

## PLAGIARIZING THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

How can we tell plagiarism from an allusion? How does imitation differ from parody? Where is the line between copyright infringement and homage? Questions of intellectual property have been vexed long before our own age of online piracy. In Victorian Britain, enterprising authors tested the limits of literary ownership by generating plagiaristic publications based on leading writers of the day. Adam Abraham illuminates these issues by examining imitations of three novelists: Charles Dickens, Edward Bulwer Lytton, and George Eliot. Readers of *Oliver Twist* may be surprised to learn about *Oliver Twiss*, a penny serial that usurped Dickens's characters. Such imitative publications capture the essence of their sources; the caricature, although crude, is necessarily clear. By reading works that emulate three nineteenth-century writers, this innovative study enlarges our sense of what literary knowledge looks like: to know a particular author means to know the sometimes bad imitations that the author inspired.

ADAM ABRAHAM is a Postdoctoral Fellow at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is the author of *When Magoo Flew: The Rise and Fall of Animation Studio UPA* (2012) as well as articles on Victorian literature and culture.

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Nineteenth-century British literature and culture have been rich fields for interdisciplinary studies. Since the turn of the twentieth century, scholars and critics have tracked the intersections and tensions between Victorian literature and the visual arts, politics, social organization, economic life, technical innovations, scientific thought – in short, culture in its broadest sense. In recent years, theoretical challenges and historiographical shifts have unsettled the assumptions of previous scholarly synthesis and called into question the terms of older debates. Whereas the tendency in much past literary critical interpretation was to use the metaphor of culture as ‘background’, feminist, Foucauldian, and other analyses have employed more dynamic models that raise questions of power and of circulation. Such developments have reanimated the field. This series aims to accommodate and promote the most interesting work being undertaken on the frontiers of the field of nineteenth-century literary studies: work which intersects fruitfully with other fields of study such as history, or literary theory, or the history of science. Comparative as well as interdisciplinary approaches are welcomed.

A complete list of titles published will be found at the end of the book.

# PLAGIARIZING THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

*Imitation, Parody, Aftertext*

ADAM ABRAHAM

*Virginia Commonwealth University*



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