

Forgery in Nineteenth-Century  
Literature and Culture

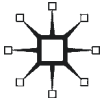
*This page intentionally left blank*

# **Forgery in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture**

## **Fictions of Finance from Dickens to Wilde**

Sara Malton

palgrave  
macmillan



FORGERY IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Copyright © Sara Malton, 2009.

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2009 978-0-230-61222-8

All rights reserved.

Cover Image: George Cruikshank, *Bank Restriction Note*, a satirical note  
© The Trustees of the British Museum

Portions of the Introduction and Chapter 1 appeared in "Forgery, Fiscal Trauma, and the Fauntleroy Case," first published in the *European Romantic Review* 18.3 (July 2007).

Portions of Chapter 2 appeared in "Illicit Inscriptions: Reframing Forgery in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Ruth*," first published in *Victorian Literature and Culture* 33.1 (2005).

First published in 2009 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®  
in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC,  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-37696-4 ISBN 978-0-230-61974-6 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230619746

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Malton, Sara.

Forgery in nineteenth-century literature and culture : fictions of finance from Dickens to Wilde / by Sara Malton.  
p. cm.

1. English literature—19th century—History and criticism.  
2. Finance in literature. 3. Forgery in literature. 4. Forgery—England—History—19th century. 5. Criminals in literature. 6. Dickens, Charles, 1812–1870—Criticism and interpretation. 7. Wilde, Oscar, 1854–1900—Criticism and interpretation. I. Title.

PR468.F56M35 2009  
364.16'3—dc22

2008034619

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by Newgen Imaging Systems (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: March 2009

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For Tyler and Reginald*

*This page intentionally left blank*

## C O N T E N T S

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	ix
<b>Introduction False Economies: Reframing Forgery in Nineteenth-Century Culture</b>	<b>1</b>
“A Crime of the First Magnitude”	1
Illegitimate Issue	6
Fake Expectations	9
<b>One Remembering “The Hard Coinage of Punishment”: Forgery and the Legacy of Capital Legislation</b>	<b>19</b>
<i>Barnaby Rudge</i> and the “Bloody Code”	23
“The Space That Told the Whole Story”: The “Unfortunate” Fauntleroy and <i>The Woman in White</i>	31
<b>Two “Only the Ledger Lives”: Financial Disease and Deception at Mid-Century</b>	<b>47</b>
“Individual, Small Economies”: <i>Cranford</i>	51
Illicit Inscriptions: <i>Ruth</i>	55
Counterfeit Culture: <i>Little Dorrit</i>	66
<b>Three “Apocryphal Business”: Eroding Standards of Value at Home and Abroad</b>	<b>77</b>
The House of Melmotte	79
“A Species of Gold Thread Not Known in England”: <i>The Moonstone</i>	84
<i>Gold Fever</i> and Financial Terror: <i>Dr. Jekyll and         Mr. Hyde</i>	94

<b>Four</b>	<b>The Criminal Aesthetic: Recapturing the Forger at the <i>Fin-de-Siècle</i></b>	<b>109</b>
	“Adept at Counterfeiting”: Hardy’s Daring Forger	111
	“A Mask Tells Us More than a Face”: Fosco, Forgery, and Oscar Wilde	126
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Toward Forgery’s Modern Manifestations</b>	<b>143</b>
<i>Notes</i>		149
<i>Works Cited</i>		169
<i>Index</i>		183



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

---

I wish to acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for its generous support of my research for this project. I also thank Saint Mary's Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for its provision of a grant in aid of research, and I extend my gratitude to the archivists at the Bank of England Archives for their gracious assistance.

It has been my extreme good fortune to have received the help and encouragement of so many inspiring scholars during my work on this project. Chief among them is Jill L. Matus, to whom I am greatly indebted for this book's completion and for so much more. Her guidance and support has been instrumental to my intellectual growth from the earliest days of my work, and she continues to provide me with an admirable model of scholarly excellence and collegiality. Jim Adams's generosity knows no bounds, and I am grateful to have had the benefit of his exemplary counsel during a critical point in this book's development. I owe a great deal to Alan Bewell, Garry Leonard, and John Reibetanz, each of whom has been exceptionally giving of his time, knowledge, and enthusiasm. Christopher Keep has had a greater influence on my work than he perhaps knows, and I thank him for it. I also wish to thank the following individuals for their attention to various parts of this book during its development: Deirdre D'Albertis, John Baird, Marjorie Garson, Regina Hewitt, Stephanie King, Alexandra Peat, Jan Purnis, Scott Schofield, and, certainly not least of all, Keith Wilson, who rightly taught me early on that "the world begins and ends with Thomas Hardy."

I thank my research assistants, Stephanie McAllister and Stephanie Moulton, for undertaking their work with such exceptional zeal, as well as Farideh Koohi-Kamali, Brigitte Shull, Kristy Lilas, and Julia Cohen at Palgrave for their assistance throughout this process. I also

*Acknowledgments*

wish to express my sincere appreciation for the thoughtful attention granted my work by the anonymous reader at Palgrave.

It is impossible to enumerate the various ways that my work has benefited from the encouragement and sound counsel of Nikki Hessel and Sarah Brouillette. I am also very grateful for the exceptional wisdom and good humor of Travis De Cook and for my fine colleague, Kirrily Freeman, who has proven a constant source of insight during my work on this project and many others.

My deepest debt of gratitude is owed to my husband, Tyler Held, whose loving enthusiasm has done so much to make this work possible and life all the more pleasurable. Finally, I thank my dearest son Reggie, whose joyful love and laughter in this, his first year of life, has been my greatest educator in what truly makes life authentic. I am grateful to be able to dedicate this book to these two exceptional men.

SARA MALTON  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
June 2008