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Daniel A. Novak
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REALISM, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND NINETEENTH-CENTURY FICTION

This radically new account of the relationship between photography and literary realism in Victorian Britain draws on detailed readings of photographs, writings about photography, and fiction by Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Oscar Wilde. While other critics have argued that photography defined what would be "real" for literary fiction, Daniel A. Novak demonstrates that photography itself was associated with the unreal – with fiction and the literary imagination. Once we acknowledge that manipulation was essential rather than incidental to the project of nineteenth-century realism, our understanding of the relationship between photography and fiction changes in important ways. Novak argues that while realism may seem to make claims to particularity and individuality, both in fiction and in photography, it relies much more on typicality than on perfect reproduction. Illustrated with many photographs, this book represents an important contribution to current debates on the nature of Victorian realism.

DANIEL A. NOVAK is Assistant Professor of English at Louisiana State University.

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For Maximillian and Estelle Novak: my first and best professors
and
To Daphne: for turning my myths, fictions, and dreams into reality

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Acknowledgments

> In his text, the writer sets up house. Just as he trundles papers, books, pencils, documents untidily from room to room, he creates the same disorder in his thoughts. They become pieces of furniture that he sinks into, content or irritable. He strokes them affectionately, wears them out, mixes them up, re-arranges, ruins them. For a man who no longer has a homeland, writing becomes a place to live. In it he inevitably produces, as his family once did, refuse and lumber. But now he lacks a store-room, and it is hard in any case to part from left-overs. So he pushes them along in front of him, in danger finally of filling his pages with them.
>
> Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

I open this acknowledgment with Theodor Adorno's half-nostaligic, half-despairing account of his life *in* and *of* writing not merely to confess the "untidiness" of my desk or the disorder of my thoughts – although I am certainly guilty of the first and perhaps of the second. Instead, it is Adorno's affection for the refuse of writing that attracts me to this passage. Having begun the research and writing at the heart of this book as an undergraduate at the University of California, Los Angeles, I have been carrying these thoughts (sometimes literally) on my back from place to place for a long time, surely (as friends have joked) like my grandparents in the *shtetl*s of the Ukraine and Bohemia carried their belongings. Unlike Adorno, however, I have not had to rely on writing alone for a home. The friends and mentors I have found and who have found me over the course of my education and career have collectively given me both a "homeland" and a home in the familiar and hospitable spaces of academia – the seminar-room and the office, the living-room and the bar.

Attempting to thank all of those people is, of course, impossible in the narrow space I have here. Thanks go to my undergraduate thesis advisors Kenneth Reinhard and Al Hutter for their infinite patience. At Princeton, I was lucky enough to work with Elaine Showalter, Jeff Nunokawa, and Eduardo Cadava, without whose intelligence, generosity, encouragement, and kindness, I would not have been able to finish (or begin) this project. Thanks also go both to my professors and mentors – all of whom expanded my sense of what it means to think, read, and write: Jonathan Lamb, Earl Miner, Larry Danson, Oliver Arnold, Deborah Nord, Uli Knoepflmacher,

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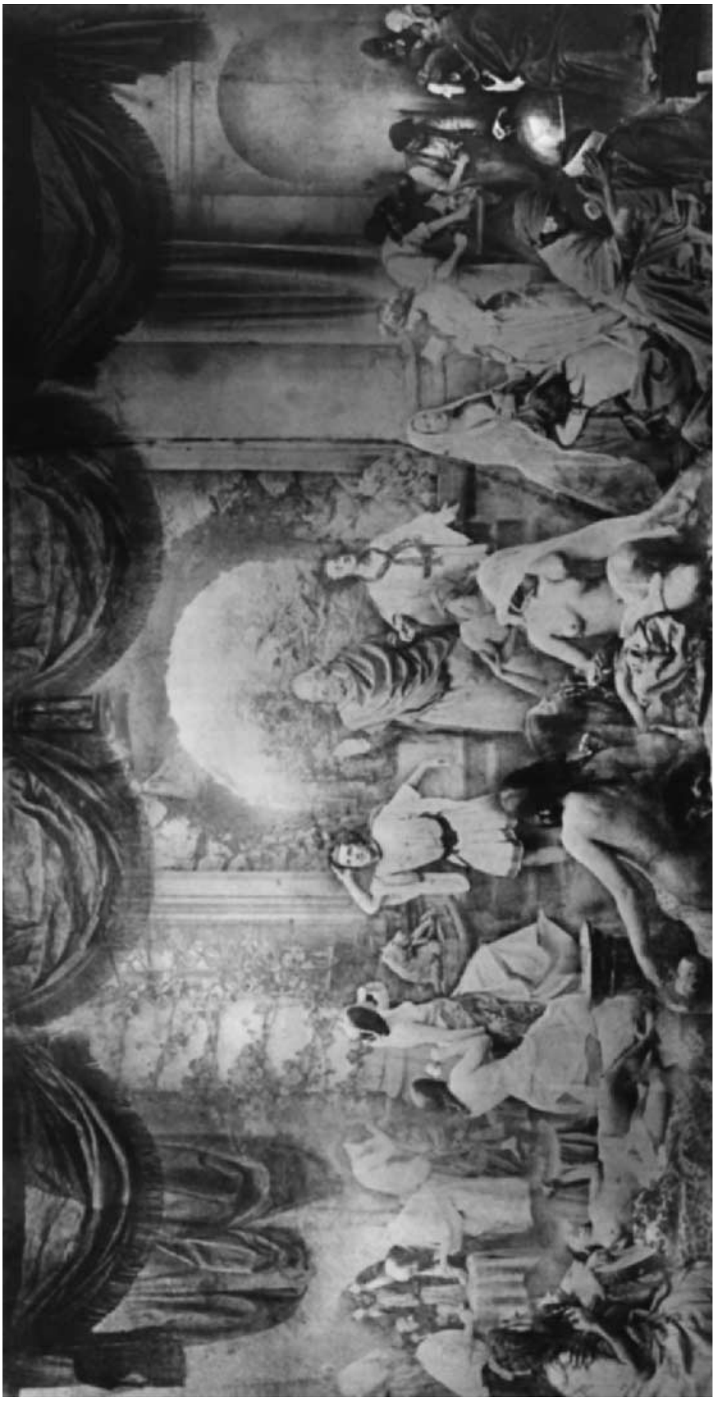

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