Notes to the Introduction

1 See Nathan Hensley’s summation in ‘Figures of Reading’, Criticism 54, no. 2 (2012): 329–42, especially 329–30. ‘Should the reading we do be close or distant? Deep or superficial? Fast or slow? And is literature information or something, well, better?’


3 Rita Felski, Uses of Literature (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009), 76.


5 Brigid Lowe, Victorian Fiction and the Insights of Sympathy: An Alternative to the Hermeneutics of Suspicion (London: Anthem Press, 2007), 12.


For Deleuze, however, the term refers more specifically to the reality of states of potential, rather than the sense of pretended, artificial, or mediated reality explored here and in the concept’s broader usage in cultural studies (as I go on to explain). See Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (London: Routledge, 2000), 35–36.

Jean-Marie Schaeffer, *Why Fiction?,* trans. Dorrit Cohn (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010), x: ‘[V]irtualisation is by no means an invention of the digital era [...] every mental representation is a virtual reality. There is thus definitely a link between the virtual and fiction; being a particular modality of representation, fiction is at the same time a specific form of the virtual’. See also Elizabeth A. Grosz’s argument in *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 77. ‘[T]he virtual reality of writing, reading, drawing or even thinking [...] loads the presence of the present with supplementarity, redoubling a world through parallel universes, universes that might have been’, as quoted in Peter Otto, *Multiplying Worlds: Romanticism, Modernity, and the Emergence of Virtual Reality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 6.


Plotz, *Semi-Detached*, 16.


30 As Richard Walsh similarly argues, ‘What we understand, feel, and value [in fiction] may be ultimately grounded in the abstract and the general, but it is not in general terms that we experience understanding, feeling, or valuing it. Fiction enables us to go through that process, for the sake of its experience’. *The Rhetoric of Fictionality: Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2007), 51.


33 Dickens, *Letters 1840–1841*, 2: x, original emphasis.

34 Lesley Anne Goodman, ‘Indignant Reading’ (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013), 26, original emphasis.


38 Dickens, 135–36.


Notes to Chapter One


2 The most formalised version of this idea is known as the possible worlds theory of fiction, which uses the tools of modal logic to explain how we refer concretely to hypothetical, counterfactual, and fictional states of affairs. The narratological scholarship around this theory aims to solve other kinds of problems – of narrative semantics and typology – than this book’s focus on the novel form and its criticism, but the two share an interest in the ontology of fictional language. See Marie-Laure’s Ryan’s bibliographical survey in ‘Possible Worlds in Recent Literary Theory’, *Style* 4, no. 26 (1992): 528–53; Ruth Ronen’s study *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). For a more recent discussion, see Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘From Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds: Ontological Pluralism in Physics, Narratology, and Narrative’, *Poetics Today* 27, no. 4 (2006): 633–74.


5 Rose quotes a range of examples, from a nineteenth-century joiner’s son: ‘characters in the book have always been historical characters with me, just as real as Caius Julius Caesar [. . .] I believed every word it contained. I never saw a novel before. I did not know the meaning of fiction.’ The minister Joseph Barker: ‘I doubted nothing that I found in books [. . .] I had no idea at the time I read Robinson Crusoe, that there were such things as novels, works of fiction, in existence.’ See Rose, 92–102; for the philosophical confusion of Sherlock Holmes’s fictional existence in factual London, see David Lewis, ‘Truth in Fiction’, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1978): 37–46.


Both of the brothers’ islands lack a longitudinal coordinate because the universal Prime Meridian (the zero point of longitude) would not be established in Greenwich until 1884.


Putting aside the ongoing contentiousness of his wider history of the form, Watt’s account incisively identifies the novel’s fictional informativeness as ‘its most distinctive literary qualities’: ‘the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is a full and authentic report of human experience […] with such details of the story as the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of the times and places of their actions […] presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms’. The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding (London: Pimlico, 2000), 32–33. As Michael Seidel has argued, despite the numerous revisions and criticisms on Watt’s model of realism, ‘no one, to my knowledge, has ever convincingly displaced Watt’s notion of formal realism as a dominant characteristic of narrative during the early eighteenth century, particularly in England’. See The Man Who Came to Dinner: Ian Watt and the Theory of Formal Realism, Eighteenth-Century Fiction 12, no. 2–3 (2000): 194.


‘Memoir of Hartley Coleridge’ in Hartley Coleridge, Poems, ed. Derwent Coleridge, vol. 1 (London: Edward Moxon, 1851), xlii. Further references to this volume and edition will be incorporated into the text.


Jameson, Commonplace Book, 135.

Jameson, Commonplace Book, 132. As Patricia Meyer Spacks has suggested of the eighteenth century, ‘privacy is a peculiarly emphatic issue for […] women, both within fiction (e.g., Clarissa) and as writers of fiction, poetry, and diaries’. Gendered implications of interiority, education, and sociality clearly intervene in Jameson’s expression of this practice. See Privacy: Concealing the Eighteenth-Century Self (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 25.


Jameson, Commonplace Book, 135.
Their close succession led an anonymous reviewer of Jameson’s *Commonplace Book* to recognise her account of play as the example of a known category, being ‘like Hartley Coleridge with his dreamland Euxuria, like Thomas De Quincey with his dreamland Gombroon’. ‘Mrs Jameson’s Common-Place Book’, *The New Monthly Magazine* 103 (1855): 196.

See Michele Root-Bernstein’s account of this study in *Inventing Imaginary Worlds: From Childhood Play to Adult Creativity Across the Arts and Sciences* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Education, 2014), 69–73.

‘What, if any, effect [...] the elaboration of the imaginary land, may exert on character formation and habits of adjustment in adulthood is at present unknown’. The studies that follow might be seen as a taking-up of this challenge. Leta S. Hollingworth, *Children Above 180 IQ (Stanford-Binet): Origin and Development* (London: George G. Harrap & Company, 1942), 275.


Her study also produces a tabled list of historical cases, which organises the names and dates of children alongside columns on their ‘Imaginary World’ and ‘Adult Endeavor’. See Root-Bernstein, *Inventing Imaginary Worlds*, 211–15.


Although I describe this as a transmission of narrative convention and form from colonial adventure to play, Freedgood has argued that the fictionality of the realist novel involves ‘an ontological imperialism’ mimetic of (and involved in) other kinds of imperial relationality in this period. Freedgood, ‘Fictional Settlements’, 394.


Gaskell, *Letters*, 398. In the next chapter, I suggest Gaskell’s ambivalences are grounded in a model of Brontë’s realism, and of women’s novel-writing more generally, which she seeks to defend.
40 See the account given in Ratchford, The Brontes’ Web of Childhood, 65.
41 After receiving William’s publication about the secret tails of his Gombroonians, De Quincey writes: ‘Overwhelming to me and stunning was the ignominy of this horrible discovery’ (AS 52).
42 ‘Then, around the turn of the nineteenth century, there was a last change – last in the sense that I think we are still in it, not last in the sense of perfect or final. This change is what I’m calling fiction – works that make no bones about their invention despite being set within contemporary reality. (This last trait clearly separates fiction from the ‘fanciful’ genres of the fairy tale or the oriental tale, as well as from allegory.)’ Nicholas D. Paige, Before Fiction: The Ancien Régime of the Novel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 26.
44 Gallagher’s study on the alternative history genre makes this distinction, against the narratological models of Ryan and Dolezel, arguing that ‘we don’t read most novels as counterfactual conjectures; we intuitively make a distinction between the kind of hypothetical exercises involved in counterfactuals and mere fictionality.’ Gallagher, ‘What Would Napoleon Do?’ 333. This chapter argues, however, that ‘mere fictionality’ is more distinct and complicated than Gallagher acknowledges.
46 Dickens, David Copperfield, 48.
47 Watt, Rise of the Novel, 19.
51 Saler has also identified this moment of conceptualisation – the invention of explicitly imaginary facts – as an encounter between a Weberian model of modern disenchantment, exemplified here by Bentham’s purge of non-actual or non-literal truths, and a re-enchantment of the world and everyday life through forms of make-believe. By using paracosmic play as the signal phenomenon, I locate this moment earlier in literary history than Saler’s focus on the fictional worlds of Arthur Conan Doyle, H. P. Lovecraft, and J. R. R. Tolkien. See Saler, As If, 8–11.
52 Jason Pearl, Utopian Geographies and the Early English Novel (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014), 11, 137.
53 Malkin, Father’s Memoir, 69.
54 See Terence Cave’s argument that ‘The paratextual material [of Utopia] seems designed to foster the illusion of Utopia as a new or new-found island, but this is especially true of the map and the alphabet [. . .] [which] is of course essential to the way the work as a whole commutes between the ‘ideal’ world of Utopia and the lived reality of the early sixteenth century.’ Thomas More’s Utopia in Early Modern Europe: Paratexts and Contexts (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 21–22. For a discussion of belief and evidence in Utopia, see Emmanouil Aretoulakis, 'The Prefatory/Postscript Letters to St. Thomas More’s Utopia: The Culture of ‘Seeing’ as a Reality-Conferring Strategy’, Journal of Early Modern Studies, no. 3 (2014): 91–113.
56 Pearl, Utopian Geographies, 117.
57 Pearl, Utopian Geographies, 11.
59 Trollope writes that ‘This had been the occupation of my life for six or seven years before I went to the Post Office’, (AA 33) which he joined as a clerk in 1834 – placing the start of play around 1827 – and he later notes that ‘Up to this time [1843] I had continued that practice of castle-building of which I have spoken’ (49), making roughly sixteen years of castles in all.
60 Jameson, Commonplace Book, 131.
62 Cohen and MacKeith, Development of Imagination, 10–11.
63 Root-Bernstein, Inventing Imaginary Worlds, 41.
66 Hillis Miller similarly articulates the intuitive sense that the novel ‘give[s] the reader access to a realm that seems to exist apart from the words, even though the reader cannot enter it except by way of the words’. On Literature, 54.
67 Paige, Before Fiction, 31–32.

Notes to Chapter 2

1 Gaskell, Letters, 398.
2 Elizabeth Gaskell, The Life of Charlotte Bronte, ed. Elisabeth Jay (London: Penguin, 1997), 69 Further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text.
3 That Eliot’s essay, published during the writing of the Life, singles out Brontë and Gaskell (alongside Harriet Martineau) as women writers who do commit to these qualities of excellence may have given ballast to Gaskell’s associations of Brontë’s writing with manual and domestic labour, with the ‘patient analysis of cause and effect’, and with her own prose. George Eliot, ‘Silly
4 Eliot, ‘Silly Novels by Lady Novelists’, 301–2; Eliot’s focus on difficulty, both of novel-writing and of the feminine accomplishments indulgently represented in novels, reflects an antipathy to art’s deprecation into facile recreation. Her critique is embodied by Gwendolen Harleth, who wishes ‘I could write books to amuse myself [. . .] How delightful it must be to write books after one’s own taste instead of reading other people’s! Home-made books must be so nice’. Gwendolen discovers, in the same chapter, that her soprano is nothing extraordinary in the judgement of a trained musician. Daniel Deronda, ed. Graham Handley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 39.  
5 Q. D. Leavis, Fiction and the Reading Public (London: Chatto & Windus, 1978), 237.  
7 Lowe, Insights of Sympathy, 82.  
8 Nabokov, Russian Literature, 106.  
10 Tolkien, Tolkien on Fairy-Stories, 42.  
12 Elder Olson, ‘“Sailing to Byzantium”: Prolegomena to a Poetics of the Lyric’, The University of Kansas City Review 8, no. 3 (1942): 216–17; quoted in Abrams, 284.  
14 Nabokov, Russian Literature, 106.  
17 Brontë, The Letters of Charlotte Brontë, 98, emphasis added.  
20 Pavel, Fictional Worlds, 56.  
21 Meg Harris Williams, ‘Book Magic: Aesthetic Conflicts in Charlotte Brontë’s Juv...
30 Jane Moore, ‘Problematising Postmodernism’, in *Critical Dialogues: Current Issues in English Studies in Germany and Britain*, ed. Isobel Armstrong and Hans-Werner Ludwig (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag Tübingen, 1995), 139. The agent of this act, in Moore’s analysis, is unclear; something which ‘texts are compelled to perform’ due to the inherent nature of fictional language. My own approach is to understand novelists as exploiting the authorial power afforded by fictional realities.
38 Nabokov, *Russian Literature*, 106.
42 Barthes, *The Rustle of Language*, 52.
44 See Bock’s similar reading of this moment: ‘For young Charlotte, to make books was to stand in the epistemological space where the actual and the imaginary overlap, creating a third reality in the storytelling situation’. *Storyteller’s Audience*, 31.
48 Dames, ‘On Hegel’.

Notes to pages 44–53

https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108938518.009 Published online by Cambridge University Press
50 Anne Thackeray Ritchie, Chapters from Some Memoirs (London: MacMillan and Co., 1894), 64.
51 Gaskell, Letters, 400–401.
54 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 54.
55 Charlotte Brontë, The Professor, ed. Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 221. Further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text.
56 Dames, ‘On Hegel’.
57 Leavis, The Reading Public, 188.
58 Leavis, The Reading Public, 189–90.
60 Glen, Imagination in History, 57–58.
61 Glen, Imagination in History, 58.
62 Leavis, The Reading Public, 188.
63 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 54.
64 Levine, Realistic Imagination, 15; Brontë, The Professor, 2003, 31.
66 Levine, Realistic Imagination, 15.
67 Levine, Realistic Imagination, 15.
68 Glen, Imagination in History, 50.
69 Glen, Imagination in History, 46.
70 Glen, Imagination in History, 35.
71 Sally Shuttleworth, Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 24; for the textual history of Self-Help, and particularly its development throughout Smiles’s editorship of The Leeds Times (a newspaper Brontë was known to have read), see Tim Travers, Samuel Smiles and the Victorian Work Ethic (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987), 76–80.
72 Samuel Smiles, Self-Help; with Illustrations of Character and Conduct (London: John Murray, 1859), 277–78.
73 Sedgwick, Touching Feeling, 131, original emphasis.
74 Shuttleworth, Victorian Psychology, 127.
75 Shuttleworth, Victorian Psychology, 146–47.
Notes to Chapter Three

2 James, *Literary Criticism*, 1:1331–32.


In narratology, this is more usually framed as a problem of communication and pertinence (rather than, as I suggest here, a mechanism for narrative), or a way of typologising genres of fiction by degrees of implied incompleteness. See Marie-Laure Ryan, ‘Fiction As a Logical, Ontological, and Illocutionary Issue’, *Style* 18, no. 2 (1984): 129–31; see also Doležel’s reviews of this.

As I argued in the first chapter, to add an imaginary soldier to a historical military campaign, or posit an extra address (221B) to those which actually exist on London’s Baker Street, is exemplary of the novel’s distinctive, utopian fictionality.

Lewis, ‘Truth in Fiction’, 42; see a similar argument in Nicholas Wolterstorff’s variation on a critical commonplace: ‘We shall never know how many children had Lady Macbeth in the worlds of Macbeth [. . .] because there is nothing of the sort to know’. Works and Worlds of Art (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 133; cited by Doležel as an exemplary case of ‘The property of incompleteness [which] implies that many conceivable statements about literary fictional worlds are undecidable’. ‘Mimesis and Possible Worlds’, 486.

Miller, Discontents, ix.


Miller, Discontents, 365; for a similar model of narrative desire as moving from insufficiency towards totality, see Peter Brooks, Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 94. ‘[W]e are able to read present moments – in literature and, by extension, in life – as endowed with narrative meaning only because we read them in anticipation of the structuring power of those endings that will retrospectively give them the order and significance of plot’.

Anthony Trollope, The Last Chronicle of Barset, ed. Helen Small (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 729. Further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text.

Anthony Arthur, ‘The Death of Mrs. Proudie: “Frivolous Slaughter” or Calculated Dispatch?’, Nineteenth-Century Fiction 26, no. 4 (1972): 478; such criticism recurrently identifies as anomalous or idiosyncratic behaviours which novelists in this period clearly had in common. My broader argument is to reintegrate these anomalies into a coherent practice of fiction. ‘Perhaps it is only Thackeray, among the great, who seems to find a positively wilful pleasure in damaging his own story [. . .] insisting in so many words on his freedom to say what he pleases about his men and women and to make them behave as he will’. Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (London: Jonathan Cape, 1954), 87–88.


Kincaid, Anthony Trollope, 3.

Arthur, ‘Death of Mrs. Proudie’, 482.

Arthur, ‘Death of Mrs. Proudie’, 484.

Arthur, ‘Death of Mrs. Proudie’, 480. While I emphasise this here as a practice of literary production, in the next chapter on Thackeray’s novel series, I examine the reading experience engendered by such intertextual connections of a fictional world.


Sutherland, ‘Trollope at Work’, 439.

James, *Tragic Muse*, xi.


Miller, *Burdens of Perfection*, 95.


As Betty Cannon puts it, one falls into Sartre’s definition of bad faith ‘if I take one or both of two positions about reality: If I pretend either to be free in a world without facts or to be a fact in a world without freedom’. *Sartre and
Psychoanalysis: An Existential Challenge to Clinical Meta-Theory (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 46. The experience of an explicitly subjective world with consistent, objective facts represents the strategic redeployment of these operations of bad faith in an authentic act of play.

Wall, Trollope and Character, 34.


ApRoberts, Artist and Moralist, 43. It should be noted that ApRoberts argues strongly against Trollope’s arbitrariness or artificiality, which would constitute ‘an unethical manipulation of data’ in the moral situations he constructs. My argument, of course, is precisely that this manipulation constitutes an ethical process.

Miller, Burdens of Perfection, 94.

Quoted in Ratcliffe, ‘Episodic Trollope’, 61.


Michie, ‘Rethinking Marriage’, 155.

Sussman, ‘Optative Form’, 493.


On the extent to which the difference between these two characters is a gendered one, see Michie’s argument that ‘Thinking for all Trollope characters, but especially for women, happens under a set of social and generic constraints’ that are particularly palpable for middle- to upper-class women of Alice’s position. ‘Rethinking Marriage’, 155; see also Margaret F. King’s argument on Trollope’s attitude towards contemporary ‘learned ladies’ bringing female decision-making into new scrutiny, in ‘Certain Learned Ladies: Trollope’s Can You Forgive Her? And the Langham Place Circle’, Victorian Literature and Culture 21 (1993): 307–26; for Sussman, ‘Gender is among the variables that cause the surface details between the two novels to differ […] but the underlying condition is the same […] it is this universality of the optative[.]’ ‘Optative Form’, 502.

Wall, Trollope and Character, 63.

Sussman, ‘Optative Form’, 496.

Miller, Burdens of Perfection, 95, 98.


For a full account of Trollope’s working process, see Mary Hamer, Writing by Numbers: Trollope’s Serial Fiction (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

Notes to Chapter Four

2 Chesterton, On Dickens, 15:404.
3 Chesterton, On Dickens, 15:403.
4 Chesterton, On Dickens, 15:403.
5 Chesterton, On Dickens, 15:403.
6 James, Essays on Literature, 1:1352.
10 James, Tragic Muse, xi.
11 James, Tragic Muse, xi.
12 Chesterton, On Dickens, 15:404.
13 Tillotson, Thackeray the Novelist, 1-2.
14 James, French Writers, 2:41.
15 Chesterton, On Dickens, 15:403.
21 Gaskell, Letters, 602.
22 James, Essays on Literature, 1:977.
25 Henrietta Eliza Vaughan Stannard, née Palmer, also wrote under the pseudonyms ‘John Strange Winter’ and ‘Violet Whyte’, and was also referred to by her husband’s name, Mrs Arthur Stannard.
27 James, French Writers, 2:41.
28 Allingham, ‘Visits to Aldsworth’, 134.
29 Auyoung, When Fiction Feels Real, 97.


40 Winyard, “May We Meet Again”, para. 3.


43 Plotz, ‘Serial Pleasures’, para. 27.


46 Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 1:34.

47 Brontë, *Villette*, 105.


53 Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 24, original emphasis; Root-Bernstein, *Inventing Imaginary Worlds*, 23.

54 Allingham, ‘Visits to Aldsworth’, 134.


59 ‘Farewell to Angria’ in Brontë et al., *Tales*, 314. Further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text.


65 Barter, 36.
70 Dames, *Physiology*, 109.
73 Levine, *Forms*, 125; see also Levine’s previous work in *The Serious Pleasures of Suspense* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003).
75 Levine, *Forms*, 108.
76 Levine, *Forms*, 128.
85 Thackeray, ‘Proposals’, 238.
88 Levine, *Forms*, 130.

Thackeray, Roundabout Papers, 272.

Thackeray, Roundabout Papers, 272–73.

Thackeray, Roundabout Papers, 273.

Thackeray, Roundabout Papers, 273.

Thackeray, Roundabout Papers, 272.


Said, Culture and Imperialism, 74; Chesterton, On Dickens, 15:403.

Barter, Stories of Pendennis, 36.

Tillotson has also called this the ‘lack of an edged shape’ in Thackeray’s novels, produced by ‘an aspiration towards rendering the vastness of the world and the never-endingness of time’. Thackeray the Novelist, 12.

Notes to pages 135–142

1 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 144.
2 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 144, original emphasis.
3 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 145.
4 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 144.
7 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 146.
8 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 144.
9 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 144.
11 As I have previously argued, such conflations of belief with experience misconceive the double consciousness involved in pretending and imagining (although Lewes distinguishes ‘knowing’ from ‘being affected’). Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 145.
12 Lowe, Insights of Sympathy, 94.
13 It is hard to say for certain how much of this composition is the written record of a verbal game that occurred the year before, in 1828, and how much is
being invented with the composition in 1829. The Brontës in this period are in the process of transitioning from writing down records of previous play-narratives and writing new narratives as a form of play in itself.

15 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 141, original emphasis.
16 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 143, 145–46, original emphasis.
17 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 144, 146.
18 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 142.
21 As I argued in the second chapter, such repudiations are more ambivalent than they appear – Crimsworth and Frances in fact build an extravagantly successful boarding-school at the conclusion of The Professor.
22 James, Tragic Muse, xi.
23 Lowe, Insights of Sympathy, 91.
24 James, Essays on Literature, 1:958, 965.
26 Davis, Resisting Novels, 24; quoted in Lowe, Insights of Sympathy, 76.
27 Davis, Resisting Novels, 24.
30 Mill, Analysis, 1:52.
33 Jean-Marie Schaeffer has recently described these experiences – of memory, visualisation, and hallucination – as “virtual realities” born with biological systems of representation’. Why Fiction?, xii.
35 Robert MacNish, The Philosophy of Sleep (Glasgow: W. R. M’Phun, 1834), 243.
37 Henry Holland, Chapters on Mental Physiology (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1852), 113.
38 Prichard, Diseases of the Nervous System, 126.
44 Shuttleworth, Mind of the Child, 86–87; more or less the kind of moral failing Plato denounced as the effect of poetry in Book X of The Republic, as it appeals to our ‘childish and pervasive’ love for unreason. See Plato, Republic, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 606d–608b, 360–62.
48 Davis, Resisting Novels, 24.
49 ‘Mrs Jameson’s Common-Place Book’, Chamber’s Journal, 1855, 8.
50 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 144, emphasis added; Lewes’s own work had contributed to the consensus around mental perceptions by theorising the phenomena of ‘subjective sensations; that is to say, we see objects very vividly, where no such objects exist; we hear sounds of many kinds, where none of their external causes exist […] They are indistinguishable from the sensations caused by actual contact of the objects with our organs’, which in intense forms ‘produce Hallucinations’. The Physiology of Common Life, vol. 2 (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1859), 308.
51 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 145.
55 Lamb, Selected Prose, 202.
57 Lewes, ‘Dickens In Relation’, 145.
58 ‘About Ejuxria and Gombroon’, Bentley’s Miscellany, no. 59 (1866): 75.
60 Abercrombie, The Intellectual Powers, 52.
63 Lowe, Insights of Sympathy, 94.
64 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 148.
65 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 143.

67 Lowe, Insights of Sympathy, 94.

68 Ryan, ‘Modes of Narrativity’, 375.

69 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 146; Lewes seems therefore to be reversing associationism’s terms for objects of direct sensory presence (sensations) and recalled or mental presence (ideas). As Mill despairingly admits, both ‘sensation’ and ‘idea’ are words of ‘inconvenience […] used with great latitude of meaning, both in ordinary, and in philosophical discourse’. Mill, Analysis, 1:152.

70 Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 146.


73 Charles Dickens, Little Dorrit, ed. Harvey Peter Sucksmith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 5–6. Further references to this edition will be incorporated into the text.


75 Trilling, ‘Little Dorrit’, 578–79.


77 For which, see John Carey’s strong contention: ‘We’re told that the repetition [of the prison symbol] unifies the novel, and that it reveals a deeper meaning. This deep meaning is represented by maxims like “Society is a prison” or “All the world’s a prison”, […] using the word “prison”, we realize, only in some enfeebled figurative sense – a sense which no one who had ever really been in prison would condone’. The Violent Effigy: A Study of Dickens’ Imagination (London: Faber & Faber, 1979), 114.

78 Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 146.


81 Trilling, ‘Little Dorrit’, 578.


As with Jane Eyre, going hungry at the Lowood School, who makes a habit of ‘prepar[ing] in imagination the Barmecide supper of hot roast potatoes, or white bread and new milk, with which I was wont to amuse my inward cravings’ (JE 87). Or with Lamb’s depiction of ‘Captain Jackson’, maintaining a spirit of hospitality in poverty: ‘You saw with your bodily eyes indeed what seemed a bare scrag—cold savings from the foregone meal—remnant hardly sufficient [. . .] But in the copious will—the revelling imagination of your host [. . .] no end appeared to the profusion’. To drink, ‘Wine we had none [. . .] but the sensation of wine was there [. . .] Shut your eyes, and you would swear a capacious bowl of punch was foaming in the centre’. Essays of Elia, Letters, and Rosamund, A Tale (Paris: Baudry’s European Library, 1835), 209. Such studies in illusory food are clearly interested in the potential resources of a sensuous imagination in historical conditions of need.

Ryan, ‘Modes of Narrativity’, 375.

Barbara Hardy, Dickens and Creativity (London: Continuum, 2008), 124.


Ryan, ‘Parallel Universes to Possible Worlds’, 156.

Hardy, Dickens and Creativity, 109.

Trilling, Little Dorrit’, 579.


Prichard, Diseases of the Nervous System, 128; or as Abercrombie noted, ‘Visions of the imagination which have formerly been indulged in, of that kind which we call waking dreams, or castle-building [. . .] [are] now believed to have a real existence’. The Intellectual Powers, 234.

Exemplifying, as Robert Douglas-Fairhurst puts it, ‘how adept Dickens was becoming at creating complications for himself and then tidying them away’. Charles Dickens, ed. Adrian Poole, The Cambridge Companion to English Novelists (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 136.

Stoehr, The Dreamer’s Stance, 64.

See Stoehr, The Dreamer’s Stance, 63–64.

Trilling, ‘Little Dorrit’, 578.


See also Wolfgang Mieder, Behold the Proverbs of a People (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2014), 422–25.

Auerbach, Time, History, and Literature, 86.


‘Hartley Coleridge as Man, Poet, Essayist’, 605.
Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 145.

Lewes, ‘Dickens in Relation’, 145.

Venice seems to represent, for Dickens, a particularly apt setting for this kind of mental state. His accounts of visiting the city emphasize the hallucinogenic quality of ‘this strange Dream upon the water’, wondering at the architecture that rises unstably – like the aerial castle – from its ‘unsubstantial ground’. Charles Dickens, Pictures from Italy, ed. Kate Flint (London: Penguin, 1998), 249, 256.

Barthes, The Rustle of Language, 144.

Leavis and Leavis, Dickens the Novelist, 222.


Stoehr, The Dreamer’s Stance, 38.

Stoehr, The Dreamer’s Stance, 64.

As Jolene Zigarovich has pointed out, ‘in the manuscripts, proofs, and first editions of the novel, the names in all the epitaphs are small-capped, which resembles epitaph typography […] Chivery’s depersonification, his spatial self-distance, is not confined to a mode of verbal narration’. Proleptic Death in Dickens’s A Christmas Carol and Little Dorrit, ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews 29, no. 2 (2016): 80. Alongside the ‘hypotyposis’ of John’s verbal description of his future, these epitaphs form a graphic representation of what he imagines, such that – bizarrely – the character’s imagined objects achieve a more visual, spatial, and material existence in the novel’s print than in the novel’s world. Like the extended metaphor of the castle in the air, the imagined world of John’s prison-churchyard assumes its own reality for the reader as its objects materialize on the page.

Notes to the Conclusion


6 Felski, Limits of Critique, 12.
7 ‘The work of ideology is to present the position of the subject as fixed and unchangeable [...] [in] human nature and the world of human experience, and to show possible action as an endless repetition of “normal”, familiar action. To the extent that the classic realist text performs this work, classical realism is an ideological practice’. Catherine Belsey, Critical Practice (London: Routledge, 2001), 74.
11 Bauer, How to Do Things with Pornography, 6.
12 ‘The thing about playing is always the precariousness of the interplay of personal psychic reality and the experience of control of actual objects. This is the precariousness of magic itself, magic that arises from intimacy, in a relationship that is found to be reliable’. D. W. Winnicott, Playing and Reality (London: Routledge Classics, 2005), 64.
13 Davis, Resisting Novels, 103.