

THE SOCIAL NETWORK IN CHARLES DICKENS'S

*BARNABY RUDGE AND MARTIN*

*CHUZZLEWIT*

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## ABSTRACT

In the foundational text, *George Eliot and Blackmail*, Alexander Welsh charts the development of modern society, from the birth of our information culture to the emergence of new community patterns, and he explains how the tensions created by publicity fostered a widespread interest in secrecy. In outlining the conditions that intensified this need, Welsh provides a useful interpretative model for studying the human networks in Charles Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The worlds portrayed in these historical and domestic novels—with their emphases on local information, social mobility, and accountability—illustrate how an overall increase in publicity weakens the traditional community structure. In particular, the communities in *Barnaby Rudge* articulate a conscious desire to regulate information at the local level, even as modern technology encroaches upon them and threatens to undermine their authority. Similarly, the divers branches of the Chuzzlewit network attempt to displace traditional authority by attaining individual social prominence.

Using the tools of contemporary social network theory, this project examines the community models in *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and it demonstrates how Dickens inscribes his concept of authorial power within the network structure. Individual chapters focus on the specific network models employed in each novel, including the small world, prominence, affiliation, proximity, and distribution. This thesis intersects with existing criticism on Dickens and the publishing industry of the 1830s, and it provides an alternative interpretative frame—one that relies heavily on the theoretical support of Alexander Welsh, E.P. Thompson, and Georg Simmel. Ultimately, reading Dickens through the lens of network theory reveals his prescient

knowledge of the patterns of societal organization more commonly associated with social networks, and it illuminates the structures of meaning within his individual novels.

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## INTRODUCTION

In an 1839 letter to John Forster, Charles Dickens describes his plan for a new literary periodical, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, “containing stories and descriptions of London as it was many years ago, as it is now, and as it will be many years hence” (House 564). He then considers the “little club or knot of characters” whose personal histories and perspectives would supplement each narrative (563). In *Barnaby Rudge*, the final story serialized in *Clock*, Dickens presents small clusters of characters that mirror this provisional model, and he fuses history with the present to predict an imminent structural change—one that may be linked with the birth of modern society in the nineteenth century and his own evolving professional model. As the first novel published after *Clock*, *Martin Chuzzlewit* illustrates the transition from local traditions and rituals to a more sophisticated model of how society works. The Chuzzlewits represent an inversion of the interiority typically associated with families, and their peripheral connections often possess the most valuable information. Using the methods of social network analysis, this project examines the community models in *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and it demonstrates how Dickens inscribes his understanding of professional and societal changes during the Victorian period within their structures.

In exploring the link between network patterns, publication format, and historical context, this project intersects with existing criticism on Dickens and the publishing industry of the 1830s. It augments these conversations by providing an alternative interpretative frame—one that relies heavily on the historical and theoretical support of Alexander Welsh, E.P. Thompson,

and Georg Simmel. These scholars underline important shifts in the social framework during the nineteenth century, and in doing so, they provide critical entry points into social network theory. As indicated in Chapter One, *Barnaby Rudge* represents London in the 1780s as a small world of individual communities, which mirror the conditions of industrial society, while at the same time commenting on the publishing practices of the 1830s. *Martin Chuzzlewit* contains a more complex skein of connections, which as a whole illustrates the motives for attachment and distribution in the social and professional worlds. Both novels portray traditional authority as morally and intellectually bankrupt, even as their primary authorities remain in the end, and their antagonistic characters are either diminished or conspicuously absent. Reading Dickens through the lens of contemporary network theory reveals his knowledge of the methods of societal organization more commonly associated with social networks, and it illuminates the structures of meaning within his individual novels, like *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

### **The Rise of Social and Information Networks**

In the foundational text *George Eliot and Blackmail*, Alexander Welsh charts the development of modern society, from the birth of our information culture to the emergence of new community patterns, and he explains how the tensions created by publicity fostered a widespread interest in secrecy. In outlining the conditions that intensified this need, Welsh provides a useful interpretative model for studying the human networks in *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The worlds portrayed in these historical and domestic novels—with their emphases on local information, social mobility, and accountability—illustrate how an overall increase in publicity weakens the traditional community. In particular, the communities in *Barnaby Rudge* articulate a conscious desire to regulate information at the local level, even as

modern society encroaches upon them and threatens to undermine their authority. In the same vein, the divers branches of the Chuzzlewit network attempt to displace traditional authority by asserting individual social prominence.

For the most part, the Victorians welcomed the expanding print and information network, but they also understood information as a valuable form of private property. Welsh identifies reputational blackmail as an important consequence of publicity and the evolving community structure. Closely connected with privacy, reputation involves the selective revelation and concealment of personal information, an order blackmail threatens to disrupt. Novels that contain blackmail plots translate reputation—collective or individual—into information that can be marketed to third parties. Welsh explains that a blackmail story contains two narrative threads, that of the incriminating action and that of possible detection, which implicate the reader in the plot. Readers are not threatened by the exposure of information, but are instead treated to a panoptic view of the blackmail story and the dynamic interplay of its primary actors and motivations, played against a specific social network (8). This information economy most often emerges from drastic changes in culture or community structure.

The birth of modern society also sparked the development of small collectives that simultaneously mirrored and countered the larger social framework. Between 1780 and 1830, the timeframe for *Barnaby Rudge*, the British working-class community grew more regimented and invested in productivity, and they became generally less violent and impulsive. In *The Making of the English Working Class*, E.P. Thompson considers how this attention to orderliness spurred the development of trade unions and friendly societies. He explains that, “in the secretiveness of the friendly society, and in its opaqueness under upper-class scrutiny, we have

authentic evidence of the growth of independent working-class culture and institutions” (421). This undercurrent prompted the formation of trade unions and political societies, like the ’Prentice Knights and the Protestant Association, which intended to render discontentment so nebulous that authorities could not identify its center (497). Often under the protection of anonymity, these communities worked to protect private information from public channels, to diffuse useful knowledge, and to achieve solidarity with one another and against authorities (487).

Based on their reasons for assembling, these communities adopted symbols and practices designed to protect them from society. James Eli Adams, in *Dandies and Desert Saints*, details the distinctive behavior and dress of a young Tractarian brotherhood. This particular community sought to reinforce the social integrity of its movement by wearing elaborate clothing, coordinating its actions, and reciting creeds—collectively the markers of its party loyalty. Though the ’Prentice Knights are a trade union, and not a religious sect, their initiation ceremony follows a similar order (90). In the small communities that participate in such rituals, the construction and preservation of secrets is rendered more difficult by close proximity. Georg Simmel, in his 1906 article “The Sociology of Secrecy and Secret Societies,” explains that the frequency and intimacy of close contact prompts nodes to disclose information that might otherwise remain a secret (467). This phenomenon, which threatens the integrity of tightly-knit communities, manifests itself in the Maypole company, as they selectively distribute information to third parties.

Many scholars consider Simmel an important turning point in sociology, in part because he defined with some precision the nature of secret collectives. Although this project does not

consider secrecy in detail, Simmel's analysis of intimate communities and interpersonal relationships is particularly relevant to a study of social networks. He claims that as a community expands, its monetary relationships reveal the most about its traits because they can be quantified and traced. Monetary transactions bear three peculiarities, all of which pertain to the inheritance plot in *Martin Chuzzlewit*: first, financial transactions can be compressed by virtue of slipping money into another person's hand; second, in the absence of qualitative measurement, possessions may be secreted and protected against publicity as long as they can be exchanged in physical form; and third, they have the ability to be diffused across the entire network, depending on individual investments (467). This model not only provides a useful frame for understanding the financial connections in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but it also, in its desire to quantify qualitative connections, provides an entry point into modern social network analysis.

### **The Social Network: Theories and Topologies**

Contemporary network theory provides a frame for understanding, not only the mechanisms for distributing information in *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but also the limitations placed on professional and social networks in the early nineteenth century. In *Small Worlds*, Duncan J. Watts outlines the four interrelated strands of social network theory, beginning with the statistical analysis of network data. This area typically focuses on social structure, the quantitative measurement of social interaction, and an analysis of the resulting social network topologies. In theoretical models, the social network appears as either a completely ordered or a completely random world, with local properties that mirror its global structure. The density and distribution patterns of a subnetwork, two local properties that enable transmission, would then reflect the motives of the entire social world. Unlike theoretical models, the fictional networks

evaluated in this thesis incorporate elements of both order and randomness, and they tend to cluster into heterogeneous small worlds.

The second theoretical strand interprets the qualitative properties of the social network, with special attention placed on the distance between clusters and the strength of local ties. Certain structural preferences, like the tendency to associate with similar nodes or the likelihood that one's acquaintances are connected, suggest that the social network depends equally on its strong and weak ties for structural cohesion (Watts 13). In other words, real social networks sustain dense strong-tie structures that support local knowledge and diffuse weak-tie structures that procure information from distant regions (Borgatti 434). Finally, the third and fourth strands define the social network as a meta-network, comprised of highly clustered or equivalent subgroups—that is, the social network contains clusters that reflect the economic, political, and organizational structure of society (Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks* 109). This interpretation offers the most comprehensive view of the power structure embedded in the Dickensian social network, especially as it illuminates the conditional and indeterminate properties of each social world (Watts 18).

Primarily aimed at conceptual models, these premises underpin the empirical methods used to understand real social networks. This project examines the salient structural and dynamical properties of the five network models in *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*: the small world, the affiliation network, networks of prominence and proximity, and the distribution network. Building on the anecdotal small-world phenomenon, Watts formalizes the small world as the coincidence of rich local connection and short global separation in decentralized networks

(“Networks” 493).<sup>1</sup> He claims that while the small world is connected enough to admit rich structure, its constituents operate within a local domain that comprises a limited subset of the entire network (499). In *Understanding Social Networks*, Charles Kadushin explains that the small world consists of individual, highly transitive communities that share certain interests and preferences. Isolated communities become integrated into the network when they acquire short chains of intermediate acquaintances that link them to another community. The small-world is thus a community-based network that forms when separate domains link and rewire the communication circuit (120).

As the densest regions of the small world, local communities rely on the constant presence of certain members for structural cohesion—a property that distinguishes them from formal networks.<sup>2</sup> Whereas a formal network contains official leaders and definite boundaries, the informal communities addressed in this project defer to named leaders and exist without clear perimeters. In a community motivated by information exchange, those who possess information hold power and set the normative patterns of communication (Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks* 126). Simmel posits a close relation between informal leaders and the conditions not only for trust, but also for enforceable trust and coercion (qtd. in Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks* 126). Without formal leadership, small communities employ information and rituals as tools for limiting their population (Kadushin 127). This process ensures that each community retains its original character, while at the same time linking with surrounding worlds.

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1. See Stanley Milgram’s article “The Small World Problem” (1967) for more on the first small world experiment; See Watt’s “Networks, Dynamics, and the Small-World Phenomenon” (1999) for more on decentralization. A decentralized network lacks a dominant central vertex to which all other vertices are directly linked. p. 496

2. Kadushin defines structural cohesion as the minimum number of nodes required to retain the shape of a community. p. 127

In informal networks like the small world, nodes tend to inhabit multiple roles and positions, a phenomenon known as multiplexity. Multiplexity involves the form and content of an interconnected community, and it transpires when the same set of nodes performs multiple roles. In other words, this phenomenon occurs when nodes are simultaneously relatives, business partners, members of the same political or religious sect, or the constituents of an organizational culture (*Understanding Social Networks* 36). The communities in *Barnaby Rudge* demonstrate the extent to which multiplexity invests patrilineal, unionized, and class-based societies with trust. Inhabiting multiple positions enables nodes, and their respective communities, to protect and support their own information economies, even as it creates the potential for fraud (37).

The disposition of each community is partly determined by its original motives and interests. In an article entitled, “Power, Influence, and Social Circles,” Kadushin details the four primary types of circles found in the small world. First, the cultural community shares a distinct moral code and interest in tradition, and it usually esteems recreation, literature, and gossip. Cultural communities tend to produce symbols and “are surrounded by a periphery of symbol consumers and validators” (692). Perhaps more than any other type, the cultural circle remains markedly detached from formal organizations, and it works diligently to protect itself from moral depravity. Second, the utilitarian community invests in trade and the external economy, and it forms connections between formal organizations. Like its integrative counterpart, which arises from mutual professional experiences, the utilitarian community is less concentric and more egalitarian in its connections. Both the integrative and utilitarian models materialize in the form of trade unions, fraternities, economic enterprises, and they work as intermediaries between

systems. Finally, the power and influence circle assumes a pyramidal structure, and it often exists within some amorphous, larger political unit, often without a coherent ideology. As with the utilitarian model, its connections are often covert and less legitimated, and when combined with the utilitarian model, it becomes a powerful—and threatening—super community (692).

Although this model coincides with the community pattern in and around London in 1780, the framework shifts dramatically after the First Industrial Revolution. For this reason, *Martin Chuzzlewit* contains a complex web of oppositional networks that pivot on the concept of social prominence. In *Social Network Analysis*, Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust posit a direct correlation between prominence and visibility. For individuals to hold prominence, they must form and receive sufficient ties to render themselves visible to the entire social network. Wasserman and Faust explain that prominence may be measured by examining a node's direct and adjacent ties and its connection to intermediaries (172). In real social networks, prominent nodes tend to be more central and more deeply involved in relationships with others, and they often receive as much esteem from collecting new ties as they do from authoring them (174). Similarly, Kadushin contends that prominence should be measured according to individual traits and outputs. Those who hold certain qualities or produce substantive content should be ranked higher than their less qualified and productive counterparts (Kadushin, "Power" 688). Prominence thus depends on a combination of visibility, inherent qualities, content, and productivity.

Wasserman and Faust also account for the affiliation model, which often pairs with the network of prominence. The affiliation network, also known as the membership network, contains both a set of nodes and a set of events that are linked between each nodal point. Nodes

may be linked by their participation in a particular activity or community, while events are connected to the degree that they have common actors (292). In *Martin Chuzzlewit*, certain nodes use events—like the dispute between Martin and Mr. Chuzzlewit or the inheritance plot more generally—to form strategic links with prominent nodes.

Network theorists typically classify distribution networks by power and content; this project will consider both models as they pertain to the American newspaper industry and the network of prominence. When properly conducted, a distribution network renders information in an efficient manner, often obtaining a good performance even if the path between the client and the server is congested. According to Dinesh C. Verma, an effective content distribution network improves the overall reliability and navigability of the social and information network (Verma 14). Power distribution networks then operate according to a hierarchy in which utility and the successful distribution of social capital to third parties are the highest points (Che and Sha 52).<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the proximity network operates within a particular influence domain, in which individual nodes are linked to proximate communities. Wasserman and Faust define proximity as the average distance to, rather than from, the most immediate node or community (204). In a proximity network, status and distance are inseparably intertwined, and thus a node's prominence is measured by its proximity to communities and other prominent nodes. To make an assertion based on proximity, one must comprehend the status and directional relation of every node in the influence domain (205).

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<sup>3</sup>. Distribution is commonly associated with computer science, but the terminology is particularly useful for a study of information pathways and the superabundance of information produced by Dickens's American press.

## Two Dickens Novels, Five Network Models

In the first chapter, I examine the three most prominent communities in *Barnaby Rudge*. I argue that Dickens depicts a small world network in this novel, complete three with individual communities—the Maypole company, the 'Prentice Knights, and the Protestant Association—and that these communities intersect and transform into a crowd during the Gordon Riots. Recognizing that each community bears a distinct personality, this chapter analyzes their structural and dynamical features and explains how they relate to the larger social framework. Though not immediately perceptible, each community represents a particular phase in the rise of society and, by extension, a point in Dickens's concept of authorial power. This chapter also argues that the Chronicler, whom Dickens curiously links with a young apprentice, allows readers to view the motivations and attachment patterns of each community.

The second chapter examines the four disparate network models in *Martin Chuzzlewit*. I contend that Dickens portrays the social world in this novel as a system of oppositional and doubled relations that orbit around a central patriarchal figure. Despite the virulent disdain the Chuzzlewits harbor for one another, they all follow the same selfish impulse toward social prominence. Aligning each character with a network model—affiliation, prominence, proximity, or distribution—and establishing their respective capacities for immoral action, this chapter ultimately shows that Dickens inhabits a rather conservative class vision and stands in favor of traditional networks of prominence.

The Conclusion explores the link between the social network models portrayed in these novels and Dickens's concept of authorial power. It argues that Dickens employs each network model as a specific critique of editorial and publication practices during the 1830s, and it claims

that he retains his conservative vision despite being implicated in competing networks. To explain the connection between serialization and the distribution patterns of social networks, the Conclusion also includes a brief analysis of the frame story in *Master Humphrey's Clock*, and it provides more specific information about Dickens's understanding of copyright and publication format.

“WHISPERS OF CONFEDERACY”: *BARNABY RUDGE* AND THE SMALL-WORLD  
PHENOMENON

The fog of sleep rolls off, and London shines awake. The streets are filled with carriages, and people gaily clad. The jails are full, too, to the throat, nor have the workhouses or hospitals much room to spare. The courts of law are crowded. Taverns have their regular frequenters by this time, and every mart of traffic has its throng. Each of these places is a world, and has its own inhabitants; each is distinct from, and almost unconscious of the existence of any other. (180)

— Charles Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock*

By the time Chapman and Hall published the first number of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, Dickens had already established a healthy reputation as a novelist, and he wanted to introduce a new literary periodical in the design of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. In a series of letters to John Forster, Dickens outlines his plan for a weekly serial that would follow an old gentleman, Master Humphrey, and his small company of friends who gather regularly to read the manuscripts stored in his clock-case. As evidenced by the epigraph, the frame stories supplied by the club depict greater London in the nineteenth century as a small world, filled with constantly overlapping characters and subnetworks. This particular meditation on the order of London, which curiously precedes the first number of *Barnaby Rudge*, suggests an interest in not only the densely populated and sparsely connected worlds of the city, but also their relation to an entire system of representation. In other words, Master Humphrey, who administers his own local circle, provides a comprehensive view of the network that will be scrupulously studied in the final narrative produced by the club.

The weekly format of *Master Humphrey's Clock* furnished Dickens the time and space needed to explore small social worlds and to extend his findings to the current social and political scene. As the final novel serialized in the periodical, *Barnaby Rudge* takes pains to connect these individual networks, sometimes at the expense of narrative order and historical accuracy. For instance, the novel initially seems more interested in the connections formed at the rural Maypole Inn than the Gordon Riots of 1780, but this focus works to establish the Haredale mystery plot, which underpins many of the relationships in the novel. The anti-Catholic riots at times seem secondary to the plot, but as many have pointed out, this is likely because Dickens uses them for his own purposes.<sup>4</sup>

Recent criticism of *Barnaby Rudge* explores the link between the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots of 1780 and the Chartist movement of the 1830s. Many critics contend that Dickens inserts a decidedly Chartist crowd into his depiction of the Gordon Riots and actually champions a modern political movement. For example, in *Dickens and Anti-Catholicism*, D.G. Paz argues that the plot of *Barnaby Rudge* organizes itself around Chartist concerns first and religion second. Stephen Marcus similarly asserts that Dickens presents a conflicting interpretation of history. He claims that the character of the Gordon Riots—the amalgam of extreme Puritanism and impulses toward rebellion—resembled, in the minds of many liberals in 1840, the Chartist campaign (174). In depicting the Gordon Riots as a blend of religious fanaticism and extreme political appetites, Dickens stresses the similarities between the two movements and questions the material and spiritual conditions under which society erupts (Marcus 175). Conversely, John

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<sup>4</sup> See the original preface to *Master Humphrey's Clock* for more on Dickens's plan for the periodical; Dickens intended to maintain regular contact with his readers through short numbers that would someday exist apart from their original machinery; In *Charles Dickens and "Boz,"* Robert L. Patten notes that Dickens originally intended to publish a miscellany addressing the issues of the day and architectural and social history (286).

Plotz points out that Dickens's rollicking, anarchic mob is largely inconsistent with the ordered Chartist petition crowds of 1830 (129). Nevertheless most critics agree that the Dickens invites readers to interpret his riots through the lens of contemporary political conflict.

As several scholars demonstrate, *Barnaby Rudge* makes readers privy to inherent structural contrasts through its elevated narrative perspective. Natalie McKnight argues that the variance between past and present that naturally occurs in historical fiction likely nudged Dickens to consider contrasts in general. She points out that these contrasts tend to form around masculine and feminine relationships, the tumultuous streets of London, the savage crowd, and the gravity of history (25). In *The Victorian Multiplot Novel*, Peter Garrett takes this concept a step further and claims that Dickens consistently employs the historian's superior panoramic vision in order to show the pervasive threat of criminal attack, while distancing himself from the violent energy of the crowd (35). In the chapters that follow, I argue that Dickens credits the Chronicler in the novel—and thus chroniclers in general—with this same synoptic perspective, particularly with respect to historical events.

Additionally, scholars contend that *Barnaby Rudge* represents the social world as divided according to location, social status, and political affiliation. For instance, Camilla Cassidy locates the rural Maypole Inn in an idyllic past in which the status quo is maintained by virtue of resistance. She claims that John Willet advocates stasis by rejecting new technology and obstinately referring to his son as a young boy (372).<sup>5</sup> Marcus claims that the novel only presents one type of connection—that of father and son. He points out that the novel offers up five filial pairs that collectively represent a disordered notion of authority. For Marcus, the

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<sup>5</sup> Juliet John makes a similar claim about the heritage aesthetic and the historical novel in *Dickens and Mass Culture*. p. 198

connection between Gabriel Varden and his apprentice Sim Tappertit is particularly rich because it reveals discontent with the master-apprentice model. The trade union that arises out of this relationship has received comparatively little attention considering the large role it plays in the small world. In *Plots of Opportunity*, Albert Pionke points out that Sim and the 'Prentice Knights function as a hub connecting the various disordered worlds of the novel (40). As the central community in the small world, the 'Prentice Knights effectively link the local and global, past and present scenes of unrest.

Focusing on the most prominent communities in the novel, the Maypole community, the 'Prentice Knights, and the Protestant Association, this chapter aims to identify the principles of interconnection at work in the Dickensian social network and to show how Dickens uses fictional small worlds to critique the practices of Victorian professional networks. Dickens serialized *Barnaby Rudge* in his own periodical only after a prolonged disagreement with Bentley, and his virulent disdain for publishers who would mitigate authorial power finds expression in the worlds of the novel. In particular, Dickens dramatizes the narrative perspective of Chroniclers, who “are privileged to enter where they list, to come and go through keyholes, to ride upon the wind, to overcome, in their soarings up and down, all obstacles of distance, time, and place” (80). He employs the Chronicler’s superior narrative vision in the novel because it maintains an elevated, panoramic view of the entire network, while disclosing the intricate details of individual social worlds. Dickens curiously juxtaposes this figure with Sim Tappertit, an eager apprentice who tries to unlock his master’s house with a newly-minted key, only to discover that the housemaid sealed the lock with coal-dust. This moment connects apprentices with emergent writers, who use their journalistic training to intuit complicated parallels and

differences between current and previous network conditions. By the same token, it advances the Dickensian Chronicler as one privileged to link multiple social worlds but also vulnerable to the effects of the smallest prank. Using the small-world phenomenon as a frame, this chapter seeks to show how the various worlds of *Barnaby Rudge* intersect at the local level, where influence and information can be specified, and how these connections produce global effects. From this perspective, the novel is not merely about the Gordon Riots or Chartism, but rather, it emphasizes, through the rhetoric of history and connection, the restrictions imposed by the publishing industry of the 1830s.

### **A Little Knot of Solemn Gossips**

*Barnaby Rudge* opens at the Maypole Inn, a roadside tavern in rural Essex that harbors a traditional English community. While the inn outwardly provides a resting place for travelers, it promotes solidarity between its loyal customers and stands in quiet opposition to the chaos of modern London. The “little knot” of men in the opening scene constitutes a conservative network, with customary relationships and rituals designed to protect the integrity of the inn (97). In relating the character of the Maypole community, Dickens focuses on the legends told by the fire and their implicit leader, John Willet. The narrator commences with the apocryphal history of the inn, noting that it “was said” that the house was built during the reign of King Henry VIII and that Queen Elizabeth once slept there after a hunting expedition (5). The community uses this narrative to distinguish the “true believers” from visitors and “the matter-of-fact and doubtful folks” who threaten the sanctity of their little traditions (5). According to Juliet John, what is most interesting about the Maypole history is that it illuminates “the tangential and superstitious relationship between objects and stories in our consumption of history” (255).

Indeed, the mounting block supplies the grounds for their claims, but this story also represents the mindset of the community. In Kadushin's terms, those enraptured by this legend belong to an informal hierarchy in which participants only see the immediate connections around them and are unable to envision or model the external system (*Understanding Social Networks* 42). The history circulated at the inn illuminates the named and implicit positions present in the traditional hierarchy, and it also establishes the Maypole as a dense social cluster.

The information publicized at the Maypole enforces not only a distinction between outliers and regulars, but also the skewed patterns of distribution upheld by its leader. When a mysterious traveler visits the inn and inquires about the late Reuben Haredale, Willet informs him that this “is a Maypole story, and has been any time these last four-and-twenty years” (17). He then stresses that Soloman Daisy shares the rights to the story with the house, and “nobody but [him] has ever told it under this roof, or ever shall — that's more” (17). Given his earlier reference to treason and the organization of the community, one might assume that Willet directs this warning at the traveler. But as Daisy begins his story, he turns his back to the traveler and addresses his old companions, as if insulted by the traveler's disinterest. In the process, Daisy adopts an authoritative posture that at once alienates the traveler and invokes the hierarchy embedded in the Maypole community. Kadushin explains that information and ideas are responsive to the dense networks that amplify and transmit them (*Understanding Social Networks* 40). The local information embellished and circulated at the inn pertains to its history, from which the traveler is excluded. Nevertheless, his arrival marks an intersection with the external world, one that activates the implicit power structure present at the inn. In a multiplex system like the Maypole, shifting between roles usually strengthens ties and builds trust, but as

the traveler observes, it also makes them more prone to fraud. When Daisy concludes his narrative, and thus his authoritative role, the traveler reduces his account to pageantry for “all the gaping idlers in the neighbourhood” (21). Certainly, Daisy creates a narrative that will appeal to his audience, down to the superstitious return to the date of the murder, but he also strengthens the community by uniting them under a common dread. The traveler simply indicates that the process of holding more than one position may produce negative effects later in the novel.

The Maypole chatter about John Chester reveals how truth and falsehood become inseparably intermingled in small communities. Soon after Mr. Chester arrives at the Maypole, he sends a letter to Mr. Geoffrey Haredale through Barnaby, who Willet claims ““is sort of a natural”” and ““as much to be trusted as the Post itself”” (91). Willet immediately reports this event to his little community and insists that the letter, because of its sender and mysterious content, is ““doubtless of a threatening nature”” (97). For the ““little knot of smokers and solemn gossips, who seldom had any new topics of discussion,”” Mr. Chester furnishes ““a good, dark-looking mystery,”” which they receive with zest and ““quiet congratulation”” (97). To this point, the community has merely reveled in its own history, but the arrival of Mr. Chester marks their involvement in a current event. They soon decide that Mr. Chester requested the largest suite at the inn because he intends to challenge Mr. Haredale to a duel, thus bringing the action under the Maypole roof. While this theory illustrates their tendency to speculate, it also proves that the Maypole regulars expect adventure to find them. Stephen Marcus asserts that the Maypole embodies an idyllic past, in which ““the liberation from the passage of time has become a means of exercising tyrannical power”” (176). Indeed, the Maypole community represents a reductive way of thinking about the past and present, but it also perpetuates a type of information that rests

ambiguously between truth and falsehood: social gossip. This format supports the exclusive dense-tie structure present at the Maypole Inn, while also appearing to participate in an active discourse.

Although the core Maypole community appears dense and impenetrable, its members maintain a small number of weak ties who convey information to distant parts of the small world. In particular, Gabriel Varden, an especially important constituent at the inn, holds an anomalously large number of external links. This grants him the curious task of linking the Maypole with outliers and protecting them from criminals and the tumultuous crowd. For instance, Varden maintains a connection with Mrs. Rudge and Barnaby, two nodes who occupy the social periphery. Although Mrs. Rudge resists integrating herself into the network, Barnaby facilitates communication between worlds and eventually commits to the crowd. Both Mrs. Rudge and Barnaby are connected historically with the Maypole and the Warren, but neither chooses a network because their stations limit their mobility. Varden also secures a permanent personal link to the Maypole when Joe Willet marries his daughter. The paths organized and sustained by intermediate ties appear to protect the Maypole community from disorder, but they also implicate the traditional network in scandal. Together, the Maypole community employs its weak ties as mediators in the forbidden relationship between Edward Chester and Emma Haredale. Mr. John Chester later indicts “the neighborhood in general” for serving as “go-betweens, and agents” for Edward, and moreover, he names Barnaby “foremost among them all” (106). Here, Mr. Chester inculpates the entire community, while noting the strength and efficiency of its weak tie structure.

Further, John Willet demonstrates that named leaders still administer the norms of the Maypole community. Like other multiplex systems in the novel, the Maypole company follows the trust model of delegation. As the landlord and patriarchal figure, Willet determines how the community interacts with each other and responds to travelers. His faithful community usually imitates his “profound obstinacy and slowness of apprehension,” while quietly admitting his shortsightedness (8). In the initial account of the Maypole, the narrator notes that Willet considers his positions “quite settled and ordained by the laws of nature and Providence,” a stance he repeatedly takes with his regular parlor customers (8). For the most part, the community accepts his leadership. When the mysterious traveler first presents himself at the inn, they emulate Willet’s impassive gaze, subjecting the traveler to an unsettling “fire of eyes,” and they appear equally disconcerted when he trivializes their favorite legend (8). By consistently representing traditional authority, Willet affords the community a sense of security and structural cohesion. Camilla Cassidy asserts that Dickens intends the novel to be dynamic and retrospective, while John Willet simply wants his world to stand still (373). This statement encapsulates the whole of his reign at the Maypole, especially as he and the inn resist the information and technologies that might alter his small friendship network. In other words, John Willet represents the resistance of traditional authority to even the slightest structural change.

Despite having cooperative friends, Willet encounters internal opposition that would seem to predict the dissolution of traditional authority. Marcus contends that *Barnaby Rudge* is primarily concerned with “authority in political and social relations, as well as in personal and private ones. Among its most notable qualities are the intelligence and skill with which it connects these two kinds of relations, and the steadiness with which it elucidates the ‘intimate

relation' between them" (172). Certainly Willet embodies the need for personal and private authority, especially with relation to his son, but he also demonstrates that tradition, "the internal handing on through time," still presides over information practices at the inn (Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks* 135). When Joe confides to Varden that he hopes the traveler is dishonest, he intends to subvert the traditional mechanisms of persuasion and break ties with his father. His desire to conceal their disagreement over the traveler thus reveals the latent anxiety about power and emasculation that drives many of the circles in the novel. Although Varden assures him that this, too, is Maypole business, he still fears having the story of his "being beat like [a] boy" told outside of the inn (31). The narrator later points out that the rest of the community sustains the practices Joe wishes to overturn:

Whether people, by dint of sitting in the same place and same relative positions . . . for a great many years, acquire a sixth sense, or some unknown power of influencing each other which serves them in its stead, is a question of philosophy to settle. But it is certain that old John Willet, Mr. Parkes, and Mr. Cobb were one and all firmly of opinion that they were very jolly companions . . . they looked at each other . . . as if there were a perpetual interchange of ideas between them. (274)

Here and throughout the novel, Dickens represents the traditional community as so densely private that it becomes inefficient, confining its "interchange" to the strongest links. Though they communicate effectively with one another, they make no efforts to extend outside of the group, thus stagnating their pool of knowledge. Furthermore, this mode of communication perpetuates an unnatural hierarchy, which limits both the quality and quantity of connections made at the Maypole Inn.

### **The Secret Society of 'Prentice Knights**

The conflict between outmoded Victorian ideals and modern methods extends to the 'Prentice Knights, a secret movement dedicated to restoring the "good old English customs" and

subverting their Tyrant Masters (74). Most often read as a parody of Victorian trade unions, the 'Prentice Knights mark the shift from a conservative hierarchal model to an integrative society, which invests in political and professional reform. Varden first introduces Sim Tappertit, their charismatic, self-appointed leader as his "sneaking, underhanded" apprentice, whose childishness has already undermined his attempts at professionalism (40). Marcus contends that, even though Sim wants to be considered a "wild-eyed radical," his ideas about Utopia are retrospective and bear many of the same contradictions present in Lord George's campaign (179). He urges his fellow apprentices to function as free citizens who challenge the order imposed on them by their masters and who obstruct the paths of political authorities, but he actually wants an old model of power and community. His interest in "ancient rights and holidays" indicates that his secret union will persist in its powerlessness because it mirrors the desires of the Maypole community (74). The 'Prentice Knights will simply orbit a particular sphere for a while and return to their positions unchanged because their stations grant them the knowledge, but not the influence, to alter the network system. While meeting in the dark basement room, the 'Prentice Knights play skittles, dice, and cards on the very ground reserved for devising secret plots against their masters. The impulse toward pageantry and entertainment thus collides with their serious political goals and renders the union void.

During one of their midnight meetings, Sim Tappertit conducts an elaborate initiation ceremony that, in addition to mirroring the rites of Victorian Trade unions, demonstrates the utility of the integrative model. The ceremony begins as Sim enters the quiet basement room, takes the ceremonial chair, and accepts a large thighbone as his "sceptre and staff of authority" (73). In keeping with the rites of trade unions, the candidates remain in a separate

room until Sim knocks nine times upon a skull with the thighbone, a rather comical signal that permits entrance into their society. The third candidate then emerges in courtly dress, as specified by “the Institutions regulating the introduction of candidates,” and he bows before Sim, as though he understands the moral culture of their fraternity (74). While Dickens clearly intends to satirize the practices of fraternal secrecy, he calls attention to certain ideological fissures inherent in the trade union structure: trade unions, like other informal networks, arise from shared interests and should adhere to customary relationships and practical functions. But, as demonstrated by the ceremony and the misplaced Constitution, the ’Prentice Knights submit to a mysterious code of conduct that promotes exclusion and secrecy—two properties that prevent productive alliances with other communities. Further, the ceremony assumes a graver tone as Sim leads the prospects through a “dreadful and impressive oath,” which promises fidelity to the Constitution, “the Church, the State, and everything established — except the masters” (76). This oath is meant to establish the ’Prentice Knights as a regulatory body, but it in fact demonstrates that the integrative model of society may not be better than its conservative counterpart.

Integrative communities tend to employ ideas as tools for affecting widespread sociological change. Sim demonstrates this property by collecting key patterns and distributing secret copies to his fellow apprentices. In the process he intends to traverse the professional and informational barriers, embodied here by the master’s private property, and secure access to the full advantages of his trade. The narrator notes that Sim’s own key is a “clumsy large-sized” copy of the original, which emphasizes both his professional and social deficits and his distorted concept of history (69). Interestingly, before Sim enters the basement room, he pauses to check

his pockets for the key, as though his authority over the 'Prentice Knights depends on the representation of old models of authority. In *Linked*, Albert-Laszló Barabási contends that well-connected nodes—those with ties to multiple communities—serve as paths to remote parts of the network, enabling connections that were previously unavailable to certain nodes (53). In this model of society, the weak-tie structure facilitates communication between separate worlds, which in turn strengthens the entire network. The 'Prentice Knights intend precisely this mode of connection when they take secret keys, but their interest in history and exclusion renders them secondary to the actual plot. The key thus embodies an organizational tool that is meant to organize and increase their collective capital, but actually stresses their disjunction.

Not surprisingly, the 'Prentice Knights never succeed in their own endeavors and are forced to align themselves with the Protestant Association. In an enrollment report to Lord George, Gashford notes that the 'Prentice Knights (now the United Bulldogs) include both apprentices and workmen, and they now contribute to the Protestant Association's funds. Lord George then describes Sim as a conscientious "little man," who sometimes accompanies Mrs. Varden to their meetings (301). Sim's connection to the Protestant Association becomes more distinct when he and his lieutenants link with Hugh and Dennis at the Boot, where they learn the properties of the Association. Now emancipated from their apprenticeships, the men enlist in the Protestant Association, hoping to achieve "a distinguished state in great political events" (321). Though Sim cultivates an affect of power, his small stature and "stupendously little" legs suggest that he is still incapable of making the connections he desires (321). In aligning Sim with the Chronicler and the United Bulldogs with the Protestant Association, Dickens questions the properties needed to secure prominence in the small world. Neither brazen self-promotion nor

assembling a professional union seems to enhance their stature. Even connecting with an established movement like the Protestant Association, which satisfies their need for rebellion and grants them “position[s] of trust,” renders them a contingency instead of a dominant force (321). Finally, Dickens represents the United Bulldogs as an unbalanced society that can only legitimize itself by merging with an established circle. Both the apprenticeship model and the secret union prevent them from procuring an adequate number of strong and weak ties. Their actions during the riots, then, become more about finding local and global influence than advancing the Protestant agenda.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Great Protestant Association**

Dickens devotes the latter half of the novel to the Protestant Association, which mobilizes its members by diffusing information outside of official channels. Surrounded by an “air of mystery” and imbued with a “secret charm, and power of attraction,” the Protestant Association quickly acquires more weak ties than its traditional and integrative counterparts (304). The narrator notes that, had the Association urged all of the zealous Protestants to sing hymns or petition against the act for abolishing penal laws against Roman Catholic priests, it might have assembled one hundred people. But when rumors spread that “a secret power was mustering against the government for undefined and mighty purposes,” and “when the air was filled with whispers of confederacy among the Popish powers to degrade and enslave England,” the Association swelled to forty thousand members, all of whom sought to defend Protestantism as an essential part of national character (304-5). In the Preface Dickens warns that religious cries are “easily raised by men who have no religion, and who in their daily practice set at nought the

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<sup>6</sup> In “The Case Against Trade Unions,” Patrick Brantlinger notes that the ’Prentice Knights would like to be regarded as violent and threatening, but they are too weak to succeed except in cooperation with the Protestant Association (40).

commonest principles of right and wrong” (3). The Protestant Association, which distributes printed handbills to the entire social network and enlists almost everyone in its mysterious cause, clearly illustrates this phenomenon.

The Protestant Association succeeds as a conspiracy because it deploys three interrelated properties before and during the Gordon Riots. First, the Association becomes the most transitive social circle by mobilizing its covert and less legitimated connections. For instance, Hugh and Dennis the Hangman become central figures during the riots, leading men to destroy property all over London, and even Barnaby wears a blue cockade and marches with the crowd. The Association even appeals to Mrs. Varden and Miggs, who are usually excluded from participation in the social network. By building a vast weak-tie structure that incorporates, not only men from legitimate circles, but vagrants, criminals, and women, the Protestant Association ensures that it will meet its ends. Further, the Association diffuses mysterious rumors across the entire small world, and its secret invitations are “dropped in public ways, thrust under house-doors, tossed in at windows, and pressed into the hands of those who trod the streets by night” (305). The very framework of London becomes “infected with the common fear [that urges] men to join together blindfold” in defense of the Protestant Association’s unclear agenda (305). If the ’Prentice Knights can be said to exploit the threshold, then the Protestant Association reaches the informational tipping point, at which they permeate the entire small world. Finally, under the supposed leadership of Lord George Gordon, the Association mobilizes both its weak and strong ties in efficient ways. Its preparations begin at The Boot, where affiliates gather to read newspapers and pamphlets, and they extend to the regional bands found during the riots.

Unlike other subnetworks in the novel, the Protestant Association uses elements from both the utilitarian and power models to coordinate its movements. When Sim first arrives at The Boot, he learns that its customers—men obviously affiliated with the Protestant movement—consider it improper to appear curious about their league. The idea that one should not disclose his knowledge of the union suggests that the Protestant Association intends to form covert connections, ones that appear separate from the circle while advancing its cause. Since the Association presides over interaction at the Boot, it seems strange that Hugh and Dennis’s No-Popery dance is received with applause. However, the connections later formed at the tavern indicate that the Protestant Association is a relatively informal social circle, with ties extending to the darkest parts of the network. Further, the men gather in “little knots” to read newspapers and pamphlets sponsored by the Protestant Association, a practice that teaches them to interpret their roles in their roles in the community. Watts reasons that an “avalanche” of new information often precedes periods of growth and conflict in the social network, particularly as rumors permeate the entire social structure (*Structure and Dynamics* 422). In the same way, the literature distributed at the Boot intends to instruct readers and invite them to participate in the vast network of information. It seems that this method works, since men visit The Boot in shifts: “when any of this group went out, fresh people were sure to come in soon afterwards and sit down in their places, as though the others had relieved them on some watch or duty; which it was pretty clear they did, for these changes took place by the clock, at intervals of half an hour” (319). These periodic shifts indicate that, in addition to attracting working-class men whose lives revolve around time, the Association synchronizes its movements before its first demonstration, a process that enables them to cull their resources and respond to political

threats.<sup>7</sup> The Protestant Association thus operates as a power and influence model, with some distinctly utilitarian objectives, like adhering to a schedule and keeping its followers informed.

### **The Small Word in Action**

Dickens presents the Protestant crowd as an active political discourse, whose rhetoric is incomparable to that of print mediums. Based loosely on the Gordon Riots of 1780, Dickens's crowd considers the Catholic Relief Act a threat to their religion and, more importantly, the constitutional stability of Great Britain. Paired with the literature circulated by the Protestant Association, the crowd articulates a widespread suspicion of institutional powers, especially those that would limit access to information. According to Jeffrey L. Spear, the Gordon riots may be read as a three-tiered event: the first level involves the petition movement, the march to the House of Commons, and the official petition for the repeal of the Catholic Relief Act; the second includes an assault on the Catholic infrastructure, including their schools, places of worship, and private property; the third tier consists of attacks on secular institutions and the property of public officials (81-2). Although the mob in *Barnaby Rudge* sidesteps public policy and focuses exclusively on the Institution, it still registers each tier of the original event. For instance, before the crowd converges at Westminster Hall, Varden observes "little knots and groups and persons" gathered in "conference together on political or private matters" (335). Mr. Haredale reasons that these nodes are leagued in order to prevent Catholics from having "the surpassing and unheard of privilege of teaching [their] children to read and write" (359).

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<sup>7</sup> John Plotz explains that holding simultaneous meetings indicates that a movement can enforce discipline in spite of local conditions. The ability to implement a standard schedule, instead of bending to local pressure, was key to creating an effective demonstrative body (134).

With this observation, Mr. Haredale questions the overall message presented by the Protestant Association, particularly as it intends to limit Catholic participation in the global network, and he also indicates that even in their small, seemingly concentric shape, the local clusters display the properties of the larger movement.

The crowd lends anonymity to both the rollicking masses that invest in its cause and those who participate at a distance. While discussing the Protestant Association with Chester and Gashford, Mr. Haredale associates Chester with the Association, which he quickly corrects. Mr. Haredale then apologizes ““for having ranked [Chester] among the humble instruments who are obvious and in all men's sight”” (359). He then claims, ““Men of [Chester's] capacity plot in secrecy and safety, and leave exposed posts to the duller wits”” (359). Earlier in the novel, Chester secretly links with Hugh and Sim Tappertit in order to participate in the riots from a distance. He employs Hugh as his messenger by blackmailing him and promising to be his ““protector”” as long as he deserves it, and he partners with Sim in order to access Edward and the Vardens (238). Later, after leaguering with the Protestant Association, Hugh confides to Chester that he could not read the handbill and that he brought it to him because there is ““No one to trust with [his] secrets”” since Barnaby disappeared, and he is desperate to please him (334). Chester labels Hugh an ““apt instrument”” for his personal design because, even when coerced, he remains a fiercely loyal and enthusiastic agent (336). In both instances, Hugh operates as an intermediary for Chester, commandeering information and allying himself with a cause that he does not understand. This enables Chester to profit from the anti-Catholic riots without actually joining the crowd, and it grants him first access to important internal information, like whom and where the Association plans to attack. It appears, then, that Mr. Haredale correctly identifies Chester's

position before and during the riots, since he uses Hugh and Sim to exact revenge on the Warren. By exploiting them instead of openly linking with the Association, Chester both assumes an authoritative position and remains distant enough to prevent his tactics from being discovered.

Moreover, since the Protestant Association attracts nodes from every part of the network, it generates an “ignorant and excited throng” that fails to articulate coherent demands (361). Kadushin contends that the power and influence community sometimes lacks a stable ideology, meaning its members blindly follow its regime (693). Dickens notes that the Association’s supporters “knew not what” and “knew not why” the crowd formed, but were simply following the irresistible mania (305). He then claims that “the worst passions of the worst men” merge with the Association to threaten “all that was good and peaceful in society” (370). Although Lord George intends to repeal the Catholic Relief Act and restore an old model of society, his cause becomes an outlet for violent, rebellious, and previously unattached people. Hugh and Dennis, in particular, represent the folly of the Protestant crowd when they assert that property and popery are synonymous. This mistake reveals that the mysterious rumors used to unite the crowd also work to conceal its mission, and also, that the Protestant Association accepts anyone who volunteers. John Plotz contends that crowds must be read against their political and social contexts, where their negotiations and contests occur, and where they develop a “collective repertoire of gestures” (129). Although most often characterized as anarchic and disorganized, the Protestant crowd in *Barnaby Rudge* actually registers a distinct language and structural pattern. It emerges from rumor, a particular brand of information, and though it looks like an incoherent mass, it is underpinned by numerous local clusters.

The crowd then turns to the House of Parliament, where its relation to the information network becomes more distinct. When the crowd dissolves after Hugh strikes Mr. Haredale with a stone, it divides into “chance clusters,” which travel in “various directions” toward the House of Commons (366). Returning to a local structure enables the crowd to conquer larger tracts of land, and it brings individual characters to the forefront. For instance, the blind-man Stagg convinces Barnaby that “gold was to be found where people crowded, and not among trees and quiet places,” and he blackmails Mrs. Rudge so that she must visit London (395). When Barnaby and Mrs. Rudge arrive in London, they discover that the crowd, or “stream of life,” pours in one direction, dividing itself into “knots of two or three, of sometimes half-a-dozen” (385). Barnaby then joins the roving mob against his mother’s wishes and is immediately “whirled away into the heart of a dense mass of men” (403). This sequence reveals that even the weakest ties to an organization sometimes hold remarkable influence. In previous chapters Stagg remained at the fringe of political movements, like the ’Prentice Knights, but now, he helps orchestrate a structural shift by marketing the crowd to outliers. Local structure also reveals that Hugh, Sim, and Dennis lead small clusters alongside Lord George and Gashford. Moreover, Dickens depicts the crowd as simultaneously clustered and fluid, attending to its common “absorbing object” (395). In this sense the crowd binds men to a perilous state of abstraction and commissions their movement. The crowd then floods the streets of London like a “great press,” congesting the primary pathway for nearly two hours (396). This particular mob thus suggests a number of problems with the current information channel, including its limited scope, its fraudulent agents, the overproduction and diffusion of disordered material.

When the crowd finally disperses and Lord George appears to have lost control, rumor becomes the mechanism of organization. When word spreads “from mouth to mouth” that a messenger had been sent to the military, the crowd retreats from the congested pathway to their original points in the network. Hugh and Sim Tappertit return to the Boot, where Hugh declares himself an apt leader of their pack because he understands that “there’s no spirit among the people in these here times” (414). Previously, Gashford served as Lord George’s assistant, but after the petition fails, he becomes a more explicit leader, particularly of Hugh and Dennis.<sup>8</sup> He first tells them that the original cause is lost and that they should “do nothing” for him because they “are not in [his] service,” but then, he reports, but “cannot say whether it be true or false—that the men who are loitering in the streets to-night are half disposed to pull down a Romish chapel or two, and that they only want leaders” (417). Hugh and Dennis immediately enlist in this cause, leaving Gashford to walk “stealthily about, listening to all he heard, and diffusing or confirming, whenever he had an opportunity, such false intelligence as suited his own purpose” (419). Gashford remains on the outskirts of the crowd as Hugh and Dennis fulfill his master plan, occasionally pausing to comment on their work and confirm rumors. It would seem, then, that Gashford assumes ownership of the crowd after the initial demonstration.

Once reassembled, the mob exhibits more qualities of the power and influence model. During its brief suspension, the narrator claims that the crowd resumes its “honest confidence in the government under whose protection they had lived for many years” and its habits of friendly intercourse (420). This sudden shift, followed by their immediate reassembly, reveals the capriciousness of the crowd and its relative disinterest in the original cause. As the narrator

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<sup>8</sup>. As early as Chapter 35, John Grueby names Gashford “the man who blows the fire” and urges him to control the masses before they “grow a little bit too strong” and destroy all of London (298).

explains, “a mob is usually a creature of mysterious existence, particularly in a large city . . . . Assembling and dispersing with equal suddenness, it is as difficult to follow as the sea itself” (429). Dickens stresses the inconstant, fluctuating nature of the mob, which swells large one moment and disbands the next. In its current state, the crowd cannot form a coherent ideology or standard of information. Large collectives only succeed when they focus on a particular task, like destroying the Maypole and the Warren. The crowd descends on the Warren as a “solid body,” demonstrating that the entire small world, at times, functions as a cohesive unit (459). In this moment, “all space [is] full,” and “the one pursuing voice” of revolution directs their progress and enables them to conquer more property (458).

When they approach the Maypole Inn, they tear down the actual maypole and force it through the window in an act that at once suspends the community’s symbolic, traditional order. The narrator notes that when the Maypole is destroyed, “as far as [John Willet] was concerned, old Time lay snoring, and the world stood still” (454). Rather than driving the Maypole into the present, the riots interrupt and halt its cycle, and since Hugh and Sim participate in the event, weak ties become the enactors of violence, at times from the inside. Later in the novel, Dickens’s narrator reveals that Protestant literature drives many of these exploits, as one of the rioters pauses at Lord Mansfield’s house to share a pamphlet circulated by the Association (554). In combination with a rumor that “there must ensue a national bankruptcy and general ruin,” this image tells us that information presses the crowd to protect and destroy certain property (557). Even the Maypole community inquires about these rumors before the crowd arrives and receives a skewed version of the truth.

The mob then descends like “an angry sea” on Newgate Prison, where its motives become more directed and compressed (522). Led by Hugh, Dennis, and Simon Tappertit, the crowd marches to the Golden Key and seizes Gabriel Varden, who knows how to unlock the prison door. Moments before the riots began, Varden constructed a set of keys that are intended for “rooms where there were fires, books, gossip, and cheering laughter,” instead of “places of distrust and cruelty” (338). The narrator claims that it is impossible that one of Varden’s keys could unlock “a churlish strong-box or a prison-door,” yet the rioters demand that he apply them to precisely this sphere of action (338). Once inside the prison, “and the mob were dispersed from end to end,” Dennis obtains a set of keys from a cupboard and uses them to double-lock the condemned cells (451). Doing so, he intends to prevent the rioters from liberating the most violent prisoners and ensure that these ““four devils”” get ““worked off”” as originally planned (451). Paired with the attack on the Maypole Inn, this incident offers an alternative view of social life, which Marcus claims is predicated on “exposing whatever is private, [and on] liberating whatever is suppressed” (208). The rioters determine the plight of society by making public the people and problems deemed unfit by institutions.

The mob later performs the role of the Chronicler, dividing itself into tiny clusters that infiltrate “every chink and crevice,” as if it understands “the exact plan of the whole” (540). While the narrator is clearly referring to the blueprint of the prison, it is also worth mentioning that the crowd appears most compressed and mechanical during its attack on Newgate Prison; in other words, the crowd registers features of the entire social network—from the traditional Maypole community to the egalitarian Protestant Association—in its efforts to alter institutional practices.

### **The Small World at Rest**

In the final chapter, Dickens accounts for the most prominent players in the Gordon Riots. Once the crowd settles and Hugh and Dennis are hanged, those involved in this “little history” inhabit an altered state of society (680). While Sim, Gashford, and Lord George manage to escape punishment, their influence is greatly diminished after the riots: Sim continues with wooden legs, Gashford secures a position as a government spy before being discovered, and Lord George dies in prison for crimes unrelated to the Protestant movement. Additionally, since the riots upturned the hierarchy at the Maypole, Joe and Dolly become its proprietors. Even more than before, the Maypole represents the past, as the community employs the inn as a venue for celebrations, and people gather to admire the fabled snuffbox the King sent Joe after the riots. Barnaby also remains for a time, and Willet and his cronies occupy less authoritative positions in a house adjacent to the inn. Dickens thus forces tradition, along with the other models presented in the novel, into the background and allows the younger generation to assume control. This model importantly points to the weak-tie structure, a connective system that the Chronieler highlights and that Dickens reconsiders in *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

“COUNTERPARTS AND PROTOTYPES”: NETWORK TOPOLOGIES IN *MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT*

As there are a vast number of people in the huge metropolis of England who rise up every morning, not knowing where their heads will rest at night, so there are a multitude who shooting arrows over houses as their daily business, never know on whom they fall. (505)

— Charles Dickens, *Martin Chuzzlewit*

In August 1841, two years prior to the publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens writes a letter to Thomas Mitton about “a new work in monthly parts instead of a novel” and his recent agreement with Chapman and Hall about an extended break from writing (House 372). He explains that he first planned to launch a new three-volume novel at the close of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, but he feared a premature publication would spoil his good reputation. Chapman and Hall understood that Dickens’s reputation was practically “as good as money,” and they granted him a paid, yearlong pause from publishing, with the expectation that he would break ground on a monthly serial the next year (365). In the final numbers of *Clock*, Dickens reveals he will travel to America during this time and will return with “another tale of English life and manners” (lx). The extent to which the American trip would inform his new novel was not immediately apparent, but in a letter written to Macvey Napier in late October, Dickens insists, “I don’t go with any idea of pressing the Americans into my service. In my next fiction, and in all others I hope I shall stand staunchly by John Bull” (House 405). Indeed, the first number of *Martin Chuzzlewit* details the past and present circumstances of a decidedly British network, the Chuzzlewit family, and the multiple, antagonistic networks surrounding them.

The framing material introduces these competing network models and their primary motivators: selfishness and money. Included in the April 1843 installment, the original illustrated wrapper charts the inheritance plot and portrays the Chuzzlewits as connected by a shared interest in prominence and material wealth. The illustrated frame begins with two bassinets—the cradles of affluence and poverty—and ends with two men standing atop an autobiography. This material importantly frames the title, which promises to compare the exploits of Martin Chuzzlewit with “an historical record of what he did, and what he didn’t,” and to reveal, moreover, “who inherited the family plate, who came in for the silver spoons, and who for the wooden ladle.”<sup>9</sup> A line about the family inheritance appears in fine print beneath the title, as if the financial plot, though compressed and subordinated to other narrative events, underpins every connection in the novel. In the same vein, Dickens’s Preface to the 1850 Cheap Edition admits that Pecksniff and Jonas are “unnatural” exaggerations, but that he amplifies them in order to show “how selfishness propagates itself; and to what a grim giant it may grow, from small beginnings” (717). Grotesque characters like Pecksniff and Jonas demonstrate how the network of prominence, which restricts access to the family wealth, motivates its nodes to manipulate information and produce their own fraudulent capital.

In the process these characters and their respective networks settle into oppositional and doubled relations with one another. Jonathan Arac, in *Commissioned Spirits*, locates *Martin Chuzzlewit* in the “anti-traditional tradition,” or “tradition of the new,” in which new works of fiction create themselves from old material that they eventually discard (71). By attempting to depict real life through “dead” literary forms, these works attempt to detach themselves from the

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<sup>9</sup>. This material derives from the preface to the 1982 Oxford Clarendon Edition of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. All subsequent quotations come from the 2009 Oxford edition.

traditional authority, even as they exploit its content and obscure the immediate lines of descent. In this same way, the affiliation network feeds parasitically off of the traditional network of prominence, even as it challenges those traditional forms by introducing a content-free model of power. Likewise, the American distribution network issues volumes of indiscriminate information, while proximity networks form capricious, arbitrary attachments.

The scholarship surrounding *Martin Chuzzlewit* focuses on the moral of selfishness and the prevalence of coincidental encounters. In *Other Dickens*, John Bowen explains that *Martin Chuzzlewit* portrays modern ethical practices as grossly unbalanced. The characters possess a paradoxical sense of self, or selfishness, that at once renders them unique and the same (206). Adam Grener defines selfishness as a dissociative posture that depends on anonymity and seeks to cultivate it where it does not exist. He contends that coincidental encounters help link the social world with the central theme of selfishness, but they also represent an inconsistency in the changing landscape in the nineteenth century: people are simultaneously grouped into small collectives and scattered throughout the social web (324-5). Indeed, Mr. Chuzzlewit and Pecksniff pretend to be strangers, while characters like Mark Tapley volitionally build new relationships. These practices draw our attention to the conflict between each character's sense of identity and the whole network, and in doing so, they focus our attention on the quality and context of local connections.

*Martin Chuzzlewit* is typically regarded as the turning point in Dickens's professional model. Prior to publishing this novel, Dickens administered his own novelistic network in the form of *Master Humphrey's Clock*, which he delivered in short weekly installments. Marcus uses the term "apprenticeship" to characterize the publication of *Barnaby Rudge*, a novel that

critiques the master-apprentice model and marks the end of his own apprenticeship as an editor and novelist. Arac claims that by keeping a steadier eye on the design of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens produced a better, more mature novel—one that serves as a template for his subsequent works (62). In the shift from the eighteenth-century historical novel to literary realism, Dickens deploys a more tractable narrative pattern, which successfully confronts the domestic and familial, the economic and professional, and the criminal levels of life.

Although the small-world phenomenon explains certain facets of the familial and affiliation models, it limits the interpretive potential of these frameworks. Whereas *Barnaby Rudge* depicted discrete small communities with distinct preferences and personalities, *Martin Chuzzlewit* represents a complex web of disparate, competing network models and displaced notions of authority. The connections within each model are at once suspended from Martin Chuzzlewit, the family patriarch and representative power, and rooted in selfish impulses and erroneous attachments. As Kadushin explains, if emergent networks emphasize revolution or individual entrepreneurship, then an expansive network in which every node reports to a single authority becomes inefficient; the network cannot be directly supervised, so nodes must learn to manipulate information and create their own social capital (*Understanding Social Networks* 94). With this concept in mind, this chapter seeks to understand the link between the network of prominence and three key emergent networks—affiliation, proximity, and distribution—and to show how the novel appraises each model. Dickens consistently represents prominence, the trait coveted by the entire network, as suspect to the extent that it is governed by wealth, and doing so, he invites readers to question the motive behind each attachment. At times, the novel appears to favor proximity networks and to work toward the recuperation of the traditional network,

while passing pejorative judgment upon the affiliation and distribution networks as too prone to fraud and erratic connections. Collectively, these networks demonstrate how Dickens encodes his moral vision in the structure and content of the novel, and they reveal his desire to recover the traditional networks that champion the values worth saving.

### **A Traditional Network of Prominence**

The ancestry outlined in the first chapter suggests that labels such as traditional or familial have the potential to obscure more than they reveal about the Chuzzlewit network. Beginning with the Creation story, the narrator recounts the lineage of the oldest and most illustrious family in British history, which demonstrates its “immense superiority” through “documentary evidence” (4). Their archive includes oral narratives, letters from anonymous family members, and “an Alps of testimony, beneath which the boldest scepticism should be crushed and beaten flat,” all meant to prove their prominence to the social world (5). Whether the family actually believes this narrative or not, it illustrates their investment in reputation, and its inconsistencies hint at a secret that, when revealed, will be the ruin of the family name. John Bowen reasons that the family “creates” its history through willful misunderstanding and the combined work of omission, invention, and fabrication (186). Indeed, the Chuzzlewits design an ancestry that links them to important historical figures and events, hoping that close proximity will boost their collective status, but their erroneous concept of history is important for other reasons. First, it demonstrates a commitment to achieving esteem by “strange and ordinary tricks,” like language, disinterest, and selective attachment, and doing so, it constructs the Chuzzlewits as “counterparts and prototypes” to the established network model (5). The family cultivates a disinterest in one another through language, while at the same time using this

disinterest to attach themselves to prominent nodes and to prove their worth in the social world. Kadushin explains that prominence is typically measured according to individual outputs and traits, meaning those marked by productivity or a particular quality tend to rank higher in the social network (“Power” 688). By claiming laudable traits and supplying evidence, the Chuzzlewits intend to buttress their reputation and prove their ability to affect widespread change. Additionally, the family incorporates information that “may be said” or “*has* been said” of them into its growing inventory of evidence, a tactic that illustrates their interest in content, however specious (4). The history presented in this initial chapter thus shows how the Chuzzlewits monitor and fashion their reputation to the extent that it becomes suspicious. They desire the degree of dignity that is usually assigned to traditional networks, yet the singularity with which they pursue prominence—and the wealth that supplies its central warrant—has already undermined their efforts.

### **The Affiliation Network**

Perhaps the best example of the affiliation model, Pecksniff uses language to secure prominent contacts and administer his own professional world. The second chapter finds Pecksniff supine before his doorstep, “having received from a sharp angle . . . that sort of knock on the head which lights up . . . an imaginary general illumination of very bright short sixes” (11). He remains in this position for a considerable time, staring placidly at his own street-door, which bears a “brazen” nameplate with his title, “Pecksniff, Architect” (11). In this scene, Dickens casts Pecksniff as a social climber from a social climbing family, caught in the act of climbing his own front steps and struck down by the sign that announces his occupation. The narrator notes that this door “would seem to have been more suggestive than street doors

usually are,” for Pecksniff “continue[s] to lie there, a rather lengthy and unreasonable time” (8-9). When his daughters eventually open the door to find him, he remains silent, forcing them to look “round him, and about him, and over him, and everywhere but at him” before finding him at the bottom of the steps (9). By reducing Pecksniff to a flat, inaudible figure, Dickens indicates that he follows the Chuzzlewit model of self-fashioning, complete with a misleading title and professional background. As Steven Marcus contends, Pecksniff creates his professional persona from a rhetorical style that is consistent with “the deceptiveness and ambiguity of his character” (217). His duplicity manifests most strongly in his interactions with potential apprentices, but it also appears in his pretense of architectural knowledge, his suspicious alliance with Mr. Chuzzlewit, and his bid for the family inheritance. In this particular scene, he misrepresents his professional expertise not only with his nameplate, but also by adding “And Land Surveyor” to his business cards (11). The narrator observes that, while nothing is known about Pecksniff’s architectural work, “it was generally understood that his knowledge of the science was almost awful in its profundity” (13). Based entirely upon his self-presentation, this reputation enables him to accept new pupils at a premium—connections that affirm his importance in the professional world.

In addition to using duplicitous language to construct a professional identity, Pecksniff uses “sounds and forms” to render himself more attractive to other nodes (11). For instance, his enemies assert, “there was never a more moral man than Mr. Pecksniff, especially in his conversation and correspondence,” and his unswerving confidence in prosodic meter “was the master-key to [his] character” (13). During their initial encounter, Mr. Chuzzlewit labels Pecksniff a “tool” for conspirators, whose attention to empty forms—connections without

substance—makes him an instrument of deceit. His enemies, too, deem him a fraud, likening him to Fortunatus's purse of kind sentiments, an empty copybook, and an old direction-post, "which is always telling the way to a place, and never goes there" (11). Together, these metaphors reveal that Pecksniff speaks in great volumes, but he lacks the content and quality demanded by the professional market. At first, the profusion of empty language works to conceal his professional deficits and to mark the "special Providence" that sanctions his work, but as the novel unfolds, his affiliates realize his limitations and break ties with him, sometimes at the expense of their own reputations (282). While giving Young Martin a tour of his home, Pecksniff states, "Various books you observe . . . connected with our pursuit. I have scribbled myself, but have not yet published. Be careful how you come up the stairs" (72). Here Pecksniff claims the authority of an expert, though he has not published, and he urges Young Martin to be careful in his ascent to prominence. This last statement seems disposable, but given the "Plans, elevations, [and] sections" devised in this home, it actually signals Martin's entry into a competitive market, one from which he was previously exempt (73). In this sense Pecksniff exploits both of the markers of his profession in his pursuit of prominence.

When compared to the traditional network, which at least has material content at its base, Pecksniff appears empty and fraudulent. As Bowen argues, Pecksniff embodies "the essentially fictional and performative conventions upon which capitalist activity rests," especially in his collection of premiums and rents (196). His familial connections even become mere professional contacts or "money relations" later in the novel (196). In the same vein, J. Hillis Miller posits a definitive link between language and currency in Dickens's later novels, stating that his comic characters, for whom language functions as a "counterfeit coin," parallel the vacuity of the

current social and economic milieu (74).<sup>10</sup> Like Pecksniff, these characters possess a remarkable capacity for speech, but they employ metaphors that bisect the material and immaterial to reveal what lies behind money and alleged expertise. At one point in the novel, Pecksniff insists that his “duty is to build, not speak; to act, not talk; to deal with marble, stone, and brick: not language. I am very much affected” (476). Pecksniff claims to build a reputation based on his professional merits, but his *affectation* places the emphasis on his words. In this sense, the qualities created through “sounds and forms” allow him to confirm his professional expertise and establish himself as a visible leader in the social network. This, in turn, allows him to market himself in such a way that attracts profitable connections, though he lacks intellectual content.

But Pecksniff’s commitment to reputation materializes most strongly not in his use of language but in his attitude toward commercial connections. At the end of Chapter Two, Pecksniff advertises for a new apprentice at his architectural firm, which Young Martin promptly joins. The position promises to combine “the advantages of a practical architectural education, with the comforts of a home, and the constant association with some (however humble their sphere, and limited their capacity) who are not unmindful of their moral responsibilities” (13). In other words, Pecksniff promotes an education built on close contact with the domestic and familial and with his most immediate connections, Tom Pinch and the two Miss Pecksniffs. This educational model demonstrates first how one achieves prominence through connection rather than productivity and second how conflating the domestic and professional spheres complicates the network culture. His apprentices, Tom and Martin, become the amateurs against which his professional prowess is measured and empowered, and perhaps more importantly, they uphold

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<sup>10</sup>. Miller claims that “the unreality of money” diffuses throughout the network in order to define its characters and dissolve them in its vacuity. The result is detachment from reality, which manifests most strongly in the metaphors used by the characters and narrator. p. 73

his reputation by producing new work. For instance, while Martin is in America, Pecksniff submits his design for the grammar-school as his own, accepting full credit from the Lord Mayor for creating “structures which shall last” (476). Although Martin witnesses this transaction and curses Pecksniff for stealing his plan, the public never learns the truth, and Pecksniff becomes an established leader in the field of architecture. According to Wasserman, nodes become prominent by investing in connections that make them visible to the entire social network. These connections usually occur at the point of transmission or reception, but professional network models also account for individual productivity (173). In this sense, Pecksniff advises his students to produce work that will benefit the community, which he then presents as proof that he understands the field of architecture. His students merely serve as an intermediate step in his path to prominence, one that is practical and can quickly enhance his social visibility.

Later in the novel, John Westlock reflects on his apprenticeship with Pecksniff, noting his readiness to bend in any direction to boost his status. During his time with Pecksniff, Westlock witnessed “the hypocrisy, the knavery, the meannesses, the false pretenses, [and] the lip services” used to form new alliances, and he mourns his contribution to the business (174). He then names Pecksniff “the most consummate scoundrel on the face of the earth” and voices his concern for those currently affiliated with his firm (174). Although Westlock understood Pecksniff during his apprenticeship, his inferior status kept him from publicizing his findings, but now that he holds a better economic position and is not “forced by circumstances” to be silent, he speaks freely against Pecksniff’s unscrupulous character, hoping to dissuade Tom and Martin from investing in his practice (175). As Westlock points out, Pecksniff selects apprentices based on their resources, and he often succeeds in siphoning off material from his

students because they need his protection. Martin confirms this theory, noting that Pecksniff expects him to “supply his defects,” and he then reveals his intent to profit from their relationship by leveraging his connection to Mr. Chuzzlewit (175). Although Pecksniff and Mr. Chuzzlewit combine against Martin and render this plan void, his intent suggests that he, too, understands the dynamic of the Chuzzlewit family network. Additionally, Westlock finds Pecksniff’s advertisement for a new apprentice, whom he labels “that fortunate youth, born under an auspicious star . . . whose parents, or guardians, are destined to be hooked by the advertisement” (174). Perhaps the most telling example of his professional practice, these advertisements articulate his claim to prominence and expertise—a call that is at once echoed and affirmed by his students and their families. His model of professionalism privileges links over expertise and intellectual content, and as Westlock and Martin indicate, he forms attachments that benefit his reputation.

Young Martin at once doubles and resists the model of affiliation sponsored by Pecksniff. Initially, Martin partners with Pecksniff because his grandfather, Mr. Chuzzlewit, disinherits him, and he suddenly needs to learn a skill. He confides to Tom Pinch that his grandfather harbors an “inveterate dislike” of Pecksniff, and he “had a natural desire to run as directly counter to all his opinions as he could” (86). Admittedly, Martin finds himself predisposed to professional life, but he primarily intends to rebel against the form and content of traditional authority. An affiliation with Pecksniff marks a break with his tyrannical grandfather, even as it tethers him to a new network model. Likewise, Pecksniff chooses Martin because Mr. Chuzzlewit disowns him, and he can profit from their differences. Despite knowing Pecksniff’s intent, Martin remains with him until his grandfather reappears and Pecksniff accuses him of forging a relationship

based on ““perverted statements, and on false pretenses”” (182). He is then free to travel to America with Mark Tapley, a tenant at the Blue Dragon who directly counters the selfishness of the affiliation and traditional models. This transition importantly occurs after Pecksniff pairs with Mr. Chuzzlewit, and he suddenly appears to hold an advantage in the social network. Pecksniff first uses this power to expel Martin and Tom, nodes that reflect and counter his social practice, respectively.

### **When Prominence and Affiliation Intersect**

In most iterations of the prominence network, the lines of connection emanate from a single node who represents the mindset of the entire community. This person does not necessarily hold power in the traditional sense, but establishes the shared pattern of communication, one that is predicated on centrality and trust. As noted in the original Preface, Old Martin Chuzzlewit serves as this figure in the traditional network of prominence. His constituents scatter in “small parties” throughout the network and often settle into “unfrequented places, where there was no outlet, and where their pursuer kept eddying round and round at his pleasure” (8). Equated with the “ancient Dragon,” Mr. Chuzzlewit embodies a conservative model of prominence, which mistrusts the affiliation model because it lacks independent content (23). The wind that leveled Pecksniff in the second chapter embodies tradition as it undercuts an unbalanced, content-free network. It continues to blow until the entire family descends on the Blue Dragon, expecting to confront their imperious patriarch, Mr. Chuzzlewit.

Reputation plays a key role in the affiliation and traditional networks, particularly as the two models interact. Since Mr. Chuzzlewit arrives at the Blue Dragon unexpectedly and requires immediate medical attention, Mrs. Lupin dispatches a messenger for Mr. Pecksniff, “a learned

man who could bear a great deal of responsibility, and a moral man who could administer a world of comfort to a troubled mind” (25). In this instance, Pecksniff’s reputation grants him first access to a prominent relative, whose presence still remains a secret to the rest of the family. His relationship with Mr. Chuzzlewit is indeterminate at this time, but his centrality in the network is enough to warrant his presence at the inn. The narrator observes that an “air of mystery” surrounds the Blue Dragon as Mr. Chuzzlewit and his attendant, Mary, retreat to an upstairs room, an act that demonstrates their disinterest and renders subsequent connections more meaningful (25). Adam Greener reasons that this coincidental encounter between Pecksniff and Mr. Chuzzlewit “initiates the major action of the novel, but it also displays how selfishness depends on anonymity and attempts to cultivate it where it does not exist” (329). Indeed, Mr. Chuzzlewit consciously removes himself from his relatives and creates the illusion of estrangement, but his connection with Pecksniff appears less random when one considers their respective reputations. Mr. Chuzzlewit occupies the center of the network, and his visibility is predetermined by the framing material. Pecksniff constructs a reputation that counters the traditional concept of prominence and sets him at odds with Mr. Chuzzlewit. He only becomes visible by using and dismissing other nodes, while his traditional counterpart, Mr. Chuzzlewit, maintains his reputation by cultivating a disinterest in certain family affairs. In short, Pecksniff becomes visible through an indiscriminate proliferation of new ties, and Mr. Chuzzlewit becomes even more visible by withdrawing from the spotlight.

Marked by animosity and selfishness, the initial exchange between Mr. Chuzzlewit and Pecksniff uncovers more layers of the traditional and affiliation networks. When Pecksniff first appears at the Blue Dragon and identifies himself as a cousin, Mr. Chuzzlewit voices his

contempt for the affiliation network: “His first words! In his very first words he asserts his relationship! I knew he would; they all do it! Near or distant, blood or water, it’s all one . . . lying, and false-witnessing, the sound of any word of kindred opens before me” (34). With the greeting “My good cousin,” Pecksniff intimates kinship and familiarity, which Mr. Chuzzlewit reads as an attempt to secure an attachment (34). Kadushin explains that nodes are more likely to seek asymmetric ties—that is, ties that are not reciprocal—when these attachments denote rank or promise to deliver new information (88). In this way, Pecksniff attempts a connection with Mr. Chuzzlewit because he embodies traditional prominence, but Mr. Chuzzlewit knows that Pecksniff, like his other greedy relatives, is motivated by “treachery, deceit, and low design” (37). Although Pecksniff insists that he intended to comfort a stranger and that Mr. Chuzzlewit should regard him as such, his face discloses his plan to profit from his cousin’s misfortune: since Mr. Chuzzlewit takes no pleasure in collecting or hoarding resources, Pecksniff believes he should transfer them to someone who could bear them better, but as Mr. Chuzzlewit points out, wealth breeds avarice and contempt within familial networks. Clearly, Mr. Chuzzlewit recognizes his prominence in the social network and sets boundaries between himself and his mercenary relatives.

Meanwhile, the entire family descends on the Blue Dragon and demonstrates its capacity for selfishness. After a period of three days, in which he haunted the Dragon “at all times and seasons,” Pecksniff returns to the Dragon, hoping to “quiet his mind by assuring himself that the hardhearted patient was going on well” (47). Instead, he discovers Montague Tigg in the stairwell and learns that “the whole family is pouring down to this place” with one purpose in mind: to overturn the one who monopolizes the family wealth (47). Although Tigg is not a

Chuzzlewit and does not have a stake in this battle, he reasons, ““The time has come when individual jealousies must be forgotten . . . and union must be made against the common enemy. When the common enemy is routed, you will all set up for yourselves again . . . and nobody will be in a worse position than before”” (47). The family typically exists in a state of disunion, connected only by blood and their interest in money, but Tigg asserts that the illusion of structural cohesion, rather than real, substantive connections, is enough to subvert the traditional network. In the meantime, Mr. Chuzzlewit remains in his upstairs room, “refusing to receive all letters, messages, and parcels; and obstinately declining to treat with anybody,” except Mrs. Lupin and Mary (49). By limiting his sphere to two non-partisan nodes, Mr. Chuzzlewit ensures that his social climbing relatives will not profit from his present misfortune. Kadushin explains that when prominent nodes decline attachment, the inferior, attachment-seeking nodes usually respond in one of three ways: they remain unattached, sort themselves into cliques, or form symmetric dyads (84). Even in its most unified state, the family divides itself into small collectives who “were perpetually encountering each other in divers parts of the neighbourhood” (49). For example, while the Spottletoes are “mounting guard” at the Dragon, Anthony and Jonas Chuzzlewit join Tigg and Chevy Slyme at The Half Moon and Seven Stars, an obscure alehouse adjacent to the bustling Dragon (48). In this way, the family unites under a common interest while remaining markedly separate from one another.

The skewed pattern of attachment and separation in this scene reveals that the family maintains a tedious balance of passive and active connections. In a matter of days, “the whole family sat down before the Blue Dragon and formally invested it,” leaving Mr. Chuzzlewit “in a state of siege” (49). While he remains firmly planted in his room, his family quarrels and

bandies names and insults until they finally unite in “mutual aggravation” and plan to hold a council in Pecksniff’s home (49). Tigg explains the logic behind this sudden assembly and passive approach: ““steps must be taken to prevent his disappearing again; and if possible, to counteract the influence which is exercised over him now, by his designing favorite. Everybody who is interested feels it”” (47). By this account the family uses Mr. Chuzzlewit to air their grievances with the traditional network model, while at the same time seeking affiliation with him. With the exception of Pecksniff, they simply inhabit the same space as Mr. Chuzzlewit, without actively working to alter their society. During this time, Pecksniff grows increasingly interested in the assembly and performs “a kind of moist meekness” to soften the “jealous, stony-hearted, distrustful company, who were all shut up in themselves” (50). Pecksniff’s relatives resent this performance and subsequently align him with Tigg, the parasitic, disreputable friend of Chevy Slyme. Pecksniff later resolves to be “a messenger of peace,” but Mr. Chuzzlewit and a select few relatives have already undermined his tactics (49). Mr. Spottletoe even claims that it would be better for the crowd to disperse now than to fall under the leadership of Pecksniff. Nevertheless, Pecksniff delights in the crowd because they ““have no reserve before each other, but are appearing freely in our own characters”” (52). This statement, coupled with his early response to the crowd, suggests that Pecksniff actively crafts his reputation while his relatives simply orbit a prominent relative. When they discover that Mr. Chuzzlewit escaped, they naturally suspect that Pecksniff assisted him, since he continually fashions himself as a benevolent intermediary.

The lines of tradition and affiliation become even more entangled at Anthony and Jonas’s firm in London. Located “somewhere behind the Post-office” and filled with “fragments of old

patterns,” the old house serves as both their primary residence and storefront (153). The men appear to conduct all of their business inside its “narrow limits,” and evidence from their prior transactions, quite literally, spills from every corner of the house (153). Even the bedrooms are filled with “files of moth eaten letters” and “a chaos of boxes and old papers” meant for another time, and the family owns more counting house stools than comfortable chairs for “reflection and social enjoyment” (153). In short, Anthony and Jonas replace the typical notions of family life with relics from prior business arrangements and network patterns, and they order their house for negotiation rather than domestic comfort. Further, Anthony only partners with Jonas because he is “the only creature to whom he was linked with long ties of association” and with whom he shares a business model (158). When Jonas outlines the rules of a bargain, “Do others, for they would do you,” Anthony heartily concurs and asserts his parentage, claiming, ““your own son, Mr. Chuzzlewit!”” (158). Anthony and Jonas defend their partnership and business practices with a fraudulent economic principle, rather than familial obligation. In a world overrun by financial interests, the men at once assist and compete with each other, a tactic that soon compels Jonas to dispense with his father.

In addition, Anthony and Jonas obscure the lines of prominence and affiliation by employing close friends and relatives. For instance, during a tour of the firm, Jonas introduces his cousins to Mr. Chuffey, the ““perverse old file”” who manages the company records (156). Like other artifacts in the house, Mr. Chuffey sits quietly in a corner, “frozen up—if any term expressive of such a vigorous process can be applied to him—until he was again thawed for a moment by a word or touch from Anthony” (158). These descriptions not only work to personify the family records, but they also imply that information remains inactive until called upon by a

prominent figure. In this instance, Anthony occupies the prominent position and can solicit information and responses that are unavailable to his son. When Jonas asserts that all other business precepts are counterfeits, the narrator claims that Mr. Chuffey would be the only one to dispute these terms, should he ever speak (158). Although Mr. Chuffey appears not to hear, see, feel, or think, this statement indicates that he understands and stores his surroundings. As mentioned, prominence is typically measured by outputs, and at this point in the novel, Mr. Chuffey has yet to produce anything; he simply exists as an extension of the house.

When Anthony Chuzzlewit unexpectedly dies, the network model shifts from the traditional patriarchy to pure affiliation. Chapter Eighteen opens with an account of the emergent network structure:

Change begets change. Nothing propagates so fast. If a man habituated to a narrow circle of cares and pleasures, out of which he seldom travels, step beyond it, though never for a brief space, his departure from the monotonous scene on which he has been an actor of importance, would seem to be the signal for instant confusion. As if, in the gap he had left, the wedge of change were driven to the head, rending what was a solid mass to fragments. (255)

In years past, the Chuzzlewits embodied an unfaltering network of prominence, albeit one based on a dubious family history. Its nodes inhabited a small, tightly-knit web that, collectively, worked toward maintaining its prominent reputation. But when Mr. Chuzzlewit disinherits Young Martin and voids the patrilineal inheritance, he weakens the entire network system. Kadushin reasons that removing important actors or paths from a hierarchal web has the potential to destroy its foundation. Although a traditional kinship network like the Chuzzlewit family is typically egalitarian, the presence of a definite patriarch and inheritance line creates a pyramidal power structure (132). Erasing Martin from the family line produces a wave of dissent, which begins at the Blue Dragon and continues through the end of the novel.

The family dynamic also shifts dramatically when Anthony dies and frees the dominant patriarchal position at their firm. True to form, Pecksniff appears at the Chuzzlewit house moments before Mr. Chuffey finds Anthony and screams, signaling to the entire house that its very framework has been compromised. Pecksniff uses this opportunity to connect with a fellow professional, the doctor who reminds Mr. Chuffey that he was ““not connected by ties of blood with our deceased friend”” (279). In this scene, Mr. Chuffey and his uncouth nurse, Mrs. Gamp, are particularly threatening because they know too much about the family business. Mrs. Gamp even asserts that Mr. Chuffey pretends to be ignorant, and she ““cannot suffer Spies to be set over [her]”” in the Chuzzlewit house (273). Even without a direct link to the family, Mrs. Gamp comprehends its structure, down to its seemingly innocuous friend, Mr. Chuffey. Dickens then juxtaposes Pecksniff with Mrs. Gamp and the undertaker, who deems this the most impressive, ““calculated”” case he has seen in his professional experience (271). Once again an outlier detects the Chuzzlewit network design by interacting with a few key nodes. This section highlights several key aspects of the changing network, beginning with the end of Young Martin’s selfishness as he departs for America and culminating in the death of a traditional father-son partnership. It also demonstrates that the family relies extensively on outliers who have the potential to reveal their secrets and unravel their collective and individual reputations. It also focuses our attention on Pecksniff as a parasitic node who preys on the broken links in the prominence network.

In a chapter entitled “Secret Service,” the different network models intersect, and both the prominence and affiliation networks become suspect. Tigg hires Nadgett, a virtuous and methodical private investigator, to spy on Jonas, and he learns, through a disclosure that mirrors

the serialization process, that Jonas murdered his father. While walking to Tigg's house, Nadgett crosses paths with Tom Pinch, who happens to be thinking of Jonas because he is "prominently connected" with his agenda, as well (505). That Nadgett and Tom share a prominent connection indicates that the disparate network models are more intricately connected than they first appear. Both men participate in a proximity network, though Nadgett typically remains in the shadows, but they are connected in material ways to separate iterations of the affiliation model. Tom once served as an apprentice to Pecksniff, who pursues a connection with Mr. Chuzzlewit, and Nadgett works for Tigg, who seeks both an alliance with and dark secrets about Jonas. This places them both at a remove from the prominence network, while at the same time working in its service because both harbor information that would destroy the affiliation model. Nadgett later reveals his information about Jonas in a numbered list, fearing that someone may be listening. In other words, Nadgett wants to withhold private, valuable content, rather than market it to every information pathway, or "arrow," in the entire network (505). Selective distribution, backed by real content, becomes another means of asserting prominence in the novel, and sometimes, in the case of Montague Tigg, real content has a sinister quality.

When Jonas teams with Slyme and Tigg Montague in their new, content-free enterprise, he expects to profit from their investors—an inversion of the affiliation model that is mirrored by Montague Tigg's transposed name. Tigg, however, has already learned about Jonas's crimes, and he claims to reveal the content of his own character, "in the spirit of confidence" which he hopes prevails between them (543). He then intimates, "perhaps there is something in it; perhaps there is nothing," a statement that hints at the secret he knows about Jonas and his fraudulent marketing scheme (543). Later, Tigg informs Jonas, "everybody profits by the

indiscretion of his neighbor; and the people of the best repute, the most” (543). Not only does Tigg intend to capitalize on his immediate contacts, but he also plans to use the information he has on Jonas to lure prominent investors (544). He insists that this plan works to their shared advantage, “not my own,” and he promises to exploit his information about Anthony’s murder for profit (542). When Jonas commands Tigg to be silent and keep his information private, Tigg asserts, “My discoveries being published, would be like many other men’s discoveries in this honest world; of no further use to me” (543). As Welsh contends, Tigg understands the paradoxical value of concealment, and he knows that profiting from this knowledge requires him to symbolically mobilize the support of legitimate contacts (50). His blackmail attempt ultimately fails because his network lacks substantive content, and because he partners with Jonas, who eventually murders him to hide his secret. Tigg later dreams that Nadgett and “a man with a bloody smear on his head” demand to know Jonas’s name, and he wakes frightened and paranoid (556). It appears that the secret purchased and used to manipulate Jonas actually owns Tigg and works to unravel his carefully constructed character.

### **The Proximity Paradox**

The family maintains a number of subsidiary ties who connect them to remote parts of the social network. While Pecksniff is in London, Tigg interrupts Martin and Tom to request a loan for his friend Chevy Slyme, who is currently detained at the Dragon for his bill. Though Pecksniff previously denied Slyme money, claiming that even eighteen pence would be objectionable, Tigg insists that he planned to settle their debt, and he implores Martin and Tom to provide the money. He then cites Mark Tapley as evidence that Pecksniff and Mrs. Lupin sent him, but Mark appears largely disinterested in their financial matters. He affirms that Chevy

Slyme amassed a three-pound debt at the tavern, but claims that he and Mrs. Lupin are more concerned with his unshakably felonious ways. Martin then appeals to Tom: ““I am ashamed to say—that this Mr. Slyme is a relation of mine, of whom I have never heard anything pleasant; and that I don’t want him here just now, and think he would be cheaply gotten rid of . . . You haven’t enough money to pay this bill, I suppose”” (94). Besides introducing Tigg and Slyme, this passage illuminates a recurrent pattern of positions and relationships present in the Chuzzlewit network. First, it reiterates their proclivity for dishonesty and mistrust, and it demonstrates how they manipulate people and information. Knowing that Tom respects Pecksniff, Tigg refers to him as ““my friend Pecksniff”” and compliments the ““industrious”” work being conducted in his home (93). He then consults Tom’s trusted friend Mark in order to boost their confidence in him and create ties of social responsibility. According to Greener, Mark exudes a neighborliness that forges bonds of social obligation, even as the family selfishly practices estrangement and disconnection. He contends, “Mark’s neighborly assertion of *connection in spite of anonymity* provides a stark contrast to the selfish assertion of *disconnection because of anonymity*, a difference further emphasized when the purportedly anonymous turn out to be known” (303). In this particular scene, Mark unites the familiar and unfamiliar worlds of the novel, and he introduces the concept of connection through proximity and necessity. Even though Martin and Slyme are related, Tom does not know either of them, and he must decide whether or not to form an attachment in the name of Pecksniff and Martin. Loaning Slyme money means they will interact in the future and that all of them—Pecksniff, Martin, Tom, and Mark—are now affiliated with the swindling Chevy Slyme.

During this encounter, Tigg and Slyme emphasize the pyramidal network structure created by Pecksniff, one that seems to replicate that of the traditional model. As Tigg enters the house, he observes the type of business conducted at Pecksniff's home: "There is at this present moment in this very place, a perfect constellation of talent and genius, who is involved . . . in a situation as tremendous, perhaps, as the social intercourse of the nineteenth century will readily admit of" (91). He then introduces his friend Slyme as "an individual, of whom it may be said, in the language of a Poet, that nobody but himself can in any way come up to him" (91). In aligning Slyme with a literary form and situating him outside of the network, Tigg indicates that he occupies a liminal space between the traditional family structure and the entrepreneurial alliance model. He is still very much a part of the Chuzzlewit family, but he believes himself entitled to a higher function than Mr. Chuzzlewit allows. Slyme claims that society—meaning his relatives—conspires against him and impedes his social development. He then asserts his prominence over Martin and Tom, insisting that to be "obliged to two architect's apprentices. Fellows who measure earth with iron chains, and build houses like bricklayers" is somehow beneath his station (96). Here Slyme implies that he not only deserves greater social esteem, but also that he is above his industrious counterparts who produce real, substantive content. This statement also indicates that Tom and Martin belong to a particular realm of the network, akin to a small community that controls the production and distribution of material content. In this model Pecksniff supervises his apprentices and circulates the contents of their work, occasionally without their consent. That Slyme, "the most literary man alive," observes this pattern suggests that he adheres to a similar business strategy and will exploit those who invest in his scheme (96). Before he and Slyme depart, Tigg adds Tom Pinch's loan to his memorandum in order to

make it more official and business-like. Perhaps more than most, this scene illustrates the intersection of financial, professional, and familial worlds. A member of the family appears and expects to borrow money from Pecksniff and ends up with a loan from his apprentice, who feels obligated to please his master, professional affiliate, and honorable friend.

The prominence and affiliation models intersect in London, as Pecksniff travels to meet Mr. Chuzzlewit at Todgers's Commercial Boarding-House. While boarding a coach, Pecksniff encounters Jonas and Anthony Chuzzlewit, the latter of whom accuses him swindling Mr. Chuzzlewit. Anthony admits that their entire family is hypocritical, but ““the annoying quality in *you*, is that you never have a confederate or partner in your juggling”” (105). Unlike Jonas and Anthony, Mark and Martin, and Tigg and Slyme, Pecksniff remains relatively unattached, and this, Anthony says, ““would deceive everybody, even those who practice the same art”” (105). Distance and disinterest allow Pecksniff to become a better impostor, one who successfully attaches himself to prominent nodes. In the affiliation model, visibility and prominence are intertwined, and Pecksniff achieves both through selective partnerships and, as Anthony points out, ““a tacit understanding”” with his friends (105). Although Pecksniff does not seem to invest in substantive relationships, his hidden connection to Mr. Chuzzlewit bears a modicum of content, most of which pertains to their shared link, Young Martin. Pecksniff parts with Anthony and Jonas after this conversation, but their scepticism about him continues throughout the novel.

When Pecksniff finally arrives at Todgers's, he finds a small circle linked by knowledge and geographical proximity. The narrator locates Todgers's in the dim, labyrinthine recesses of modern London, where men frequently wander ““through lanes and byways, and court-yards, and passages”” and ““never once emerged upon anything that might be reasonably called a

street” (112). While the house itself is dark and mysterious, except to a chosen few, the narrator asserts that London deserved Todgers’s and was “qualified to be on terms of close relationship with the hundreds and thousands of the odd family to which [it] belonged” (112). In a sense, the house resides in a sprawling metropolitan network that both represents the organization of society and works to integrate apparently disconnected travelers into the larger social framework (Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks* 125). Kadushin explains that nodes may be linked because they belong to a particular demographic or are geographic neighbors, but these connections have the potential to be multidimensional. Nodes that perform the same professional role may also share interests, while others simply occupy the same space (127). Todgers’s embodies this multilayered network of proximity, especially as its “chosen few” tenants share certain traits and interests. The narrator puts it this way: “To tell of half the queer old taverns that had a drowsy and secret existence near Todgers’s would fill a goodly book; while a second volume no less capacious might be devoted to an account of the quaint old guests who frequented their dimly lit parlours” (114). The house inhabits a world of nodes and houses that, in their attention to society and work, embody literary content and form. Each boarder takes a particular “turn,” which makes him an apt instrument of connection, and when fully assembled, the union would seem to have a natural capacity for storytelling, much like the Maypole in *Barnaby Rudge*. Limited by birth and social station, these men embody the private life, and as Marcus keenly observes, they endeavor to cultivate their own social capital and “respect each other’s oddities” (259). The presentations listed in this chapter demonstrate that Todgers’s links men from various backgrounds and helps them stabilize their identities. It is especially surprising that Pecksniff and Mr. Chuzzlewit choose to meet at Todgers’s since it represents both

an older network model and the highly transitive network of proximity; however, the complex structure of the Todgers's society enables them to surpass their formal kinship connection and to aim straight for the content: revenge against Young Martin.

Three days after arriving in London, Pecksniff sends a warm and respectful letter to his elder cousin, who responds much later with a visit to Todgers's. Mr. Chuzzlewit apologizes for the nature of their last meeting and requests that Pecksniff become his ally "by ties of Interest and Expectation" (137). He emphasizes these last words before asking Pecksniff to administer "the very worst species of meanness, dissimulation, and subtlety, on the right heads" (137). By agreeing to these terms, Pecksniff tethers his social identity to Mr. Chuzzlewit and enters into a dyadic business partnership based on trust and mutual obligation. An attachment to Mr. Chuzzlewit promises to supply greater security and esteem than his current business, so Pecksniff assents to his demands, including terminating Martin and Tom Pinch. Additionally, this relationship implies moral and economic dimensions that are jointly determined by and diffused across the familial network. Andrea Larson contends that personal history shapes the context for new partnerships by reducing the risk and creating better conditions for exchange (78). In this instance, Mr. Chuzzlewit finds Pecksniff more consistent than his overtly rapacious family, noting his apparent disinterest in the family squabble. He then recognizes that Pecksniff has recently taken a new inmate who must be dismissed at once. As Larson explains, an implicit obligation to integrity and mutual assistance lends structure to business partnerships, especially when reputation is at stake (84). Mr. Chuzzlewit uses his own reputation to compel Pecksniff to discharge Martin, which he does in exchange for social prominence.

## **The American Distribution Network**

The alliance between Mr. Chuzzlewit and Pecksniff presses Martin to travel to America with his magnanimous counterpart, Mark Tapley. While aboard the *Screw*, Mark befriends his shipmates and helps them complete various tasks, like cooking and tending to the sick. Martin remains markedly detached from this community, hoping “to conceal [his] circumstances and [himself], and not to arrive in a new world badged and ticketed as an utterly poverty stricken man” (217). This selfish posture effectively demonstrates the distinct influence of the traditional network, particularly as Martin works to uphold his former reputation in a new environment. At least in this chapter, the novel appears to favor networks of proximity and need, and it hails Mark Tapley as an “established authority,” capable of leading his shipmates through considerable hardship (217). Unlike Martin, Mark is not privileged to forge connections based on more than proximity, and he must determine to be jolly despite his limited domain. Additionally, Mark embraces the shift from the traditional network to the “Land of Liberty,” thinking its systems “unquestionably had some advantages over the *Dragon*” (218). He envisions America as an opportunity to create an identity based on personal traits rather than wealth or connections, and he continues to hold this viewpoint throughout their journey, even as his investment fails and Martin falls ill. The network of proximity present on the *Screw* thus embodies a key transition point from the British models of connection to the American distribution network.

When Martin and Mark finally arrive in America, they encounter a network based on production and distribution rather than connections or tradition. The bustling American press greets Martin and Mark as they disembark from the *Screw*, and a fellow passenger comments

twice that “it is in such enlightened means that the bubbling passions of our country find a vent” (220). Both the journal titles, which range from the New York Family Spy to the Rowdy Journal, and the headlines speak volumes about their scandalous content, and their writers and editors appear similarly audacious and immoral. In particular, Colonel Diver, editor of the Rowdy Journal, asserts that his paper is the “organ of our aristocracy in this city,” and it draws influence from “intelligence and virtue. And of their necessary consequences—dollars” (222). This distribution model counters the traditional concept of prominence through inherited wealth and reputation by building a hierarchy of information. The American network appears more interested in information than private circumstances or connections, and it markets immorality (222). This notion at once reveals their national chauvinism and inspires Martin to part with tradition and become a “great capitalist” in the American information economy (222).

Martin and Mark soon learn that the Rowdy Journal publishes forged content, a practice it claims to have inherited from England. Before Martin enters the house, he finds that the Rowdy Journal boasts its reputation in “great characters” outside the front door (224). Like Mr. Pecksniff, the Journal uses language as a tool for asserting prominence in the American distribution circuit, but it at least supports its reputation in print. Mr. Jefferson Brick contends that the Rowdy Journal and its affiliates comprise “the well of Truth, whose waters are black from being composed of black printers’ ink, but are quite clear enough for [his] country to behold the shadow of her destiny reflected in” (226). Though intended to promote the Journal as an authoritative voice, this statement reveals that the American press generally, and the Rowdy Journal in particular, route public opinion through a murky information channel.

The American newspaper industry obscures political and social information in the same way that Pecksniff employs incoherent metaphors, and also like Pecksniff, they work as an independent agency. When Martin asks about their competition, Colonel Diver claims that even they buy his papers “by hundreds of thousands” because “we are a smart people here, and can appreciate smartness” (227). Martin then inquires whether “smartness [is] American for forgery,” to which the Colonel responds, “it’s American for a good many things you call by other names,” but “whatever name we choose to employ . . . the art of forgery was not invented here . . . we got it all from the old country” (227). Colonel Diver insists that the American press adheres to a British network model, but as Martin understands, they depend exclusively on the credulity of outsiders. By this account the American press copies and disseminates the form and content of its British counterpart. Dickens employs this model as an example of a faulty network practice, based on cheaply-printed, derivative content.

The American distribution network counters the traditional model by issuing an indiscriminate mass of fraudulent information. Brick explains that in America, “whatever the chance contributions that fell into the slow cauldron of their talk, they made the gruel thick and slab with dollars. Men were weighed by their dollars . . . life was auctioneered, appraised, put up, and knocked down for its dollars” (235). In other words, the American press exists in an information economy that is more interested in quantity than quality, and this pattern corrupts readers and makes them even more immoral. General Fladdock equates the “limited diffusion” of the British market with a game, which divides “the human race into court cards and plain cards, of every denomination, into clubs, diamonds, and spades—everything but hearts” (248). By this account the British information network favors a particular class and thus limits

imagination and moral dignity. Unlike the reprobate American writers who publish forged information, the General asserts that the British monopolize information in such a way that bankrupts public knowledge.

Once integrated into the fraudulent distribution network, Mark and Martin invest in Eden, thinking the American market will enhance their social esteem. The American merchants advertise Eden as an “architectural city” (307) and “terrestrial paradise,” (442) filled with “a vast bond of equal love and truth” (309). Martin proposes that he and Mark invest in Eden as “partners and friends,” rather than as master and servant, and he submits “Chuzzlewit and Tapley” as a potential company title. Mark naturally relinquishes his right to prominence, allowing Martin to adopt “Martin Chuzzlewit Architect and Co.” as their official brand (302). In the process, Martin establishes his own hierarchal network in America, which holds Mark under its authority and, in essence, compels him to be jolly. In a matter of moments, Martin becomes both a landed proprietor and the frontman for their business, and his attitude toward both reveals that he retains his selfish posture in the American framework. When Martin and Mark finally visit their land, they discover that Eden is actually an untenanted swamp, “choked with slime and matted growth” (325). In keeping with his character, Mark remains confident in their enterprise and must support Martin, who feels the brunt of their failure and instantly falls ill. Mark then rescues Martin from physical death and the selfishness that led him to America and Eden in the first place. It is particularly significant that Martin nearly dies without a connection to the British network system and that he now apprehends the “blemish” in his character: selfishness (452). The narrator asserts that, together, Eden and Mark Tapley had “brought him down” from his selfish posture and “raised him up” to return to the traditional network (453).

### **Restoring the Network of Prominence**

Free from the weight of selfishness, Martin returns to England and resumes his seat in the network of prominence. Upon their return, Martin dispatches a letter to Mr. Chuzzlewit, which Pecksniff promptly tears into small pieces. Martin later returns to Pecksniff's house, bypasses the servant-girl who answers the door, and enters the parlor where Pecksniff and his grandfather assemble. The narrator claims that, "in the swift instant of their mutual recognition," Mr. Chuzzlewit buries his face in his hands, as if reminded of the disunion of the family network (567). Watching his grandfather, Martin feels the weight of his rebellion, "this buttress of a ruined tower he had built up in the time gone by," and he mourns his detachment from the family line (568). During this conference, Pecksniff protects his prominence by guiding Mr. Chuzzlewit's interpretation of Martin's apology. At this point, Mr. Chuzzlewit allows himself to be manipulated by Pecksniff, and he dismisses Martin from the house.

Incriminating information motivates the entire family to gather at Jonas's house and to reconsider their respective positions in the familial network. Both Mr. Chuffey and Lewsome, the neighborhood apothecary, accuse Jonas of poisoning his father, which Mr. Nadgett later confirms. In Chapter 46, Mrs. Gamp reports that Chuffey confided "the awfullest things" to her, and that he mysteriously inquired, "who's lying dead upstairs" (610). Later, in Chapter 52, after being rebuffed by Jonas for speaking nonsense, Chuffey becomes more a more cogent and unified witness, insisting, "I am silent, but I—I—I can speak," and "I am strong enough to cry out to the neighbours" (662). Interrupted by a break in monthly numbers, this disclosure reveals that the novel participates in reserve alongside its fictional networks. From one number to the next, the narrator unveils information about the murders of Anthony and Tigg and even the

financial plot, which underpins the different network connections. When Nadgett finally corroborates these testimonies with objective evidence, the narrator claims that “the game was up,” and the new network structure, which Jonas intended to build through murder and fraud, has been compromised (672). Nadgett then relates his evidence in a careful sequence, and Jonas is convicted and killed without a trial.

Those classified as ethical proximate contacts—Nadgett, Chuffey, Tom, and Mrs. Gamp—offer keen insight into the machinations of rival family members, which awakens Mr. Chuzzlewit and causes him to understand that Selfishness, “with its long train of suspicions, lusts, deceits, and all their growing consequences; was the root of the vile tree” (679). At this moment, Pecksniff feels especially threatened by Nadgett and his relatives, and he accuses them of being vultures who feed of Mr. Chuzzlewit in ““carnivorous enjoyment”” (687). He then approaches Mr. Chuzzlewit with outstretched arms, an act that makes literal the concept of affiliation, and in the final act of leveling, Mr. Chuzzlewit strikes him to the ground. Martin is then restored to his place in the traditional network, and only those untouched by selfishness remain in the family circuit.

Returning to the traditional model in the end suggests that Dickens favors tradition when it distances itself from damaging external influences and when it monitors its own behavior and contributes productively to society. The final chapter indicates that Mr. Chuzzlewit provides for Tom Pinch and restores the ethical practices of his network. The traditional framework thus rises above its rivals when it sponsors quality content and honorable practices.

## CONCLUSION

In *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Dickens employs the community patterns identified by contemporary network theorists in ways that signify in relation to Victorian institutions of publication and authorship. The economics of the Victorian publishing industry—especially the industry surrounding these novels—may be easily linked with the social and economic history of the period, including the human, institutional, and informational dynamics of production and distribution. Dickens understood that publication format was as crucial to his success as content, and his experiments with literary periodicals, the newspaper industry, and the three-volume novel play out in his fictional networks. While *Barnaby Rudge* portrays the publishing industry as a small world with models of traditional authority, apprenticeship, and egalitarian diffusion, *Martin Chuzzlewit* routes content and connection through an inheritance plot, which divides the network into competing entities. Reading Dickens through the lens of social network theory offers clues into his views on novelization and authorial power, and it also suggests that the modern information technologies that revolutionized Victorian publication practices actually contributed to fraud.

Born out of a copyright conflict with Bentley, *Master Humphrey's Clock* allowed Dickens to administer his own small world through stories that would someday exist apart from the machinery in which they originated. In a letter to Forster, Dickens insists that he will conduct the entire periodical himself:

Nobody but myself would ever pursue *these ideas*, but I must have assistance of course, and there must be some contents of a different kind. Their general nature might be agreed upon beforehand, but I should stipulate that this assistance is chosen solely by me, and that the contents of every number are as much under my own control, and subject to as little interference, as those of a number of *Pickwick* or *Nickleby*. (House 564)

By declaring himself the lone contributor to *Clock*, Dickens asserts his prominence in a professional network and ensures that his content will be printed in an efficient manner. Dickens intended to counter the fraudulent practices of his former publishers by rejecting their editorial control and creating his own network. When paired with his plan to serialize *Clock* in England and America simultaneously, this impulse toward control foregrounds a professional model that had been implicit in his practice since his days as a journalist: authorship as a collaborative enterprise (Patten, *Charles Dickens and "Boz"* 253). Dickens selected Chapman and Hall to publish *Clock*, and he relied on his favorite illustrators, George Cattermole and Hablot Knight Brown, for the sketches that accompanied each number. His letters to Cattermole, in particular, indicate that he determined the subject of each sketch, down to the expressions on the characters' faces, but despite his effort to assert local control, he shared the copyright with Chapman and Hall, who could discontinue the *Clock* after one year (Patten, *Dickens and His Publishers* 107). This short-lived, collaborative enterprise set the foundation for Dickens's future editorial work, including his next novel and subsequent periodicals.

The small community in *Master Humphrey's Clock* effectively illustrates the practice of serialization. In the opening number, we are introduced to Master Humphrey and his group of friends, who gather regularly to read material that they previously deposited in an old clock-case. With the exception of the deaf gentleman, who remains anonymous throughout the text, each character contributes stories to their little archive and reads them to the group. This practice is

especially significant because it mirrors the input and output of a literary community and, as indicated by the clock, is regulated by time. Each time the group assembles, they trade short narratives—some independent and some continued from previous weeks—from the clock-case and collect new manuscripts. Admission to this community is predicated on contribution, and once initiated, the characters must continue to produce new “chapters” for the little club.

Although Master Humphrey and his friends do not introduce *Barnaby Rudge*, their habits of production and consumption provide the meta-narrative through which we are meant to interpret the small world.

Read against the background and frame story of *Clock*, the small world in *Barnaby Rudge* articulates Dickens’s frustration with the publishing industry in the 1830s. The apprenticeship model, embodied by Sim Tappertit and the ’Prentice Knights, quickly loses traction and leagues with the radical Protestant Association, and the traditional Maypole community persists in a slightly diminished form. From the perspective of this novel, authority without content or respect for imminent leaders is almost as incriminating as rebellion against all authority, and in perpetuating such a limited pool of contributors and information, it forfeits its rights to global prominence. The novel’s final scene indicates that Joe Willet will use the legacy of the Maypole to commemorate certain festive occasions, but its memory will be secondary to his own enterprise.

Chapman and Hall ceased publication of *Master Humphrey’s Clock* in December of 1841, roughly a year and a half after its first weekly number. As indicated in the introduction to Chapter Two, Dickens immediately formed an agreement with them to produce *Martin Chuzzlewit* in monthly numbers after a yearlong pause from writing. His subsequent trip to

America marks his break with the weekly publication format and the small world network, and it allows him to consider the form and function of the American news industry. In the time between the 1780 setting in *Barnaby Rudge*, its final number in 1841, and the first number of *Martin Chuzzlewit* in 1843, the network frame had shifted dramatically, and book sales had become largely dependent on the information trade conditions in other countries—a revision that the American trip brought to the forefront (Weedon 157). *Martin Chuzzlewit* thus illustrates, through its inheritance plot and competing networks, the contest for prominence in the global publishing industry.

The most controversial issue surrounding Dickens's trip to America was the question of copyright and the rights of British authors in the American network. His hesitance to form contracts with American publishers in particular, and his disdain for the press in general, figures prominently in the American chapters of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. By the same token, his contempt for what he perceived as a fraudulent publication model underwrites the various network models depicted in the novel, beginning with the Pecksniffian affiliation network and returning at the end to the traditional network of prominence. In its desire to exploit the content of others, the affiliation network represents the fraudulent practices of the American distribution network. This link is reinforced by the Eden scam, which resembles the Pecksniffian affiliation model, but without an attachment to a prominent figure. The novel takes pains to condemn the distribution and affiliation models as too fraudulent and predatory, and it emphasizes that neither model has real material content at its base. It also indicates that the reason American appears so treacherous to outsiders like Martin is that, as a nation, it lacks a traditional framework that, in the distribution of worthwhile forms of patronage, can help preserve ethical publication practices.

Instead, dominated by unscrupulous distribution networks, America is a place to invest foreign capital and die in Eden, where proximate connections cannot save everyone.

Ultimately, *Martin Chuzzlewit* seems less interested in punishing the traditional network of prominence than redirecting its focus. The proximity network would seem to represent the fledgling writers who remain firmly at the periphery, whether as apprentices or freelancers, until hailed by a prominent publisher or print medium. In the end, the proximate contacts salvage the traditional network by calling attention to its mercenary self-interest and unlawful behavior and by producing worthwhile content. The fact that both novels seem invested in saving some aspect of the traditional network suggests that Dickens retains his conservative concept of authority, even as the larger professional framework continues to evolve.

Thus reading *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit* through the lens of social network theory demonstrates how Dickens encodes his professional vision into his novels and how he uses genre to complement his social commentary. Paired with publication format, the shift from eighteenth-century historical fiction to the domestic and financial novel indicates that Dickens understood his profession as trapped in an old model and involved in a decidedly domestic dispute. Based on finances and a hierarchy, Dickens recognized that the publishing industry in the 1830s was so obstinate, disordered, and competitive that it rendered itself vulnerable to domestic and transatlantic fraud. If traditional publishing networks intended to survive, they needed to respond in productive ways to the whispers of confederacy and find ways to either incorporate or dismantle their counterparts and prototypes.

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