Unintended Authors: Piracy, Plagiarism and Property in Victorian Popular Culture

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Abstract

The introduction to this special issue of the *Victorian Popular Fictions Journal,* "Unintended Authors," argues that Victorian popular fictions crucially relied on incoherently regulated global artistic markets that made bargain-basement grabbing and reselling *comme il faut*. The absence of clear and uniform copyright statutes, case law, and trade practices across national, colonial, linguistic, and generic borders surprisingly did not obstruct nineteenth-century authorship; rather these conditions did the work of cultivating an extraordinary proliferation of scrappy innovators creatively reusing antecedents. A cast of rogue publishers, theatrical adaptors, and proto brand managers take centre stage here in an effort to recognize the collaborative, appropriative, and reiterative dimensions of nineteenth-century fictional entertainment.

Keywords

piracy; plagiarism; popular fictions; copyright; theatre; publishing; translation

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Monica Cohen

Introduction: Four Case Studies

The organising principle of this special issue, "Unintended Authors: Piracy, Plagiarism and Property in Victorian Popular Culture," posits that the absence of clear and robust national and international laws protecting originating authors and copyright holders had the surprising effect of animating Victorian pan-media markets with scrappy, innovative, and imaginative pioneers. While the "myth… of the single author as the owner of his own creative work" (Legette 2017: 1) percolated through each copyright debate in Britain from 1814 onwards, the enormous proliferation of platforms that made Victorian popular culture so expansive (serialisation in parts, in weeklies, in monthlies; novel reprints in triple deckers, in single volumes, in illustrated volumes, in colonial editions, in translation; plays in performance, in revival, in newspaper summaries, in acting editions; images in paint, in theatrical *tableau*, in lithograph, in *carte de visite*, to name just a few) meant that nineteenth-century popular culture as a global network of circulated and recirculated works was rife with multitudinous opportunities to repeat, to repackage, to reimagine. Because it was not until late in the century that copyright protection became predicated on the spirit expressed in a work rather than on the material in which it was first built, the conditions for creative experimentation were bountiful (van Gompel 2010: 196-7).

In light of these conditions, material and legal, it is difficult to categorise many creative innovators, however significant they were to critical inventions in the transnational circulation of Victorian popular fictions. Consider the following figures as case studies studies that, taken together, demonstrate the need to reimagine the landscape of Victorian popular fictions in ways that include participants who have not previously counted as authors in a traditional sense. These figures provide a *mise en abyme* for the special issue as a whole in so far as they locate reusers at the heart of Victorian popular fictions despite hailing from what we used to think of as the margins.

The British William Thomas Moncrieff (1794-1857), an ingenious entrepreneur and theatrical impresario, contributed to the invention of the modern musical in his skilful reuse of popular music as thematic actors, which made the Victorian stage a dynamic, experimental fount of creativity and fun: Moncrieff "knew how to pick a story, to make a hit; and he turned long novels into vehicles for actors, pulled operas inside out and brought tunes to the stage in playful, inventive ways" (Bratton 2015: 10, 16).

The American Hannah Crafts, writing *The Bondswoman's Narrative* in the 1850s, anticipated modernist bricolage, exemplifying "African Americanizing practices" of complex and self-conscious repetition: her work is recognised today as the first novel written by a formerly enslaved woman (Hack 2017: 34, 36; Gates 2014: xv). I would even argue that Crafts ingeniously used narrative redaction in a strategy that bears remarkable resemblance to what contemporary American artists are using to "recalibrate the standard representational capture of Blackness" (Adams 2021). In this regard, her work resists what Anjali Vats has called, in another context, "racial scripts that label people of color as imitators who presumably lack the capacity for ground-breaking thought" (Vats 2020: 10).

The Egyptian Mustafà Luftì al-Manfalūtī (1876-1924), harbinger of modern Arabic prose style, still stands as "one of the most important literary figures of the Arab world" by virtue of his sentimental style, generic range, and wide popularity (Moosa 1983: 82). That al-Manfaluti played such a central role in the professionalisation of Arabic literature emerges in his liberal "translations-adaptations" on the bookshelves of prolific literary and film critics such as Nissīm Rajwān: "It was from quite an early age," he reminisces, "that I started reading Arabic books and magazines, starting with the numerous historical novels of Jorji Zaydan [1861-1914] and the many translations-adaptations of French and English romances and novels produced by the Egyptian Lutfi al-Manfaluti [1876-1924]…" (Snir 2020: 116). Already canonical in the nineteenth century, his works reimagined European texts with a "sophisticated lexicon and syntax" that conveyed a distinctly "Egyptian voice" in an "endogenous high literary register reminiscent of the ornate *saj'* of premodern belletrist prose" (Negri 2021: 160-1).

The Chinese Lin Shu (1852-1924), an influential and maverick wordsmith, began his wildly successful publishing career by using literary rather than colloquial Chinese for writing fiction, ultimately bringing over 150 novels to eager Chinese-language readers excited by the idea of seeing the classical Chinese literary tradition repurposed for conveying knowledge about the modern world (Yu 1975: 28-30). Reinventing the prose fiction form of *chuanqi*, Lin transformed a recognisable native genre to capture the imagination of a newly invented Chinese "'common reader' – that quintessentially nineteenth-century character of global literary and cultural history whose ascendancy in various locales is predicated on the spread of literacy and the increasing accessibility of printed matter" (Sun 2021: 17). His reworking of episodic and often supernatural fiction was wildly popular and served as well as the basis for theatrical adaptations.

Four consequential and brilliant figures. And yet... Besides their extraordinary contributions to nineteenth-century fiction-making, Moncrieff, Crafts, al-Manfalütï, and Lin share a peculiar, and yet I would argue common, relationship to professional authorship in that they all reused without permission material originally written and published by others. I will return to these four writers later in this introduction. For now, they serve as an entry point to this special issue because they illustrate how unauthorised reuse, whether dubbed plagiarism, piracy, or something else, fueled the unprecedented dynamism and creative outpouring characteristic of popular fiction during this period. The articles gathered here flesh out this newly conceived body of works and workers enabling us to recognise important creative contributions outside of the limited discourse of so-called original authorship.

Originality Discourse: The Monster that Refuses to Die

Reuse made many authors, particularly in Britain, furious, and many railed against it as a matter of pressing legal, even moral, reform. Sometimes their complaints were specific to reprinting and repackaging: Charles Dickens famously appended the Nickleby Proclamation to advertisements for his next novel, then reprinted it in the preface to the first bound edition, threatening "Pirates" with "summary and terrible" execution on lofty "gibbets" and deriding "cheap and wretched imitations of our delectable Works" as the mean work of "kennel pirates… not worth the powder and shot of the law" (Dickens [1838] 1910: vi). Sometimes authors' complaints were specific to the refusal of the United States to sign any kind of multilateral international copyright agreement: Anthony Trollope went to America several times in the hopes of negotiating a treaty that would stop the ubiquitous unauthorised reprinting of British works, an appropriation of "the goods of other people [done]… with impunity ([1883] 1991: 311) only to return wryly disappointed. Sometimes authors' complaints were specific to the administration of colonial trade practices as applied to books: Edward Jenkins did not challenge the refusal of Canadian readers to pay duties on unauthorised reprintings of his popular novel *Ginx's Baby* (1870) on the grounds that such a challenge would call attention to contradictions in Imperial trade policy (Seville 2006: 97-102). And sometimes their complaints were specific to cross-media adaptations, such as stage versions of printed fiction: "[T]he stupid copyright law of England," Wilkie Collins griped, "allows any scoundrel possessing a pot of paste and a pair of scissors to steal our novels" (quoted in Law 2006: 105). Percolating throughout these complaints is the idea that unauthorised reuse, whether printing or adaptation, transgressed the ownership rights of originating authors whether those rights existed or not.

This condemnatory view of reuse remains common even in twentieth-century book history, a field I expected to assume a relatively neutral posture: S.H. Steinberg's canonical *Five Hundred Years of Printing*, for example, depicts the relatively unregulated eighteenth-century book trade in the same morally incensed language that Collins employs. "The first effective dam against piracy was erected by the English Copyright Act of 1709," he begins dispassionately, but then goes on to deploy an astonishing set of incendiary figurations:

> …but as [the Copyright Act] did not apply to Ireland, Irish printers continued to rob English printers and authors, deodorizing their filthy lucre by the sweet perfume of patriotism; in this they were stoutly supported by the Irish authorities, until the Union of 1801 ended this scandal. Thus it came about that three pirated editions of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) appeared in Dublin prior to the genuine London edition, as disloyal workmen had surreptitiously taken the proofs across St George's Channel.
>
> (1996: 148)

The language of a theft so base, so greedy, so filthy that it actually reeks (!) mobilises a racialised discourse that estranges the Irish as seditious criminals palming off counterfeits for "genuine" works even though the Irish publishers themselves were doing nothing illegal, and there was nothing ungenuine about the Irish editions other than that Richardson did not get paid. Indeed, Steinberg omits a lot of contextual complexity. Richardson was writing epistolary fiction, which already imagined the conditions of abridgment, excerpting and anthologising in its posing as a collection of letters penned by multiple writers; Richardson thus

continued to insist that his work was collectively produced while also insisting on his individual ownership of it (Price 2000: 140). Moreover, the alleged "scandal," from the point of view of the Irish printers, was an act of political resistance, including resistance to the monopoly of London booksellers whose high prices deprived the Irish print industry of work and Irish readers of affordable books (Temple 2000: 167).

While Steinberg objects to unauthorised reprinting and Collins to unauthorised adaptation, they both imagine conditions of authorial control predicated on origination: Richardson should get to control who reprints the novels he originally wrote and Collins should get to control who dramatises novels he never intended for performance. That they imagine such privileges as absolute and self-evident derives from what shorthand usage designates as the Romantic idea of authorship: the early nineteenth-century theoretical transformation of "the writer into a unique individual uniquely responsible for a unique product" (Woodmansee 1984: 429). This Romantic idea of authorship, and this sense of the originating author's absolute moral rights, directly contradicts what copyright law and juridical thinking generally recognised, which was a limited set of rights of usage increasingly subject to international negotiations. While the long nineteenth century in Britain and in British colonies did see an increase in the number of authors holding copyrights instead of publishers and printers, and while there was a lot of originality talk, the basic juridical understanding of copyright remained nearly unchanged since the first copyright act was passed in 1710: "It was still the same limited economic privilege of making and selling reproductions of printed texts as it was in its days as a publisher's privilege" (Bracha 2008b: 189). This seems to have remained the case globally, due, in part, to Britain's colonial presence and imperial soft power: grandiose talk of absolute original authorial ownership seems inevitably in tension with a practical focus on regulating material verbatim copying.

In 1853, for example, the tension between this Romantic idea of authorship and copyright realities on the ground materialized in the contrast between two important events: the Munich publication of J.C. Bluntschli's "On Authors' Rights" in his two-volume law book, *German Private Law,* and Justice Robert Grier's decision in *Stowe v. Thomas* regarding an unauthorized German translation in Pennsylvania of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. While Bluntschli argued for a Romantic idea of authorship in which the relationship "between creator and created" was natural and self-evident, personalistic to the point that even profitless unauthorized reuse still counted as an offensive violation, Grier decided in favor of an unauthorized translator on the grounds that a translation was a new creative work and thus not a violation of copyright (Deazley 2008f and 2008d). So in Germany we have a vision of authorship that sees it an unrestricted personal property while in the United States we have a vision of authorship that sees it as restricted to verbatim copying. Interestingly, the previous year, 1852, French law struggled to resolve the same tension: the French International Copyright Act emerged from the problem of French law's recognition of the author as an "incontestable" owner while refusing to accord that recognition to authors who published their work, whether French nationals or not, abroad (Deazley 2008e). While France and Germany emerge here as the home of the Romantic author endowed with moral rights in contrast to Anglo-American copyright regimes that focused on commercial rights of reprinting, the tension remained unresolved throughout the century especially in cases of translation – translation in the literal sense of moving from one language to another, but also in the figurative sense of moving from one genre to another, one platform to another, one publishing format to another. This arena remained, and for a surprisingly long period of time, a virtual Wild West, a set of conditions and attitudes that seems to be as true in the print culture of the Ottoman Empire and in the translation practices of late-Qing China as it was in Victorian London or nineteenth-century Philadelphia.

Nevertheless, originality discourse kept showing up. Indeed, the contrast between Romantic ideals and legal realities emerges in the Phillis Wheatley story – or more specifically, what emerges is how a peculiarly American evolution of originality discourse predicated what Anjali Vats calls "creatorship" on whiteness. Wheatley, an enslaved woman, published copyrightable poetry in 1790, but only after proving to a panel of white male Bostonian luminaries that she possessed the "true imagination" for original writing, thus refuting what Thomas Jefferson had declared nine years earlier, that Black people "lack higher imaginative capacity despite a talent for music" (Vats 2020: 35-6). What is so perverse about this quasi-vigilante "trial" is that the American copyright regime created in the 1790 Copyright Act, which was modelled on the British 1710 Act, says nothing about imagination or originality (Bracha 2008a). The Act merely stipulates that copyright protection pertained to "citizens or residents of the United States," which is another reason British authors, along with other non-American authors, were not afforded protection until the Chace Act of 1891. However much originality may have been invoked to deprive Phillis Wheatley of legal personhood, originality was not a significant factor in copyright law or legislation of the period. This perhaps explains why there "does not seem to be any white analogue to Wheatley's trial" (Vats 2020: 35). In other words, white American writers did not have to prove originality to gain copyright protection. Indeed, as Oren Bracha has argued, originality is the great "myth of copyright in America," and, I would argue, in the nineteenth-century Anglophone world generally: "the strange inverse correlation between the increasing rhetorical importance of originality and its shrinking significance as a doctrinal requirement" means that noisy chatter about originality ironically accompanied escalations in unauthorised reuse (2008a).

Reuse in Context

This is not to say that there were not many putative scoundrels spuriously reusing the art of others. But it is important to point out that much of this unauthorised reuse unfolded with legal impunity given the following, not exhaustive, list of conditions in the West: the lack of American participation in conventional international copyright agreements;[1] the lack of dramatic copyright until 1833 and the lack of performance rights in novels until 1911;[2] the lack of clarity in the Copyright Amendment Act of 1842 in reference to widespread reprinting trade practices among periodical publishers;[3] and the lack of protection for images arguably until the Fine Art Copyright Act of 1862 – or if not 1911 if we consider the inclusion

[1] The United States did not join the Berne Convention until 1988, its original terms as expressed in 1886, particularly the stipulation that "signatories provide authors non-economic moral rights," being antithetical to American commercial practices (Jacobs 2016: 169). Not all Americans were happy. One of the March 1886 issues of *Puck*, a cartoon weekly, featured a double-page fold out depicting an American pirate stealing from authors representing Germany, France, and Britain, and accompanied by a jaunty jingle: "Come, Pirate-Lads, with one accord, / From all our Eastern cities, / Who without leave or license steal / And publish foreign ditties. / Why seek in London for your wares, / And have your faith indicted? / There's still a wondrous work at home / Which is not copyrighted."

[2] In contrast to the American novelist who by 1870 enjoyed the right to dramatisation, the British novelist had no such right on the grounds that a novel and a play are so different that a translation of one into the other qualifies as an independent act of creativity (Miller 2018: 143-4).

[3] See Deasley (2008a).

of photography.[4] Thus unauthorised reuse was not limited to what Meredith McGill terms the "American culture of reprinting" whereby "culture" designates "iteration and not origination" (2003: 4). Unauthorised reuse was not exclusive to the American "public domain" that Robert Spoo castigates as "a vast opportunistic literary commons assembled from the legal have-nots of foreign authorship and reflecting the protectionist policies of a developing nation in quest of instant and assured culture" (2013: 3). While American reiterative practices may have stood out in the British imagination due to the very size of the North American literary, theatrical, and artistic markets, a version of Spoo's "opportunistic literary commons" mushroomed in Great Britain's theatres, periodicals, and fly-by-night publishing houses. Colonial networks for the distribution of English-language works gave this literary and artistic commons an international reach; translation practices made it a global phenomenon.

Indeed resistance to according artists the kind of moral rights they may have enjoyed in France and Germany remained a constant feature in British statutory and case law throughout the nineteenth century.[5] Take for example the Dramatic Literary Property Act of 1833. It established performance rights for plays that had been published, although most were not, but it did not protect non-dramatic works like novels from unauthorised dramatisation, and scepticism about whether it was a public good, let alone enforceable, to expand copyright protection to "ephemeral and intangible things as plays and songs," remained robust throughout the century (Alexander 2010: 345). Take as another example the Copyright Amendment Act of 1842. It strengthened some copyright protection for authors, but it understood articles in periodicals as belonging to the publisher "as if he were the actual author," even though the author maintained the right to republish the piece elsewhere and the publisher needed the author's permission for additional republishings (Deazley 2008a). You can imagine the Chancery mess that ensued. Take as another example, the Fine Arts Copyright Act of 1862. It was progressive in imagining a protection of artists consistent with what countries with strong copyright protections had in place, but its use of the term "original" derived from a market oriented around protecting art investors from repetitions that would degrade the value of their purchases: the Act employed the term original "as a restrain upon the autonomy and actions of the artist, and to secure the economic interest of the art market" (Deazley 2008a). If the moral rights of authors and artists were so self-evident, copyright debate would not have played out so tortuously.

Nevertheless, nineteenth-century public discourse, especially in England, featured a lot of rhetorical indignation, much along the lines that Collins expressed in his figure of the cutting-and-pasting scoundrel. This invocation of scissors and glue specifically belittles the work of reuse in terms of a hierarchy that places manual labour below intellectual labour. This bias informed copyright debate as late as 1911 when, to take one example, the protected status of photography teetered between a mechanical paradigm that emphasised manual labour and a fine arts paradigm that emphasised the expression of ideas (Cooper 2018: 6).

[4] The enormous circulation of images during the long nineteenth century demanded the expertise of engravers, who struggled to combat a "taxonomy of authorship" that privileged the intellectual labour of painting over the manual labour of reproduction: despite their craftsmanship, engravers were not admitted to the Royal Academy of Arts until 1853 and even then they held a lower status than painters and sculptors (Cooper 2018: 16-17).

[5] The moral rights of artists – self-evident and perpetual – characterised French and German law long before they entered into Anglo-American jurisprudence: "it has been a cannon of comparative copyright scholarship that the most significant difference between Anglo-American and Continental European copyright law was their respective attitudes towards moral rights" (Rigamonti 2006: 354).

This is a bias that belies the extraordinary creativity, ingenuity, and skill that moved print from a slow and small-scale enterprise serving a coterie of selected few to a modern print culture capable of serving massive audiences, spawning new platforms and inventing newly accessible forms of entertainment.

The revolutionary inventiveness of print's industrialisation aside, it is the aim of this special issue to envision standing alongside Collins's scoundrels many literary and visual fiction-makers whose reuses actually did express new ideas, who reimagined aesthetic works with sensitivity and craftsmanship, contributing to a growing, increasingly inclusive and global marketplace filled with new iterations of antecedents, unlimited by national, generic, and juridical borders. This expansive sense of nineteenth-century popular fiction emerges in the unprecedented proliferation of texts and images across an enormous range of media platforms (Shannon 2019: 183), an outpouring made possible by technical innovations in paper production, transportation, and consumer markets (Cohen and Stein 2012: 1). In their meditation on the convergence of early African American literary traditions and nineteenth-century print culture, Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein offer a pan-media approach to print culture that is "subject to reiteration and reappropriation… and allows equally for representation and misrepresentation" (2012: 7). Along similar lines, Jessica DeSpain, in citing Lawrence Lessig's idea of "remix culture," points out that the explosion of printing facilitated by increased automation in book production, increased literacy, and increased leisure time, made "textual adaptation a generative cultural practice" (2014: 3). More recently, Clare Pettitt has reframed these reiterative networks in terms of "seriality." Seriality captures what became, by the mid-nineteenth century, the dominant mode of cultural production and circulation in transatlantic and Western European spaces, a potential inclusivity nevertheless in tension with the regulatory state:

> all kinds of things were being serialised – not just Dickens's and Dumas's novels, but recipes, science, Bibles, encyclopaedias, directories and manuals of all kinds. Political events, military engagements and natural disasters were represented in serial form in panoramas and on stage. The sociability and permeability of serial form was creating a new version of the public sphere and a more inclusive model of citizenship and it was permanently changing the relationship of the individual to the state.
>
> (2020: 10)

The sociability and permeability of serial form's creative reuse of all kinds – piratical, plagiaristic, derivative, adaptive, in tribute, in contention, in dialogue, in fun and in not so much fun – mark an aesthetic networking unique to the long nineteenth century, a period when regulatory laws and beliefs had not yet caught up with industrial and engineering advances.

This work, and this special issue, seek to challenge the Romantic biases that privilege "the originating creative artist-genius" over adaptor-journeymen conventionally relegated to "the trash heap of the secondary and imitative" (Bortolotti and Hutcheon 2007: 445), biases that champion the kind of possessive individualism that drove William Wordsworth to shore up his literary property as a cornerstone for a national literary canon at the same time that formula, intertextuality, imitation, and translation nevertheless nourished a "corporate mode of authorship" among sentimental and gothic writers (DeLucia 2020: 95-6). The special issue argues for an alternative model of literary history that recognises the market-driven "affinities and associations" that "exceed individual authors" (DeLucia 2020: 105).

This global pattern of creative reuse suggests that, as Daniel Hack points out in quoting James Snead, the defamiliarisation that helps make compelling and moving works of art, is sometimes the kind of reimagination that is rooted in reuse: "'Whenever we encounter repetition in cultural forms, we are indeed not viewing 'the same thing,' but its transformation'"

(Hack 2017: 3, 2; Snead 1984: 59). Such transformations can be thought of as philosophical inevitabilities to the extent that "[c]ulture as a reservoir of inexhaustible novelty is unthinkable" given "the finite supply of elementary units and the need for recognizability" (Snead 1984: 60). Such transformations, however, are also overdetermined by the juridical thinking and trade practices that condition during the Victorian period the production and consumption of cultural forms on the ground. Throughout the long nineteenth century, repetition in cultural forms could be both transgressive of what are often designated as the moral rights of creators and compliant with the trade practices of their time and place.

My Four Case Studies

Let me return to my initial four creative innovators in this new light. Moncrieff may have been derided as a piratical wretch in constant and public conflict with novelists, especially Dickens, who saw their works repurposed without permission for the stage. Nevertheless, Moncrieff was a master adaptor working fully within the cultural and legal parameters of the time, energetically using multimedia devices – music, celebrity actors, set designers – to reimagine novelistic narratives in ways that were transformative (Bratton 2015: 10).

Crafts ingeniously sampled, rearranged, and repurposed published novels by Charles Dickens and Charlotte Brontë and Walter Scott. She is thought to have read many of those novels in the library built by her enslaver John Hill Wheeler, a library that was filled with unauthorised American reprints of British novels, what the British called pirates. Wheeler's copy of Dickens's *American Notes*, for example, was an 1842 edition published by the American firm of Wilson and Company, a publisher that had shared in the bonanza of pirated reprints flooding the American market that year: Harper & Brothers, Lea & Blanchard, Jonas Winchester and Park Benjamin, James Gordon Bennett all published pirated reprints after Dickens fell out with Lea & Blanchard whose editions of the *Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* sat on Wheeler's bookshelves (Moss 1984: 112; Sinche 2014: 36-71). *Bleak House*, which figures prominently in *The Bondswoman's Narrative*, was not in Wheeler's library, making it more likely that Crafts read it serialised in *Frederick Douglass's Paper*. While Harpers spent a lavish $2,000 to secure the American reprint rights of *Bleak House,* rival publisher Henry C. Carey noted that hundreds of thousands of copies reached American readers through other unauthorised publishers and unauthorised reprintings in magazines and newspapers (Hack 2017: 28; Patten 2017: 175). Indeed McGill's American culture of reprinting was especially robust in periodicals (Slauter 2014: 6), suggesting that for *Frederick Douglass's Paper* to reprint the novel without Dickens's permission would have been in keeping with standard trade practice. Without claiming a causal relationship, I wonder what we can learn from acknowledging the embeddedness of the ingenious *Bondswoman's Narrative* in American reprinting practices of foreign novels.

If Moncrieff benefited from permissive performance rights and Crafts from America's refusal to join international copyright treaties, al-Manfalūtī and Lin emerge through intriguing translation practices: neither spoke a Western language, but reimagined rough encapsulations sketched out by paraphrasers (Hill 2020: 862). Thus al-Manfalūtī, despite his powerful influence on later Arabic writers, resists categorisation because he primarily rewrote Western fiction to incorporate Islamic values and Arabic tastes (Hill 2020: 860; Moosa 1983: 84). Condensing a sprawling romance into a tight short story or recasting a lyrical play into a prose narrative, al-Manfalūtī reused European texts with impunity at a time, between 1838 and 1914, when a proliferation of periodicals circulated "translated" fiction that "oscillated between the poles of what we would call, in juridical terminology, plagiarism

(the unattributed translation) and forgery (the pseudo-translation)" (Moosa 1983: 84; Selim 2017: 120). By the turn of the twentieth century, a frenzy of Arabic translations of European stories and novels, especially from French, met the needs of an expanding market often without bothering to include the original work's title or author and only sometimes including a reference to the originating language (Moosa 1970: 204-5, 220). For example, Wahba Mas 'ad Effendi's *Mukhtasar Sīrat Henry Esmond* reproduced Thackeray's *The History of Henry Esmond;* Ahmad Hāfiz 'Awad retitled Frederick Marryat's *Japhet in Search of a Father* for serialisation without any acknowledgment of the text's source; 'Abd al-Qādir Hamza's *Dahāya al-Aqdār* plagiarised a French novel (Moosa 1970: 220). Matti Moosa makes reuse central to the invention of modern Arabic fiction generally, arguing for its contingency on "imitation and adaptation, and even… outright plagiarism" (236).

Crucially, however, the idea of copyright during this period of literary revival in the Ottoman Empire, often called the Arabic *nahda,* was arguably as underdeveloped as it was in the West, and translations of uncredited texts were not always seen as unethical (Khayat 2019: 424).[6] While some translators of Western fiction into Arabic employed aesthetic standards that credited originating texts on title pages and in introductions that provided context and commentary (Moosa 1970: 221), many took a scappier, more improvisational approach. How can one not admire this description of Tānius 'Abdūh and his prolific translation work: according to his contemporaries, 'Abdūh was a "walking library… [He] carried with him sheets of paper in one pocket and a French novel in the other. He would then read a few lines, put the novel back in his pocket, and begin to scratch in a fine script whatever he could remember of the few lines he had read" (Moosa 1970: 221). This voluminous ingestion and reworking at the border of European languages and Arabic does not seem terribly different from a Balzac or a Dickens ingesting and reworking at the border of genres – newspapers, melodrama, circus, wax museum, dioramas, street ballads and a novelistic discourse —voraciously retelling all that popular entertainment offers. Indeed, Andrea Maria Negri has argued that al-Manfalūtī's translation of François Coppée's 1895 play *Pour La Couronne* should be recognised as a "new text," not a mere translation: using a foreign text as an "apparatus," al-Manfalūtī reconfigured the French play to express the entirely new "*Weltanschauung* of an Egyptian subjectivity" (2021: 170).

Similarly, Lin Shu's fictions were adaptations of British, French, and American works, none of which he read in the original language: "translation collaborators," often educated at missionary institutions in Shanghai and Wuhan where European languages were taught, chose and provided summaries of the texts, which Lin artfully recrafted (Hill 2020: 862). Lin was not alone in such creative reuse during the late-Qing period: "Pseudotranslations – 'original' writings passed off as translations – as well as translations presented as original writings, all helped to create an environment where the provenance of texts was open to suspicion" (Hill 2011: 126). Even though Qing writers shared a "repulsion to stealing someone else's idea," there was no formal institutional system to distinguish between unethical reuse and traditional intertextuality (Sela 2013: 580).

[6] In 1853, for example, Harriet Beecher Stowe lost her influential infringement case against F.W. Thomas's unauthorised German translation of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* on the grounds that once an author has published his ideas, "he can have no longer an exclusive possession of them" (*Stowe v. Thomas* 1853: 206) and that a good translation "often requires more learning, talent and judgment, than was required to write the original" (207). Stowe's case, and the opinion's citation of French, Belgian, German, and English precedent, suggests that translation practices in the West recognised translation as a new work even as it directly referenced the original author and title. This referencing does not always seem to be part of translation practices in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman empire, the late Qing dynasty, and imperial Russia.

If Lin was not alone, however, he was arguably among the most prolific and the most influential, and here we can see the global reach of nineteenth-century serial networks. His 1904 prose adaptation of Charles and Mary Lamb's 1806 prose retelling of Shakespeare (*Tales from Shakespeare)*, *Yinbian Yanyu* (*A Poet Reading from Afar*), furnished Chinese readers with their first access to Shakespeare's plays in a form that employed recognisable Chinese narrative structures (the *chuanqi*); as the basis for theatrical adaptation, Lin's Shakespeare tales retold in Chinese the Shakespeare plays that the Lambs had retold in prose, and what Shakespeare had retold in drama borrowed from prose sources (Sun 2021: 17). Alexandre Dumas, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Walter Scott, twenty-five novels of Henry Rider Haggard and all of the principal works of Charles Dickens, to name only a few, all reached Chinese readers through Lin's reimagining. While the English scholar Arthur Waley confessed in 1958 that Dickens, for example, may become completely distorted in classical Chinese, Waley also maintained that the Inimitable actually became "a better writer" as channelled by Lin: "'every point that Dickens spoils by uncontrolled exuberance, Lin Shu makes quietly and efficiently'" (Yu 1975: 30). Quiet and efficiency certainly do not come to my mind as characteristic qualities of the Dickensian style!

Media Translations: Example 1

If al-Manfalūtī's Egyptian François Coppée and Lin's Chinese Charles Dickens emerge as unintended authors through language translation, others emerge through media translation. Here, too, an encounter with repetition in cultural forms is not an encounter with the same thing. In both underscoring and undermining the significance of material repetition, Bill Brown strangely turns to the nineteenth century. "The experience of reading *Great Expectations,*" he argues, seems to be determined by delivery platform: "its serial publication in *All the Year Round*, its illustrated serialisation in *Harper's Weekly*, its three-volume publication by Chapman and Hall, the six-volume interpoint braille edition, and the most recent Penguin edition, let alone your Kindle, your iPhone, your headphones" (2010: 25). And yet, he continues, "the novel in some sense remains the same" (25).

Does it, though? In the United States, *Great Expectations* ran, as Brown notes, in *Harper's Weekly,* a four-columned *illustrated* magazine. Without Dickens's approval, Harper and Brothers commissioned John McLenan to provide forty illustrations and six head-note vignettes that offered interpretations of the letterpress and imagined a third-person perspective to complement the novel's first-person narrative voice (Allingham 2009: 126, 118, 122). While Dickens seems to have kept a tight rein on his earlier illustrators, working with them in close collaboration, there is no evidence that he had the slightest idea that McLenan's visualisations shepherded American readers through *Great Expectations,* both in serial form and then in Harper's subsequent two-volume edition and a one-volume edition published by T.B. Peterson and Brothers (Allingham 2009: 114, 116; Patten 2017: 217). By contrast, the English publication in *All the Year Round* did not include any illustrations to enlighten or guide the reader, nor were the first three editions in volume form illustrated (Patten 2017: 218). When English readers were able to experience the novel in tandem with illustrations, they had to make do with the "eight banal illustrations" Marcus Stone produced for Chapman and Hall's one-volume Library edition in 1862 (Patten 2017: 220). So not only was the American reader's experience of the text significantly different from the English reader's, but that difference

derived from American trade practices that legally sidestepped authorial control: Harper and Brothers could hire McLenan without seeking anyone's permission. In fact, because the novel was serialised in the United States a week ahead of its serialisation in England, technically Dickens did not even own its English copyright (Patten 2017: 217). My point here is that Brown is wrong to claim that a nineteenth-century novel *is the same* across all platforms, and that those platforms, in this case the American illustrated periodical, were free to reimagine because there were so few copyright laws or regulatory practices to get in their way.

One more dimension of *Great Expectations'*s publication history demonstrates its reiterative life as a creative transformation. As weeklies, *All the Year Round* and *Harper's* printed their letterpress in columns, two in *All the Year Round* and four in *Harper's.* Column layout employs a short leading and a compact measure, quite different from the long leading and wide even measures used for the page layouts of books and free-standing instalments designed for future binding. In distinguishing between the legibility of typeface design and the readability of textual layout, Tony Seddon and Ina Saltz have suggested that wide measures are more conducive to the reading of long novels than short measures such as those employed in newspaper columns in so far as wideness allows for a reading rhythm that facilitates scanning long lines of text (2012: 331). This insight suggests that *Great Expectations* consumed in weekly serialised print would have felt more like reading a newspaper than reading a book. So not only did American and British readers experience *Great Expectations* differently due to the presence or absence of illustrations, but weekly periodical readers experienced the novel differently from those who would later read it in book form. Material form makes a difference.

Media Translations: Example 2

While *Harper's Weekly*'s illustrated, four-columned *Great Expectations* was a quasi-authorised iteration of Dickens's novel, Thomas Peckett Prest's impersonation of Dickens in Edward Lloyd's 1838 and 1839 penny plagiarism of *Oliver Twist, Oliver Twiss* by "Bos," offers another example of reiterative entertainment's contribution to the life of an aesthetic object. *Oliver Twiss* compresses the action of *Oliver Twist*'s thirty-two-page monthly instalments into eight-page weeklies, giving the reiteration the feel of parody and infuriating Dickens (Abraham 2019: 62). But the illicit reuse also revises the novel's casual anti-Semitism in ways that suggest how the afterlife of a novel might realise a set of counterfactuals the novel itself implies without explicating. Take, for example, the scene that showcases Fagin's villainy. In Dickens's novel, Fagin goads Sikes into the infamous murder of Nancy, stoking the housebreaker's vanity by slowly planting the false idea that Nancy had betrayed him:

> "Let me out!" said Sikes. "Don't speak to me – it's not safe. Let me out, I say."
> "Hear me speak a word," rejoined the Jew, laying his hand upon the lock, 'you won't be –"
> "Well," replied the other.
> "You won't be – too – violent, Bill" whined the Jew
> The day was breaking, and there was light enough for the men to see each other's faces. They exchanged one brief glance; there was a fire in the eyes of both which could not be mistaken."
> "I mean," said Fagin, showing that he felt all disguise was now useless, "not too violent for safety. Be crafty, Bill, and not too bold."
>
> (Dickens [1837-9] 2003: 395)

Thus Fagin, "the Jew," orchestrates the brutal murder.

In Prest's version, however, things play out differently. Sikes dashes out on his homicidal mission, but Solomon (the Fagin figure) feels entirely different about the whole debacle:

> "I'll hasten after him," cried the Israelite, "there may yet be time to save him from this crime, and if I should do the wretched girl a service, it will be one good action to weigh against the many heavy crimes I've been guilty of… this girl must and shall be saved; – I'll myself follow him, and perhaps it may not be too late to stop the cruel blow… But his girl must and shall be saved; – I'll myself follow him, and perhaps it may not be too late to stop the cruel blow."
>
> (1839: 445 from the monthly part)

Dickens's insensitive representation of Jews during the 1830s (Stone 1959: 223-53) is entirely remastered in Prest's take, which actually anticipates Dickens's revision of Fagin in *Our Mutual Friend*'s Riah, the anti-Semitic stereotype of the grasping "Jew" reimagined in the generous "Israelite." The seeds of Fagin's revision are already in *Oliver Twist* as the Jew is the first adult figure in the story to give Oliver food, warmth, and companionship as he is also the only figure to make Oliver laugh. This is the seed that flowers in Prest's plagiarism.

In this sense, these afterlives – piratical, plagiaristic, reiterative – express in material and market-driven formations a tremendously moving dimension of Victorian fiction: the "optative" register of lives not led. Andrew Miller has brilliantly outlined this idea of characterisation as a function of modernity's contingency: "the lateral prodigality of [Dickens's] novels, by which I mean their recognition that there are counterfactual lives each character is pointedly not living, defining mirror existences that have branched off along other lines than that down which he or she is, in fact traveling" (2007: 119). This *potential* – the prostitute who might have been an heiress, the bureaucrat who might have been a poet, the doctor who might have been a murderer – this "imaginative prodigality," to use Miller's term, is a crucial dimension of Victorian popular fiction. And I would argue that these counterfactuals are the very stuff that reiterations are made of.

The Defense

This defense of reuse informs an important revision in adaptation theory: Bortolotti and Hutcheon have proposed that we dismiss "fidelity discourse," whereby narrative iterations are evaluated according to how loyal they are to an original antecedent, implicitly denigrating new iterations as derivative and cheapening (2007: 443). Instead, they suggest using biology: if we think about an adaptation as a mutation, we can see stories "as a fundamental unit of cultural transmission" that adapts to new forms of dissemination and new audiences (447). This provocative approach to reuse as a matter of aesthetics renders matters of intellectual property irrelevant: if recognising the ownership of an idea pivots on evaluating how closely an iteration imitates, is loyal to, an antecedent, then thinking about aesthetic ownership at all gets in the way of seeing so many exciting transformations.

Thus the goal of "Unintended Authors" is to gather provisionally and open-endedly a cast of scrappy creators who took advantage of legal and cultural ambiguities around the ownership of ideas in the transitional context of multiple emerging markets served by a dizzying array of new platforms. I say "provisionally and open-endedly" not only in the spirit of Victorian reiterative networks, but in a nod to the many projects that were not able to make it here due to that other global phenomenon, the Coronavirus pandemic that has disrupted so many lives. Those inclusions are for another day. I hope that such a day will disclose Victorian reiterative networks as a matter of world literature. In the meantime, this collection remains generally centred in Anglophone markets even as its findings imply a more extensive reach.

While there is a great degree of potential conversation between the articles gathered here, I have grouped them into three categories: rogue publishers who were nonetheless not wildly departing from common trade practices; theatrical adaptors who, in responding to specific audiences and to specific dimensions of dramatisation, reinvented an English theatre conventionally understood to be in decline; and a set of authors who might be called brand managers in so far as they organised their creative lives around the market forces that underpinned reiterative authorship in the long nineteenth century.

Cluster 1: Rogue Publishers

The first constellation features rogue publishers: printers, compilers, and booksellers. I introduce them here in chronological order.

Brian Maidment discloses the wild ride of William Kidd's audacious career as a shameless and misleading repackager who nevertheless demonstrated how the reuse of wood engravings contributed significantly to furnishing down- and mid-market consumers with pleasurable reading during the 1830s. "'Thief in the Name of Kidd': Unscrupulous Opportunism and Cheap Print in Late Regency London" takes as part of its title the accusation of "piracy" by popular illustrator George Cruikshank in his fury over Kidd's spurious suggestion time and again that his publications featured images created by George when, more often than not, they were by the less talented Cruikshank brother Robert. This repackaging sleight of hand anticipates, as Katherine Bowers notes, the Minerva Press's passing off of Mary Anne Radcliffe as the famous gothic novelist Ann Radcliffe by omitting their first names. While there is no evidence that Kidd's parents deliberately named him after the notorious seventeenth-century pirate Captain William Kidd, Cruikshank may have made the association between the publisher's misleading practice and piracy, having supplied a number of "miniature sets for toy theatres" where legendary bandits and pirates were ubiquitous (Patten 1992: 189). Deliberate or not, Kidd pursued ethically dubious trade practices at the same time that he contributed to dramatic changes in literary markets newly featuring affordable illustrated books and pamphlets.

If Kidd's illustrated repackaging made him something of an unintended author in the 1830s, periodical reviewing in the 1840s provides another site of unintended authorship. In "Frederick Douglass, Copyright, and the British Press, 1845-47," Alexis Easley takes us through newspaper and magazine reviews of Douglass's British book tour that repackaged his biography, *Narrative of the Life*, in ways not entirely dissimilar to Kidd's cutting and pasting. While recontextualisation, abridging, and even plagiarising were accepted practices of book reviews during the period (not at all technical infringements on Douglass's copyright), the gross misrepresentation of his *Life* in the British press lands with enormous irony for us today: the unbridled appropriation of Douglass's literary work in England is remarkable given his fight against the appropriation of labour among the American enslaved. Easley calls attention to how acceptable forms of literary reuse ironised the work of abolition in British print culture at a moment when the American culture of reprinting was in its most voracious stage and most offensive to British writers and publishers.

While British periodicals were busy inventing their own iteration of Frederick Douglass's biography, the *Ten Hours' Advocate and Journal of Literature and Art* began its unique run. Between 26 September 1846 and 12 June 1847, the *Ten Hours' Advocate* made its case for factory reform, specifically a ten-hour day for women and children. The specificity of this political goal nevertheless unfolded accompanied by fiction filched from popular magazines designed for middle-class readers, thus performing a complicated dance that side-stepped associations with Chartism and radical politics generally in order strategically to build

an argument for reform ostensibly predicated on middle-class literary taste. Thus Rob Breton argues in "Women and Children First: Appropriated Fiction in the *Ten Hours' Advocate*," the legal but ethically dubious pilfering of fiction already published in middle-class periodicals enabled this narrowly targeted journal of the Lancashire Central Short-Time Committee to imitate conventional middle-class ideals as a political strategy. Although the British reviewers' misrepresentation of Douglass did not serve any particular political agenda, the *Ten Hours' Advocate* repackaged middle-class magazine fiction to make it mean differently. Just as Snead (1984: 59) notes of cultural repetition generally, the *Ten Hours' Advocate*'s repetition of conventional middle-class reading material does not involve an encounter with the same thing, but with its transformation.

Like William Kidd in the 1830s, John Maxwell in the 1850s and 1860s figures as an entrepreneurial maverick, repeatedly testing evolving case law as courts struggled to apply often ambiguous statutes. An orphan from Limerick, John Maxwell became a "controversial publisher and proprietor" (Blake 2009: 403) partly due to his rapacious reprinting practices, many of which ended in lost Chancery suits. Maxwell's career offers a vivid picture of the revolving doors of periodical and book publishing that encouraged authors, illustrators, printers, and publishers to adapt material, with or without authorial permissions, to emerging markets that crossed class and national boundaries. In Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Maxwell found not only an accommodating romantic partner, but a sensational business partner as well: a novelist willing to give him *carte blanche* reprinting rights while she built her own formidable career. In "John Maxwell's Challenges to Authorial Copyright Law: 'Manufacturing' Cheap Fiction in the *Welcome Guest* and the Shilling Volume Library," Jennifer Phegley identifies the power couple of 1860s London in the marriage of a wily publisher and an ambitious content creator. I am happy to be able to say here that this article, after daunting logistical challenges, will appear in the 2022 Spring issue of the *Victorian Popular Fictions Journal.*

Cluster 2: Stage Adaptors

The second constellation of content creators emerging from the sphere of unregulated intellectual property features stage adaptors taking advantage of the bargain-basement customs of Victorian theatre.

This cluster demonstrates the creative vitality of Victorian theatre in direct contradiction to the pervasive myth of its impoverishment. The conventional narrative of English theatre's decline revolves around five market and juridical conditions:

1) Fewer publications of plays and more publications of novels, the idea being that readers preferred novels and novels were more profitable (Barrett 1999: 174-5);

2) The comparative difficulty of making a living from writing plays given lack of copyright protection until 1833 and the difficulty of enforcing penalties particularly in provincial theatres throughout the century (Marcus 2012: 439);

3) The ample supply of French plays that could be translated with impunity (Mattacks 2016: 135);

4) Early twentieth-century aesthetic hierarchies that did not recognise the staples of Victorian theatre, melodrama, burlesque, extravaganza, pantomime, and farce, as of literary value (Pearson 2015: 1); and

5) The ephemeral nature of these creative acts – the fact that so many of these forms are lost – makes it difficult to challenge such aesthetic hierarchies.

And yet another way of looking at this cultural landscape discloses English theatre's *rise*: the number of spectators grew alongside London's massive population growth; the number of theatres multiplied, with twenty-five new theatres opening between 1780 and 1830, and several theatres doubling their capacities (Burwick 2011: 1). If theatre was in such decline, why did the most prominent Victorian novelists still harbour "theatrical ambitions" (Kurnick 2012: 3)?

On the one hand, nineteenth-century theatre looks like a dynamic, potentially lucrative creative space. On the other hand, it was not hospitable to a Romantic model of authorship. Because the playhouse itself, the play title, and the celebrity actors who dominated playbills and advertisements throughout the century provided the central terms for theatre marketing and conveyed a sense of nineteenth-century drama as "collaborative performance," there was little room for the kind of single authorship that sometimes emerged in print publication (Pearson 2015: 151). Indeed playwrights' own names rarely appeared on playbills or even in newspaper advertisements until the 1860s, although Wilkie Collins was an exception, as was J.P. Burnett, whose partnership with Jennie Lee helped establish his name as responsible for the play *Jo* (Pearson 2015: 205 – and which Julianne Smith discusses at greater length in this number). The following unintended authors described by contributors to this number emerge from this collaborative, anti-ownership landscape.

Spotlighting the *Jack Sheppard* mania of 1839-40, Erica Haugtvedt's "Class and Complex Transmedia Character in the Early Victorian Period: *Jack Sheppard* (1839-40)" discovers, in the shuttle back and forth between stage adaptations emerging from working-class theatres and a penny press serving a similar set of readers, a pattern of responses to Ainsworth's popular novelisation of the infamous bandit that reimagines him as an emancipatory figure who actually escapes his historical and novelistic fate at the executioner's block. The transmedia dimensions of Jack Sheppard as a character forged across genres figure as an analogue to the psychological dimensions that will come to inform characterisation in conventional realism; the subjunctive complexity of fiction's counterfactuals – the "what if's" of Jack Sheppard's story – anticipate the "what if's" of psychological interiority as it develops later in the century.

If working-class markets provided unexpected authors of new Jack Sheppards, melodramatic conventions replaced Esther Summerson and Ada Clare with Jo and Lady Dedlock as *Bleak House'*s central characters. Thus Julianne Smith identifies Austin Lee in 1853, right after *Bleak House*'s conclusion in parts, and J.P. Burnett's 1876 collaboration with his wife Jennie Lee as instrumental in reimagining Dickens's sprawling novel as the streetsweeper Jo's story: the mix of classes in the East End Theatre of London where Lee's early adaptation played conspired with the fact that the novel had not yet concluded, so the significance, or insignificance, of Jo was not yet clear. During the circulation of the novel's early numbers, the hierarchy of minor and major characters was fruitfully ambiguous. As "Stage Piracy in Victorian Britain: *Bleak House* Adaptations" suggests, the novel's counterfactual centring on Jo, gains traction through the conventions of melodrama: Jennie Lee played Jo as a breeches part, contributing to the sense in which "the community of dramatic craftsmen seemed to require several decades" to figure out what to do with a giant Dickens novel (Bolton 1987: 349).

The unsung J.B. Johnstone emerges from the 1856 translation of Mayhew's proto-sociological urban journalism into a theatrical idiom in Taryn Hakala's "Melodramatic Mayhew: J.B. Johnstone's *How We Live in the World of London.*" Again a sense of radical and dynamic innovation emerges in Johnstone's reimagining of Mayhew's parade of city street figures, a reimagining that also spotlights Mayhew's own use of theatrical conventions. This is to say that Johnstone is not only "reaping something new" in the sense that Hack (2017: 2) borrows the phrase from Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" to identify African

American literature's creative engagements with British antecedents, thus transforming Mayhew's series of newspaper reports into a moving melodrama that delighted a mixed class of theatregoers. Johnstone's stage work also demonstrated the melodramatic underpinnings of Mayhew's own writings, thus expressing its latent content.

Playing alongside the unhanged Jack Sheppard, the cross-dressed Jo and the melodramatic Mayhew, is a hitherto unknown playwright. In "Knighthoods and Empty Benches: Wilkie Collins's *Armadale* and the Late Victorian Culture Industry," Robert Laurella finds a new "Wilkie Collins," not the father of the novel of sensation Victorian scholars have come to revere, or the failed dramatist scholars have come to dismiss, but, surprisingly, "Wilkie Collins," the successful playwright - surprisingly because the conventional wisdom has been to dismiss Collins's plays as abject failures: "Despite his enthusiasm [for the stage]," Andrew Gasson notes, "Collins was never wholly successful as a dramatist and for some plays… he had difficulty securing a theatre" (1998: 124). The copyright performance that Collins wrote to protect *Armadale* from other stage adaptors is certainly partly responsible for this reputation, but Collins's later adaptation of *Armadale*, reimagined in 1875 as *Miss Gwilt,* demonstrates his adeptness at staging interiority and ethical nuance, not at all what one would expect from a sensation novelist. Thus the conditions that drove Collins to reimagine *Armadale* on the stage, wresting the story away from would-be hack adaptors, gave rise to a new author.

Cluster 3: Brand Managers

Anthony Trollope somewhat notoriously undermined the Romantic idea of the individual genius author when he coolly remarked on a professional author's relationship to their readership:

> It is a matter of course that in all things the public should trust to established reputation. It is natural that a novel reader wanting novels should send to a library for those by George Elliot [sic] or Wilkie Collins, as that a lady when she wants a pie should go to Fortnum and Mason.
>
> ([1883] 1999: 206-7)

While the novelist as pie-maker, or, as Trollope went on to suggest, as shoe-maker, may not have been in keeping with the idea of a genius author originating a unique work of art, Trollope underscores the commercial dimension of what are after all Victorian literary and art *markets*.

There are three pieces in this section. The first identifies a set of publications that capitalised on a successful career. In "Ghost Writers: Radcliffiana and the Russian Gothic Wave," Katherine Bowers demonstrates that the circulation of Radcliffe imitations on the Russian literary market created a Russian Corporate Radcliffe, an authorial abstraction that had market power without any actual affiliation with the authorial person Ann Radcliffe. Russian translation practices that took their cues from French translations of English works, marketing conditions that employed celebrity names without authorisation or confirmation, the public disappearance of Radcliffe herself after publishing only five novels – all conspired to produce a set of novels in Russian advertising Radcliffe as the author without having anything to do with Radcliffe the person behind the famous name.

Darker contexts produce two other unintended authors: a revenge biography that discredited Fanny Fern's public image as a feminine ideal in Mashael Alhammad's "'A Nondescript Monster': Fanny Fern in Transatlantic Print Culture"; and homophobic misattributions that tarred Oscar Wilde in Katerina García-Walsh's "Oscar Wilde's Misattributions: A Legacy of Gross Indecency." In both cases, conventional trade practices

in an unregulated literary market enabled sexual scandal to produce fake avatars of well-known authors. While I would have preferred to conclude on a happy note of admiration for this cast of innovative creators, these last articles identify its villains, demonstrating the sinister side of rapidly evolving print technologies.

If this darkness gives me pause, I am not sure it detracts from the point that Victorian popular fictions flourished by virtue of diverse unrecognised creators working in ground made luxurious by the accelerated pace of growth in global aesthetic markets and germinal copyright laws that were not mature enough to make sense either of permissive trade practices or of the parameters of creative ownership generally. The tortured history of nineteenth-century copyright law thus floodlights a field of study where influence – across platforms, socio-economic class, languages, and cultural institutions – not only matters but becomes indispensable for understanding the nineteenth-century imagination, its products and its pleasures. Bringing this particular ragtag company of minor players to centre stage and applauding their innovative pluck aspires to deprivilege originality, along with the intentionality it implies. But this focus on the nineteenth century's "unintended authors" aspires as well to recovering some of its wildness and fun.

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