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0521633222 - After Dickens: Reading, Adaptation and Performance

John Glavin

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After Dickens is both a performative reading of Dickens the novelist and an exploration of the potential for adaptive performance of the novels themselves. John Glavin conducts an historical inquiry into Dickens's relation to the theatre and theatricality of his own time, and uncovers a much more ambivalent, often hostile, relationship than has hitherto been noticed. In this context, Dickens's novels can be seen as a form of counter-performance, one which would allow the author to perform without being seen or scrutinized. But Glavin also explores the paradoxically rich performative potential in Dickens's fiction, and describes new ways to stage that fiction in emotionally powerful, critically acute adaptations. The book as a whole, therefore, offers a radical new reading of Dickens through an unusual alliance between literary criticism and theatrical performance.

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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 syntheses 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.

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FOR

MARGARET O'KEEFFE GLAVIN

quaerens margaritas bonas,
unam pretiosorem Margaritam inveni
(Matthew 13:44)

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Acknowledgments

The Dickens Project, University of California, Santa Cruz, begot the adaptations that began *After Dickens*. Indeed, the book itself was first the idea of the Project's two Directors, Murray Baumgarten and John Jordan. Dickensians, at least, will know what I mean, then, when I gratefully acknowledge them as my Chapman and Hall. They each read the entire manuscript in its earliest stages, and their prudent counsel turned a loose, baggy monster into something that had shape if not quite style. The former and current administrators of the Project, Linda Rosewood Hooper and JoAnna Rottke, made working bicoastally anything but a binary opposition. And the Friends of the Dickens Project have always been just that, heroically friendly, especially Barbara Keller, the Friends' dynamic leader during most of this book's gestation.

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Note on the text

For Dickens's texts I have, without apology, relied on a motley assortment of different paperbound editions, just those dog-eared ones I use to teach, because that's where my notes and markers are.

For *Oliver Twist*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *Dombey and Son*, *David Copperfield*, *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Great Expectations*, and *Our Mutual Friend* I relied on the Penguins.

For *The Pickwick Papers*, *Nicholas Nickleby* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* I used the Oxford Illustrated Edition.

Although I do not quote them in the text of *After Dickens*, for Dickens Letters, I read the multi-volume Pilgrim Edition published by The Clarendon Press and edited principally by Madeline House and Graham Story.