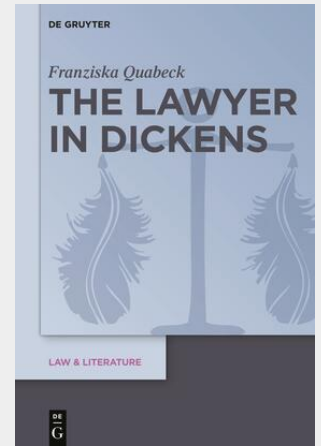


Quabeck

The Lawyer in Dickens

The Lawyer in Dickens takes a closer look at the construction of his types of lawyers. While Dickens's critique of the legal system and its representatives is almost proverbial, a closer look at his lawyers uncovers a complex and ambiguous construction that questions their status as Victorian gentlemen. These characters offer a complex psychology that often surpasses their minor or stereotypical role within various Dickens novels, for they act not only as alter egos for different protagonists, but also exhibit behaviour that reveals their abusive attitude towards women. This book argues that Uriah Heep lays the groundwork for Dickens's conception of the lawyer in his later works. The close analysis identifies a strong anxiety about the uncertain social status of professionals in the law, but also unfolds a deeply troubled attitude towards women. The novels express admiration for the lawyer's professional power, yet the individual characters are simultaneously exposed as ungentlemanly. This discussion shows that the lawyer in Dickens is a difficult creature not only because of his professional ambition and social transgression, but also because of his intrusion into the domestic space and into the lives of others, especially women.

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