

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

Introduction: Imagining Readers	1
1 Jane Austen's Other Endings	18
2 <i>Little Dorrit's</i> Complaint	53
3 Reading Ahead in <i>Adam Bede</i>	85
4 <i>Middlemarch's</i> Negations	115
5 <i>Daniel Deronda</i> and Us	141
Afterword: The Reader's Part from Virginia Woolf to Relatability	167

Notes 177

Bibliography 197

Index 217

INTRODUCTION

Imagining Readers

(Another open secret that everyone knows and no one wants to: the immense amount of daydreaming that accompanies the ordinary reading of a novel.)

—D. A. MILLER, *THE NOVEL AND THE POLICE*

It may seem strange, but it is the fact, that the ordinary vulgar vision of which Mr Casaubon suspected him—namely, that Dorothea might become a widow, and that the interest he had established in her mind might turn into acceptance of him as a husband—had no tempting, arresting power over him; he did not live in the scenery of such an event, and follow it out, as we all do with that imagined “otherwise” which is our practical heaven.

—GEORGE ELIOT, *MIDDLEMARCH*

ANYONE WHO has ever read a novel knows that the images that form in a reader’s mind in the course of reading contain more than the fictional characters and events as they are described by the author. In *The Novel and the Police* (1988), D. A. Miller suggests that literary critics are reluctant to admit this “open secret,” which he embeds in a footnote, in parentheses: “(Another open secret that everyone knows and no one wants to: the immense amount of daydreaming that accompanies the ordinary reading of a novel.)”¹ Both writers and readers recognize that such “daydreaming” can take innumerable forms, from “stopping as you read . . . because of a flow of ideas, stimuli, associations,” as Roland Barthes describes, to “plung[ing] into the tale in our own person,” in Robert Louis Stevenson’s words.² Sometimes an author directs readers to visualize on their own: to “make up from bare hints dropped here and there,” as Virginia Woolf puts it,³ or to picture a real-life beloved in

the place of a fictional character, as numerous novelists from Laurence Sterne to Wilkie Collins do. In these varied ways, readers imagine things other than the words on the page while reading a novel. Novelists, critics, and readers know how “ordinary” such imagining is (a word both Miller and George Eliot use in the epigraphs above), but as Miller implies, literary criticism as a discipline lacks productive ways of talking about this unscripted imagining. Such acts of imagining otherwise—imagining initiated in the reader’s mind, of things *other* than the words on the page—are the subject of this book.

Like Miller, Eliot acknowledges how continually imaginative we are as beings, no less while we read novels. In *Middlemarch* (1871–72), referring to Will Ladislaw’s unusual *lack* of such fantasies, Eliot expresses her characteristic mix of sympathy and critique for what “we all do” in inventing our own more desirable alternatives to what is. She suggests we live in thrall to the “tempting, arresting” “scenery” of our own imaginings, to a point that can comprise an entire “imagined ‘otherwise’ which is our practical heaven.”⁴ Unfortunately for Eliot, she found her own readers engaged in imagining her novels “otherwise,” wishing for the realist worlds she portrays to be more idealized. She satirizes this readerly desire for the fictional world to be “just what we like” within the realist manifesto that interrupts her novel *Adam Bede* (1859).⁵ In fact, Eliot belongs to a host of nineteenth-century British novelists who engage with how readers bring their own continuations, speculations, and substitutions to bear on fictional worlds an author has created.⁶ As the numbers of both novels and readers—and with them, the novel’s cultural presence—grew exponentially during the nineteenth century, authors like Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope, Thomas Hardy, and others were characterizing novel readers in letters, prefaces, and within their novels as engaged in an “immense amount” of their own imagining.

Densely imagined, with highly directive narrators, Victorian realist novels have long been thought to depict self-contained worlds that were brought into being solely by their authors. We have missed how many of these writers engage reader-initiated imagining in constructing their novel-worlds.⁷ At times, these directive writers attempt to limit independent invention. In *Little Dorrit* (1857), Dickens instructs “patience” as he fends off readers of his serially published novels, who formed their own versions of the narrative between installments. He writes about Mr. Merdle’s strange behavior, “Had he that deep-seated recondite complaint, and did any doctor find it out? Patience.”⁸ At other times, however, these writers openly appeal to the universal tendency to fill out the “scenery” of imagined alternatives as a potentially enriching part of novel

reading. In *Adam Bede*, Eliot enlists the reader's private store of images to personalize a scene of Adam and Dinah falling in love: "That is a simple scene, reader. But it is almost certain that you, too, have been in love" (537). Though known for their intrusive or didactic narrative voices, these novelists were fully alive to the aesthetic possibilities generated by independent minds.

Novel readers always have and always will form images of their own while reading novels, while the discipline of literary criticism has relegated and continues to relegate readers' independent imaginations. In the nineteenth century, novelists sought to incorporate and make use of imaginative acts that occur within readers' minds, outside of a novel's pages, to an unprecedented extent. Despite long-standing critical efforts to exclude readers' imaginations from both criticism and the classroom, identifying an appreciation for the reader's imagination within the very novels that literary studies has made canonical underscores how inextricable readers' free-floating imaginations are from literary history. I concentrate on the period from the 1850s through the 1870s, when the triple-decker novel increasingly codified into formulas of plot, character, and description. Novelists like Dickens and Eliot were concerned with how ubiquitous novel reading was forcing readers' imaginations into conventional paths. As the novel began to gain literary prestige, a host of novelists and critics began to recognize that the mixed activity of reading, inventing, and daydreaming could be engaged in aesthetically constructing a novel's world in a more capacious way.⁹ Although they are known for meticulous efforts to manage readers' affects and expectations, nineteenth-century realist authors ceded authorial control for the sake of capturing authentic readerly experience in their novels. In fact, over the course of the nineteenth century the novel became an aesthetically elevated form not by eschewing the common reader's tendency to imagine alternatives but by increasingly using syntax and prose style to engage that tendency all the more.

The Critical Problem of Readers' Minds

The novel reader's imagination has long gotten a bad rap. We lack productive models to account for the creative, unscripted work the novel reader's imagination does when it is not strictly envisioning the described fictional world.

From the novel's early history and continuing subtly into recent literary criticism, readers' creative imaginations—especially those of female readers—have regularly been dismissed as either too weak or too powerful. The eighteenth-century rhetoric about novel readers' minds is well known: on the one hand,

overly weak imaginations lead to passive absorption or clichéd and imitative action. Writing in 1817, Coleridge chides “the devotees of the circulating libraries” for their supposed indulgence in a weak form of imagining: “I dare not compliment their pass-time, or rather kill-time, with the name of reading. Call it rather a sort of beggarly Day-dreaming, during which the mind of the dreamer furnishes for itself nothing but laziness, and a little mawkish sensibility.”¹⁰ On the other hand, eighteenth-century antinovel critics worried about powerful imaginations, which were supposed to be dangerously erotic and potentially subversive. It is striking that early critics of the novel assumed that readerly imagining would be stimulated in one of these two directions and spill over beyond the fictional world as it is described in the text. As my first chapter examines, recent critics have been belying these myths of a naive, uncritical, eroticized female novel reader by portraying women’s novel reading as an intellectually rigorous exercise.¹¹ Recasting novel reading as actively interpretive and critical, however, has had the effect of denying, rather than reclaiming, the ways that novel reading can stimulate a productively creative play of mind.

Two hundred-plus years on, the modern discipline of literary criticism has subtly continued to characterize the reader’s imagination as, on the one hand, too powerful. With New Criticism, English developed into an academic discipline in the early twentieth century by suppressing the reader’s personal associations, affects, and imaginative excursions—by characterizing these subjective additions as disruptive, anti-academic forces that needed to be reined in. Q. D. Leavis reacted against the practices of ordinary Victorian readers and dismissed their reading as motivated by affect and imagination rather than aesthetic analysis, by “the voluptuous day-dream instead of the dispassionate narration of a complicated plot.”¹² As impersonalizing protocols took over literary criticism, I. A. Richards even coined a technical-sounding term (“mnemonic irrelevances”) for the “irrelevant personal associations” that interfere with the proper practice of criticism. What followed was a long history, from New Criticism to surface reading, of critical approaches devoted to minimizing the free associations that “common” readers bring to bear on a text.¹³ Even today, after Deidre Lynch has shown how foundational affective labor is to literary study, lively debate about “surface,” “distant,” and other critical modes of reading has continued to devalue and minimize the unscientific subjectivity inherent in professional methods of literary interpretation. For instance, Sharon Marcus and Stephen Best, in their 2009 introduction to the practice they call “surface reading,” describe how a critic should try “to correct for her critical subjectivity” and seek “to occupy a paradoxical space of minimal critical agency.”¹⁴

By contrast, within Victorian and novel studies, readers' imaginations have been portrayed as almost too compliant with a text, another form of weak imagination. As reader-response criticism gained prominence in the 1970s with the work of Wolfgang Iser, literary texts were seen as constructing and addressing an "implied" reader who passively thinks as a directive author wills. Under the influence of Michel Foucault in the 1980s and 1990s, Victorian novels especially appeared to envision the reader's unresisting submission to the text. Garrett Stewart's *Dear Reader: The Conscripted Audience in Nineteenth-Century British Fiction* (1996) epitomizes this view of authors from Jane Austen to Oscar Wilde directing the reader's sympathies, schooling the reader's morals, and training the reader's cognitive processes through "the relentless micromanagement of reaction" enacted in direct address and analogous scenes of reading.¹⁵ The joint legacies of reader-response criticism and a "hermeneutics of suspicion" have arguably prevented us from seeing a Victorian novel's addressed "reader" constructed as an independent figure, one who is capable of imagining as freely as some of the real readers these novelists encountered. Most recently, a wealth of interdisciplinary studies has argued that readers follow instructions in showing how novelists draw on a scientific understanding of cognitive processes in order to evoke discrete effects.¹⁶ In *Dreaming by the Book* (1999), Elaine Scarry uses contemporary research about perception in order to identify ways that literary authors instruct their readers in the act of imagining so that the reader's visualized images have the solidity of actual perception. While this approach identifies how space is made within fiction for the reader's faculties, we have not yet accounted for ways readers' imaginations act independently: how they add to and replace what an author describes, and participate in ways that are unscripted or even directly contradict what is happening in the novel. In fact, recent studies of the shifting levels of consciousness that operate in reading fiction has further helped us understand—and see that Victorian writers understood—how readers pay partial or discontinuous attention to their books.¹⁷ We need a theoretical model to account for a "reader" implied in the text whose imagination is independent of the author's control, whose reader-initiated additions, such as daydreaming, identifying, conjecturing, and making comparisons with real life, are neither dictated nor included but left room for in works of fiction.

Whether it is even possible to find evidence of readers' imaginations—and, if so, which readers' imaginations—has long been a topic of debate among historians of reading who, until recently, largely sought out reading as a material and social, rather than psychological, phenomenon. The mental

experience of the individual reader has long been “the ever-elusive holy grail of the historian of reading,” as Heather Jackson puts it.¹⁸ Victorian material culture is filled with artifacts, narratives, and dramas spun off of freshly published fiction that give some indication of how readers added imaginatively to authored fictional worlds.¹⁹ What we have yet to recover fully is how authors at the time *responded* to the historical reading habits we have been able to map. At times with the market in mind, novelists tried to anticipate the tastes and tendencies of readers in aggregate, even if only by recognizing the unpredictability of readers’ minds. “’Tis an incalculable animal the general Reader!,” George Henry Lewes wrote to Eliot’s publishing house about sales of the early books of *Middlemarch*, which he hoped would “in time haul in the general public.”²⁰

That the novel genre prompts readers to imagine possibilities for alternative *plots* has been repeatedly discussed as one of the defining features of the genre. John Plotz describes how the novel as a form generates an extraordinary number of possible outcomes, keeps the reader in a state of “ongoing uncertainty,” and ultimately, in a kind of letdown, realizes only one of many possible paths.²¹ More recently, counterfactual acts of imagining that are explicitly carried out in literary texts have gained broad currency as constructions that raise moral, philosophic, and epistemological questions.²² In Andrew H. Miller’s work on unled lives, a character’s “optative” mode of thinking about how else his or her own life might have turned out functions to highlight consequential moral choices.²³ Other critics of nineteenth-century literature have identified a variety of ways in which the period’s writers use counterfactual propositions, seeing them as a marker of the provisionality, contingency, and interest in probability that pervade Victorian thinking, particularly scientific thinking.²⁴

Literary studies has had fewer concrete ways of describing how readers independently imagine what Eliot calls “the *scenery* of . . . an event,” by which she means the images readers generate, not only narrative outcomes they project. Initially in the nineteenth century, alternative plotting preoccupied writers, because they knew plotting preoccupied readers: my first chapter focuses on the alternative possible endings that Austen includes within half of her finished novels; my second chapter shows Dickens leaning in to his readers’ confusion about how his multiplot novels fit together and, counterintuitively, seeking to prolong this uncomfortable uncertainty in constructing *Little Dorrit*. Yet a subtle trajectory emerges over the nineteenth century, as psychological theories develop in depth and the novel gains prestige as an art form, in which authors increasingly prompt readers to the capacious imagining of alternative images rather than the formulaic prediction of events; moreover,

these authors increasingly do so through syntactic means. The particular novels I examine stand out for how visibly they show authors grappling with the challenge of engaging readers' independent minds by using the formal elements that make up the novel, both structurally and stylistically. Eliot, whose career-long frustrations with plot-obsessed readers are well known, makes direct appeals to readers to use their power of memory in *Adam Bede* before embedding the imagining of alternative images in the grammar of her last two novels. In *Middlemarch*, it is syntax—the frequent use of negation—that stimulates the reader to imagine more than one possibility for the fictional world nearly at the same time. As I show, reading such a novel consequently feels layered, three-dimensional, and what we tend to call “literary.”

The discipline of literary studies continues to lack a term or terms to define those moments in a novel when an author acknowledges the unscripted, independent imagination that “accompanies the ordinary reading of a novel.” Robyn Warhol’s concept of “disnarration” applies to what the *author* describes as not happening, something not belonging to the realized fictional world.²⁵ Ellipsis describes a moment in a text when a narrator claims to leave something to the reader’s imagination. But critical discussion of ellipsis tends to stop with the vague phrase that a reader “fills in” those narrative gaps. (With what? I think, when I read that phrase.) We have no technical way of referring to what readers meaningfully invent, envision, and integrate into their experience of the fictional world—which is, after all, infinitely variable and unknowable.

I focus on moments we *can* identify concretely: when novelists render or address readers as independent imaginers who mentally add, associate, and conjure alternatives to the author-created world. Using an array of rhetorical moves, the writers I examine refer to what a reader might imagine other than what is described on the page. They use direct address to invite a reader to summon private memories, use negation to describe what a character does not look like, or depict characters engaged in specific forms of imagining they observed in their readers, like speculation. Alternative imagining is thus recognized in the text and becomes one of the narrator’s tools. Like free indirect discourse, description, summarizing a character’s thoughts, or using perceptual cues, making space for the many individual acts of imagination in a reader’s mind constitutes a valued technique for getting the reader invested in a three-dimensional, realistic imagined world.²⁶

What I identify are narrative techniques that can be seen developing along with, and conveying, authors’ changing attitudes toward readerly imagining. When Austen’s narrator explicitly proposes how else the novel could have

ended, or Eliot's narrator directly invites readers to daydream about their own past loves, these novelists anticipate and parry their readers' characteristic imaginative thrusts and pull these external images into the novel's orbit. As case studies, these novels can suggest a more collaborative way of viewing the author-reader relationship than has been typical in literary studies. Henry Jenkins, foundational critic of fan studies, emphasizes the contentious aspect of Michel de Certeau's analogy of reading as a kind of poaching, "an ongoing struggle for possession of the text and for control over its meanings."²⁷ Nineteenth-century British fiction in particular has been described as exerting a high level of control over the reader's imagination. But control is too simple a formulation. I show how these authors stage both struggle *and* collusion with their readers about the illusion the author has set up, which the reader is participating in creating. They allow us to further develop a dialectical model of novel writing and reading, one that highlights authors' engagement with and dependence on the separate and ongoing imaginative lives of real readers.

Nineteenth-Century Readers, Authors, and Critics

Literary studies is overdue for seeing *nineteenth-century* readers' imaginations in a different light.²⁸ Victorian studies of reading have repeatedly featured dramatic rhetoric from conservative skeptics of the novel about the "vice" or "disease" of novel reading.²⁹ We have yet to reconcile these negative images with what we know about publication practices like serialization, which gave readers ample time in which to generate narrative possibilities between installments.³⁰ In other words, we have yet to understand how present and determining the active imaginations of readers were for nineteenth-century British authors, for a variety of material, cultural, and intellectual reasons—sometimes present as an irritating reality but also as a desirable aid in reading fiction.

Nineteenth-century anxieties about the freedom with which the public could read novels have been well traversed.³¹ What the commercial growth of the fiction market also heightened was a sense of imaginative entitlement toward the fictional worlds readers encountered. As Ian Duncan has suggested in writing about the popularity of the *Waverley* Novels in the early nineteenth century, the novel as a genre came into existence not because of patronage but because there was an increasingly large audience who would in some form or another pay to read it. Thus, he says, "a novel *belongs* to the market and the reading public convened there" and "lays itself open to imaginative appropriation by different communities and interests and for divergent intentions."³²

While we cannot reconstruct what any individual reader, at any time, pictures while reading *Jane Eyre* (1847), as Duncan suggests, we can trace some subjective attitudes toward novels and speculate about why these attitudes are particularly present in a given historical moment. Across a range of both material and imaginative experiences that the nineteenth-century reading public commonly had with novels—from borrowing circulating library books to resisting unhappy endings—we find an attitude repeated in the way that readers encountered fiction and in how authors and critics thought they ought to approach it. Concerns about quixotic readers simply imitating what they read gave way to depictions of readers having their own subjectivities. Those subjectivities were interdependent with the fiction they read, resulting in a complex, imaginative intermingling.

The intermingling of novels with daily life began on a physical level, with innovations in publishing and book distribution, which fostered a dynamic in which novels moved physically and psychically in and out of the flow of readers' daily lives. For example, the high cost of books meant that from the eighteenth century onward, an increasing number of readers paid an annual fee to borrow, rather than buy, their books from subscription libraries. Mudie's Select Library provided more middle-class readers with the books they read than any other venue did between its founding in 1842 and the end of the century.³³ Mudie's encouraged what was, for them, a profitable dynamic of fiction cycling in and out of the Victorian household. Typical references to Mudie's in print took forms that emphasized the sense of books in constant motion—the “box from Mudie's,” the vans coming and going to and from New Oxford Street—while Mudie's itself advertised that it offered “a constant succession of the principal books of the season.”³⁴ The period's other commercially successful innovation in book distribution, W. H. Smith's bookstalls in railway terminals, marketed novels as something one read in the temporal and physical space between destinations. W. H. Smith's bookstalls similarly, if more subtly, conveyed a sense of fiction as something that traveled physically as well as psychologically throughout Victorian life.

Publication in parts, one of the most recognized publishing trends that made fiction more accessible in the nineteenth century, meant that novels intermingled creatively in readers' lives as well. Periodicals and serials literally circulated in and out of a reader's daily, weekly, or monthly experience; during the temporal gaps between installments, readers could think, talk, and read about a number of fictional worlds even as they were going about their own lives.³⁵ In a lecture published in 1870, Trollope claims to speak for “everyone

from the Prime Minister down to the last appointed scullery maid” in describing how novels of all kinds have become integrated into readers’ minds until, “Our memories are laden with the stories which we read, with the plots which are unravelled *for us*, and with the characters which are drawn *for us*.”³⁶ As Trollope intimates, a sense that fiction was available for imaginative appropriation drew strength from numbers, from the very wealth of fiction that was being published for all kinds and classes of readers. According to Trollope, readers infused everyday experience with the contents of novels and projected their real experiences into those works of fiction.

This participatory way of viewing literary reading was not new, but did gain strength with the expansion of novel reading in the nineteenth century. Deidre Lynch has shown meticulously how literature became “something to be taken personally by definition” beginning in the late eighteenth century.³⁷ Lynch shows how, in the early nineteenth century, worshipped authors and grateful readers had clearly defined, hierarchical roles to play. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the personalization of literary reading had developed, along with the growth of novel readership, to the point that authors regularly grappled with readers, like the one who wrote to ask Eliot “not [to] be angry with me for having ventured to finish the novel in my own way.”³⁸ Novelists can be seen guiding readers within their novels in ways that strikingly accord with the tendencies—especially the irksome tendencies—of real nineteenth-century readers. Eliot complained in a letter to her publisher about “that infinite stupidity of readers who are always substituting their crammed notions of what ought to have been felt for any attempt to recall truly what they themselves have felt under like circumstances.”³⁹ Within her novels, she models wrongheaded imagining through characters who daydream egoistically about their own futures, while the narrator invites the novel’s addressed reader to compare a fictional scene with his or her own poignant, real-life experiences. Such alignments between the tendencies of real and constructed readers may be found in many periods. In using formalist strategies, we can recover a historicized understanding of the “reader” whom novels address, which would otherwise remain unimaginable.

Thus, nineteenth-century British novelists offer a guide to recasting novel reading as a shared imaginative exercise, in which the allegedly separate functions of author and reader overlap, sometimes collaboratively and sometimes in a thorny way. Even within the same essay, nineteenth-century authors can alternately idealize and express frustration with novel reading as “the exercise of a generous imaginativeness,” in Hardy’s words. Hardy was especially aware of readers’ capacity to shape a work of fiction to their own specifications, for

good and ill. In “The Profitable Reading of Fiction,” he rails against “mentally and morally warped” readers for misinterpreting his frank critiques of conventional morality—a reception that eventually caused him to give up writing fiction. Yet in the same essay, he describes a quite different and desirable outcome that can result from the reader’s absorbing, interpreting, and mentally adding to the novel’s pages. The aim of reading for pleasure, he says,

should be the exercise of a generous imaginativeness, which shall find in a tale not only all that was put there by the author, but he it never so awkwardly, but which shall find there what was never inserted by him, never foreseen, never contemplated. Sometimes these additions which are woven around a work of fiction by the intensive [*sic*] power of the reader’s own imagination are the finest parts of the scenery.⁴⁰

Hardy describes the process of reading as completing the novel: the fictional world is cocreated, albeit sometimes “awkwardly,” by the author and by mental images the work sparks in the reader’s mind. The sense of a reader’s determining agency is similarly present for Stevenson, who writes in “A Gossip on Romance,” “Something happens as we desire it to happen to ourselves; some situation that we have long dallied with in fancy, is realized in the story with enticing and appropriate details. Then we push the hero aside; then we plunge into the tale in our own person . . . and then, and then only, do we say we have been reading a romance.”⁴¹ For Stevenson the figurative waywardness that the story encourages in the reader’s mind (“we push the hero *aside*”) is crucial to transforming a simple story into a particular aesthetic form, romance. What Hardy and Stevenson describe is how absorption in a book is a stimulus to creativity.

The visualizing that Hardy and Stevenson describe, however, differs from a form of readerly creativity, anticipating plot, which became a nuisance for nineteenth-century authors of long and often serialized novels. Hardy describes the reader’s imagination adding to the novel’s “scenery” and images “woven around” the original tale adding to its artistry; Stevenson refers to “enticing and appropriate details” fleshing out a situation the reader has more casually “dallied with” in fantasy. Novelists and critics from the time repeatedly extol the pleasures of engaging deeply in a novel by fleshing out its images, not its sequence of events. One Victorian reviewer criticizes Dickens for not offering this means of engagement: “Mr Dickens never trusts to a vigorous sketch, or a few characteristic touches; he accomplishes his purpose by minute description and copious dialogue, and leaves no work to the imagination of the reader.”⁴² Mid-Victorian critics repeatedly judge novels based on how

hospitably they invite the reader's separate imagination to add to the fictional world. A critic finding fault with the newest sensational fiction in 1860 uses similar terms to praise earlier novelists like Austen:

Nothing indeed is ever felt in the highest spirit of art, which is altogether real. Something must always be left for the reader's imagination to supply; and imitation ceases to please when it assumes reality and rejects the aid of that imagination which is the surest way of obtaining sympathy. [. . .] The imagination does the work to which it is invited, and it does it best when most left to itself.⁴³

Repeatedly, nineteenth-century novelists and critics describe an author's imagined world as incomplete, as requiring the "aid" or "additions" (in Hardy's term) of a reader's imagination, which emphatically acts "best when most left to itself." Some of these critics were also expressing concerns about the mindlessness of reading sensation novels and an increasing body of less educated readers who, as Collins put it, have yet to become attentive to "the delicacies and subtleties of literary art."⁴⁴ Thus, critics at the time can be found distinguishing literary quality (novels that attain "the highest spirit of art") from those that do not on the basis of the aesthetic invention that a novel stimulates in the reader's mind. "For the full enjoyment of fiction," another critic outlined in 1853, "the imagination must be in a productive mood; the figures then start into life, and the various aspects of nature flit through the mind, forming a background to the living scene."⁴⁵ Even before the sensation novel heightened the perceived need to shield "literary" fiction from the encroachment of mindless, "popular" reading, Victorian critics were making such distinctions based not on a work's intrinsic qualities but on the nature of the reading experiences the work induced. In doing so, these critics were also articulating in detail numerous ways the creative, "productive" exercise of the reader's autonomous imagination enhances novel reading.⁴⁶

For some of the period's most influential and seemingly controlling novelists and critics, then, the reader's fertile imagination was an important resource, full of potential, that could add literary, aesthetic layers to the novel-world. Victorian authors who were concerned about reading narrowly for *the* plot encourage readers in various ways within their novels to read capaciously for the plots or the scenery. These novelists use formal structures that invite readers to construct a multiplicity of mental images that both are and are not part of the realized novel-world. They do so pedagogically, trying to engender a more rigorous, analytical use of imagination than narrativizing or wish-fulfilling fantasies. They figure the reader who imagines otherwise as

hyperliterate and hyperaware, able to navigate among layers and weigh the feasibility of different options. Having the mental flexibility and patience to discern probabilities and make choices are laid out as vital skills for, as well as effects of, reading complex realist fiction. Eliot in particular was well versed in current theories about the independent, unconscious, and uncontrollable nature of imagination. She and other novelists reacted with concern to how ubiquitous novel reading seemed to be schooling readers' imaginations to take prescribed, linear forms—forms that did not reflect what either imagination or real life is like, and thinned out a novel's imaginative world. Moreover, realist authors knew that reading their novels was not always a pleasurable experience. Serial publication has largely been seen as creating pleasurable opportunities to exercise imagination, but Victorian novelists were aware of readers' dissatisfaction with a novel's slow progress, prosaic outcome, or "repulsive" characters, as they worked to direct readers away from purely comfortable forms of imagining. The discomfort inherent in reading a realistic novel is one we will see in numerous forms throughout nineteenth-century fiction.

For these reasons the book takes a deep dive into Eliot, who has long been seen as an extreme case of the bossy, didactic Victorian narrative voice that intrudes on the reader's imagining in order to control it. Deeply aware of and anxious about her audience, Eliot often prompts readers' personal imagining, for the professed aim of realist fiction to capture truthful experience is at stake when these authors seek to enlist some portion of the reader's private fantasy life within the realm of the novel itself.⁴⁷ Many definitions of "realism" or realist art include a sense of representational depth: what is depicted on the surface, and known to be fictional, is a means of accessing further layers of experience that are not fictional.⁴⁸ In prompting readers to form a continuous multiplicity of images, rather than a single, static image, Eliot develops the lifelike, three-dimensional depth of the fictional world. In her essay "The Natural History of German Life," Eliot contrasts the effect of one-dimensional "generalization" with the expansive effect of "a picture of human life":

The greatest benefit we owe to the artist, whether painter, poet, or novelist, is the extension of our sympathies. Appeals founded on generalizations and statistics require a sympathy ready-made, a moral sentiment already in activity; but a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is a part from themselves, which may be called the raw material of moral sentiment.⁴⁹

Eliot's preoccupation with expanding an audience's imaginative capacities beyond the "ready-made" informs her entire novelistic career. For Victorian realist

novelists generally, as we know, moral good and aesthetic appreciation are interdependent. In Eliot's description of *how* aesthetic feeling results in moral sentiment, art causes one to "attend to what is a part from themselves," or makes a recipient's gaze more panoramic or multidimensional, as opposed to the one-note, narrow view of the "trivial" or "selfish" person. In other words, carrying out the social and moral values of Victorian fiction depends on expanding the reader's capacity for imagining several alternatives at the same time.

In tracing how, as the nineteenth century progresses, novels increasingly seek to incorporate the reader's independent imagining into their formal construction, *Imagining Otherwise* ultimately offers an alternative literary-historical narrative, and one that may be counterintuitive. Novelists writing in the early twentieth century are usually associated with expecting readers to envision more than what is directly represented by the words on a novel's pages, to do what Virginia Woolf calls "the reader's part in making up from bare hints dropped here and there."⁵⁰ I show how nineteenth-century novelists use direct address, verb tense, negation, and other rhetorical gestures to encourage the formation of multiple, alternate images that go beyond plot alternatives. They engage aesthetically with their readers' imagining for its capacious resistance to teleological and formulaic narratives, a capaciousness that increasingly marked the novel as an elevated art form. Well before modernism, novelists were treating the reader's capacity for creative projection as having the potential to be a real and intricate part of the increasingly cultivated art of fiction.

This particular historic preoccupation with readerly imagination constitutes a specific dynamic in the history of the novel but also helps to unlock the complexity of similar dynamics when they appear in other literary periods. In the social and material revolution taking place now, online accessibility has brought heightened attention to readerly independence, and it has become increasingly difficult to separate institutionally recognized truths from unauthorized contributions, as the growing field of fan studies has shown. These questions have become pressing in our classrooms as today's readers and viewers increasingly assess works of art based on their own ease in imagining the represented experiences: in other words, how "relatable" the work is.⁵¹ Our twenty-first-century grappling with audience participation, welcome or not, gives insight as well as urgency to understanding how earlier novelists responded to the ways readers insinuated their own imaginations into authored texts.

Imagining Otherwise began as a book about Victorian authors. In teaching Austen's novels, however, I was struck by her elaborating other possible endings

and *not* leaving them to the reader to imagine independently. At the time Austen was writing, novel-inspired imagining was seen as frivolous and dangerous, a defining trait of women's reading. Beginning with eighteenth-century commentaries on novel reading, I show a striking shift in how various literary readers describe the realistic pleasures of novel reading in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Persuasion* (1818)—all novels in which a heroine suffers intensely from unreciprocated love and is not rewarded with an overly romanticized marriage—Austen uses alternate endings to chide her reader into more rigorous imagining. Austen's appropriation of "serious possibilities" into a component of realism offers a glimpse of a broader trend toward novelists enlisting readers' independent imaginations in aesthetically complex ways.

By midcentury, however, reader-directed imagining—particularly about plots—had become a source of frustration for Victorian novelists. Dickens's own creative process was filled with anxiety and strain, so he sympathized when Victorian readers who engaged in open-ended imagining between serial installments were eager to be done with uncertainty and confusion about the innumerable ways his novels' convoluted plots might come together. However, in *Little Dorrit* Dickens designs an extreme experiment in drawing out the not always pleasurable imaginative process by which a multiplot novel comes together as a whole in the reader's mind. Dickens's awareness of being dependent on readers whose imaginations were subject to the constraints of living in an industrialized, mid-nineteenth-century world reveals a more vulnerable, less controlling side to what is still seen as his "Inimitable" authorship.

Chapter 3 is devoted to Eliot, who was both optimistic about readers' capacity for imagining as an aesthetic resource and frustrated when she saw how this capacity was being used. Within her well-known directive, narratorial presence, Eliot uses a range of strategies at various formal scales to preserve what she knew was the fluid, capacious nature of imagination. From early in her career, Eliot was keenly aware of the conflict between her realist aims and the fantasies of readers who wished for particular plot outcomes. In *Adam Bede*, she tries to direct this fertile readerly invention away from wish fulfillment and enlist it in developing sympathy. Eliot at once chides readers for forecasting their favorite characters' futures and lyrically invites readers to import their own memories into fictional scenes, to imbue her realist fiction with authentic affect. Our ingrained perception of Eliot's controlling narratorial presence, like Dickens's, has concealed her tenuous dependence on readers to imagine her novels as *she* wished.

Eliot's later novels reveal how even at the level of prose style, she was concerned that novelistic conventions were narrowing her readers' imaginative reception of fiction. In *Middlemarch* Eliot experiments with how syntax influences a reader's creative engagement with a novel. Chapter 4 focuses on her incessant use of negation, of referring to things only to identify them as not being part of the novel's realized world. Within Eliot's sentences, what a character does not know, or what a character does not look like, becomes entangled with what does exist within the contours of the fictional world. These habitual negations call upon readers to continually practice developing two or more contradictory images at once. Over the lengthy experience of reading Eliot's prose, the imagining of alternatives becomes a nearly unconscious habit in reader's minds and results in a more capacious, multidimensional, realistic reading practice.

What happens when readers do not *want* to imagine a novel's world is the subject of chapter 5. Eliot expected reflexively that anti-Semitic Victorian readers would feel repulsion toward the Jewish elements of her last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), and within the novel, characters repeatedly repulse others with whom they could identify. This repulsion, rejection, and exclusion both within and toward *Daniel Deronda* puts Eliot's characteristic use of the first-person plural pronoun "we" in an unusual predicament. "We" is an imaginative projection of beings outside the novel who share emotions, behaviors, and experiences, a communitarian ideal threatened by readers unwilling to envision Jewish people as part of "all of us." Eliot's career-long concern with imaginative limitation overlaps with an increasing awareness, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, that novel reading did not necessarily lead to inclusive compassion. Rather, Eliot recognized that novel reading could stimulate virulently negative affective experiences—including discomfiting, though potentially productive, self-reflection.

Nineteenth-century writers imagined the reader's daydreams and distracting thoughts as part of reading an artistic novel, making them part of the history of the novel as an art form. The afterword follows this unscripted imagining forward into twentieth-century literary criticism and the twenty-first-century classroom. Focusing first on Virginia Woolf, the afterword recasts the imperative to envision more than what is directly represented by a novel's words as underwritten by a longer arc of recognition than modernist writers admit. The book ends in the classroom, where recognizing the prehistory of readerly imagining may help us to stimulate more nuanced ways of talking about the readerly imagination and subjectivity that undergirds both students' engagement with

literature and, though critics have long sought to deny it, our criticism. Readers today are embracing the increasingly sophisticated creative opportunities that new participatory media affords. Whether in the form of fan fiction or “reliability,” the individual, common reader’s imagination has become a determining part of our current literary environment. Its checkered and overlooked history deserves a closer look.

INDEX

- Abercrombie, Nicholas, 178n19
affect theory, 175
Ahmed, Sara, 192n3
Allison, Sarah, 192n29
alternative plots: Austen and, 6, 7, 14–15, 18–19, 26, 30–32; in Austen's *Mansfield Park*, 37–45; in Austen's *Persuasion*, 45–51; in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, 32–37; Dickens and, 117; Eliot and, 16, 51; and realist fiction, 15, 19. *See also* counterfactuals; imagining otherwise
Anderson, Amanda, 81
antinovel criticism, 3–4, 19–22
anti-Semitism, 16, 141–46, 148–49, 155–56, 160–61, 192n20
Aristotle, 22, 154
Armstrong, Isobel, 128, 143, 148, 192n14, 193n39
associationist psychology, 57–58, 79–80, 99
Atherton, Carol, 170
Austen, Cassandra, 37–38
Austen, Henry, 37–38
Austen, Jane, 18–51; and alternate endings, 6, 7, 14–15, 18–19, 26, 30–51; and contemporary novels, 26–27, 179n5; critical responses to, 21, 24, 27, 39, 45; and daydreaming, 48; direct address to her readers, 5, 27; *Emma*, 24, 28–29, 31, 39; and imagination, 23, 26, 28–32, 34, 36–37, 39–41, 44–50; *Mansfield Park*, 18, 28–30, 37–45, 48; *Northanger Abbey*, 25–27, 44; *Persuasion*, 18, 25, 37, 45–51; and the pleasures of reading, 25–32; *Pride and Prejudice*, 28, 30, 38–39, 48; and readers of her work, 23, 25–31, 37–38; and realism, 19, 24, 28–30, 39, 44–46, 48; *Sense and Sensibility*, 18, 32–37, 39; and wish fulfillment, 26, 32–33, 36, 40, 43, 48–49
authorial control: Dickens and, 15, 53, 57; Eliot and, 13, 15, 86, 94, 97, 118; nineteenth-century novelists and, 3, 12; readers' independence of, 5, 8
Auyoung, Elaine, 177n16, 190n17

Bain, Alexander, 101
Barthes, Roland, 1, 178n21
Beer, Gillian, 26, 90, 123, 189n82, 190n10
Benson, James, 191n39
Bernard, Catherine, 183n14
Best, Stephen, 4
Bion, W. R., 177n7, 186n7
Blackwood, John, 85–89, 91, 94–95, 107, 127, 192n20
Bodenheimer, Rosemarie, 95, 96, 120, 126
book distribution, 9
books, forms of, 23
Booth, Wayne, 167
Bradbury, Nicola, 68
Brantlinger, Patrick, 178n31
Bray, Charles, 143
Brodie, Laura Fairchild, 27
Brooks, Peter, 25, 34, 43, 74, 76, 77, 87
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, *Aurora Leigh*, 130–31
Burdett, Carolyn, 191n1

- Burton, Robert, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 171
- Buss, Robert, *Dickens's Dream*, 54, 55, 56
- Butler, Marilyn, 181n48
- Butt, John, 183n2
- Buurma, Rachel Sagner, 173
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord, 20
- Carlisle, Clare, 190n15
- Carlyle, Jane, 85
- Carpenter, William, 100
- Chase, Cynthia, 194n54
- Christoff, Alicia Mireles, 98, 143, 177n7, 186n7, 192n10
- Clark, Anna, 194n43
- Clifford, Anne, 171
- cognitive science, 5, 175
- Cohn, Elisha, 81, 91
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 4
- Collins, Wilkie, 2, 12
- common reading, 4, 167–76
- conventional plots. *See* formulaic plots
- counterfactuals: Austen and, 44; Eliot and, 117; in nineteenth-century literature, 32; scholarship on, 6; in twentieth-century literature, 37, 178n22. *See also* alternative plots
- Cvetkovich, Ann, 195n19
- Cynicism, 192n8
- daily life, novel reading and, 9–10, 22, 24–25
- Dallas, E. S., 99–102, 108, 111, 136; *The Gay Science*, 100
- Dames, Nicholas, 58, 131, 167, 188n39
- Dames, Richard, 195n2
- daydreaming: Austen and, 48; Dickens and, 82; Eliot and, 8, 10, 86, 91–93, 103, 108–9, 111; imagination likened to, 100–101; by readers, 1, 3, 5, 16, 19–21, 176; Woolf and, 172. *See also* imagination; imagining otherwise; wish fulfillment
- de Certeau, Michel, 8, 178n32
- De Gay, Jane, 169
- Deresiewicz, William, 46
- Dickens, Charles, 53–84; and alternative plots, 117; and authorial control, 15, 53, 57, 94; *Bleak House*, 53, 68, 76, 78–79, 183n5; critical responses to, 11, 57, 61, 63–65, 67–70, 185n48, 185n50, 185n56; *David Copperfield*, 59–63, 67, 73, 84, 117; and daydreaming, 82; direct address to his readers, 54, 75–77; “Discovery of a Treasure Near Cheapside,” 60; *Dombey and Son*, 65; *Great Expectations*, 74, 77, 117; *Hard Times*, 58–59, 80; and the imagination, 53–71, 79–84, 183n4; *Little Dorrit*, 2, 6, 15, 53, 58–59, 64, 67, 70–84, 183n5, 185n67; *Martin Chuzzlewit*, 63, 69–70; *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, 56; *Nicholas Nickleby*, 64; *Our Mutual Friend*, 53, 67, 185n48, 185n56; *The Pickwick Papers*, 66; and plot, 6, 15, 53, 64–65, 74, 185n50; and psychology, 57–58, 183n14; and readers of his work, 2, 54, 56–57, 65–69, 75–77, 183n5; and serialization, 15, 53–54, 57, 65–70; *A Tale of Two Cities*, 184n24; and wish fulfillment, 82
- direct address to readers: Austen’s use of, 5, 27; Dickens’s use of, 54, 75–77; Eliot’s use of, 3, 7, 8, 13, 15, 90, 96–97, 104–5, 111, 118–28, 142, 162–63
- disgust. *See* repulsion
- disnarration, 7
- Doré, Gustave, 56
- Du Bosc, Jacques, 20
- Duncan, Ian, 8–9
- Eliot, George: *Adam Bede*, 2, 3, 7, 15, 30, 85, 92–99, 102–13, 118, 120–21, 132, 134–35, 144, 157–58, 162, 165, 172; and alternative plots, 16, 51–52; and authorial control, 13, 15, 86, 94, 97, 118; critical responses to, 89, 106, 110, 117–18, 131, 137–40, 144–46, 158, 163, 191n39, 191n42; *Daniel Deronda*, 16, 86–88, 92, 102, 103, 113–14, 141–66; and daydreaming, 8, 10, 86, 91–93, 103, 108–9, 111; direct address to her readers, 3, 7, 8, 13, 15, 90, 96–97, 104–5, 111, 118–28, 142, 162–63;

- and forecasting, 85–95, 98, 112, 117, 136; and the imagination, 13, 86, 94–112, 118–38, 142–44; and imagining otherwise, 1, 2, 6–8, 10, 13, 164–66; “In Which the Story Pauses a Little,” 126; on language and the mind/emotions, 128–32, 139; “Leaves from a Note-Book,” 138; “The Lifted Veil,” 92; “Looking Inward,” 131; *Middlemarch*, 2, 6, 7, 16, 86, 87, 89–93, 115–40, 163, 173; *The Mill on the Floss*, 51, 90–91, 182n93, 186n7; moral nature of her work, 89, 120, 134, 155, 158, 187n18; “The Natural History of German Life,” 13, 99, 128, 129; and plot, 117, 119, 130–31; and psychology, 99, 128, 136, 143; and readers of her work, 2, 7, 10, 13, 15, 51, 66, 85–112, 118–20, 131–32, 134–35, 137, 141–45, 156–64, 176; and realism, 86, 93, 105–6, 120, 131, 172, 190n8; *Romola*, 86, 92, 95, 130, 145, 186n3; *Scenes of Clerical Life*, 88, 94; and serialization, 85–88, 91, 93–95, 127, 187n18; “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists,” 92–93, 120, 125; “Story-telling,” 98, 127; and sympathy, 15, 86, 91, 101, 102, 105–6, 108–11, 114, 133, 141–45, 149–56, 158, 160, 163–64, 176, 191n1, 191n39, 192n10; *Theophrastus Such*, 131; unauthorized sequels of works by, 88, 190n7; we/us in fiction of, 142–43, 156–64; and wish fulfillment, 15, 86, 88, 90, 92–94, 110–14, 136, 138 ellipsis, 7
Ellis, Steve, 171
everyday. *See* daily life
- fan fiction and fan studies, 8, 14, 17
Farina, Jonathan, 190n9
Favret, Mary, 45, 46, 182n84
Felski, Rita, 146, 152, 165, 193n28
Fielding, Henry, 22, 62
Fildes, Samuel Luke, “The Empty Chair, Gad’s Hill—Ninth of June 1870,” 55, 56
Flint, Kate, 169, 172, 180n11
Ford, George, 185n50
forecasting, Eliot’s fiction and, 85–95, 98, 112, 117, 136. *See also* wish fulfillment
- formulaic plots, rejection of: Austen and, 19, 27, 33, 36–37, 44, 181n48; Eliot and, 51–52, 118, 127, 130, 137–39, 145; in nineteenth-century literature, 3, 6, 14, 32
Forster, John, 54, 56, 63–65, 67, 69, 74
Foucault, Michel, 5, 173
free indirect discourse, 7, 33, 42, 46, 50, 51
Freud, Sigmund, 121, 152, 183n14
- Gallagher, Catherine, 29, 37, 44, 117, 178n22
Galperin, William, 21, 44, 180n17
Gao, Timothy, 177n9
Garrett, Peter, 66, 73–74, 78, 185n45
Glavey, Brian, 175
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, 131
Goodlad, Lauren, 184n43
Graham, Peter, 182n70
Gray, Donald, 187n18
Green, Laura, 150
Greiner, Rae, 101, 192n10
Grossman, Jonathan, 71
Gwendolen: A Sequel to George Eliot’s “Daniel Deronda,” 88
- Haight, Gordon, 99
Halsey, Katie, 25–26, 43
Hardy, Barbara, 117, 118, 137, 142, 156, 183n4, 190n8, 194n51
Hardy, Thomas, 2, 10–11
Harvey, W. J., 95, 189n80
Haywood, Eliza, 180n8
Heffernan, Laura, 173
Hegel, G.W.F., 128, 193n39
Hemans, Felicia, “The Image in Lava,” 186n8
Henchman, Anna, 193n42
Henson, Louise, 183n12
Hertz, Neil, 189n80, 192n4
Horn, Laurence, 119, 123
Household Words (magazine), 58, 60, 62
Hughes, Kathryn, 189n79
Hughes, Linda, 68, 87
Hunt, Leigh, 64
Hunter, J. Paul, 22

- identification, in Eliot's fiction, 142, 146,
149–51, 164, 193n28, 194n43
- imaginability, 23, 29–30
- imagination: associationist model of, 57–58,
79–80, 99; Austen and, 23, 26, 28–32, 34,
36–37, 39–41, 44–50; daydreaming likened
to, 100–101; Dickens and, 53–71, 79–84,
183n4; Eliot and, 86, 94–112, 118–38,
142–44; of Eliot's characters, 132–38;
language's effect on, 128–32; nineteenth-
century theories of, 13, 58, 86, 99–101,
136; novels and, 23, 24; purported dangers
of, 19–22; Romanticism and, 23–24;
sympathy associated with, 12, 101–2,
108–9, 111, 133, 143–44, 154; unconscious
actions of, 13, 86, 100–104, 106; Woolf and,
167–73. *See also* daydreaming; imagining
otherwise; psychology
- imagining otherwise: Austen's engagement
with, 5; authors' engagement with, 2–3,
6–8; contemporary students/readers
and, 16–17; criticisms of, 3–4, 10–11, 15,
19; critics' praise of, 11–12; defined, 2;
Dickens's engagement with, 2–3; Eliot's
engagement with, 1–3, 6–8, 10, 13, 164–66;
formal structures of the novel conducive
to, 7, 12, 14, 15–16; Hardy's engagement
with, 10–11; literary criticism's engagement
with, 3–7; literary criticism's neglect of,
1–3; modes of, 7; morality in relation to,
6, 14, 37, 43–44, 49; nineteenth-century
literature and, 8–14, 20–25; novelistic
conventions' restriction of, 3, 16; novels
and, 6; power of, 4, 11; serial fiction and,
66–70; weakness of, 4–5; Wilde's engage-
ment with, 5. *See also* alternative plots;
daydreaming; readers
- imitation, 21–22, 101
- Iser, Wolfgang, 5, 171
- Jackson, Heather, 6, 23
- Jaffe, Audrey, 94, 150, 179n47, 191n2
- James, Henry, 87, 167; *The Portrait of a Lady*,
164
- Jeffrey, Francis, 65, 75
- Jenkins, Henry, 8
- Jews. *See* anti-Semitism
- Johnson, Claudia, 47, 146, 193n25
- Johnson, Samuel, 21–22, 168–69
- Kaplan, Fred, 64–65
- Keen, Suzanne, 149
- Klancher, Jon, 21
- Knight, Edward Austen, 28
- Knight, Fanny, 45
- Knight, Louisa, 37–38
- Knox, Maria Palacios, 178n28
- Kreisel, Deanna, 30
- Kurnick, David, 186n3, 191n42
- Langan, Celeste, 109
- Leavis, F. R., 146, 193n25
- Leavis, Q. D., 4, 146
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 100
- Levine, Caroline, 66, 133, 179n35, 186n16,
187n35
- Levine, George, 86, 179n48
- Lewes, George Henry, 6, 30, 57, 86, 88–89,
91, 99, 109, 187n18, 192n20; *The Physiology
of Common Life*, 99; *Problems of Life and
Mind*, 105
- libraries, 9, 26
- litotes, 116, 133
- Locke, John, 57, 100
- Longhurst, Brian, 178n19
- Lund, Michael, 68, 87
- Lupton, Christina, 22, 31
- Lynch, Deidre, 4, 10, 21, 23, 26, 49, 150
- Magazine* (published by Blackwood), 88,
94–95
- Main, Alexander, 88–90, 131, 132, 135, 138,
187n23; *The Wise, Witty, and Tender Sayings
of George Eliot*, 88
- Marcus, Sharon, 4
- Marcus, Steven, 187n39
- Martin, Carol, 88, 95
- Matus, Jill, 183n14

- Maudsley, Henry, *The Physiology of Mind*, 106
Mead, Rebecca, 88–89, 107, 174–75, 187n23
Milbanke, Annabella, 28
Mill, James, 57
Mill, John Stuart, 58, 100
Miller, Andrew H., 6, 32, 53–54, 113, 117,
 189n82, 190n8
Miller, D. A., 1–2, 46, 176
Miller, J. Hillis, 78, 122–23
Milton, John, 133
mind. *See* imagination; psychology
Mitchell, Rebecca, 194n47
Mitford, Mary Russell, 30
Molesworth, Jesse, 181n64
Moore, John, *Zeluco*, 112
morality: Eliot and, 89, 120, 134, 155, 158,
 187n18; imagining otherwise in relation
 to, 6, 14, 37, 43–44, 49
Morris, Mowbray, 183n4
Morson, Gary Saul, 18
Mozley, Anne, 106
Mudie's Select Library, 9
Muñoz, José Esteban, 151

negation, in Eliot's prose, 16, 115–40; com-
 plexity and depth of life and the world
 suggested by, 116, 123–25, 128, 140; com-
 plexity of inward life suggested by, 117,
 125–27; effects of, on reader's experience,
 118–19, 122–28, 140; and Eliot's characters,
 132–38
New Criticism, 4
New Yorker (magazine), 174
Ngai, Sianne, 150, 155, 194n48
North American Review (magazine), 88
novels: criticisms of, 21–22, 26; and imagi-
 nation, 23, 24; imagining otherwise
 associated with, 6, 10; nineteenth-century,
 8–10; purported dangers of, 20–21; readers'
 daily lives and, 9–10, 22, 24–25

O'Gorman, Francis, 182n93
O'Hara, Frank, 175
Oliphant, Margaret, 164–65

omniscient narrators, 94, 98, 102
Orwell, George, 116, 185n48
Oulton, Carolyn W. de la L., 70, 183n5

Pater, Walter, 170
Perkins, David, 24
Phillips, Natalie, 22
Picker, John, 190n7
Pinch, Adela, 25, 50, 182n87, 193n25
Piper, Andrew, 23, 25
Plato, 130
pleasures of novel reading, 11, 15, 19, 22, 25–32
plot: Dickens and, 6, 15, 53, 64–65, 74, 185n50;
 Eliot and, 117, 119, 130–31; negation's effect
 on reader's sense of, 119; uncertainty
 and confusion as components of, 53–79.
 See also alternative plots; formulaic plots
Plotz, John, 6, 69, 131
Plumptre, John, 37
poetry, 23–24, 27
Price, Leah, 88
psychology: associationist, 57–58, 79–80, 99;
 Dickens and, 57, 183n14; Eliot and, 99–102,
 128, 136, 143; language and, 128–32; Lewes
 and, 86, 99, 105; Woolf and, 172. *See also*
 imagination
publishing, 9, 23

Radway, Janice, 194n58
Raines, Melissa, 128
reader-response criticism, 5
readers: Austen and her, 23, 25–31, 37–38;
 compliance of, 5; correspondence of, with
 authors, 86–87; daily lives of, 9–10, 22,
 24–25; Dickens and his, 2, 54, 56–57,
 65–69, 75–77, 183n5; Eliot and her, 2, 7,
 10, 13, 15, 51, 85–112, 118–20, 128, 131–32,
 134–35, 137, 141–45, 156–64, 176; fiction's
 resonance with/mirroring of the experi-
 ences of, 13, 19, 22, 25, 34, 39, 45, 61–62,
 86, 93, 96–98, 104–7, 132, 162–64; histori-
 cal relationship of authors and, 171;
 independence of, 5, 14, 99, 169–70, 180n17;
 negative feelings experienced by, 13, 16, 43,

- readers (*continued*)
66, 71, 143, 152, 164–66, 175; nineteenth-century, 8–14, 21, 168; serialization's effect on, 8–11, 13, 65–70, 87, 91, 93–94; solitary, 171; sympathy felt by, 150, 176, 189n82; uncertainty and confusion as the experience of, 53–79; weakness of, 20–21; Woolf and her, 168–73. *See also* daydreaming; direct address to readers; forecasting; imagining otherwise; reading; wish fulfillment; women readers
- reading: common, 4, 167–76; Dickens's conception of, 61–63; in eighteenth century, 19–20, 22; as everyday activity, 9–10; history of, 5–6, 8–12, 22–25; mental experience of, 5–6; personalization of, 10; purported dangers of, 20–21. *See also* pleasures of novel reading; readers
- realism: alternative plots and, 15, 19; Austen and, 19, 24, 28–30, 39, 44–46, 48; author-reader relationship as important in, 2–3, 14; dissociation as component of, 194n47; Eliot and, 86, 93, 105–6, 120, 131, 172, 190n8; imaginability and, 29–30; and imagination, 24; imagining otherwise as response to, 2; imitation and, 21–22; readers' response to, 13; representational depth as component of, 13; uncertainty and confusion of life as theme in Dickens's practice of, 54, 69–71, 74–77, 79
- recusatio*, 27
- Reed, Edward S., 188n65
- reliability: Austen's fiction and, 19, 29–30; contemporary students/readers and, 14, 17, 168, 173–76, 186n8; defined, 179n51; Eliot's fiction and, 86
- repression, 152
- repulsion, Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* and, 141, 146–48, 152–56, 164–66
- Retzsch, Moritz, *The Chess-Players*, 160, 194n56
- reverie. *See* daydreaming
- Richards, I. A., 4, 175–76
- Richardson, Samuel, *Clarissa*, 86
- Richter, David, 20
- Rohrbach, Emily, 45, 182n89, 182n90
- Romanticism, 23–24
- Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 106, 109, 189n79
- Rozema, Patricia, *Mansfield Park*, 43
- Rylance, Rick, 58
- Salisbury, Laura, 174
- Scarry, Elaine, 5, 96, 116, 130, 188n51
- Schor, Hilary, 77, 185n67
- Schultze, Clemence, 194n56
- Scott, Walter, 24–25
- serialization: Dickens and, 15, 53–54, 57, 65–70; Eliot and, 85–88, 91, 93–95, 127, 187n18; and readers' experiences, 8–11, 13, 65–70, 87, 91, 93–94
- Silver, Brenda, 171
- Simons, Judy, 26
- Small, Helen, 183n6, 192n8
- Smith, Adam, 101, 149–50, 152, 192n10
- Southam, Brian, 26–27
- Spacks, Patricia, 20, 25
- Spencer, Herbert, 99, 100
- Spinoza, Baruch, *Ethics*, 143
- Stauffer, Andrew, 186n8
- St Clair, William, 20, 180n10
- Stephen, Leslie, 159
- Sterne, Laurence, 2, 22; *Tristram Shandy*, 97
- Stevenson, Robert Louis, 1, 11
- Stewart, Dugald, 57
- Stewart, Garrett, 183n4, 188n42; *Dear Reader*, 5
- Stiles, Stefanie, 175
- Stone, Harry, 184n21
- Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 142, 159
- Sully, James, 101
- Sun, Emily, 194n1
- surface reading, 4
- sympathy: Austen and, 33, 42; Dickens and, 67; Eliot and, 15, 86, 91, 101, 102, 105–6, 108–11, 114, 133, 141–45, 149–56, 158, 160, 163–64, 176, 191n1, 191n39, 192n10; imagination as source of, 12, 101–2, 108–9, 111, 133, 143–44, 154; readers' feelings of, 150, 176, 189n82; theories of, 149–50; Woolf and, 173

- Tanner, Tony, 46
Tillotson, Kathleen, 183n2
The Times (newspaper), 91, 102
Tondre, Michael, 178n24
Trollope, Anthony, 2, 9–10, 44, 124, 140, 194n59; *Barchester Towers*, 96; *The Small House at Allington*, 164–65

Uglow, Jenny, 109
uncertainty, in Dickens's fiction, 53–79
unconscious mental activity, 13, 57, 86, 100–104, 106, 136, 183n14, 188n65

Vrettos, Athena, 57, 184n15

Warhol, Robyn, 7
Warner, Michael, 174
Warner, William, 20–21, 180n8
Welsh, Alexander, 187n39
Whately, Richard, 24
White, William Hale, 107
W. H. Smith (bookseller), 9

Wilde, Oscar, 5
Winter, Sarah, 56, 183n6
wish fulfillment: Austen and, 26, 32–33, 36, 40, 43, 48–49; Dickens and, 82; Eliot and, 15, 86, 88, 90, 92–94, 110–14, 136, 138; novelists' response to readers', 12. *See also* daydreaming; forecasting
women, agency of, 44, 49–50
women readers: benefits for, 26, 44; Eliot and, 93, 95, 96, 104, 110–11, 126; negative opinions about, 3–4, 15, 19–20, 26, 93, 95, 96, 104, 110–11
Woolf, Virginia, 1, 14, 16, 167–73, 176, 195n12; *First Series*, 169; "How Should One Read a Book?," 170, 172; *Orlando*, 167, 169–70; "The Reader," 171–72
Wordsworth, William, 109; "Simon Lee," 23–24
Wright, Daniel, 191n30

Yeazell, Ruth, 43

Zunshine, Lisa, 127