

**THE ETHICS OF NARRATIVE FORM IN
GASKELL, DICKENS, AND ELIOT**

KATHLEEN M. PACIOUS
IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL SCHOLAR

SUPERVISOR: DR. ELIZABETH TILLEY
DISCIPLINE OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
COLLEGE OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND CELTIC STUDIES
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY

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SUMMARY OF THE CONTENTS

This thesis explores Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* through the lens of rhetorical narratology to offer conclusions for realism, metafiction, and the ethics of reading. The thesis highlights the existing gap between narratology and ethics and contributes to developing a framework of ethical narratology.

The introduction asks the following research questions:

1. How do fictional narratives invite a response from readers and in what way is this ethical?
2. What are the implications of the interplay between textual and readerly dynamics for the genre of realism?
3. What is the relationship between the ethics of the telling and heterodiegetic (noncharacter) narration?
4. How we can foreground the ethical effects of narratives without veering into empirical methodologies?
5. How can mimetic and synthetic strategies work together to create a more enhanced invitation and reading experience for the reader?

The literature review develops the theoretical framework of narrative theory, realism, empathy, and ethics. Chapter three focuses on sympathy, mutual focalization, and intermental thought in *North and South*. Chapter four explores the misdirections and delayed disclosures that make up the ethics of the telling in *Our Mutual Friend*. Chapter five demonstrates the ethical consequences of temporal ordering in *Daniel Deronda*. The conclusion suggests that readers' judgments of characters, narrators, implied authors, and themselves are the bridge between realism and ethics. Judgment relies on distance created through techniques that are both immersive and defamiliarizing and that accentuate mimetic and synthetic reading strategies. Interaction with these techniques depends on reconfiguration, highlighting the crucial role of readers as agents of closure for the realist novel. Reconfiguration offers ethical rewards which can be discussed through a metahermeneutic language of invitation, expectation, and response. Ultimately, this thesis offers readers a set of tools to negotiate the value of literature.

To Marshall Gregory

(1940-2012)

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DECLARATION REGARDING WORK

This thesis is all my own work. I have not obtained a degree in this university or elsewhere on the basis of this work.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background to the Research

The fields of literature and philosophy have seen a recent resurgence in the area of ethics, and how and where ethics overlaps with narrative. This thesis explores how three Victorian novels invite deliberation and judgment, which I contextualize as ethical processes, through specific narrative techniques, and how the interaction of readers with these techniques raises questions about genre, reading strategies, and the connection between literature and values. The focus stems from interest at the level of textual analysis and close reading, the rhetorical structures of readerly engagement, and the impact of literature on the reader and on society within the larger context of education. While considerations of literature's impact on the reader are not new, the core concerns of interpretation, evaluation, and judgment demand a new focus; one that highlights the relationship between readerly expectations, genre and narratological cues. The current research on ethics and literature has brought many of these issues to the surface but they are still very marginal in the field. The focus has foregrounded empathy, cognitive studies, and a historical approach to ethics applied to the Victorian novel. What has been overlooked is the idea of judgment and perception, and ultimately, how these overlaps of readerly and textual dynamics suggest a self-consciousness to the genre of realism. Such a self-consciousness highlights ideas of the writerly reader, and readerly engagement, and the importance of both cognitive and ethical engagement.

If we are aware that literature can contribute to readers' moral and ethical development because novels make us think, take new perspectives, evaluate and deliberate in new ways, learn to judge effectively, take us out of ourselves to see and experience things in a new way, then appropriate attention needs to be paid to both how literature is taught and what kind of incentives are offered to both researchers who offer conclusions in this area and students who enter arts or humanities education. This connection has broad consequences for how literature is taught at both second and third

level, whether literary studies should receive increased funding, and ultimately, how to interpret and evaluate the “worth” of literature. Below, the central argument of this thesis and the research questions used to investigate that argument are explored in detail.

Definition of Terms

Below are included definitions of terms used frequently throughout the thesis. These terms are included here rather than as an appendix in order to foreground the concepts and avoid confusion over language and meaning. This thesis will build on the definitions below.

Ethics: The study of the transmission of *ethos*. *Ethos* derives from the Greek understanding of a person’s character, or identity, understood as something that is both being and becoming. *Ethos* is not a fixed thing but is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Therefore, ethical criticism or the ethical effects of literature or the ethical response readers make to a text is the study of the influences of a narrative on a reader’s feelings, judgments, and beliefs. *Ethos* does not only apply to that of the reader. Rather, reading is an encounter with and discussion of several different *ethoi*—that of the implied author, narrator, characters, and reader. Understanding *ethos* in this way means understanding what an individual or vision of the novel values. The negotiation of these values is inextricably linked to both evaluation and judgment which are part of interpretation, and therefore are ethical practices in their own right. My use of the word ethics does not connote a religious set of principles or moral code nor does it explore ethical themes or situations in the text. While I have been encouraged to replace ethics with words such as “values” or “judgment,” I think it is important to maintain “ethics” as the umbrella term, and value or judgment as one of the applications of ethics. Ethics depends on the practices defined below.

Deliberation: The mental processes of weighing up possibilities, of choosing between alternatives, of taking on various perspectives leading to an outcome. Deliberation occurs both at a character to character level (the ethics of the told) and at a narrative level on the part of the reader who is invited to deliberate with the author, with the narrator, or with the characters. Deliberation is essential for reflection and for analysis.

Perception: The act of observing or understanding through the senses, leading to mental processes of understanding. Perception and perspective are linked as taking on a new perspective usually leads to new perceptions. Perceiving is also linked to focalization, or who sees, which understands “seeing” not just as a visual operation but also tied to ideological engagement.

Judgment: The evaluation of values. As stated above, reading practices invite an encounter among the ethos of readers, characters, narrator, and implied author. Each ethos is made up of different values and these values are transmitted through the narrative structuring of the text (or the textual dynamics as James Phelan refers to them). Judgment can be at the simple level of whether something is bad or good, but I suggest taking it to another level, one that asks how the structure of narrative leads the reader to make a certain judgment. Judgment is also important for textual discussion. Individual readers judge differently and the discussion of those judgments, what Wayne C. Booth refers to as coduction, is essential to interpretation and evaluation. Since novels are communicating something to an audience, that act of communication is never made in a vacuum; instead, acts of communication beg to be evaluated, or judged. Therefore,

judgment becomes what Liesbeth Korthals Altes calls the negotiation of values.

Moral Imagination: The cognitive faculties that include judgment, deliberation, perception, emotion, beliefs, desires, and the abilities to ask: “what if.” Moral imagination is different from just neurological processes or brain hard-wiring. Instead, it exists on the level of both human potential and individual reflection leading towards action. Moral imagination depends on the interior space of human beings where we can understand, evaluate, and decide in which direction we wish to live. Moral imagination means the ability to reflect on choices and see them not as biologically preconditioned or environmentally predetermined, but instead as arising out of the freedom of each individual and towards a teleological purpose.

Narrative: Acts of communication between the implied author, narrator, characters, and reader. These key players in an act of communication will be explored in the literature review. These acts of communication are made up of reporting through both speech acts and nonspeech acts. Narrative as communication posits that language is knowable. It also means that the three components of author, text, and reader matter as someone communicates something to someone for some purpose (Phelan *Experiencing Fiction* 3). Pertaining to this view of narrative, narrative theory, as explained in the methodology as well as further in the literature review, offers a rhetorical understanding; that is, meaning can be transmitted and the active analysis of that meaning depends on a reader’s engagement which is always a multilevel response that includes emotional, intellectual, and ethical dimensions.

Narrative Techniques: Specific textual choices of style or form; for example, narration, voice, representation of fictional minds, and focalization, all of which lead to emotional, intellectual, and ethical responses from the reader. Many of these techniques invite irony, empathy and/or sympathy but I do not suggest that any one of those techniques is always ironic, empathetic, or sympathetic. This refinement is discussed further in the literature review. These narrative techniques are explored in relation to the readerly dynamics they invite.

Narrative and Reading Strategies: Narrative interpretation and reading strategies can be approached in three ways. These include: Mimetic which connects what is reported to the representation of something real and cues readers to respond to the fictional events in the same way as they would to a real situation; Thematic which connects what is reported to the representation of type, class, or ideology; and Synthetic which connects what is reported to the way it is reported, showing the constructedness or “built nature” of the story, event, character, etc. (see Phelan *Reading People, Reading Plots*).

Realism: The literary genre that includes certain techniques which create the illusion of a mimetic reading but that, *at the same time*, call attention to the self-consciousness of writing and the author’s real awareness of the synthetic devices that create that illusion. Thus realism is both a play and slippage of representing the real via showing the “behind-the-scenes” that built that “pretend real.” This apparent contradiction offers a very interesting and nuanced exploration of the effects on readers’ emotional and ethical involvement which requires their cognitive investment in the fictional as both real and constructed. I will explore this definition further in the literature review.

The literature review includes extensive definitions of the author, narrator, character, and reader as well as a more thorough analysis of readerly and textual dynamics.

Research Questions

This thesis poses the following research questions:

1. How do fictional narratives invite a response from readers and in what way is this ethical?
2. What are the implications of the interplay between textual and readerly dynamics for the genre of realism?
3. What is the relationship between the ethics of the telling and heterodiegetic (noncharacter) narration?
4. How we can foreground the ethical effects of narratives without veering into empirical methodologies?
5. How can mimetic and synthetic strategies work together to create a more enhanced invitation and reading experience for the reader?

Argument

Fiction, through a combination of narrative techniques (textual dynamics) and readerly responses (readerly dynamics), invites its audience to participate in an ethical change, namely changes of perspective, changes of deliberative practices, and changes of judgment. On a more genre-specific level, I suggest that Victorian novels do this in particularly interesting ways through the way they affirm and challenge our understanding of the genre of realism. Many of the techniques that realist novels employ actually anticipate later postmodern techniques, especially by drawing the reader into an awareness of the synthetic, or the metafictional, which does not impede reading these novels as mimetic stories reflecting Victorian society of the time. The central argument of this thesis is posited on an understanding of the mimetic and synthetic levels of both textual dynamics and reading practices. The combination of levels creates the space for both immersion and defamiliarization which highlights the play between

sympathy and irony, as well as engagement at the level of story and metafictional awareness of the synthetic components of the novel. To interpret while dealing with the combination of these levels requires a reconstruction of the implied author's ethos, and by default, the reader's expectations of that ethos and of the novel itself. The research around this area has not been developed far enough to suggest how ethos constructions are intertwined with readerly expectations which are built on the reader's understanding of genre and types of reading strategies (see Korthals Altes). Through reconstructing both textual dynamics and readerly dynamics, this thesis demonstrates the significance of the relationship between implied author and reader as both synthetic and mimetic. This "both/and" approach offers some ultimate conclusions for metafiction, realism, and ethics.

Because the category of realism is far too broad to apply to the three chosen novels, each novel will be taken on its own terms. Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* challenges our understanding of fictional minds and sympathy and leads to an awareness of the importance of intermental, or shared, thought, and distance via focalization for judgment. While it accomplishes this at the level of character, the methodology employed to understand shared thought can equally be transferred to the reader/ implied author relationship. Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* draws us into a mimetic and synthetic reading that highlights the implied author/authorial audience relationship to draw out the ethical implications of partnerships and performance in view of reciprocity, cognitive pleasure, and judgment. George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* offers an exploration of the ethical implications of temporal ordering and perspective which highlights the crossover of the story, and the telling of that story, or discourse, and how readers judge the effectiveness of those invitations. The primary novels will be explored further below.

Methodology

Although there are many valid approaches to these research questions, the methodology that I employ is rhetorical narratology which emphasizes the communicative nature of narrative, the multilevel responses of readers (emotional, intellectual, and ethical), and which approaches a text

from the inside-out. This last point is very important as this thesis presents the novels as having their own unique set of tools to reveal their structure and ethos. Rather than applying a top-down theory, “layering” it over the text, I prefer to let the texts speak on their own terms, especially as the aesthetics and ethics of each text depend on each other and unfold from the inside-out. Rhetorical narratology posits that narratives are trying to communicate something to someone and the reception of that communication is laden with values. Acts of communication do not occur in a vacuum and therefore the judgments and reactions they arouse in readers are crucial to understanding their effectiveness. However, with rhetorical narratology, readerly reaction is not dependent on any sort of empirical testing but depends, rather, on a feedback loop of author-text-reader.

James Phelan defines the main points of rhetorical narratology below:

- (1) The judgments we readers of narrative make about characters and tellers (both narrators and authors) are crucial to our experience—and understanding—of narrative form. By form I mean the particular fashioning of the elements, techniques, and structure of a narrative in the service of a set of readerly engagements that lead to particular final effects on the implied audience.
- (2) Narrative form, in turn, is experienced through the temporal process of reading and responding to narrative. Consequently, to account for that experience of form we need to focus on narrative progression, that is, the synthesis of both the textual dynamics that govern the movement of narrative from beginning through middle to end and the readerly dynamics—what I have so far been calling our engagement—that both follow from and influence those textual dynamics.
- (3) As key elements of narrative experience, narrative judgments and narrative progressions are responsible for the various components of that experience, especially the significant interrelation of form, ethics, and aesthetics—even as judgments and progressions do not

totally explain everything we might want to know about ethics and aesthetics. (*Experiencing Fiction* 3)

The foundational understanding of rhetorical narrative theory accounts for narrative as an act of communication that depends on judgment as the intersection of textual and readerly dynamics.

The five main ideas that follow from Phelan's definition of rhetorical narratology include:

- (1) Narrative is a rhetorical act. The reality that narrative is an act of communication has special bearing for understanding the elements of a communicative situation; that is, attention must be paid to speaker, spoken, and audience which all have an ethical and aesthetic value.
- (2) Interpretation depends on a "recursive relationship" or "feedback loop" between author, text, and reader. This methodology holds special significance for textual interpretation as it relies on a non-empirical approach. As will be discussed later in the literature review, recent scholarship has created strong links with a social science approach that uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to measure readerly response to textual features. This thesis understands textual choices and narrative techniques as invitations rather than prescriptions. Rather than trying to prove that a certain feature always has a certain effect, the rhetorical approach tries to recreate how the vision of a text invites readerly judgment, by drawing out the features of the text itself. The role of readerly judgment is crucial to understanding rhetorical narratology and will be explored further below.
- (3) The role and position of the audience affects reader response. The most significant description depends on the distinction between the actual reader and the authorial audience (or the author's ideal reader) on one level, and the narrative audience and narratee on another level. The audience of the text, or the reader, has received much critical attention recently especially as methodologies have switched

to empirical-based studies. As Phelan and Peter Rabinowitz do, I make a distinction between the actual reader and authorial audience, or the reader who will interpret the text exactly as the author hoped. Rabinowitz explains that readers “assemble disparate elements in order to make patterns emerge. We can thus both develop expectations and experience a sense of completion” (44) and transform apparent inconsistencies into metaphors, subtleties, and ironies (45). In short, readers make meaning from the disparate elements of a text. This understanding of meaning making relies on the fact that readers assume “that the work *is* coherent and that apparent flaws in its construction are intentional and meaning bearing” (Rabinowitz 147). The understanding of audience leads us to understand that readers have different ways of approaching the text.

- (4) The response of the audience is threefold: mimetic, thematic, and synthetic. The trifold typology is especially significant for realist novels as we tend to assume a mimetic approach. However, as I will explore in my discussion of the three novels, the synthetic approach, or the self-consciousness of the crafting of the novel, offers new insights into the relationship between implied author, reader, and text which leads to a deeper awareness of the ethical and aesthetic interrelation of form.
- (5) “The rhetorical act of telling a story entails a multileveled communication from author to audience, one involving the audience’s intellect, emotions, and values (both moral and aesthetic), and that these levels interact with each other” (*Experiencing Fiction* 6). The interplay between narrative form, ethics, and aesthetics highlights that readerly responses cannot be divided into separate emotional, intellectual, or ethical spheres. Instead, our emotional response informs our ethical one. Our response to the aesthetics of a text cannot be separated from our understanding of the ethics of that text. This combined response has been well supported by cognitive approaches that demonstrate the integration of emotion, value, and understanding in the human brain which I will develop in the

literature review. This integration also loops back to judgment because as readers judge, those judgments are integrated into moral, intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic responses. Narratives ask the reader to make judgments that are interpretive, ethical, and aesthetic. Judgment depends on observation, and the act of observation depends on position, which I explore below.

Judgment needs to be understood properly as it indicates how readers respond to a text. Judgments include: interpretive judgments about the nature of actions or other elements of the narrative, ethical judgments about the moral value of characters and actions, and aesthetic judgments about the artistic quality of the narrative and of its parts (Phelan *Experiencing Fiction* 9). Judgments are the intersection of form, ethics, and aesthetics (7). In rhetorical narratology, judgment depends on the text's own ethical standards and therefore judgment proceeds from the inside-out. Ethical judgments depend on both the ethics of the "told" and the ethics of the "telling." The ethics of the told applies to the storyworld, or character to character relations; the ethics of the telling includes that of the narrator in relation to the telling, the told, and the narrative audience, and that of the implied author in relation to the telling, the told, and the authorial audience. The fourth ethical situation is that of the ethics of the reader's response to both (Phelan *Living to Tell about It* 23). Much ethical criticism has remained at the level of the ethics of the told, or the moral value of characters' actions, thoughts, and words. This thesis moves away from that area and instead focuses primarily on the ethics of the telling which deals with narrative theory rather than a thematic reading of the individual texts.

The way of *doing* narrative theory, therefore, means that I unpack the text's form through close-reading. I pay special attention to the style of writing which includes fictional minds, focalization, the stance of the narrator, voice, speech acts, distance between implied author and narrator, uses of irony, empathy, and sympathy, and temporal ordering. So, in *North and South* I use rhetorical narratology to explore fictional minds, sympathy, and distance. In *Our Mutual Friend* I rely on the ethics of the telling to discuss the multi-layered communication of author, narrator, and audience

and to unpack the implications for noncharacter narration of crossing over between mimetic and synthetic strategies. In *Daniel Deronda* I examine the ethical implications of temporal ordering for readerly expectations, the alliance and involvement with the narrator, and I draw attention to the ethical demands of perspective and the difficulties of the author's plan being fulfilled. I mention the publishing history of all these novels as this context has a bearing on the arc of readerly expectation and involvement. However, I do not remain within that approach but use it to jump into the text itself from the perspective of both current reader and textual phenomena. The common link of the novels is the methodology of rhetorical narrative theory and specific attention to the narrator's role, both in relation to the implied author and to the various levels of audience, and to the narrator's functions of reporting, interpreting, and evaluating.

Each of the novels was originally published in weekly or monthly parts. The publication history offers extensive reviews of the reaction of the novel's contemporary audience. However, this thesis utilizes the volume publication of each novel to demonstrate the relevance to the current audience. This methodological choice is made for two reasons. One, because the methodology does not use a historical approach, and two, because the thesis suggests consequences for current readers rather than addresses how the historical reader read. While the history of the publication of each novel does offer some insights into initial readerly reaction and the author's subsequent choices for volume publication, the focus of this thesis is on the rhetorical structures of the texts and therefore uses the volume publication as we know it.

The Primary Texts

The primary novels include Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855), Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), and George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876). The Oxford edition of these texts has been used throughout. These editions provide contexts of critical reception, chronology of publication, and select bibliographies. Additionally, all feature an introduction and editing by a leading scholar in Gaskell, Dickens, and Eliot studies. These three novels share certain features but also offer

distinct contributions to our current understanding of the genre of Victorian fiction through the lens of narrative theory. Gaskell, Dickens, and Eliot all shared the belief that the purpose of their art was to enlarge the sympathies of their readers and yet they accomplished this goal in distinct ways. These three authors are recognized as part of the canon of Victorian realism but fit uneasily into the realist paradigm. The three novels were each published serially before their volume publication, a condition which affected the reception of their work and audience interaction with the novels in their final form. Each novel employs certain techniques that affect the realism they offer. *North and South* provides a reading in sympathy and focalization, and moves away from the employment of the engaging narrator, the device which was so prevalent in *Mary Barton*. The combination of strategies contributes to a discourse on Alan Palmer's understanding of "social minds" and intermental thought, specifically addressing the need for a "rhetorical analysis of social minds" (*Social Minds* 182), and ultimately challenges the distinction between empathy, sympathy, and judgment. *Our Mutual Friend* offers a metanarrative on reading, performance, and partnering. The self-consciousness of the novel highlights the author's awareness and overt use of craft, and his playfulness with genre, both of which have implications for the ethics of the telling in texts that employ noncharacter narration. *Daniel Deronda* departs from *Middlemarch*'s safe realism for an exploration of how temporal ordering affects reader expectation and involvement as well as the multiperspectivism that Eliot hoped to bring about in her readers. Each novel deals with the practice of judgment, a task which has consequences for readerly engagement.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis offers the following structure. After this introduction (chapter 1), the literature review (chapter 2) covers the literature surrounding the theoretical framework. Since I have discussed the methodology thoroughly above, the literature review will expand on some of the theories I have mentioned as well as on the current debates in the field. The literature review surveys the main issues in the fields of narrative

theory, realism, and ethics. The subsequent chapters on the primary texts include a review of the literature pertaining to each primary text that contextualizes the novel within classic and contemporary criticism relevant to the narrative and ethical focus of the research. These novel-specific literature reviews also address the publication history of the novel in order to demonstrate the real author's expectations and real (albeit historical) readers' reactions. However, I do not dwell on this but use it to move into a discussion of the text itself. Chapter 3 begins a close discussion of the novels themselves. These chapters move chronologically and so they begin with Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1855) which addresses narrative sympathy and judgment via focalization and shared or "intermental" thought.¹ Chapter 4 explores Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* (1865) and how the ethics of the telling in noncharacter narration has implications for the implied author/authorial audience relationship and for readerly involvement that requires a crossover between mimetic and synthetic reading and narrative strategies.² Chapter 5 addresses George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1876) as an experiment in realism, specifically looking at the ethics of temporal ordering which is a feature of the ethics of the telling.³ How the author evokes sympathy from the reader has much to do with the cultivation of perspective, the narrator's reporting as a historian, and the temporal ordering of the novel and the events narrated. That chapter explores whether or not the author is successful in arousing readers' sympathies. All three chapters on the primary texts address aesthetics and ethics together to offer some conclusions regarding realism as a genre. Chapter 6 concludes the thesis by returning to the research questions and

¹ An earlier version of chapter 3 was published as "Intermental Thought and Mutual Focalization: Narrative Sympathy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*" in *Style* (Jan. 2016). A very early draft of the chapter was presented as "Looping Back to the Implied Author: Narrative Sympathy and Judgment in Gaskell and Dickens" at the International Conference on Narrative at MIT 2014. I am grateful for feedback received from the editor, reviewers, and conference participants.

² An earlier draft of chapter 4 was published as "Misdirections, Delayed Disclosures and The Ethics of the Telling in Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*" in *Narrative* (Oct. 2016). An even earlier draft of the chapter was presented as "The Friendly Move of Hypothetical Narration in *Our Mutual Friend*" at the 2015 MLA Convention in Vancouver. I am grateful for feedback received from the editor, reviewers, and conference participants.

³ A section of chapter 5 was presented at the 2016 International Conference on Narrative in Amsterdam as "The Ethics of Temporal Ordering: George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* as Experiment in Realism."

suggesting various implications of this doctoral research for further study.

Those research questions, again, are:

1. How do fictional narratives invite a response from readers and in what way is this ethical?
2. What are the implications of the interplay between textual and readerly dynamics for the genre of realism?
3. What is the relationship between the ethics of the telling and heterodiegetic (noncharacter) narration?
4. How we can foreground the ethical effects of narratives without veering into empirical methodologies?
5. How can mimetic and synthetic strategies work together to create a more enhanced invitation and reading experience for the reader?

Contribution to the Field and Implications for Further Study

Much ethical criticism has remained at the level of the ethics of the told, or the moral value of characters' actions, thoughts, and words. For example, ethical readings of *North and South* have focused on workers' rights and masters' duties, and the religious doubts of Mr. Hale. Ethical readings of *Our Mutual Friend* have explored the corrupting influence of money, the hypocrisy of society towards the poor, the legality of wills and other matters. Ethical readings of *Daniel Deronda* have dealt with the "Jewish question," the morality of Gwendolen's passions and desires, the limiting effects of both gender and class, etc. However, while acknowledging those thematic concerns and potential ethical approaches, this thesis offers a very different ethical reading of the texts, one that stays firmly planted in the ethics of the telling; that is, how the implied author's and narrator's treatment of both the events themselves and the telling of those events has consequences for the reader.

This thesis enters the current discussion initiated by Suzanne Keen, Liesbeth Korthals Altes, Ansgar Nunning, Alan Palmer, James Phelan, and others who use narrative theory from the inside out. I show how an alternative reading of "overdone" texts, and specifically Victorian realist novels, offers new and exciting areas for analysis. The current trend is to do narratological and ethical readings of contemporary or marginal texts but I

suggest that returning to novels that are heterodiegetic, realist, Victorian, canonical and extensively researched can provide new angles that can be fruitful for both reading and teaching practices. I suggest that the Victorian realist novel can benefit from a new way of being interpreted and that greater attention needs to be paid to the ethical implications of literature. While the current trend is to address ethical considerations as political or gender based ideologies, I take these further to offer the position that ethics at the level of *value* has serious consequences for literary studies. Ansgar Nunning describes why “ethical narratology is arguably both desirable and promising...because narrative fiction is one of the most important means of disseminating norms and values” (“Narratology and Ethical Criticism” 16). He further remarks that “the complex and reciprocal relationship between literature and value has not received as much attention as it arguably deserves” (17). Avoiding the didacticism of ethical criticism that was so often employed in the past, or a limited focus on what is canonical, I counter that individual texts can offer readers a heightened understanding of what readers value themselves, as well as helping them to become more aware of what a text, and in this case, specifically a novel, can offer as a separate set of values, or worldview: “Literature has contributed, to no insignificant degree, to forming norms and values, and social conceptions of the good life” (22). It is in the conversation that ensues between these different values that creates both a better awareness of one’s own perspective, and the ways in which that perspective can be opened out to embrace more than just one’s own ego.

Although the general trend in literature is a thematic or theoretical approach, my work suggests that close reading can lead to a new analysis that is not just based on personal interpretation. Without remaining at the level of author intentionality or delving into empirical studies of reader response to which there has been extensive attention, I suggest that it is possible and worthwhile to analyse in a metahermeneutical way what a realist novel offers for readers through a closer look at the rhetorical structures of the text, that is, the form of the novel and how these invitations create a heightened level of involvement and potential ethical development for readers. While there are numerous studies that explore the “form of the

novel,” (namely Barbara Hardy, J. Hillis Miller, and Harvey Peter Sucksmith) I suggest that we need to rediscover the rhetorical, ethical, and aesthetic importance of form. Further study could apply this methodology to all of the novels of Gaskell, Dickens, or Eliot, exploring the development of what Wayne C. Booth calls the “career author.” Social scientists could take the conclusions I offer which remain at the level of the metahermeneutic and potential in order to conduct an actual empirical test of certain narrative techniques on real readers.

The introduction provided a background to the study and my motivations, an overview of the research questions, my argument, a map of the thesis structure, and the contribution that this research makes to this field. I turn now to a review of the literature. This literature review focuses on the theoretical framework of narrative theory and ethics and leaves the novel-specific literature to the individual novel chapters. The literature review has the following order. I begin with an overview of the discussion in the field regarding the roles of the key players within each communicative act that novels offer: the implied author, narrator, characters, and reader. I then turn to the idea of ethos attribution and framing. I review the literature surrounding various narrative techniques, beginning with the representation of fictional minds and its link to speech acts and theory of mind. I then address focalization and its implications for the blurring of story and discourse, thus creating a space for metanarration, metafiction, and other synthetic strategies. I then develop the literature surrounding the genre of realism and the deficiencies in how we understand the genre. This research provides opportunities to explain what can be understood as more “postmodern” techniques including defamiliarization combined with immersion, metalepsis, metanarration, and narration itself. The discussion of realism leads to a discussion of empathy and sympathy as well as the empirical studies and methodologies that have been created in light of studying techniques that arouse these emotional responses. I move away from these empirical methodologies and discuss metahermeneutic approaches to delve into ethical criticism and conclude rhetorical narrative theory. I then offer a section on various ethical theories that have been used in the discussion of narrative and ethics, all the time positioning myself in

relation to these theories. The discussion of ethics leads into a discussion of Victorian literature and history which provides a helpful background for understanding the current conversation surrounding Victorian literature. I conclude with the narrative and ethical turns that I build on in this research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Narrative Theory

Understanding narrative as communication requires that we define the individuals involved in the communicative act: the implied author, narrator, characters, and reader. As criticism has moved away from author intentionality, the main debate has focused on the identity and function of the implied author. Seymour Chatman (*Story and Discourse* 151) proposed the classical communication model in which the implied author is understood as part of the text (the brackets indicate agents within the text):

Actual author → [Implied Author → Narrator → Narratee → Implied Reader] → Actual Reader

While Chatman's model has been widely accepted, it also has serious drawbacks and has provoked extensive debates. In 2011, *Style* offered a special issue focused solely on the existence and location of the implied author. Several contributors remarked that uncertainty over the implied author exists because there is a lack of research on how readers actually infer the implied author. Susan Lanser claims that we need to know how readers infer an author from a work of fiction in order to proceed with a reader-focused understanding of the implied author (157). H. Porter Abbott states that "we lack at present sufficient empirical evidence to settle the controversies attending the concept of the implied author" (462) but proceeds to approach the argument from a cognitivist perspective which explores not just "how readers read" but also "how writers write." Without a methodology for how readers infer the implied author in current research, the implied author has become linked to an effect of reading which places him or her within the text. Liesbeth Korthals Altes claims, "Despite its apparently technical nature, there is no precise methodology for defining the implied author as a gestalt subsuming the norms of the text, meaning that, in practice, the critic's own moral, psychological, and aesthetic norms and interpretation are projected onto the author" (167). By relocating the implied author to the reader's understanding and evaluation, the concept affects how

readers proceed to interpret the narrator or character's discourse (155-156). The difficulty with the ethos of the author (or ethos in general) is that the reader's sense of positive or negative ethos traits changes over time, as does the relationship between author and reader. Therefore, with a reader-centric approach to the implied author, the implied author fails to be a fixed concept or ethos.

Others counter that it is possible to come to know the implied author and that these resources therefore place the implied author *outside* of the text. Dan Shen offers that the implied author is the real author with a set of qualities, stance, and ethical positioning that he or she has assumed in writing the text. Shen claims that the implied author can be inferred from the textual choices the real author made and is the source, not the result, of the narrative poetics ("Implied Author" 88, 95). Therefore the reader comes to know the implied author through the author's choices in the text, and not from biographical materials. Wayne C. Booth, who first coined the term "implied author," describes the implied author as the author's "second self" or "official scribe." Booth remarks:

It is a curious fact that we have no terms either for this created "second self" or for our relationship with him. None of our terms for various aspects of the narrator is quite accurate. "Persona," "mask," and "narrator" are sometimes used, but they more commonly refer to the speaker in the work who is after all only one of the elements created by the implied author and who may be separated from him by large ironies. (*Rhetoric of Fiction* 73)

Booth states that the implied author can be decoded by identifying "the chief value to which *this* implied author is committed" (73). James Phelan finds this definition ambiguous. He defines the implied author as "a streamlined version of the real author, an actual or purported subset of the real author's capacities, traits, attitudes, beliefs, values, and other properties that play an active role in the construction of the particular text" (*Living to Tell about It* 45). I use this definition of the implied author in my analysis of the ethics of the telling of these three novels. Phelan's model counteracts

Chatman's by placing the implied author outside of the text and in communication with the authorial audience ("Rhetoric, Ethics, and Narrative Communication" 68).

The second figure within the ethics of the telling is the narrator. One of the main debates about the narrator has to do with the distinction between story and discourse, and the location of the narrator. Within classical narratology there is a stark divide between the *fabula* (the story) and *sjuzhet* (the telling of the story, or discourse), which has its roots in Russian formalism. Traditionally, if the narrator is heterodiegetic (noncharacter), the narrator has been understood to reside only within the discourse, which is separate from the storyworld where the characters reside. He reports on the story but is not part of the story. In *Story and Discourse*, Seymour Chatman proposes a strict distinction between the two realms; story is the narrated events (actions) and existents (characters, setting); discourse means the arrangement or treatment of events and existents on the level of presentation. The narrator is part of the discourse space whereas the characters remain in the story space. Since narrators can only tell the story, without being part of it as characters, Gerald Prince claims that narrators can only speak, not perceive (47). In "Loose Narrators," Harry E. Shaw finds this distinction too narrow, especially when applied to nineteenth-century novels. He advocates for narrator-reader engagement which can cross the boundary of discourse. In "Defense and Challenge," Dan Shen also proposes that there are occasions when the narrator enters story space. This blurring between character and narrator poses some problems for classical narratology, and indeed, is one of the concepts that post-classical narratology has tried to deal with. Specifically, this boundary-crossing occurs because the reader reacts to the narrator as a person, not a technique.

Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon describe how readers process the narrator as a real person. Although empirically-based researchers, Bortolussi and Dixon helpfully state, "Readers process the narrator *as if* they were communicating with such an individual in conversation...the implications of this view of reader processing of narrative are many and profound. It dictates the possible effects of having narrators be absent or present in the story world..." (30). Korthals Altes confirms that readers tend to deal with

the narrator in a mimetic way. This communicative relationship between reader and narrator also draws on Phelan's understanding of the mimetic approach, which, while typically applied to characters, can also be applied to the narrator (see *Reading People, Reading Plots*).

Other scholars also find the current understanding of this split inadequate. Several contributors to Willie van Peer and Seymour Chatman's 2001 edited volume, *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*, state that contemporary narratology has not adequately addressed micro levels of textual analysis which is where this distinction metaphorically exists. In that collection, James Phelan reminds narratologists that the story/discourse split is a heuristic construct used metaphorically, and therefore is not a law unto itself (51). Phelan believes narrators can be focalizers (perceivers), which not only positions them to influence narratees, implied audiences, and real readers, but creates ethical implications for the narrator/ reader relationship (63). Because my research emphasizes the affective relationship between narrator/character/reader, I agree with Shaw, Shen and Phelan's approaches which blur the story/discourse boundary through affect, the perspective of the reader, and the mimetic understanding of the narrator.

The "what" of a narrator is crucial, then, for understanding the purpose he or she serves as well as how the narrator elicits a response from readers. Richard Walsh's *Rhetoric of Fictionality* claims that the narrator is either a character (as in character narration novels) or the author (as in omniscient or third person narration novels). Paul Dawson counters that a heterodiegetic narrator is different from the author, but works as the authorial proxy, existing for rhetorical purposes in the text ("Return of Omniscience" 149). In *Living to Tell about It*, Phelan describes the narrator as the teller of the story which is a different role from either author or proxy. The narrator's role as teller includes the functions of reporting, interpreting, and ethically evaluating. As narrators fulfill these functions, they create both instabilities and tensions. Instabilities refer to the introduction, complication, and resolution of textual dynamics relating to the story, whereas tensions refer to the same but within the discourse. Textual dynamics form one part of the progression of a novel, while readerly dynamics form the other.

Characters, who inhabit the fabula, or storyworld, are a different entity from the narrator, at least in the three novels I have chosen because none employs character narration. Characters, while fictional constructs, again call forth mimetic, thematic, or synthetic responses from readers. One of the first ways that readers tend to deal with characters is mimetically which brings attention to the ethos of the characters. The Greek understanding of “ethos” refers to “a person’s or community’s character or characterizing spirit, tone, or attitude” (Korthals Altes vii). Ethos is the ethical identity, or character, of each person. Ethos is made up of all the qualities, virtues, vices that make up a person’s identity, and this ethos is always in the process of becoming. A person expresses his or her ethos or character through the habits of choice in every domain of his or her life. Korthals Altes states that narratologists have not paid sufficient attention to “how ethos constructions, presupposed in statements about a narrator’s unreliability or irony, for instance, are intertwined with expectations and framing acts resulting from generic cues and reading strategies” (12). This definition is fairly new in that other scholars have identified how a reader can construct the mental attributes of character, narrator, and author, but have not explicitly defined these attributes as having any relationship to ethos. Ethical criticism attempts to describe the encounter of a story-teller’s ethos with that of the reader. Ethical criticism shows how the virtues (ethos) of a narrative relate to the virtues (ethos) of an individual and society, or how the ethos of any story affects or is affected by the ethos of the reader. Characters can also be understood thematically, as representing a role or ideology, or synthetically, as demonstrating the craft and artifice of the author.

The role of the reader is the final piece in any act of communication. The audience of the text, or the reader, has received much critical attention in recent years, especially as methodologies have switched to empirical-based studies. As indicated in the introduction, this thesis makes a distinction between the actual reader and the authorial audience. The actual reader refers to the individual “real” reader and will be referenced as “the reader.” The authorial audience refers to the author’s ideal reader and will be referenced as the “authorial audience.” The difference between the two

holds much significance for understanding how readers interpret and what kind of response the implied author hopes to initiate through the design of the text. I posit that when the implied author or narrator asks the reader for a certain response, he or she remains the actual reader. If the reader opts to respond according to the prompt, he or she joins the authorial audience (see Phelan *Experiencing Fiction* 4). This approach accepts multiple interpretations of the same text and yet highlights the need to create a vocabulary for affective and ethical dimensions relating to readerly dynamics. My work does not measure reader reactions, but offers a hypothesis that certain textual features or narrative techniques have the potential to engage readerly judgments so that readers can undergo an awakening of their moral imagination (their faculties of observation, deliberation, judgment, perspective-taking, and desires), wherein lies the ethical impact. While empirical approaches have offered fascinating studies about reader response, other metahermeneutic methods exist to analyze and interpret a text. A metahermeneutic reconstruction offers an argument which explores how one reader analyzes that object of study without trying to offer a general norm for all readers. However, because one reader uses specific clues to reconstruct an ethos and hermeneutically understand a text, that strategy of reading could be replicated. Therefore, when talking about the reader, I am talking about myself (and the experience and insights I have extrapolated from teaching, journal articles, etc.), rather than a cognitive approach which seeks to prove how real readers read. This thesis explores the rhetorical or ethical effects of formally describable textual features rather than offering an empirical-based study of real readers' reactions.

Readers tend to approach a text with the concept of "framing." This methodological set of tools invites us "to label 'schemata of interpretation' that allow individuals or groups 'to locate, perceive, identify and label' events and occurrences, thus rendering meaning, organizing experiences, and guiding actions" (Goffman 21). Readers attempt to organize the material of the text they encounter, and they do this largely through applying schemes of prior knowledge:

Readers readily translate textual rhythm, punctuation, syntactic structures, and so on into emotions, moods, or mental dispositions that sketch out an ethos...To decode ethos clues is a complex calculation, taking into account a kaleidoscopic interplay of perspectives. (Korthals Altes 65)

This idea of framing loosely relates to theory of mind, or the recognition that textual clues demonstrate mental attributes of a character, which are then very easily linked to “ethos conjecturing.” As readers apply a schema to the type of text they are interpreting, they also process ethos attribution, or how readers identify the ethos of characters, the narrator, and the implied author. They do this largely through techniques that suspend immersive reading, such as embeddedness, story vs discourse, and metalepses. These techniques:

operate as ‘frame switches’...Instead of being engrossed in imagining the minds of characters and their reciprocal ethos computations, the reader’s attention is reoriented to another communicative circuit, the one connecting the narrator/author-reader, and to other interpretive and evaluative regimes. (106)

These frame switches move us beyond the either/or standpoint of mimetic and synthetic readings and towards a both/and approach. Readers can read both mimetically, through immersive strategies, and synthetically, through being called out of that immersion by techniques that point to the craft of fiction and the higher level communication offered. The combination of these techniques offers an advanced ethical reading of multiple layers of communication that ask for interpretation and evaluation.

Ethos is always tied to a specific communication situation, which has its own norms and expectations. While I will return to narrative techniques of metalepsis and other distancing techniques, first I will explore how ethos is linked to fictional minds. Within narratology, a foundational concept for engaging with ethos and deliberation is that of fictional minds, or what Dorrit Cohn calls “consciousness representation.” Cohn’s

Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction (1978) remains the foundational work on fictional minds. She describes three narrative modes for representing consciousness of characters: psycho-narration, narrated monologue, and quoted monologue. The first two, psycho-narration and narrated monologue (also known as free indirect discourse, or FID), are the more common techniques used in nineteenth-century writing. Although Brian McHale, in “Islands in the Stream of Consciousness,” called for renewed attention to these modes, most research tends to focus on free indirect discourse as the most interesting of the three, often leaving psycho-narration to the side.

Free indirect discourse refers to a way of representing the thoughts of characters through the voice and language of the character, but still presented by the discourse of the narrator. Free indirect discourse creates a dual voice, involving both the narrator and character in the narrative situation, which can lead to irony and empathy between the narrator and reader (Pascal 32). George Levine says:

Free indirect style encourages the reader to be an active participant in the narrative rather than a passive receiver of “fact” and judgments, and thus further gives the sense that the narration is like life, in which there are no omniscient narrators to help us decide what to think about what we experience. The narrator is there, to be sure, in the third person perspective of passages of free indirect discourse...but characters whose consciousness is so recorded have the widest space in which to open themselves to the readers’ judgments. (*Realism, Ethics and Secularism* 192-193)

Free indirect discourse also creates an ethical situation through the observation of the mental deliberation of characters. Andrew Miller claims that the use of free indirect discourse in the Victorian novel provides a means of attracting readers’ ethical reflection through representing a character’s deliberation: “Free indirect discourse is the medium through which I am brought into a second-person relation with this character as his deliberations, his accommodations of perspective, are presented to me as

mine” (102). Miller stresses the use of free indirect discourse as a way to negotiate first person deliberation and third person perspective of comparison to general maxims of behavior.

While free indirect discourse receives plenty of scholarly attention due to its “advanced” way of revealing a character’s thoughts, in *Fictional Minds* Alan Palmer explains that psycho-narration, or what he calls “thought report,” is deserving of much more study as it actually offers a possibly more advanced way of revealing mental consciousness. Cohn’s work posits that psycho-narration refers to a narrator’s summary of a character’s mental state. In other words, the narrator represents mental activity by offering inside views of a character through the narrator without switching to first person voice, and by describing characters’ actions to reveal their interior. Additionally, the dissonant narrator distances himself from the consciousness he narrates, creating irony, and the consonant narrator fuses with the consciousness he narrates, creating empathy. One of the problems narratology has with psycho-narration is due to a gap in narratology’s own schema. Palmer has called attention to the problematic positioning of these thought processes as a function of speech categories. Classical narratology uses a speech categories approach to categorize the mental action of characters; that is, it explains thinking (and consciousness in general) as purely verbal, which Palmer challenges as unscientific, artificial, and fragmented. He rightly claims that this approach neglects “states of mind as emotions, sensations, dispositions, beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motives, and reasons for action” (13). He rejects a pure speech categories approach and instead states that characters can be known in the same way that real people can—through actions, choices, behavior, habits—which breaks free of a misunderstanding of consciousness as only verbal. Palmer offers “a holistic view of the whole of the social mind in action...it is a functional and teleological perspective that considers the purposive nature of characters’ thoughts in terms of their motives, intentions, and resulting behavior and action” (12). This recognition of the importance of psycho-narration (beyond speech categories) as what reveals states of minds and dispositions is extremely significant as these elements also make up a character’s ethos.

Knowing a character's dispositions and attitudes is fundamental for understanding his or her ethos. Since these elements are presented through psycho-narration, the study of that mode of representing fictional minds is crucial for gaining knowledge about the ethos of a character. *Fictional Minds* continues to demonstrate the importance of psycho-narration by describing the narrator's linking role, or function of connecting consciousness with the character's context. Palmer describes psycho-narration as an advanced way that the narrator links the character's consciousness (as presented to the reader) to its surroundings/context which build on their purpose, reasons, intentions (76). This approach asks more from the reader who hypothesizes and constructs each character based on this information (16). This approach is significant from a narratological perspective as well as an ethical one. By drawing out the linking function, the alliance between narrator and character, and narrator and reader becomes an ethical one. Ansgar Nunning's "On the Perspective Structure of Narrative Texts" parallels the view of Alan Palmer. Nunning says that each character has a subjective worldview, referring to his or her "knowledge and belief sets, intentions, psychological traits, attitudes, ideological stance, and system of values and norms that have been internalized....everything that exists in the mind of a character" (211). The representation of fictional minds, especially through the two narrative modes of psycho-narration and free indirect discourse, depends on what Liesbeth Korthals Altes has labelled "ethos attribution," as well as the art of deliberation for readers and characters, a process I explore in relation to its ethical position. Because narratives invite observation and judgment from readers (Phelan *Experiencing Fiction* 7), the manner in which these fictional minds are revealed asks readers to involve themselves in the reconstruction and judgment of those minds.

An ethical dilemma that the Victorians explored in their writing was the desire and yet impossibility of knowing the mind of another. The inability, or impossibility, for characters to read other characters' minds and actually know their thoughts is a situation that the realist novel often explores. In response to this situation and in reaction to his first study, Alan Palmer has developed a theory of social minds which describes thought that

can be observed, collectivized, and shared. Specifically, intermental thought describes two or more characters sharing the same thought. Cognitive approaches such as Lisa Zunshine's Theory of Mind explores mind-reading as a crucial tool that fiction provides for its readers. While in real life, one can never be certain of what another is thinking, in realist fiction, it becomes possible. Alan Palmer states, "Part of the work of decoding action statements involves readers following the attempts of characters to read other characters' minds" (*Social Minds* 137). This mediated mind-reading makes use of a character's actions and dispositions with the understanding that the mind is embodied, and therefore can be known through observing a character's body and physicality. Ultimately, this dissertation is a response to Palmer's recognition of "the need for a rhetorical and ethical perspective on analyses of social minds" (182). Therefore, the representation of fictional minds serves as a way of bringing the reader into a character's way of deliberating, which becomes an ethical maneuvering.

Any information about the ethos of characters must be understood in relation to how it is transmitted, which means assessing the authority of the various sources (narrator, implied author) that transmit information about characters and checking the appropriateness of our inferences. Textual clues including voice and focalization are two main determinants that affect reader interpretation. When a reader attempts to identify who is speaking, or who is perceiving, he or she must make "basic interpretive decisions: the analyst perceives dual voice, for instance, by matching discursive clues with his or her mental models for who could be speaking or thinking. Such mental models prominently include the various narrative voices' ethos" (Korthals Altes 136). Korthals Altes argues that "generic framing and reading strategies also may incline readers to imagine and attribute an ethos to a personalized narrator or, instead, to a less personalized narration, or to equate this narrator or narration with the author" (143). The reliability of a narrator can be determined from textual clues: "verbal tics of the narrator, linguistic expressions of subjectivity, textual inconsistencies, conflicts between story and discourse or between characters' utterances and actions, and other text-internal contradictions or inconsistencies" (149). Relying on textual clues calls attention to features that are tangible. The reliability of

the narrator also links with the expectations that a reader brings to the text (which in turn is linked to genre framing and mental models). When these expectations are met or challenged, the reader's sense of the narrator's reliability is confirmed or subverted.

A second technique that situates ethical deliberation based on perspective is focalization. The definition of focalization, and its relationship to point of view, is still extensively debated, namely by Gerard Genette, Seymour Chatman, Mieke Bal, Manfred Jahn, and Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan. Genette identifies focalization as an aspect of mood rather than voice, as it identifies who sees rather than who speaks. He defines zero focalization where "the narrator knows more than the character, or more exactly *says* more than any of the characters knows" and internal focalization where "the narrator says only what a given character knows" (189). Thus zero focalization can be described as the result of omniscient narration in which access to the exterior setting and interior of characters depends on what the narrator chooses to reveal. Internal focalization restricts events to the perception of a focal character, thus privileging one (or many) character's consciousness and reports on the events of the narrative. "The focal character has also been labelled 'centre of consciousness,' 'reflector' (Henry James), 'refractor' (Brooks and Warren), 'figural medium' (Stanzel), 'filter' (Chatman), 'internal focalizer' (Bal), or 'SELF' (Banfield)" (Jahn 174). Henrik Skov Nielsen usefully extracts the core definition of focalization from Genette as "the restriction of access to point of view." However, even this definition emphasizes the visual aspect of focalization, at the expense of all the qualities of metaphoric seeing: knowledge, consciousness, perception, mind access, and experientiality ("Focalization Revisited" 75). Chatman offers one understanding of metaphoric seeing as referring to "acts of memory, judgment, opinion, or whatever" which expands beyond the visual to "such mental activity as cognition, conceptualization, memory, fantasy, and the like" (*Coming to Terms* 140). Manfred Jahn claims that focalization cannot exist without emotion, belief, stance both for characters *and* narrators. This ambiguity between who speaks and who perceives blurs the boundary between story and discourse:

While it is obvious that psychologically and ideologically coloured expressions of emotion, voice, belief, evaluative stance, and so on are strong markers of focalization it is also clear that these indicators apply equally to focal characters and to narrators, severely challenging the distinction between speaking narrators and perceiving characters...All emotive and perceptual aspects of focalization can and indeed must be brought to bear on an appreciation of the narrator's own psychological and ideological orientations, the factors that determine his or her perceptions, beliefs, and emotions. (Jahn 176-177)

By looking at focalization as more than just visual seeing, but rather perception with all its ideological connotations, which character focalizes at a given moment becomes not just a situation of point of view, but a "kaleidoscopic interplay of perspectives" (65) which Liesbeth Korthals Altes links to ethos attribution and ethos development.

The Genre of Realism

Above I mentioned a few of the "frames" and "frame switches" that readers rely on while analyzing ethos. Here I will offer an analysis of the genre of realism as well as techniques that subvert the genre and position the reader towards the synthetic rather than the mimetic. Exploring genre through the frame of narrative theory and ethics requires an understanding of the definition of realism, the use of "framing," readerly expectations and techniques often employed in realist literature. George Levine has described realism as:

a word that constantly changes its significance, and that much of its significance depends both on the temporal context in which it is used and the past to which it almost always, implicitly, alludes critically. Moreover...it implies that literature and language can somehow have access to things as they are, and even this apparently

commonsensical view has been challenged throughout history. (*How to Read the Victorian Novel* 56)

He acknowledges that:

Realism's effort to stand in for the world was not, among the great Victorian writers, naïve and self-deceived. Writing with a commitment to representing the real world adequately forces consideration of the extraordinary difficulties of the work of representation. It makes inevitable an intense self-consciousness, sometimes explicit, sometimes not. No writer attempting to reach beyond words can fail to be struck by the work words do, by the obstacles they put up to transparency, and therefore no such writer can fail to recognize the degree to which the creation of illusion is an essential feature of the realist process. (60)

While realism is frequently described as the genre that promotes verisimilitude and a mimetic reflection of referentiality, Levine demonstrates that realism creates an illusion while, at the same time, calls attention to that act of creation, fomenting a strong self-consciousness in the text: “[The Victorians] create their worlds while being intensely and often explicitly self-conscious about the medium through which they are doing it, and worrying not at all that the efforts at illusion will be undercut by overt exposures of the devices by which the illusion is being created” (64). The obviousness of this illusion holds significance for the synthetic understanding of literature.

The reference of realism makes more sense in the context of fictionality, a theory that has recently been defined by Henrik Nielsen, James Phelan and Richard Walsh in response to the typical genre division between fiction and non-fiction. They claim that “the use of fictionality is...a specific communicative strategy within some context in that [actual] world, a context which also informs an audience's response to the fictive act” (62-63). The acknowledgement of different degrees of fictionality helps

readers to identify the communicative purpose and intent rather than the object of representation (65):

If we assume—rightly or wrongly—that a discourse is fictive, we read it as inviting us to assume (among other things) that it is not making referential claims, and that its relevance is indirect rather than direct. We also read it as inviting us to assume that its represented objects (whether characters, events, or other things) might be partly or wholly invented and, indeed, may even be impossible in the real world. The assumption of fictionality, like the assumption of irony, changes our interpretive activity and its outcomes. (68)

The effect of ascribing fictionality to a text draws on the importance of perspective-taking which is an ethical situation:

[Fictions] offer us imaginary perspectives, but our interpretive engagement with them is continuous with the more direct ways we make sense of our lives and world, and can heavily influence the terms—ethical, emotional, ideological—in which we do so. For better and for worse, fictionality changes the world and the ways we perceive it. (71)

By exploring these novels in context of their fictionality rather than their genre classification, the exigency of their claims for promoting perspective-taking, suggesting possible development of deliberation, and highlighting practices of judgment becomes a real exercise in reader engagement and interpretation.

When a work is classified as fiction, the genre signification brings with it several parameters that set the stage of expectation as regards the type of communication, authorial ethos, etc. The idea of genre and framing is a key idea for readerly expectations of rhetorical aims. For example, do sympathetic, empathetic, and ironic appeals create a certain frame for the reader that highlight a certain ethos of the author, narrator, or characters?

Irony, as a disruption to speech and action, causes the reader to undergo a reevaluation of values. Irony always involves a frame switch—a switch to another communication level—which has consequences for readerly involvement:

The pleasure irony provides may be hypothesized to stem from one's feeling of mental adequacy and agility, with an added tinge of satisfaction stemming from being on the right side of the social judgment line, or rather way beyond it...It is just one step from here to the hypothesis that by multiplying and problematizing interpretive frames, irony increases a work's aesthetic value. The same can be argued for irony's interest from an ethical perspective, as it engages interpreters in reasoning about potential sources' values and ethos. However, readers may have different thresholds when it comes to dealing with this multiplicity of values and perspectives...For some, ambiguity and irony, including those instances pertaining to ethos, form fundamental criteria for aesthetic value. Others instead seek "rapid closure" (Tsur 2006, 58), for which stereotypical and monolithic ethos profiles can be expected to be effective. (Korthals Altes 230-231)

Thus, by using a combination of mimetic and synthetic reading strategies, readers are brought into an immersive and yet reflective reading experience that offers interpretive opportunities at the mimetic and synthetic level, and a richer understanding of the communicative processes happening at all levels.

This call to a reader's engagement depends very much on the dual defamiliarization and immersion offered by techniques that call attention to the artifice of fiction. The self-consciousness of some of these techniques depends on the concept and practice of self-referentiality. Therefore, there is an importance of recognizing the "mimetic impulse" but combining it with emphasis on the aesthetics or craft of fiction: attention to the synthetic components of framing, display, fictionality—the self-referentiality of fiction. So, while much is gained from reading mimetically that relates to

life and fiction and the mutual informing that takes place, even more can be gained (both for the reader and for the importance for literary studies) by added interpretations that go beyond the mimetic. These frame switches move us away from the either/or standpoint of mimetic and synthetic readings towards a both/and approach. Readers can read mimetically, through immersive strategies. They then can be called out of that immersion by techniques that point to the craft of fiction, thus switching to a synthetic reading. However, the mimetic and synthetic readings can be cooperative rather than exclusive. By combining them, they offer an advanced ethical reading of multiple layers of communication which ask for interpretation and evaluation that invites both engagement and distance.

Synthetic techniques that refer back to the text as a construct include metalepsis and metanarration. Metalepsis is the disruption of the separation between the levels of narration, or a crossing over from story to discourse. It can be used to cross a threshold of narration which may have the effect of disrupting the mimetic illusion or heightening the fictionality of a narrative. Metalepsis can both draw the reader in or distance him (Pier 304). Alice Bell and Jan Alber have built on this definition to discuss the interpretive conclusions that follow from a “shared knowledge of illusion” between the author and reader (186). Metalepsis can either be a total border-crossing, or it can include merely opening a window to the other world. Marie-Laure Ryan describes “ontological” metalepsis as that which “opens a passage between levels that results in their interpretation, or mutual contamination” and “rhetorical” metalepsis as that which “opens a small window that allows a quick glance across levels, but the window closes after a few sentences, and the operation ends up reasserting the existence of the boundaries” (207). Monika Fludernik distinguishes between four types of metalepsis: authorial, ontological type 1, ontological type 2, and rhetorical. She also maintains a difference “between an actual crossing of *ontological* boundaries and a merely imaginative transcendence of narrative levels” (“Scene Shift” 396). These moments of metalepsis are helpful for understanding how readers navigate switches between mimetic and synthetic interpretation.

Similar to metalepsis is the concept of metanarration. Ansgar Nunning argues that metanarration:

thematizes the act and/or process of narration... Metanarrative comments may help to substantiate the illusion of authenticity that a text tries to create. Metanarrative passages can therefore *either* “undercut the fabric of fiction”—in which case we are dealing with *self-conscious fictions*; or they do *not* undercut the fabric of fiction and then are merely *self-reflexive narratives*. (qtd. in Fludernik “Metanarrative” 4-5)

As Robert Morrissey claims, with metanarration the act of narration is made overt. This overtness calls attention to a narrator who orders, interprets, and filters the events he or she reports. The awareness that there is a person or function “behind-the-scenes,” as it were, poses interpretive problems for realism. When the reader becomes aware of the constructedness of the story, the illusion of realism should, based on its definition, break. However, while metanarrative comments call attention to their own artificiality, they may not disrupt the mimetic illusion of fiction. Nunning also differentiates between the reference and function of a metanarrative statement. The first is about narration whereas the second serves to make the reader aware of the fictionality of the act of narration (Fludernik “Metanarrative” 18). Therefore the reader finds him or herself in the ambiguous position of distanced awareness of the narrative process (defamiliarization) and engaged with the story through that explicit awareness (immersion). Again, the ambiguity of this position can be both defamiliarizing and immersive at the same time. Monika Fludernik declares that the blend of dissonance and consonance through a combination of metalepsis and aesthetic illusion create an immersive experience for the reader. In her discussion of George Eliot, for example, she remarks:

What is noteworthy in both passages is the conjoining of this strategy of address plus metaleptic metaphor—putting the reader in the scene, so to speak—with an enhancement of sympathetic affect. Reader address and the employment of metalepsis are traditionally believed to produce a breaking of aesthetic illusion; here, in fact,

they serve the opposite function of deepening the reader's involvement in the fiction rather than disrupting immersion. ("Eliot and Narrative" 22)

If defamiliarization and immersion can serve different purposes than originally thought, this raises many questions for other key concepts and their expected function and result.

One of these concepts is that of narration itself. While there has been much attention to narrated events, the idea of narrative silence has received much less study. Narrative gaps are important moments in the reading experience that have a multiplicity of functions. Robyn Warhol describes these gaps as narrative refusals, categorizing them into unnarration and disnarration. Warhol describes the unnarratable as: "narrative elisions, suppressions, repressions, silences, gaps, omissions, or lacunae" and the disnarrated: "when the narrator tells something that did not happen, in place of saying what did." She labels subjunctive narration as that which details "what might have happened, but does not" ("Dickens's Narrative Refusals" 45). Through these narrative gaps, "aspects of a text become a vividly *present absence*, existing at a narrative level somewhere between the text and everything that is left out of it" (48-49). Although she relates them more directly to the creation of subjectivity and consciousness, Warhol's exploration of these narrative refusals can be applied to the gaps that arise between the chronological events of the story and the analeptic and proleptic ways of telling that story. These unnarrated gaps, or being plunged into the past or future without the corresponding present to fill it out, create tensions in the discourse regarding temporality. While Warhol couches these narrative refusals in the "context of the cultural formation of subjectivity" (46), I connect narrative refusals to the author-reader dynamic, and ultimately to the position of the reader as empowered (or not) to make an ethical judgment.

One of realism's key aims was to "ensure the ethics of narrative empathy. On this model, realism emerged in an attempt to alter the very reality that it represents, a literary 'intervention' in the actual world" (Harrison "Paradox of Fiction" 266). The realism of Gaskell, Dickens, and

Eliot employs different typically “realist” techniques. However, all three authors relied on their readers to feel for and with their characters. The realism of Gaskell is less a call to action than a call for change in perspective. *North and South* demonstrates the possibility of a defamiliarized immersion, or the intellectual engagement offered by estrangement. Mary-Catherine Harrison describes the realism of Dickens as a juxtaposition of three different projects: realism, verisimilitude, and heightened reality, opting for the third as the most typical of Dickens’s work. Harrison asserts that Dickens’s “way of describing reality in such a way engages readers’ *imagination* and *emotion*” (“Paradox of Fiction” 270). In *Hyperrealism*, John R. Reed offers a similar reading in which he suggests that Dickens’s rhetorical style does not intend to mirror the reality of life but to enable readers to engage with a heightened life. Eliot’s realism, on the other hand, is well-described by George Levine and Monika Fludernik who argue that the reader’s awareness of that self-consciousness and creation of illusion create a dual defamiliarization and immersion, which I argue is necessary for the reader’s own ethical awareness. Rather than undermining the aims of realism, Eliot works with the disillusionment that accompanies realist literature. At no point is the reader unaware of the call to his or her own cultivation of sympathy.

The engagement that realism hoped to offer its readers was that of ethical aims grounded in emotional appeals—through empathy or sympathy. One of the main aims was the cultivation of multiperspectivity. Multiperspectivity, according to Ansgar Nunning in “Extension of our Sympathies,” links a shared point of view with shared emotions, which creates an ethical change in the reader that is perspective-driven rather than action-oriented. Although ethical impact tends to be justified only if it can be empirically measured via actions, the ethical significance of change of perspective is more in keeping with the Victorian goal of cultivating sympathy through reading fiction. Using these ideas of realism to approach the texts creates an exploration of the relationship between narrator, character, and readers through ethos and ethical awakening. A narrator’s closeness or distance affects the reader’s empathetic engagement which in turns impacts the ethical effects of a character’s consciousness on the

reader. A pivotal work on the engaging or empathetic narrator is Robyn Warhol's "Toward a Theory of the Engaging Narrator." Warhol develops her understanding of the engaging narrator further in *Gendered Interventions* (1989). She identifies five strategies of intervention which work to unite the narratee and reader (again, another border-crossing of the classical narrative model). These include the name by which the narratee is addressed, frequency of direct address, minimal irony, nonfictional stance towards characters, and realistic attitude towards narration (encouraging the reader to carry over new attitudes into the real world). Engaging intervention has not received critical attention, which is problematic as it is a widely used strategy of nineteenth-century fiction. Warhol wisely acknowledges that "a reader's response cannot be enforced, predicted, or even proven" (*Gendered Interventions* 25-26) even with the use of these strategies. Nevertheless, the authorial intention behind them was to arouse a certain type of response from the reader. While she posits that engaging techniques are an attribute of gendered narration, I position the engaging narrator within its ethical effects. The emotional engagement offered by these narrative interventions draws from narrative empathy, an area of study that has become multidisciplinary, but that has a direct bearing on the study of Victorian fiction.

Empathy

Empathy has received extensive critical attention with a special focus on narrative techniques that guarantee empathetic or altruistic development in readers. Suzanne Keen's *Empathy and the Novel* (2007) offers a thorough review of the trends in empathy studies, especially as connected to literary studies, cognitive studies, and psychology. Keen marks a clear difference between empathy and sympathy. However, she notes that prior to the twentieth century, "empathy" did not exist as a word and therefore sympathy was used to categorize what we now label empathy. For this reason, historical approaches to sympathy and empathy can confuse the application of the word. Keen defines empathy as "feeling with," as opposed to sympathy which means "feeling for." Sympathy has a distancing effect whereas empathy has an identifying effect. Nonetheless, several scholars

offer an analysis of Victorian novels in their attempt to cultivate sympathy among their readers and within the novel itself. Rae Greiner's *Sympathetic Realism* (2012) offers a similar reading of realist fiction that contextualizes the rise of realism with sympathy as defined by Adam Smith. Rebecca Mitchell's *Victorian Lessons in Empathy and Difference* (2011) notes that the Victorian understanding of sympathy sought for a recognition and acceptance of alterity, *not* a pursuit of identification. The acceptance of this difference is crucial to understanding empathy/sympathy not as a merging into one, but a respect for and acknowledgement of the mystery of the other. Mary-Catherine Harrison claims that realist novels do more than just cultivate sympathetic observation and imaginative identification; instead they invite participation through narrative interventions ("Narrative Relationships" 272-273).

While respecting the complexity and unpredictability of this ethical response in readers, these scholars nod to the ethical situations that readers are placed in because of their exposure to fictional minds. In *Empathy and the Novel*, Keen attempts to find proof for the connection between novel reading, empathy, and altruism or pro-social behavior. Although she finds that there is no real proof that empathy causes altruistic behavior, she admits that the fictionality of novels may create an artificial altruism as a reader loses nothing in giving him or herself to the narrative and there is no reciprocity to the reader's empathy or desire when reading. Empathy has the power to lead to emotional manipulation *and* aesthetic responses. There are two approaches to take with empathy; the first is the study of formal devices themselves and the second is the disposition of the reader which is dependent on empirical research and can often lead to generalizations. Keen draws on the research being done that supports certain techniques as increasing and contributing to empathetic experiences. She claims that character identification and narrative situation are the two most common techniques to explore. Character identification is not a narrative technique as it occurs in the reader, not in the text, but is:

a consequence of reading that may be precipitated by the use of particular techniques of characterization...These qualities have not

been investigated in a comprehensive fashion...Narrative situation [includes] the nature of the mediation between author and reader, including the person of the narration, the implicit location of the narrator, the relation of the narrator to the characters, and the internal or external perspective on characters, including in some cases the style of representation of characters' consciousness. (*Empathy and the Novel* 93)

The problem with narrative situation is that there is not one view on what enhances identification and empathy.

Various scholars have attributed strong empathetic attachment to first person narration, psycho-narration, and free indirect discourse. Ultimately, Keen, Meta Grosman, and others state that it is impossible to say that one set of techniques increases empathy. For Keen this is problematic because she takes a reader-centric approach that values techniques that explore how to increase altruistic behavior. Mary-Catherine Harrison responds to Keen's work by saying that changes in attitude do not have to lead to changes in behavior. Harrison claims Victorian literature is "especially suggestive for the study of narrative empathy because of its own critical premium on emotional response" ("Paradox of Fiction" 262). Authors such as Gaskell and Dickens assumed "readerly emotion would lead to ethical behaviors" (262). Harrison explores apostrophe as a technique of narrative empathy as it leads to synecdochal interpretation. She suggests that methodological problems remain in how to prove readerly emotion and narrative empathy but she focuses on the potential of narrative empathy for ethical readers. In this way, Harrison gestures more towards a rhetorical ethics as understood by James Phelan. Although some studies have shown that readers are more likely to empathize with those who are similar, Harrison theorizes that we can be cued by the narrator to empathize across difference through foregrounding and perspective-taking and that this was the aim of most Victorian social-problem authors. My use of empathy depends on Keen's definition but I move beyond an exploration of empathetic techniques to demonstrate that both irony and sympathy may actually create more readerly engagement with a text, and therefore further

potential for ethical development. Both in the way I deal with the empathy of current readers and with the reading practices of contemporary readers, I rely on Phelan's feedback loop and the interplay between readerly and textual dynamics as elicited by desire and reciprocity.

Keen gives an excellent history of affect in literary studies that explains literary theory's rejection of affectivity. She explains that up until the advent of Modernism, the readers' emotions and feelings had a place of importance in the analysis of a text's worth, as a novel could encourage empathy which led to the cultivation of good feelings and good society. The Romantics believed that "the emotionally involved reader and the sympathetically imagining writer joined in a mutually reinforcing process of cultivating feeling selves" (*Empathy and the Novel* 51) whereas for the Victorians, "the capacity to create sympathetic characters...becomes a basic test of a novelist's competence" (53). For example, George Eliot wanted her readers to be affected emotionally, as they read, rather than in their subsequent behavior (54). In the beginning of the twentieth century, high Modernism initiated a new engagement with the text that removed reactions of sentiment, or emotional response. Bertolt Brecht's anti-empathetic aesthetics prized estrangement and alienation in order to critically and objectively appraise a work of art. Empathetic engagement, identification with characters, and the pleasures of reading fell under the "middlebrow" approach to literature that caused the academy's rejection of criticism that even hinted at emotional response. New Criticism's sole focus on the text and rejection of affective and ethical readerly reactions also created an affective fallacy that literary studies has been slowly moving away from in the past twenty years. Keen uses empathy to demonstrate the pendulum swing away from and back towards attention to affect in literature. Through the rise of middlebrow reading, empathy within literary studies has gained much prominence with research from such diverse angles including cognitive poetics, neuroscience, psychology, and aesthetics.

The research on affective engagement depends on recent work on narrative and emotions, especially from the fields of neuroscience. Antonio Damasio is one neuroscientist whose research has highlighted the interconnection between reason and emotion through restoring the affective

to the domain of the cognitive (Keen *Empathy and the Novel* 27). This research has created a new connection for literary scholars who seek to draw on the returning importance of the emotions for human consciousness.

Much work on emotion, affect studies, and empathy relies on a methodology of empirical research into emotional or empathetic response through neuroscience, cognitive studies, and psychology including uses of MRI and other brain scans to link neural activity in the affective (not sensory) areas of the brain with reading. Keen also uses case studies of individuals' response to certain texts, mostly through an analysis of her students' reactions as well as the reactions of readers in listservs.

David Miall and Don Kuiken have also done extensive research on readers' literary response but with only empirical methodologies. They state that narratives evoke certain feelings in readers which subsequently shape their perspectives on how they react to or read the narrative. To say there is a universal reaction (X narrative technique brings about Y reaction among all readers) is impossible. However, what can be guaranteed is that aesthetic feeling affects readers' perspectives. Miall and Kuiken created a literary response questionnaire which uses an empirical methodology to measure empathetic response in readers. This thesis, however, connects empathetic reading with ethical reading or ethical experience rather than ethical action. As Keen says:

Authors' use of their imagination to create fictional beings with persuasive inner lives somehow helps "us"—readers operating in "real life"—develop sympathy and empathy. By now it should be clear that the empirical evidence for causal links between fiction reading and the development of empathy in readers does not yet exist, though ingenious studies are underway to shore up the case that novel reading assists in moral development by training readers in empathy. (*Empathy and the Novel* 124)

Meta Grosman builds from Miall and Kuiken's work and offers a review of current research to identify where to go next in the area of readers' interactions with texts and the effect of textual cues on reader reactions.

However, Grosman also relies on an empirical approach that seeks to devise a study that draws on:

how readers use their prior knowledge, expectations, and beliefs in interacting with the textual features of characterisation, how they attribute different traits to characters, how they form concepts of narrators, narrative perspective, and spatial perceptions of narrative venues. (162)

Numerous studies exist to gauge readers' emotional involvement but "the ways in which literary texts address the emotions of readers and the nature of emotions elicited in that way are less clear" (163). Further problems are that "the impact of various stylistic features of texts on readers has been experimentally examined, yet the insights based on individual analyses cannot be generalized to all forms of readers' interaction with texts" (164). Grosman does not suggest an alternative or a solution but limits herself to calling attention to where we are at the moment in the cross-section between reader response and textual analysis. Marisa Bortolussi and Peter Dixon also base their approach on the understanding that causal explanations must be assessed through textual experiments. For example, the observation that free indirect discourse promotes sympathy in readers must be explained through evaluation. They separate the observation that readers react sympathetically to free indirect discourse from the evaluation of how free indirect discourse causes readers to react sympathetically, which must be empirically tested. In "The Ethics of Literature," Willie van Peer also engages with empirical approaches to literature and ethics. Van Peer insists on the need for empirical testing that studies reports of other readers, controlled experiments that change the text or formal feature in question, and case studies into other times and cultures. He criticizes Martha Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge* for overlooking the importance of the empirical in her claim that literature contributes positively to social life because of its effects on the literary imagination (textual interpretation and personal testimony), but offers no evidence beyond her own experience.

A Metahermeneutic Approach

However, to move away from the empirical and towards the potential means relying on a metahermeneutic orientation within narratology. A metahermeneutic orientation analyzes the conventions by which people make and interpret literary narratives or through which they attribute an ethos to narrators or authors. This approach proceeds from a metacritical perspective which relies on reasoning processes as trustworthy (Korthals Altes 96). Metahermeneutic reflection precisely relates interpretive arguments to their underlying value-laden conceptions and pathways. This approach prompts the reader to identify and reevaluate his or her own values, acknowledging that each critic brings his or her own bias to a text. To do hermeneutics properly, each reader must acknowledge his or her starting point from which he or she approaches a text. By interpreting in this way, readers are not trying to provide a normative reading, but one among many from which further interpretations can proceed. Other orientations include a basic theory of narrative which explores how people make and share meaning through narrative. Any methods derived from theory “do not yield scientifically valid analyses or interpretations of individual works, as this is not their aim, though their insights might feed into heuristics for (meta)hermeneutic approaches” (96). This interpretation, if it cooperates with the aims of the reader’s method, should be seen as a critical approach that is backed up by the critical discourse of the argument. Hermeneutic programs include critical, ethical, feminist, or rhetorical narratologies, in which the adjective defines the relevant frame, which in turn determines what textual elements become significant (96). Narratological hermeneutic practices express allegiance to a form of close reading, hence attention to textual form and argumentation (97).

James Phelan shuttles between these four orientations. A theory of literature does not have to be fully generalizable, as defended by empirical research, to avoid being merely subjective:

[Phelan’s] approach needs not meet the criteria of a general theory of narrative. Instead, his program is hermeneutic, to the extent that he offers a method of reading that corresponds to the kind of values he,

and his solicited community of readers, attribute(s) to literature and to criticism. It is also metahermeneutic, to the extent that Phelan makes his own readers aware of how they might (not) want to interpret. (Korthals Altes 98)

Because Phelan clearly identifies and follows his method of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation, his hermeneutic (and nonempirical) method is fully defensible. Korthals Altes explains:

Close attention to narrative devices and aesthetic form, steered by some kind of systematic heuristics, can be argued to develop readers' arsenal of strategies for meaning making and subsequent interpretation. Methodical textual scrutiny can give us some distance, increasing a text's strangeness and hence the metacognitive effects of the reading experience. Far from representing a "merely" aesthetic kind of attention, such intensified attention to particulars of narrative and discursive form constitutes the first step of any careful ethical reading. (250)

One of Korthals Altes's main ideas is that the reader's understanding of literature as a form of communication affects his or her overall hermeneutics related to the ethos of characters, narrators, and authors. One reader can make an argument for an interpretation, certainly acknowledging that the starting point will be influenced by that reader's own set of values, but that critical discussion can proceed from that one argument. Because of its emphasis on method and craft and the practice of interpreting texts, the metahermeneutic approach is the most all-encompassing to understand how and why readers attribute an ethos to characters, narrators, and authors; that is, how readers make meaning from and with texts.

Marshall Gregory supports this methodology for ethical criticism that seeks to avoid anecdotal personal experience, unproven universalizing assertions of a text's power, and confusion between ethical and rhetorical claims, all of which silence attempts at discourse. He aims to build on "how we can *rethink* such issues as the dynamic porosity of selfhood, the ethical

content of literary art in relation to selfhood, the rhetoric of ethical argumentation, the methodology of ethical argument, and the reasons why any of these issues matter in the first place” (“Redefining Ethical Criticism” 289). This methodology builds on the invitations that literary texts offer: invitations to feel, believe, and judge. Using the platform of invitation then allows a critic to say “*if* a reader accepts the work’s invitations—if he or she says yes to the work’s prodding to feel this emotion here, to believe this idea here, to approve of this character here—then *these* ethical valences of influence *may* follow” (292). Gregory’s methodology relies on the “power of invitation” that books have (290) and clarifies the understanding of selfhood as a process of becoming, not a fixed thing to possess: “The discourse of a new ethical criticism needs to refocus itself from two perspectives that ethical critics can actually make arguments and produce evidence about, the two perspectives of *ethical invitations* and *aesthetic tactics*” (291). By staying at the level of the hypothetical, Gregory does not escape from making textual judgments but nuances the previous ethical claims that were made. This new way of doing ethical criticism builds on Martha Nussbaum’s and Wayne Booth’s work and has opened the door to further literary interpretation.

The importance placed on the responsibility of the reader in ethically engaging with a text is crucial. As a rhetorical theorist, Wayne C. Booth in *The Company We Keep* draws on the understanding of books as friends, and therefore the relationship between reader and text is a personal one. Books can be evaluated by the quantity of invitations offered to the reader, the degree of responsibility granted or the level of reciprocity or domination between author and reader, the degree of intimacy, the intensity of engagement expected, the coherence or consistency of the proffered world, the distance between the narrative world and the real world, and the kinds of activities offered (179-180). This type of engagement calls on readers to either surrender uncritically, preserve a distance that will protect us from character change, or surrender as fully as possible but deliberately refine how the author is asking us to see and feel (280-281). Marshall Gregory further refines this understanding of textual invitation and reader response in his explanation of ethical criticism. He claims that stories:

invite (and, to a surprising degree, control) responses of emotion, belief, and judgment that we hardly ever refuse to give, and...exert shaping pressure on our ethos because both the “knowledge” offered by stories and our seldom denied responses constitute kinds of practice, modes of clarification, and sets of habits for living that, once configured and repeatedly reinforced, accompany us into real-life situations day in and day out. (*Shaped by Stories* 1)

Gregory’s approach works because he refuses to say that a certain book will always and for all readers improve character, a clarification he makes in order to steer ethical criticism away from its didactic history. With this approach, he maintains the claim that ethical effects of stories cannot be proven, but can be posited, and with this in mind he offers that “stories can only extend invitations, not coerce effects” (3). These invitations lie mainly in the area of feeling, believing and judging, or the domain of the moral imagination, a level that is largely experiential and responsive rather than intellectually discursive:

The influence of narratives...is always potential, never inevitable, and never absolutely predictable...The fact that stories...cue our capacities for feeling, believing, and judging—invariably raises questions about their potential influence on character, for what *is* character other than the particular configuration of our own ways of feeling, believing, and judging? (23)

Because of the impossibility (without empirical proof) of proving how reading affects each person individually, any ethical responsibility lies in the reader’s personal responsibility to craft him or herself in response to the ethos of the text. Similarly to Phelan, Gregory’s approach also unites aesthetic and ethical effects: “The aesthetic strategies and the ethical vision unfold inside each other...they mutually support and sustain each other” (119). By anticipating the completion of the form and identifying the craft

of the novel, the reader is led to desire both the resolution and completion of the initial trajectory of the progression.

Ethics

The need to explore the relationship between author, text, and reader depends on a definition of ethics and its relationship with literature. The crossover and intersection of ethics and literature has received renewed attention since the 1990s so that contemporary research has divided into four main approaches: moral philosophy, including Aristotelian virtue ethics and Levinas' alterity, historical-political, formal, and rhetorical theories of ethics. While these vary in their methods, all share, in some way, renewed attention to authorial agency, readerly responsibility, and the implicitness of ethos and teleology within certain formal structures (see Buell). Many of the poststructuralist approaches tend to begin with a philosophical theory and apply that to a text. It is this "outside-in" approach that Phelan criticizes, instead opting to let the text create its own context, and deal with it on its own terms.

Aristotelian virtue ethics has prompted the work of Wayne C. Booth's *The Company We Keep* (1988), Martha Nussbaum's *Love's Knowledge* (1990), and Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* (2007), who each offer an understanding of ethics in literature that explores the particulars of a story in order to answer how to live well. The process of deliberation, or dialectically assessing and comparing alternative conceptions of "the good" in an attitude of openness, is the starting point for Aristotelian ethical criticism. Distinct from Utilitarian and Kantian approaches which ask what is most useful or what is my moral duty, thereby narrowing the parameters of what is ethical, the Aristotelian encouragement of deliberation and evaluation is opposed to the application of deductive or reductive rules or proofs for an ethical position. This approach values particulars, emotions, and openness to multiplicity. Such deliberation asks for the virtue of practical wisdom that draws upon affective engagement and prioritizes the value of being a perceiver, or the ability to discern the particular features of a given text. This ability, according to Aristotle, is at the core of practical wisdom and is an ethically valuable activity in itself (Nussbaum 37).

Nussbaum states that emotions are “more reliable in deliberation than detached intellectual judgments, since emotions embody some of our most deeply rooted views about what has importance, views that could easily be lost from sight during sophisticated intellectual reasoning” (42). Due to its emotional engagement of the reader, the novel offers a forum for ethics that invite the reader to assess “what it offers as material for human life in the world” (96).

Wayne C. Booth focuses specifically on the distinctions between author, narrator, and reader in his exploration of authorial ethos manifested through craft. He links craft to virtue, an Aristotelian understanding of excellence. An author’s craft relies on skills that enable him or her to reveal a vision of life in the best possible way. In his discussion of the relationship between craft and ethos, Booth describes the energy a reader has to expend in engaging with the implied author of a text through the figurative language and narrative choices employed. The more the reader has to work to reconstruct or identify the implied author, the more he or she surrenders to the vision offered by that of the implied author. Booth defines ethical criticism as any criticism that concerns itself with the relationship between the reader and author who engage each other in every reading experience. This criticism looks both at the ethos implied by and discerned by a human construction, and the ethos of the person who receives or recreates that construction, and then tries to find a language to evaluate such a relation. Booth’s distinction between author/implied author/ narrator is extremely useful as each has a separate ethos and invites the reader to identify with that ethos. Both Booth and James Phelan, as rhetorical narratologists, display an overlap between narratology and ethical criticism. In *Living to Tell about It* and *Experiencing Fiction*, Phelan emphasizes readers’ ethical engagement and judgment which uses cognitive, emotive, and ethical dimensions and describes the ethical effects of narrator’s choices. Booth’s *Rhetoric of Fiction* emphasizes the effects of certain narrative techniques, including inside views, direct address, and omniscient commentary, and the role of affect as a determinant in readers’ engagement with narratives.

Martha Nussbaum, although primarily a moral philosopher rather than a literary theorist, also explores the relationship between literary style

and content in the exploration of ethical issues. She attends to form (similar to Booth's craft) which shows the reader what is important, draws attention to particulars and either furthers or subverts what content reveals as important:

The telling itself—the selection of genre, formal structures, sentences, vocabulary, or the whole manner of addressing the reader's sense of life—all of this expresses a sense of life and of value, a sense of what matters and what does not, of what learning and communicating are, of life's relations and connections. (5)

Therefore it is important to discover the forms that fittingly express the ideas the author wants to put forward and engage the reader to be active in understanding, in getting at an intelligent reading of life (6). Her breakdown of author, implied author, and narrator are not as precise as Booth's and she often combines the narrator with the implied author in her evaluation of the ethos of craft, but she does draw upon the implied author's textual choices that are manifested by form.

David Parker's *Ethics, Theory, and the Novel* (1994) addresses Kantian, Judeo-Christian, Nietzschean, and Aristotelian understandings of ethics, ultimately advocating for a pluralistic approach. He works from an approach similar to that of Nussbaum and Booth, especially in the Aristotelian attention to concrete particulars, but he dialogues more with structuralist and poststructuralist theory. Parker asserts that most problems or reactions to ethics make the assumption that ethics codifies or assigns everything into categories, is always the construction of binaries, and is therefore judgmental and reactive. In his engagement with theory, he debunks both the "judgmental unconscious," or the moral code of binary differences that opposes an ethic of difference, and the "libidinal unconscious" which relies on a will-to-master approach and opposes the broadness of Aristotle's "How to Live Well" question. Parker's work is helpful, but is very much a beginning in ethical evaluation.

Another strand of ethics that is prominent in literary studies is one based on alterity. Dorothy Hale's "Fiction as Restriction" links new ethicists

(post-structuralists turned to ethics) with Booth by claiming that narratology cannot be separated from the ethical effects of rhetoric. Although she works from Spivak and Levinas's focus on how the reader submits to alterity found in the novel, essentially this idea of ethics is similar to Booth's understanding of how the reader submits and surrenders to the implied author, altering as much as needed in order to become the implied reader. Hale's alterity is very similar to Keen's perspective-taking. Although Hale says that alterity means that the Other is completely unlimited in its potentiality, I would suggest that novels cue us to respond a certain way but the experiences they offer are still limited. Unlike Hale's understanding of the reader as judge, I argue that the reader does not become the sole executive in the position of judge, but is guided and affected in his or her judgments by the text. Although her explanation of the judging reader seems to lose the affective angle, Hale does recommend reliance on narratology founded on the emotional and empathetic engagement of readerly experience. Andrew Gibson is another ethicist working from poststructuralist theory. Concentrating on postmodern texts and theories, Gibson promotes a non-essentialist ethics. He does not use an understanding of affect as cognitive, which is a serious drawback to his work. He sets out towards an ethics of affect but separates sensibility from cognition in that cognition "masters" the objects it conceptualizes but sensibility functions through openness (162). Gibson's theory of openness can be understood by receptivity, one of the ethical positions a reader can adopt when responding to textual invitations.

Adam Zachary Newton also works from the philosophical theories of Levinas, Bakhtin and Cavell to explore narrative ethics. He describes narrative ethics as "the ethical consequences of narrating story and fictionalizing person, and the reciprocal claims binding teller, listener, witness, and reader in that process" (11). To him, this is narrative *as* ethics, and is different from approaches by J. Hillis Miller or by Booth. He claims that Miller and Booth "operate essentially within a formalist and Kantian network" (10) and their ethical approaches only identify what type of judgment (open or duty-bound) is determined by a text. In one way, Newton's approach is very similar to mine as I also explore the

consequences of narrative acts, narrative choices, and the reciprocity (invitation and assent) between narrator/narratee and author/reader. However, we part ways in our understanding of the ethical relationship. I am working from a teleological and ontological approach which Newton rejects; instead, he begins from Levinas' stance of responsibility towards an Other as inherently ethical. Because Newton rejects teleology and a common ontology, he claims that ethics is the "radicality and uniqueness of the moral situation itself, a binding claim exercised upon the self by a concrete and singular other whose moral appeal precedes both decision and understanding" (12). This refusal to acknowledge the possibility of understanding does not contribute to my approach which bases itself on negotiation, receptivity, and dialogue. Newton claims that narrative poetics has discounted ethics altogether: "Narrative theory...has yet to account, adequately or fully, for the ethical in the narrative process as either a formal property (on the order of fictional patterns and structures) or a constitutive force (relations which bind tellers, listeners, and witnesses)" (29). Our work is most similar in our conclusions, but we embark on different routes to discuss the same questions.

Other work being done in ethics and narrative is rooted in a Victorian historical context. For instance, Andrew Miller's *The Burdens of Perfection* (2008) offers a historical reading of Victorian fiction that draws upon political and theological sources to position ethics as moral improvement. While much of his work is too entrenched in epistemology and skepticism for my purposes, he does offer insights into the connection between narrative technique and moral deliberation that I draw upon. For instance, he notes that the dilemma between Victorian individuality and a common ethics can be remedied by a second-person relationship, that is, between the narrator and reader, to mediate the two perspectives. He alludes to the novel's means of attracting readers' ethical reflection through representing a character's deliberation, which he refers to as casuistry. This method "allowed novelists to distinguish their mode of ethical deliberation from various alternatives and to assert its powers as a technique of moral training" (94). Miller stresses the use of free indirect discourse as a way to negotiate first person deliberation and third person perspective of

comparison to general maxims of behavior and that “free indirect discourse is regularly used exactly for the representation of casuistry” (99). His understanding of the use of narrative modes to reveal casuistry is similar to my understanding that narrative modes reveal the ethical act of deliberation. The link between ethical deliberation and the portrayal of other minds has profound importance to the Victorians as it was an access point to the identity of an Other. Miller says that the impossibility of this apprehension lay in the Victorian understanding of individual isolation, but I think this is one area where empathy could act to repair the breach.

Other Victorian ethicists include Valerie Wainwright and Jil Larson. In *Ethics and the English Novel from Austen to Forster* (2007), Wainwright’s main aim is to link the ethical works of Victorian authors with the ethics of modernity, which she says emphasizes personal flourishing (or, Aristotelian ethics). This approach, however, ultimately offers a historical and philosophical ethics. Focusing on Austen, Gaskell, Eliot, Dickens, Hardy, and Forster, she identifies the intellectual context for these novelists. This historical perspective “helps us to gain a better idea of the significance of a point of view, to understand how a certain concept is interpreted, or how an ethical position is extended or reformulated” (10). Although Wainwright says she will pay attention to narrative voice, she does so in a way that does not engage with narrative theory. Harry Shaw’s review of her work critiques the absence of formal discussion of “how narratives work as a medium for philosophical meditation” (706) and suggests James Phelan’s *Experiencing Fiction* as a more detailed and useful exploration of narrative techniques and ethical implications. Wainwright does emphasize the importance of the narrator in affecting the reader’s “interpretation of the ethical perspective of the work” (47) but does not really draw on this in her readings. She identifies the need to read the ethics of certain realist novels through the narrator (53) which is the approach I take. Larson also offers a historical overview of ethics in *Ethics and Narrative in the English Novel: 1880-1914* (2001). Larson’s aim is to read fin-de-siècle authors through their relation to Victorian culture and therefore keeps her work within Victorian intellectual thought. Her main focus is anxiety about agency through gender and sexual ethics, moral luck, aestheticized ethics, and the

ethics of speech acts. As such, she approaches ethics in a thematic way which addresses content to a greater degree than form.

Ansgar Nunning demonstrates the need to synthesize ethical literary criticism with narratological approaches. While “ethical literary criticism has largely ignored or skirted... ‘the content of the form’ ...narratology has also got many blind spots, having largely failed to take into consideration questions of content, history, ethics, or ideology” (“Narratology and Ethical Criticism” 19). Ethical approaches have often remained at the level of theme and content, and narratology has been reluctant to get involved with questions of interpretation. However, Nunning points to recent work done by James Phelan and others as beginning a new trend in combining these approaches for more fruitful analysis. For example:

ethical narratology could show that the narratological concepts of multiperspectivity and perspective structure...provide fruitful analytical tools and heuristic keys for coming to terms with ethical and ideological issues raised in narratives, and for analysing both the relations between the different perspectives delineated in a novel and the narrative construction and negotiation of moral norms and ethical values. (27)

This thesis aims to synthesize ethical and narratological approaches through an exploration of the ethical consequences of narrative techniques. In doing so, it enters the current conversation about the significance of literature and values and ways of constructing and drawing out meaning.

The new narrative, affective, and ethical turns in literary studies create an exciting opportunity to engage with texts in new ways. All three of these “turns” emphasize the reader to a greater degree than in the past (even withstanding Barthes’ “Death of the Author”) but do so in a way that creates a personal relationship between the reader and the text, and through the text, the author. The problems of this approach lie mainly in the overabundance of empirical methodologies to the detriment of theoretical approaches. Each strand—narrative, affective, and ethical—asks new questions and exposes new gaps in research, including the significance of empathetic narrative

techniques, readerly response, openness to the ethos of narrators and characters, and the development of the reader's moral imagination. By exploring the Victorian novel through the integrated approach of rhetorical narratology, readers can engage with these realist texts in new ways as they are asked to reconfigure and interpret the ethos of character, narrator, and implied author through narrative techniques.

Fiction, through a combination of narrative techniques (textual dynamics) and readerly responses (readerly dynamics), invites its audience to participate in an ethical change, namely changes of perspective, changes of deliberative practices, and changes of judgment. On a more genre-specific level, I suggest that Victorian novels do this in particularly interesting ways through the way they affirm and challenge our understanding of the genre of realism. Many of the techniques that realist novels employ actually anticipate later postmodern techniques, especially by drawing the reader into an awareness of the synthetic, or the metafictional, which does not impede reading these novels as mimetic stories reflecting Victorian society of the time. The central argument of this thesis is posited on an understanding of the mimetic and synthetic levels of both textual dynamics and reading practices. The combination of levels creates the space for both immersion and defamiliarization which highlights the play between sympathy and irony, as well as engagement at the level of story and metafictional awareness of the synthetic components of the novel. To interpret while dealing with the combination of these levels requires a reconstruction of the implied author's ethos, and by default, the reader's expectations of that ethos and of the novel itself. The research around this area has not been developed far enough to suggest how ethos constructions are intertwined with readerly expectations which are built on the reader's understanding of genre and types of reading strategies (see Korthals Altes). Through reconstructing both textual dynamics and readerly dynamics, this thesis demonstrates the significance of the relationship between implied author and audience as both synthetic and mimetic. This both/and approach offers some ultimate conclusions for metafiction, realism, and ethics.

**CHAPTER THREE: ELIZABETH GASKELL'S
*NORTH AND SOUTH*⁴**

A fierce debate took place within the nineteenth-century novel in particular on the nature of social minds. It had two sides. One was epistemological: To what extent is it possible to have knowledge of the workings of other minds?

The other side of the debate was ethical: To what purposes should our knowledge of other minds be put? (Palmer "Social Minds" 197)

An ethical dilemma that the Victorians faced was the desire and yet impossibility of knowing the mind of another. The inability, or impossibility, for characters to read other characters' minds and actually know their thoughts is a situation that the realist novel explores as access to the mind of another was access to his or her identity. The use of different techniques to portray fictional minds links to the ethical deliberation that such access offers. Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* explores the instabilities created by this impossibility for characters to know each other's minds, and yet through a combination of focalization and consciousness representation attempts to overcome this impossibility. *North and South* makes the claim that focalization and knowledge are connected, or at least *should be* connected. Both techniques of fictional minds and focalization are crucial for understanding the ethical claims of the realist novel, which Mary-Catherine Harrison explores as including the possibility of creating "empathy across difference" ("Narrative Relationships" 283) and the translation of the reader's emotional response into real-life action ("Paradox of Fiction" 259). These ethical claims are central to the social problem novel and specifically in *North and South* are grounded in shared, or what Alan

⁴ An earlier draft of this chapter was published as "Intermental Thought and Mutual Focalization: Narrative Sympathy in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*" in *Style* (Jan. 2016). An even earlier draft of this chapter was presented as "Looping Back to the Implied Author: Narrative Sympathy and Judgment in Gaskell and Dickens" at the International Conference on Narrative in Cambridge, MA 2014. I am grateful for feedback received from the editor, reviewers, and conference participants.

Palmer calls, “intermental,” thought. The Victorians’ desire for sympathy between characters, and between authors and readers, is ultimately a desire for intermental thought. Thus, situations of intermental thought become a crossover for narrative theory and ethics. This chapter follows Palmer’s recognition of “the need for a rhetorical and ethical perspective on analyses of social minds” (“Social Minds” 234). This chapter explores the instabilities and tensions of *North and South* and the readerly dynamics aroused by those textual dynamics to propose a new understanding of the ethical implications of Victorian realism that depend on sympathetic distance rather than empathy.⁵ The chapter will turn first to the publication of *North and South* which offers an analysis of Gaskell’s craft before proceeding to a close reading of key scenes of misjudgments and misinterpretation between Margaret Hale and Mr. Thornton to explore their effect on readerly engagement.

The Publication of *North and South*

In March 1859, Elizabeth Gaskell wrote a letter to an aspiring author that reveals an insight into her own craft of writing:

The plot must grow, and culminate in a crisis; not a character must be introduced who does not conduce to this growth and progress of events...Imagine yourself a spectator and auditor of every scene and event...a thing you have to recollect and describe and report fully and accurately as it struck you, in order that your reader may have it equally before him. Don’t intrude yourself into your description.
(Chapple and Pollard 420)⁶

⁵ Instabilities refer to gaps of knowledge and misunderstandings between characters whereas tensions refer to gaps of knowledge, miscommunication and misunderstanding in the telling of the story; that is, between the author, narrator, and reader. These instabilities and tensions create a dynamic of desire and resolution that direct the movement of the novel and cue the reader’s involvement. Readerly dynamics are a necessary component of progression in so far as the narrative invites and elicits responses from the reader for closure (see Phelan *Experiencing Fiction* 16).

⁶ References to the letters in Chapple and Pollard’s collection are listed by letter number.

Gaskell's nuanced understanding of the interdependence of plot and character can be understood by James Phelan's definition of "progression," or the forward movement of a novel made up of instabilities and tensions (*Experiencing Fiction* 16). While relying on the actual craft of the novel for the textual analysis of progression and ethical deliberation, I will explore briefly the publication process of *North and South* to demonstrate Gaskell's authorial positioning, especially in relation to Charles Dickens, her contemporary and another so-called realist novelist. On January 2, 1854, Charles Dickens wrote to Gaskell, inviting her to contribute to *Household Words*. Gaskell had already contributed several works to his periodical; longer works such as *Cranford* (1851) and *Lizzie Leigh* (1855), and shorter works: "The Well of Pen-Morfa" (1850), "The Heart of John Middleton" (1850), "Morton Hall" (1853) and "The Squire's Story" (1853). Although Gaskell had experience providing material for the weekly periodical, she much preferred to publish complete novels.

Indeed, most of Gaskell's novels were published as stand-alone volumes by Chapman and Hall. A letter from December 11, 1862 to an unknown recipient reveals Gaskell's attitude towards the medium of the weekly periodical:

I beg to decline your proposal of writing for a new weekly periodical. I am not in the habit of writing for periodicals, except occasionally (as a personal mark of respect & regard to Mr. Dickens) in *Household Words*. I never fixed any price on what I did then, nor do I know at what rate he pays me. I choose my own subjects when I write, and treat them in the style that I myself prefer. But half a dozen papers in H.W. are all I ever wrote for any periodical as I dislike & disapprove of such writing for myself as a general thing. (Chapple and Pollard 519)

As Gaskell says, she wrote according to her own style, rather than according to the requirements of the medium of publication. It is perhaps her experience writing and publishing *North and South* throughout 1854-1855 that led to her aversion towards the weekly periodical. The division of

Gaskell's manuscripts into weekly parts suitable for the audience expectations and business needs of Dickens's periodical initiated a problematic and frustrating working relationship between author and editor. Their disagreement over the weekly divisions revealed a fundamental difference of understanding in relation to the craft and ethos of the novel. While Gaskell had published in serial form previously, *North and South* was not episodic like *Cranford*, and, therefore, did not match Dickens's expectations of the narrative arc of each installment.

As the working relationship of Dickens and Gaskell has been discussed widely, and is especially well presented in Arthur Pollard's work on Gaskell, only a brief overview is necessary here. Gaskell wrote *North and South* between January 1854 and January 1855, to be published weekly from September 2, 1854 to January 27, 1855. She sent these parts as four separate manuscripts to Dickens. Gaskell typically sent her manuscripts with no chapter divisions, and Dickens took responsibility for suggesting breaks, attempting to create action-based cliff hangers for each weekly part. As early as February 18, 1854, before Dickens had seen one page of Gaskell's work, he wrote:

Don't you put yourself out at all, as to the division of the story into parts. I think you had far better write it in your own way. When we come to get a little of it into type, I have no doubt of being able to make such little suggestions as to breaks of chapters, as will carry us over all that, easily. (Storey, Tillotson, and Easson 278-279)

This assumption of responsibility by Dickens created two problems. The first was a miscommunication by Whitefriars Publishers who wrongly claimed that 18 sides of Gaskell's writing would fit into a weekly part. The reality was closer to 14. While the weekly installments of Dickens's concurrent publication, *Hard Times*, contained 11 columns, most of Gaskell's installments ran to 14 or 15 columns. Space was always an issue in weekly periodicals, and Gaskell wrote without considering length. Her writing, however, makes clear the second major difference between author and editor. While Dickens was caught up with the sequence of events,

specifically: “(1) the scheme of the chapters; (2) the manner of introducing the people; (3) the progress of the interest; (4) the introduction of the principal places; (5) the early introduction of the plot; and (6) the rapid movement of the story” (Grubb 143), Gaskell wrote with attention to character motivation and interiority, an approach not especially suited to Dickens’s method of serialization. Figure 1 shows the dates of writing and publication:

Figure 1: Manuscript and Publication Dates

Date	Correspondence	Chapters	Weekly Parts & Dates
June 17 1854	MS 1 Completed	Ch 1-13	Weekly Parts: 1-7 (Sept 2- Oct 14, 1854)
July 25 1854	MS 2 Completed	Ch 14-22	Weekly Parts 8-12 (Oct 21-Nov 18, 1854)
Oct 14 1854	MS 3 Completed	Ch 23-35	Weekly Parts: 13-17 (Nov 25-Dec 23, 1854)
Dec 23 1854	MS 4 Completed	Ch 36-47	Weekly Parts: 18-22 (Dec 30, 1854-Jan 27, 1855)
Spring 1855			North & South published as 2 volumes with additional material

Annette Hopkins explains, “A book in which a great deal of the drama goes on in the minds of the characters does not lend itself to mechanical divisions ending, with every issue, on a strongly emotional note” (375). Gaskell’s emphasis on character can be understood by her use of “Margaret Hale” as the first and working title of the novel. On June 17, 1854, after receiving the first manuscript, Dickens wrote to Gaskell to inquire about the title. Gaskell suggested “Margaret Hale” and on July 2, 1854, Dickens initially seemed to agree: “Margaret Hale is as good a name as any other; and I merely referred to its having a name at all, because books usually have names, and you had left the title of the story blank” (Storey, Tillotson, and Easson 363). However, after he finished reading the second manuscript on July 26, 1854, he wrote, “North and South appears to me to be a better name than Margaret Hale. It implies more, and is expressive of the opposite people brought face to face by the story” (Storey, Tillotson, and Easson 378). Although Gaskell accepted this change, she never referred to

her novel by that title. Even after Dickens suggested *North and South*, Gaskell repeatedly referred to her work in letters as “Margaret,” demonstrating her focus on the character-driven plot.⁷ Indeed, on December 17, 1854, Gaskell wrote to Dickens, “I think a better title than N. & S. would have been ‘Death & Variations’. There are 5 deaths, each beautifully suited to the character of the individual” (Chapple and Pollard 220). Even at the end of the writing process, Gaskell’s focus remained attentive to the characters of her novel.

Gaskell saw her characters as fundamental to the overall story. The importance of events is always linked to the internal and external effects on and reactions of the characters. On October 27, 1854 Gaskell wrote to Mrs. Shaen:

They’ve quarrelled, silently, after the lie and she knows she loves him, and he is trying not to love her; and Frederick is gone back to Spain and Mrs. Hale is dead and Mr. Bell has come to stay with the Hales, and Mr. Thornton ought to be developing himself—and Mr. Hale ought to die—and if I could get over this next piece I could swim through the London life beautifully into the sunset glory of the last scene. But hitherto Thornton is good; and I’m afraid of a touch marring him; and I want to keep his character consistent with itself, and large and strong and tender, and *yet a master*. That’s my next puzzle. I am enough on not to hurry; and yet I don’t know if waiting and thinking will bring any new ideas about him. I wish you’d give me some. (Chapple and Pollard 217)

Gaskell relied on her characters to move the events of the plot, rather than the other way around. The plot events and character situation are always tied

⁷ Letters from Gaskell to various recipients refer to “M. Hale” (To Forster May 14, 1854), “and besides there’s Margaret Hale!” (To Forster May 17, 1854), “I have not written one line of ‘Margaret’” (To Unknown June 1854), “So *ought* not M. Hale to stand a good chance,” (To Catherine Winkworth October 14, 1854), “I’ve got to (with Margaret—I’m off at her now following your letter) when they’ve quarrelled, silently, after the lie and she knows she loves him, and he is trying not to love her” (To Mrs. Shaen October 27, 1854), and finally “I shall send you ‘Margaret’ as soon as I get home” (To Parthenope Nightingale October 30, 1854) (See Chapple and Pollard 192, 195, 200, 211, 217, 218).

together. In this way, the progression of the novel is dependent upon the instabilities created by character knowledge, perception, communication *and* mis-knowledge, misperception, and miscommunication, which has greater consequences for the engagement of the reader.

This emphasis on character caused extensive friction between Gaskell and Dickens. On June 17, 1854, Dickens implored Gaskell to look at her story from the weekly point of view:

I do not apologize to you for laying so much stress on the necessity of its dividing well, because I am bound to put before you my perfect conviction that if it did not, the story would be wasted—would miss its effect as it went on—*and would not recover it when published complete*. The last consideration is strong with me, because it is based on my long comparison of the advantages and disadvantages of the periodical form of appearance. I hope these remarks will not confuse you, but you will come out tolerably clear after a second reading, and will convey to you the means of looking at your whole story from the weekly point of view. It cannot, I repeat, be disregarded without injury to the book. (Storey, Tillotson, and Easson 356)

Although Gaskell's reply is destroyed, she must have been annoyed by Dickens's overbearing tone because she did not change her style. Gaskell's refusal to budge in relation to the sequence of events reveals a different focus of her writing. Dickens wrote again on July 2, 1854 in an apologetic, but still domineering, manner:

Nor had I any ambition to interpose my own words of conclusion to any of the divisions...I dwelt on the necessity of my considering the capacity in the story itself of being divided as such a work for such a purpose *must* be divided, because I am under an imperative necessity on that head, which I can no more change than I can change the weather or my tenure of life. (Storey, Tillotson, and Easson 363)

However, not much changed as a result of that altercation, either in the final divisions of the first manuscript, or in Gaskell's approach to the second manuscript. Again, Gaskell's second manuscript was annotated with divisions by Dickens. Again, editor and author disagreed over where the breaks should be made. Figure 2 shows a reference chart of the different suggestions for ending each weekly part:

Figure 2: Differences in Endings

Wk. Part	Ch.	Dickens's Suggestion for End	Gaskell's Decision for End
1	1-2	Henry Lennox's arrival at Helstone	Agreed
2	3-4	Announcement of Hales' move to Milton; shorten dialogue between Margaret and Mr. Hale	Agreed but did not shorten dialogue
3	5-6	Decision to go to the seaside	Agreed
4	7-8	Margaret reading Edith's letter	Margaret's commentary on the impending visit of Mr. Thornton
5	9-10	Thornton leaving after tea	Thornton before visit for tea
6	11-12	Margaret leaves Higgins' house	Before Mrs. Thornton's visit to the Hales
7	13	Margaret's talk with Bessy and revelation of Mrs. Hale's illness	Agreed
8	14-15	Shorten strike conversation between Margaret, Mr. Hale, and Thornton	Gaskell ignored this suggestion
9	16-17	Invitation to Thornton's Dinner	Dialogue between Margaret, Bessy
10	18-19	Scene between Boucher and Higgins	Included invitation to Thornton dinner in this part, but agreed to Dickens's ending
11	20-21	Margaret enters Mill before riot	Agreed
12	22-23	Thornton's proposal	Margaret's shame
13	24-25	Unknown	Thornton's proposal included in this part but ends with Frederick
14	Vol II Ch 1-2	Unknown	Unknown

Several more weeks of correspondence reveal Dickens's anxiety that he had not received the first manuscript ready for press (that is, revised with his edits) from Gaskell. After repeated letters to Wills to request it from Gaskell, on August 20, 1854, he finally received the manuscript, without any alterations:

I have just received from Wills, in proof, our No. for the 9th of September containing the Second Part of North and South, as it originally stood, and *unaltered by you*. This is the place where we agreed that there should be a great condensation, and a considerable compression, where Mr. Hale states his doubts to Margaret. The mechanical necessities of Household Words oblige us to get to press with this No. *immediately*. In case you should not already have altered the proof and sent it to Wills (which very possibly you have: and in that case forgive my troubling you) will you be so kind as to do so at once. What I would recommend—and did recommend—is, to make the scene between Margaret and her father relative to his leaving the church and their destination being Milton-Northern, as short as you can find it in your heart to make it. I have made a break at Lennox's going away, and begin a new chapter (*not* a new weekly part, you understand) with "He was gone." (Storey, Tillotson, and Easson 402)

Although Dickens wanted Gaskell to decrease dialogue and character development in order to increase suspenseful action, Gaskell ignored these suggestions, instead choosing to close each weekly part with an instability created by the reader's knowledge and anticipation of a certain event, which relates to character-driven progression. As Dorothy Collin claims, "Variations of part divisions in the early numbers show not so much differences in the technique of serialization between Dickens and Mrs. Gaskell, as emphasis upon one aspect of the novel rather than another" (89).

Gaskell's attention to characters posed thematic and structural problems. In October 1855 Richard Holt Hutton's review of *North and South* in *National Review* complained:

It has much of the great power of its author; but the plot is sadly disjointed, and the interstices are "viewy." The characters do not move gradually through the narrative, but, so to say, get through it in kangaroo fashion, by a series of little successive springs, and the characters are rather subordinated to the "views," than the "views" to the characters. The story is clearly rather incoherent, and the incident invented, as emergency dictated, to get up periodic interest when the book became too discussional. (349)

Gaskell knew her novel had flaws because she did not have the time to write the necessary character developments that she had envisioned. The end of the writing process was marked by frustration, headaches, and overall disillusionment with the direction the novel was going.⁸

Her lingering frustration over the overall effect of *North and South* continued until the last part was published. In a January 1855 letter to Anne Jameson, Gaskell wrote:

Though I had the plot and characters in my head long ago, I have often been in despair about the working of them out; because of course, in this way of publishing it, I had to write pretty hard without waiting for the happy leisure hours. And then 20 numbers was, I found my allowance; instead of the too scant 22, which I had fancied were included in 'five months;' and at last the story is huddled & hurried up; especially in the rapidity with which the sudden death of

⁸ On December 24, 1854, Gaskell wrote to Eliza Fox: "I believe I've been as nearly dazed and crazed with this c--, d--be to h--to it, story as can be. I've been sick of writing, and everything connected with literature or improvement of the mind; to say nothing of deep hatred to my species about whom I was obliged to write as if I loved 'em. Moreover I have had to write so hard that I have spoilt my hand, and forgotten all my spelling. Seriously it has been a terrible weight on me and has made me have some of the most felling headaches I ever had in my life, so having growled my growl I'll go on to something else" (Chapple and Pollard 222).

Mr. Bell, succeeds to the sudden death of Mr. Hale. But what could I do? Every page was grudged me, just at last, when I did certainly infringe all the bounds & limits they set me as to quantity. Just at the very last I was compelled to desperate compression. (Chapple and Pollard 225)

Only a few weeks later, Gaskell revised the weekly serial as a stand-alone volume to be published by Chapman and Hall. In this change, Gaskell adjusted the final five chapters and included new material to lengthen out the events, but she could not rework the pace of the novel. In the volume edition, she included a preface stating:

On its first appearance in ‘Household Words,’ this tale was obliged to conform to the conditions imposed by the requirements of a weekly publication, and likewise to confine itself within certain advertised limits, in order that faith might be kept with the public. Although these conditions were made as light as they well could be, the author found it impossible to develop the story in the manner originally intended, and, more especially, was compelled to hurry on events with an improbable rapidity towards the close. In some degree to remedy this obvious defect, various short passages have been inserted, and several new chapters added. With this brief explanation, the tale is commended to the kindness of the reader. (*North and South* 4)

A reviewer from the *Examiner* in April 1855 applauded the changes from weekly periodical to volume publication: “Now reprinted, with some insertions that give greater finish to the story, it appears to us quite worthy of the writer’s power and reputation” (245). A later review in the *Guardian* agreed: “It is somewhat altered and considerably expanded (with much improvement to the development of character) since it appeared in that periodical, and is now not unworthy of the great reputation which its predecessors have acquired” (qtd. in Easson 348). While in retrospect these changes that emphasized character development and interiority have been

seen as positive improvements to the overall work, the serialization of *North and South* precluded any such attention.

Fictional Minds and Intermental Thought

Gaskell's emphasis on the characters and their perception and knowledge of each other suggests how she approached the progression of the novel. The progression of *North and South* largely depends on how the reader is cued to desire certain events for a character, inviting an emotional and ethical response from the reader to moments of empathy, sympathy, and irony. While Hilary Schor has analyzed textual dynamics in *North and South* as a matter of sexual desire, Gaskell offers a more nuanced understanding of desire—both readerly and character desire is linked more closely to the catharsis understood by Aristotle. In *Poetics*, the purgation or cleansing of both audience and actor reflects the narrative arc of exposition, action, and closure that draws on the feelings of the reader or audience. The instabilities specifically of moments of character misperception and incorrect knowledge of other characters create a dynamic of desire and resolution that both direct the movement of the novel and cue the reader's response. In the hopes of persuading her readers to take the perspective of *both* North and South, Master and Hand, Margaret and Thornton, Gaskell creates several gaps in knowledge between the two sides that necessitate a call upon the reader's judgment.

Both Margaret's and Mr. Thornton's minds are revealed through the combined narrative modes of psycho-narration and free indirect discourse which provide instances of inside views and help to paint a sympathetic picture of each character. The instabilities of misunderstanding arise when extensive inside views of Mr. Thornton are revealed while Margaret's thoughts remain strangely silent. These gaps of character knowledge and understanding create instabilities because the reader is aware of the interior states of both characters but cannot act to remedy their misinterpretation. Thus, readerly dynamics are a necessary component of progression in so far as the narrative invites and elicits responses from the reader for closure. The initiation of certain events anticipates the possibility that they will be resolved. Margaret Hale and Mr. Thornton become the characters to watch

working out their individual changes as *North and South* offers a reading of process rather than resolution.

In *North and South*, Margaret Hale and Mr. Thornton experience frequent misunderstandings and differences of thought. Their interpretations of each other are frequently incorrect or misleading, or one character's mind is privileged over another. Their inability to achieve intermental, or shared, thought is reflected by their misperception and misinterpretation of each other. An ethical reading of *North and South* depends on understanding psycho-narration not as a narratorial intrusion but as the holistic representation of a character's mental processes in reaction to his or her environment. Free indirect discourse, by appearing to efface the narrator, also creates a relationship of irony and empathy between narrator and reader about a character (Pascal 32). These two narrative modes are key ways of providing inside views of characters, especially of Margaret and Mr. Thornton. This positioning of these characters' thoughts puts the reader in the position of observant judge, which James Phelan claims is one of the unique features of narrativity (*Experiencing Fiction* 7). This representation of deliberation is fundamental for a reader's interpretation of ethos. Liesbeth Korthals Altes claims, "Readers readily translate textual rhythm, punctuation, syntactic structures, and so on into emotions, moods, or mental dispositions that sketch out an ethos... To decode ethos clues is a complex calculation, taking into account a kaleidoscopic interplay of perspectives" (65). While other scholars have explored how a reader constructs the mental attributes of a character or narrator, Korthals Altes contextualizes mental attributes as what forms and reveals a character's ethos.

When Margaret and Thornton represent their own thoughts with their own voices, the narrator chooses to relinquish control over the narrative discourse, inviting the reader into a closer involvement with the deliberation of the characters. Moments of deliberation offered by the narrative modes of psycho-narration and free indirect discourse do not tell the reader what to think but offer an exploration of *how* to think. As the reader observes how various characters deliberate, he or she is offered the possibility of changing thoughts, viewpoint, and perspective, and thus changing values. Along with other social problem novelists, Gaskell faced

the impossibility of guaranteeing that a reader's emotional response would lead to an ethical response. However, this uncertainty did not sway Gaskell from her attempt to use literature as a means of ethical transformation. Instead, the navigation of the conflict between Margaret and Thornton reflects Gaskell's emphasis on "the social and ethical importance of imagining and representing both perspectives" (Harrison "Narrative Relationships" 277). By positioning the reader to take on both perspectives, the narrator initiates a necessary first response before any "real-world" changes. The perspective-taking and exposure to fictional minds that *North and South* offers creates the possibility of ethical change in the reader through intermental thought between reader and character. Although psycho-narration and free indirect discourse do not necessarily make the characters more empathetic or sympathetic, the reader is made aware of the reality and pace of the feelings of the principal characters.

This gap in exposure to their fictional minds is combined with an inequality of focalization which presents opportunities for an ethical reading. Manfred Jahn claims that focalization cannot exist without emotion, belief, and stance both for characters and narrators (176). By looking at focalization as more than just visual seeing, but rather perception with all its ideological connotations, which character focalizes at a given moment creates an ethical reading of social minds in the novel. The perception through focalization that the narrator of *North and South* prizes is more than just accurate looking; it is unity between seeing and knowing, or knowing because one sees. Thus, the narrator's attention to the gaze of one character upon another reveals an emphasis on the knowledge that can be gained from the body, and the possibility of accurate knowledge and mutual understanding. Alan Palmer states, "Part of the work of decoding action statements involves readers following the attempts of characters to read other characters' minds" (*Social Minds* 137). This mediated mind-reading makes use of a character's actions and dispositions with the understanding that the mind is embodied, and therefore can be known through observing a character's body and physicality.

In *North and South*, characters look at each other to read their bodies, and have their own bodies read. Significantly, face-watching and

face-reading, with their link to focalization, are the key ways in which perception and thought are linked in the novel. Comments about seeing, watching, and observing create a platform for character-character communication that relies on how one character's bodily reaction demonstrates his or her interior thoughts, and how that message is read through another character's focalization. This variety of perspective underscores an important element of the gaze and privileged knowledge. While Thornton's thoughts are linked to what he sees, he does not always "see" correctly. This fallibility of perception creates an ongoing instability throughout the novel. The link between focalization and accurate seeing with knowledge is a problematic one that leads to the climax of misunderstandings in the novel but also the resolution through interdependence. Ultimately, *North and South*'s resolution depends on Margaret and Thornton attaining sympathy of minds, reflected by intermental thought.

The Narrator's Construction of Realism and Distance

The narrator's decision to reveal a character's thoughts or to create narrative silence has implications for the genre of realism. Positioning Gaskell as a realist author depends on the definition of realism as a genre that calls for readerly engagement without an overt narrator. Gaskell's desire to let the scene speak for itself without the introduction of the author or an intradiegetic narrator in the description creates verisimilitude without engagement between author and reader that still hopes to affect her readers' response to social problems. Mary-Catherine Harrison explains, "Mid-century realism is not characterized by detachment and objectivity; instead, it relies upon a system of reference between fiction and modern life" ("Paradox of Fiction" 266). Rather than inviting her readers' sympathies through engaging techniques of direct address and narratorial metalepsis that the narrator of *Mary Barton* uses, Gaskell creates an authorial narrator in *North and South*.⁹ This narrator remains at the level of discourse, as

⁹ Genette's definition of metalepsis as "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by the diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.), or the inverse" (234-235) has been expanded and refined to include

compared with that of *Mary Barton* who frequently enters the story space. While *North and South*'s narrator is not involved, she is not unconcerned either. Elizabeth Starr claims, "The narrator makes no overt reference to either her direct participation in or knowledge of events. Yet while an extradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator in *Mary Barton* gives way to a heterodiegetic narrator in *North and South*, the authoritative voice still definitely resides in and manages the text" (394). While the narrator of *Mary Barton* engages her reader's sympathies through direct address (Harrison "Narrative Relationships" 275), the narrator of *North and South* distances herself from the story, leaving the reader to form his or her own judgments. Gaskell removes her presence in an act of trust that her readers will respond to the narrative progression that offers an ethics of reading beyond sentimentalism. Harrison claims, "The rise of realism was due in part to mid-century authors' attempts to ensure the ethics of narrative empathy. On this model, realism emerged in an attempt to alter the very reality that it represents, a literary "intervention" in the actual world" ("Paradox of Fiction" 266). Although lacking an engaging narrator and the empathetic effects directly associated with one, Gaskell relied on her readers' capacity to feel for and with her characters. Gaskell's realism is of a different type than that of Dickens or Eliot. *North and South* is less a call to action than a call for change in perspective. *North and South* demonstrates the possibility of a defamiliarized immersion, or the intellectual engagement offered by estrangement.

The gap in knowledge of what the characters know and understand about each other asks for judgment from the reader who receives the characters' interpretations and the narrator's evaluation of their thoughts and actions. Throughout the progression of *North and South*, the reader is cued to view Margaret Hale as the character most aligned with the narrator, while Thornton is given a sympathetic place due to his position as the "center with filtration" (see Chatman *Coming to Terms* 147-148). These positions rotate so that the reader has access to both characters' interiority, an awareness of

ontological and rhetorical metalepsis that vary from actual border-crossing between story and discourse to the opening "of a small window that allows a quick glance across levels, but the window closes after a few sentences" (Ryan 207).

the individual reactions of each character, and an ironic engagement with both characters. The instabilities created by moments of character misperception and incorrect knowledge of other characters create a dynamic of desire and resolution that both direct the movement of the novel and cue the reader's response.

The narrator quickly identifies Margaret as the character to follow more closely even while revealing her need for ongoing development to become the narrator's second self. The narrator positions Margaret as the one who all the other characters turn to for guidance and direction. For example, Margaret wears Edith's Indian shawls to display them and becomes the center of attention although she is not the one to be married; Mr. Hale cannot face up to telling his wife about their impending move to Milton and asks Margaret to do it; Margaret is entrusted with the knowledge of the seriousness of Mrs. Hale's illness; etc. Margaret's development is linked to the events of the plot that make internal and external demands on her and the reader quickly realizes that Margaret has been asked for a greater maturity than her youth would allow. While Margaret is the character who is most closely aligned to the values of the narrator, the narrator hints that Margaret is not entirely reliable and will have to undergo her own maturing process. These hints are given through how the narrator reveals the ethos of one character without equal attention to the reaction of the other character. Such a distance, while not pejorative, is realistic and ultimately helpful in order to put the reader into a position of judgment. Indeed, Margaret works to navigate the difference between her own values and Mr. Thornton's, as well as the narrator's, revealing what Amanda Anderson refers to as sympathetic recognition of the other without subjugation (140).

Thornton also has had to mature quickly at a young age. Because his thoughts are revealed more frequently through both psycho-narration and free indirect discourse, and because Margaret maintains a physical and emotional distance from Thornton, the reader is cued to view and understand him with sympathy. The extensive inside views of Thornton are juxtaposed with those of Margaret to reveal a deep-seated difference of opinion. However, while the inside views of Thornton are extensive, the

narrator rarely grants an inside view of Margaret's reaction to Thornton. Instead she offers inside views of one character, and physical descriptions of the other. Because the reader has more knowledge of the minds of the characters, he or she is brought by the narrator into an ironic stance between the duality of the possibilities of desire and resolution. Navigating the possible future events and knowing one character's mind over another creates an alliance between the reader and a non-engaging narrator and leads to ironic immersion. Gaskell creates desire, suspense and privileged knowledge between the implied author and the reader over a character; the end result is a complicated tangle of irony, sympathy and empathy. While George Eliot aimed to achieve this union between narrator and reader through empathetic techniques such as the engaging narrator, an overt narratorial presence, and sympathetic attitude, Gaskell employs techniques that create a sympathetic distance. Both Eliot and Gaskell chart their heroines in process, but Gaskell leaves the reader to make judgments by refusing to comment on how a character is changed by actions, and how the reader should feel as a consequence. This alliance is intellectually immersive—both cognitively and sensitively—without playing for cheap emotion. Indeed, this ironic immersion could be more aptly labeled sympathy, as it grants fellow-feeling without loss of one's self. Howard Sklar defines sympathy as the awareness of suffering as something to be alleviated; the judgment that the suffering of another is undeserved or unfair; negative, unpleasant or uncomfortable feelings on behalf of the sufferer; and a desire to help: "Sympathy involves greater distance between the individual who feels it and the person towards whom it is directed. This distance enables the observer (the one who feels the sympathy) to make a judgment" (26).

In the hopes of persuading her readers to take the perspective of both North and South, Master and Hand, Margaret and Thornton, Gaskell creates several gaps in knowledge between the two sides that call upon the reader's judgment. These gaps of character knowledge and understanding create instabilities because the reader is aware of the interior states of both characters but cannot act to remedy their misinterpretation. The narrator leaves the reader to make judgments by refusing to comment. Unlike *Mary*

Barton, the central theme in *North and South* is not empathy with the poor; instead, it is knowledge of the mind of another, or sympathy. However, it is *through* empathy with the poor, specifically Nicholas Higgins, that both the protagonists and the reader are led to sympathy and shared knowledge. Ultimately, the distance required to experience the merits of sympathy is parallel to the process of entering into shared thought through mutual focalization. The relationship between the narrator and reader models the intermental thought that Margaret and Thornton attempt to reach throughout the novel.

Mutual Focalization and Intermental Thought

Mutual focalization refers to the position of a character seeing herself as another character sees her, and knowing the intention of that look. For example, in an early scene of dialogue between Margaret and Nicholas Higgins, Margaret comes to a fuller awareness of how she is perceived by him: “It seemed all at once to take the shape of an impertinence on her part; she read this meaning too in the man’s eyes” (73). Nicholas Higgins is the first to make an accurate reading of Margaret’s face which draws her into mutual understanding with him:

He seemed to understand her acknowledging glance, and a silent recognition was established between them whenever the chances of the day brought them across each other’s paths. They had never exchanged a word; nothing had been said but that first compliment; yet somehow Margaret looked upon this man with more interest than upon any one else in Milton. (72)

It is significant that the character with whom Margaret experiences mutual focalization and sympathy is the one to bring about the union between Margaret and Mr. Thornton. The narrator of *North and South* values the union created by intermental thought. Gaskell’s religious and political aim was mutual understanding between factory owners and factory workers, between the God-fearing and the infidel, between rural and industrial, and she realizes this theme on the micro-level. In contrast to the antagonism

between Margaret and Thornton, mutual focalization between Margaret and her brother Frederick always leads to sympathy and often, shared thought.

While “seeing” and “knowing” are not always linked in how they are reported to the reader, Thornton’s thoughts are very much linked to his focalization. His gaze is described as a deep earnestness that “seemed intent enough to penetrate into the very heart and core of what he was looking at” (80). Thornton’s look focuses on Margaret’s body in his attempt to read and come to an understanding of her person:

Her full beauty met his eye; her round white flexile throat rising out of the full, yet lithe figure...her eyes, with their soft gloom, meeting his with quiet maiden freedom...while he looked upon her with an admiration he could not repress, she looked at him with proud indifference, taking him, he thought, for what, in his irritation, he told himself he was—a great rough fellow, with not a grace or refinement about him. Her quiet coldness of demeanour he interpreted into contemptuousness. (63)

As Thornton focalizes on Margaret, his visual gaze links to his understanding, or misunderstanding, of her character as proud and contemptuous. Gaskell’s word choice reveals that Thornton’s misunderstanding of Margaret is a process; Thornton deliberately reads Margaret incorrectly in order to defend himself from the rejection of a woman he admires. By casting blame on Margaret’s attitude and demeanor, Thornton tries to protect himself from the possibility that he also can be misread. Margaret does, in fact, misread him as a “stranger; not over-brushed, nor over-polished, it must be confessed, after his rough encounter with Milton streets and crowds” (63). Margaret’s later description of her first introduction to Thornton is incomplete; she relates the entire scene through dialogue, with no revelation of her mental perception or attitude. Mrs. Hale asks what Mr. Thornton was like and Margaret responds:

‘Oh! I hardly know what he is like,’ said Margaret, lazily; too tired to tax her powers of description much. And then rousing herself, she

said, ‘He is a tall, broad-shouldered man, about—how old, papa?...About thirty—with a face that is neither exactly plain, nor yet handsome, nothing remarkable—not quite a gentleman; but that was hardly to be expected.’ (64)

Thus Margaret dismisses both Mr. Thornton and her own thoughts about him as not worthy of consideration. She relates the entire scene through dialogue, with no revelation of her mental perception or attitude. Her refusal to give a sketch of his character creates a distance between the reader and Margaret. As Margaret fails to be an accurate reporter, the reader is cued to form his or her own opinions and thoughts about Thornton, which leads to a sympathetic reading of Thornton’s character.

The reader receives very little about Margaret’s view of Thornton compared to how Thornton’s view of Margaret reveals her appearance, dress, and physical qualities. His look directed at Margaret contains elements of attraction, but is more than that—it is an attempt to read her character:

She had a bracelet on one taper arm, which would fall down over her round wrist. Mr. Thornton watched the re-placing of this troublesome ornament with far more attention than he listened to her father. It seemed as if it fascinated him to see her push it up impatiently, until it tightened her soft flesh; and then to mark the loosening—the fall. He could almost have exclaimed—‘There it goes, again!’...Her eye caught the moment when he was ready for another cup; and he almost longed to ask her to do for him what he saw her compelled to do for her father, who took her little finger and thumb in his masculine hand, and made them serve as sugar-tongs. Mr. Thornton saw her beautiful eyes lifted to her father, full of light, half-laughter and half-love, as this bit of pantomime went on between the two, unobserved, as they fancied, by any. (79)

Thornton’s perspective is revealed through focalization. Thornton “watched,” he notices “her eye,” he “saw” both her actions with her father

and her eyes directed at him, “unobserved, as they fancied.” As Thornton gazes on the scene between Margaret and her father, his thoughts are equally revealed: “It seemed as if it fascinated him to see her,” “He could almost have exclaimed,” “He almost longed to ask her to do for him what he saw her compelled to do for her father.” The clarity of inside views of Thornton sets up an instability regarding the interactions between Thornton and Margaret. While Thornton is interested and attracted, Margaret keeps a cold distance from him, mentally and physically. Margaret’s reactions rarely include her thoughts about being the object of his gaze, nor does the narrator provide a shift to Margaret as focalizer. Because of this silence, she is rarely relied on as an accurate focalizer. Margaret’s mental reaction is silence.

It is only as she fades into the background that she permits herself to study Mr. Thornton. As she focalizes on Mr. Thornton’s face, she progresses from sight to thought:

Her eye was caught by the difference of outward appearance between her father and Mr. Thornton...Now, in Mr. Thornton’s face the straight brows fell low over the clear, deep-set earnest eyes, which, without being unpleasantly sharp, seemed intent enough to penetrate into the very heart and core of what he was looking at...When the rare bright smile, coming in an instant and shining out of the eyes, changed the whole look from the severe and resolved expression of a man ready to do and dare everything, to the keen honest enjoyment of the moment, which is seldom shown so fearlessly and instantaneously except by children. Margaret liked this smile; it was the first thing she had admired in this new friend of her father’s. (80)

Although the reader was given a physical description of Margaret through the eyes of Thornton much earlier in the novel, Margaret has refused to describe Thornton in the same manner until this scene in her home. As she really looks at him, her understanding of him begins to grow as she becomes more receptive to a different perspective. However, this mutual admiration very quickly ceases.

As the conversation proceeds to the rights of the workers versus the duties of the masters, Margaret's difference of opinion quickly asserts itself. She comments on the nature of human rights but refuses to repeat it louder for Thornton's ears. She says, "It related to a feeling which I do not think you would share." "Won't you try me?" pleaded he; his thoughts suddenly bent upon learning what she had said" (117). As the conversation continues, Thornton's thoughts are revealed through free indirect discourse when Margaret comments on Captain Lennox's opinion. Thornton's jealousy becomes apparent: "Who is Captain Lennox? asked Mr. Thornton of himself, with a strange kind of displeasure, that prevented him for the moment for replying to her!" (119). Margaret's thoughts in reaction to the ongoing difference of opinion are reported through psycho-narration: "She was displeased at the personal character Mr. Thornton affixed to what she had said" (119). The battle between the two continues, even as Thornton "was vexed at the state of feeling between himself and her" (119). The conversation on mutual relationships between master and workers creates a mirror of the lack of mutuality between Thornton and Margaret who continue to oppose each other, rather than seek commonality.

As Thornton and Margaret experience a difference in thought after his derogatory remarks about the South, he repents "with an inexpressible gentleness in his tone, as he saw that he had really hurt her" (82). Margaret's reaction to his comments is reported through silence. The narrator says, "She continued resolutely silent; yearning after the lovely haunts she had left far away in Hampshire, with a passionate longing that made her feel her voice would be unsteady and trembling if she spoke" (82). Margaret keeps her thoughts and desires to herself, although, in this case, the reader is fully aware of them. Throughout Thornton's visit, "Margaret drew into a corner...and felt that she might let her thoughts roam, without fear of being suddenly wanted to fill up a gap" and "She...fell back into her own thoughts—as completely forgotten by Mr. Thornton as if she had not been in the room" (80). Both the narrator's refusal to reveal her thoughts to the reader and Margaret's refusal to give an inside view of her mind to Thornton create an instance of fallibility and unreliability. Thus, while Margaret is the center, Thornton becomes the filter—access and exposure to

his mind predominate in scenes linked to his focalization at the expense of Margaret's interiority. During their conversation which reveals a difference of opinion over the relationship between master and workers, Margaret and Thornton's lack of mutuality is reported through a continued difference in focalization: "She, smiling up in his face, the expression of which was somewhat anxious and oppressed, and hardly cleared away as he met her sweet sunny countenance, out of which all the north-wind effect of their discussion had entirely vanished" (124). The impossibility of mutual feeling between the two principal characters continues to provoke instabilities.

Although Thornton's dinner party gives the reader a hint of possible mutual admiration between the two characters, such mutuality does not bridge the gap between their differences of thought. Margaret watches Thornton act as host in the natural surroundings of his home:

His whole manner, as master of the house, and entertainer of his friends, was so straightforward, yet simple and modest, as to be thoroughly dignified. Margaret thought she had never seen him to so much advantage. When he had come to their house, there had been always something, either of over-eagerness or of that kind of vexed annoyance which seemed ready to pre-suppose that he was unjustly judged, and yet felt too proud to try and make himself better understood. But now, among his fellows, there was no uncertainty as to his position. He was regarded by them as a man of great force of character; of power in many ways. There was no need to struggle for their respect. He had it, and he knew it; and the security of this gave a fine grand quietness to his voice and ways, which Margaret had missed before. (162-163)

Margaret's perception of Thornton immediately reveals her understanding of him as a man of integrity, a reading of his character that she had refused to see in her earlier scenes with him. She recognizes the continuity between his thoughts and actions. Thus, the dialogue they engage in later about Margaret's idea of a gentleman compared to Thornton's idea of a man is tied very closely to Margaret's focalization on Thornton as the embodiment

of these ideas of manliness. Likewise, Thornton is struck again by Margaret's beauty and, for the first time, her steadiness of character, a trait that he had not seen in her before:

He had never seen her in such dress before; and yet now it appeared as if such elegance of attire was so befitting her noble figure and lofty serenity of countenance, that she ought to go always thus apparelled...He saw his sister's...wandering eyes, now glancing here, now there, but without any purpose in her observation; and he contrasted them uneasily with the large soft eyes that looked forth steadily at one object, as if from out their light beamed some gentle influence of repose: the curving lines of the red lips, just parted in the interest of listening to what her companion said...He never went near her himself; he did not look at her. Only, he knew what she was doing—or not doing—better than he knew the movements of anyone else in the room. (161-162)

Although Margaret and Thornton see each other accurately, they do not engage in dialogue or reveal their shared thoughts to each other and therefore lose the opportunity to communicate their sympathy with each other.

Margaret's thoughts about Thornton are revealed later through dialogue with her father. While her reading of Thornton is often biased and severely limited, she defends her prejudice to Mr. Hale: "He is my first olive: let me make a face while I swallow it" (167). Thornton, as a manufacturer, is foreign to Margaret, who uses the analogy of eating an olive to demonstrate the need for a physical process of accepting what is different. This extended metaphor mirrors the narrator's emphasis on process and highlights the idea of embodied minds. According to Alan Palmer, mental activity is displayed through action (*Fictional Minds* 11). Thus, drawing together these two theories of fictional minds and cognition, Gaskell uses the very bodily image of ingesting to reveal the details of process that her characters must undergo in order to see and understand each other accurately. The instabilities of knowledge and interpretation between

Margaret and Thornton continue although both characters try to infer, from dialogue and physical reaction, the thoughts and attitudes of the other. This gap between what Margaret and Thornton see and what they know about each other continues to act as the main technique that draws the reader into a position of ironic knowledge, and this knowledge is fundamentally based on sympathy with each character.

Deliberation and Judgment Through Narrative Silence

Margaret must go through a process of becoming to reach maturity, both personal and moral. The messiness of the process is well narrated through Gaskell's use of psycho-narration and free indirect discourse. Both these modes reveal Margaret's fictional mind *in process* as she undergoes emotional reactions and subsequently deliberates about her reactions without the narrator's evaluative or judging comments. Rosemary Bodenheimer explains, "Gaskell's refusal to judge or categorize the feelings she names gives another kind of narrative validity to her view that honest feeling does not live by the rules of conventional role" (296-297). In addition, this refusal creates a moral openness that draws the reader into the evaluation:

Like the treatment of Margaret, this writing creates sympathy and admiration for a character on the basis of stubborn strength of feeling, presented without the controlling terms of moral argument. Elizabeth Gaskell's best writing—this originality of diction and psychological honesty—is done with the unjudging openness to experience that is also at issue in the story. (Bodenheimer 300)

Because of their differences in focalization and knowledge of each other, their ways of deliberating also must change to reach any moment of sympathy. Margaret is frequently wrong about the other characters and her hasty judgment removes any receptivity to an alternative perspective from her own. These moments of stubbornness are not cushioned or excused by the narrator. Thus, by leaving Margaret's deliberation open and raw, the narrator invites the reader into the process of learning how to deliberate, and

creates an opportunity to evaluate vicariously through her. Mary-Catherine Harrison claims that the narrator's function in social problem novels was to serve as a bridge, helping readers move from the text to the real world, applying their emotional response in the particular to an ethical response in the universal ("Paradox of Fiction" 258). Thus, readers react to the representative figure in the text, but subsequently must reflect on their own response in order to translate those emotions into new perspectives and real-world change.

After Mr. Thornton claims that he will love her in spite of herself: "You look as if you thought it tainted you to be loved by me. You cannot avoid it...Now I love, and will love" (196), Margaret's reaction is delayed but intense. Margaret's thoughts in reaction to Thornton's proposal express her disposition towards control—both of the narrative and personal situation. Through free indirect discourse, her thoughts reveal an antagonism to being "mastered":

The clear conviction dawned upon her, shined bright upon her, that he did love her; that he had loved her; that he would love her. And she shrank and shuddered as under the fascination of some great power...She disliked him the more for having mastered her inner will. How dared he say that he would love her still, even though she shook him off with contempt? She wished she had spoken more—stronger...And so she shuddered away from the threat of his enduring love. What did he mean? Had she not the power to daunt him? She would see. (197-198)

The tempo of Margaret's thoughts and tone of her voice demonstrate her manner of deliberation. Margaret's power is through her narrative skill: her words, her thoughts, and her ability to change or direct the speech and thoughts of others. Elizabeth Starr claims that "events don't exist from narrative accounts of them" (396) and such an acknowledgment helps the reader to understand that Margaret's process of moral maturation requires the relinquishment of this control in order to open herself to the perspective of another. This instance of free indirect discourse again demonstrates the

process of Margaret's moral development. Her desire for autonomy over "her inner will" mirrors the main theme running through *North and South*: the individual versus the other as opposed to mutual interdependence. Antagonistic forces will not be subsumed into dialogue but remain the self versus the other, or the master versus the hand, or the rural south versus the industrial north. While both make claims on the other of mutual interdependence, both sides resist being dominated by the other, and ultimately only unify when there is mutual surrender that leads to a recognition of the need for interdependence.

Thornton, as well, needs to undergo a process of maturity in his deliberation as frequently his thoughts and feelings oppose one another. Mr. Hale tells Margaret, "I only want you to do justice to Mr. Thornton, who is, I suspect...a man who is far too proud to show his feelings. Just the character I should have thought beforehand, you would have admired, Margaret" (166). Margaret replies, "So I do—so I should; but I don't feel quite so sure as you do of the existence of those feelings" (167). Mr. Hale's remark clarifies Thornton's ethos both for Margaret and the reader: "He has led a practical life from a very early age; has been called upon to exercise judgment and self-control. All that develops one part of the intellect" (167). Because of this background, Thornton's emotions have not been fully integrated into his process of judgment. Recent work done by Antonio Damasio and Ronald De Sousa highlights the importance of the jointly cognitive functioning of reason and emotion. Damasio claims:

Certain levels of emotion processing probably point us to the sector of the decision-making space where our reason can operate most efficiently....Well-targeted and well-deployed emotion seems to be a support system without which the edifice of reason cannot operate properly. (*The Feeling of What Happens* 42)

The dependence of reason and emotion on each other for proper cognitive functioning is supported by De Sousa who claims "Emotions are a kind of perception—perception of the axiological level of reality. And the reality they reveal is one that is tragically rich with an irreconcilable plurality of

value” (332). The perceptive power of emotion serves two purposes; one, it identifies what an individual values and helps to narrow a plethora of choices, and two, it affects the emotional hue of focalization. De Sousa continues, “Emotions are often described as guiding the processes of reasoning—or distorting them, depending on the describer’s assessment of their appropriateness. Indeed, this is in great part what all good novels are about” (197).

Thornton’s refusal to show his feelings to Margaret is at variance with the frequency with which his feelings affect his thoughts and decisions. Through Thornton, Gaskell explores how emotions affect reason. By placing emphasis on the influence of emotions on deliberation, Gaskell invites her readers into an ethical reflection of the nature of deliberation. As readers are exposed to these two characters working out their cognitive processes, the opportunity for the development of the moral imagination through the cultivation of sympathy occurs. Howard Sklar claims:

Some would suggest that, for emotions such as sympathy to possess ethical value, they must involve *deliberation* on the content of the experience itself. This is the thrust of Aristotle’s position in his *Ethics*, in which he delineates the ethical implications of choice and then shows how choice, in turn, requires deliberation. (32)

The way a character deliberates has an ethical effect on the reader. To proceed from sensation into cognition, deliberation opens the path to evaluation and judgment.

The closing of the disparity between Thornton’s thoughts and his feelings begins the process he must undergo for his own moral development. His desire for Margaret creates a tempo of images and conflicting emotions that form the basis for the next series of decisions he makes:

If Mr. Thornton was a fool in the morning, as he assured himself at least twenty times he was, he did not grow much wiser in the afternoon. All that he gained...was a more vivid conviction that

there never was, never could be, any one like Margaret; that she did not love him and never would; but that she—no! nor the whole world—should never hinder him from loving her. (208)

Thornton's reaction to his uncontrollable heart creates a dilemma of interpretation for himself: "He felt his power and revelled in it. He could almost defy his heart...And then he left the hot reeking room and...it seemed as though he gave way all at once" (212-213). Although Thornton tends to deliberate in a measured and constant way, his suffering over Margaret causes him to act in ways he regrets. Through Thornton, the reader learns of the difficulty of judgment due to the unreliability of feelings. "He, while he blamed her—while he was jealous of her—while he renounced her—he loved her sorely, in spite of himself" (331). His ordered deliberation breaks down into separate emotional and rational reactions.

Margaret's process of ethical development through sympathy becomes more obvious during the riot scene as the climax of misread intentions, thoughts, and actions occur:

Margaret had always dreaded lest her courage should fail her in any emergency, and she should be proved to be, what she dreaded lest she was—a coward. But now, in this real great time of reasonable fear and nearness of terror, she forgot herself, and felt only an intense sympathy—intense to painfulness—in the interests of the moment. (174-175)

Margaret's capacity to suffer for someone derives from her sympathy which requires distance—she does not take sides between the hands and Thornton; instead, she reacts to the overall scene. In the same way, the reader, rather than empathizing with one or another character, is left to watch and judge on the sidelines. The suspense of the scene and the juxtaposition of types of courage cue an emotional reaction in the reader, which, as Sklar says, through reflection, can turn into an ethical response. During the riot scene, for the first time, Margaret sees and understands the external scene together, but she fails to perceive the internal mind of Thornton. Although Margaret

sees the angry crowds and tries to read the actions of individual men in that crowd: “Margaret knew it all...She saw their gesture—she knew its meaning—she read their aim” (177, 179), she does not fully understand the consequences of what she sees. While she tells Thornton, “You did not see what I saw” (179), placing emphasis on the privilege of focalization and knowledge, the narrator qualifies her assumed, but faulty, knowledge that her femininity will protect Thornton: “If she thought her sex would be a protection—if, with shrinking eyes she had turned away from the terrible anger of these men, in any hope that ere she looked again they would have paused and reflected, and slunk away, and vanished—she was wrong” (179). Margaret’s consciousness has not been formed and adapted to “Northern ways,” nor to basic human nature, and thus, she misunderstands the actions and anger of others, just as her actions are misread by Thornton as attraction rather than sympathetic protection. The reader sees this discrepancy of thought through the narrator’s separate inside views of Margaret and Thornton which reveal contradictory actions and understanding.

Later, in dialogue with Thornton, Margaret states, “Why, there was not a man—not a poor desperate man in all that crowd—for whom I had not more sympathy—for whom I should not have done what little I could more heartily” (195). Both instances are given as direct thought or quote, which is juxtaposed with Thornton’s emotionally-charged thoughts reported through free indirect discourse. Besides the difference of interpretation between the two principal characters regarding the riot scene, the instability derives from and initiates a context for later events based on Margaret’s claim of sympathy and maidenliness. Thornton’s reaction to her protection is due to a different reading of her actions. Initially, “He could not sympathise with her. His anger had not abated; it was rather rising the more as his sense of immediate danger was passing away” (180). However, as the object of his focalization changes from the rioters to Margaret, so do his thoughts: “Looking on her pure white face, the sense of what she was to him came upon him so keenly that he spoke it out in his pain: ‘Oh, my Margaret!...No one call tell what you are to me!...You are the only woman I ever loved’” (180-181). The narrator continues to report Thornton’s thoughts through a

combination of psycho-narration and free indirect discourse: “He went away as if weights were tied to every limb that bore him from her...Every pulse beat in him as he remembered how she had come down and placed herself in foremost danger—could it be to save him?” (180-181). Thornton’s reaction to Margaret’s act of sympathy reveals his love for Margaret to the reader, but also precipitates the next series of instabilities. When Thornton’s proposal is met with indignation and anger, he says to Margaret, “I know you despise me; allow me to say, it is because you do not understand me” (195-196). She replies, “I do not care to understand” and Thornton finally remarks, “No, I see you do not. You are unfair and unjust” (196). The variance of their speech is reflected by their thoughts as well. Margaret’s thoughts are kept silent, “She would not speak in answer to such accusations” (196) whereas Thornton’s are reported: “For all his savage words, he could have thrown himself at her feet, and kissed the hem of her garment” (196). It is only after he leaves that Margaret’s thoughts are revealed: “She thought she had seen the gleam of washed tears in his eyes; and that turned her proud dislike into something different and kinder, if nearly as painful—self-reproach for having caused such mortification to any one” (196).

Margaret and Thornton’s variance of focalization and thought also leads to the global instability of the scene at the train station. Margaret’s reaction to Thornton’s knowledge of her actions is focused on his awareness that she lied. However, Thornton and the reader are aware that he cares more about the young man he saw her with than the lie she told. Thornton:

was haunted by the remembrance of the handsome young man, with whom she stood in an attitude of such familiar confidence...At that late hour, so far from home! It took a great moral effort to galvanise his trust—erewhile so perfect—in Margaret’s pure and exquisite maidenliness, into life. (270)

The difference in their interpretation of the same event involves the reader in the deliberation over what action to take to bring about a resolution of the instability. Margaret cannot read Thornton correctly because she cannot

read his thoughts. Nor can Thornton know fully the motivation for Margaret's behavior. While both try to read the other through focalization, this reading of the outside does not give accurate knowledge of the mental state of either character. The reader is the one who can read both the mind of Margaret and of Thornton; while the characters misunderstand their own feelings, the reader is made aware of the unspoken. As a social problem novel, *North and South* invites the reader into the position of both observing difference, and imagining the reconciliation of that difference. Although Gaskell had relied on engaging narrative interventions in *Mary Barton* to achieve this "empathy across difference," the narrator of *North and South* uses silence to invite the reader into a sympathetic stance with the protagonists. This act of confidence in her readers' abilities to perceive and judge accurately reflects Gaskell's assurance of the merits of perspective-taking.

Sympathy Through Distance

The narrator suggests that accurate perception and emotion is what leads to the mutual interdependence that Gaskell was striving for. As Margaret takes on the perception of other characters, such as Bessy and Nicholas Higgins, and as Thornton integrates his emotions into his judgment, the two begin to experience intermental, or shared, thought. By empathizing with Higgins who acts as her window to the poor, Margaret enters into a sympathetic understanding of the North, industry, and ultimately Mr. Thornton. As Margaret begins to move from mental silence to thought, and see as the other characters see, she comes to a more accurate reading of herself, and her feelings for Mr. Thornton. After the riot, Margaret says, "Now I will think of it—now I will remember it all. I could not before—I dared not" (190). After Mr. Hale leaves for Oxford, Margaret takes advantage of the silence and isolation to allow herself to reflect over her recent experiences: "For months past, all her own personal cares and troubles had had to be stuffed away into a dark cupboard; but now she had leisure to take them out... Now, once for all she would consider them, and appoint to each of them its right work in her life" (344). She continues this process of deliberation later in the novel. After her return to London with

Aunt Shaw and the Lennoxes, Margaret gives herself the time to think without interruption:

She used to sit long hours upon the beach, gazing intently on the waves as they chafed with perpetual motion against the pebbly shore...She was soothed without knowing how or why...All this time for thought enabled Margaret to put events in their right places, as to origin and significance, both as regarded her past life and her future. Those hours by the sea-side were not lost, as any one might have seen who had the perception to read, or the care to understand, the look that Margaret's face was gradually acquiring. (414-415)

This transition into an awareness of her own thoughts and way of deliberating begins the process she needs to reach a sympathetic understanding with Thornton.

Thornton reaches an accurate knowledge of Margaret because he has learned to integrate his emotions into his judgment. After Margaret helps Nicholas Higgins attain employment at Marlborough Mills, Thornton acknowledges:

He had a tenderness in his heart—'a soft place,' as Nicholas Higgins called it; but he had some pride in concealing it; he kept it very sacred and safe, and was jealous of every circumstance that tried to gain admission. But if he dreaded exposure of his tenderness, he was equally desirous that all men should recognize his justice...And then the conviction went in...and touched the latent tenderness of his heart; the patience of the man, the simple generosity of the motive...made him forget entirely the mere reasonings of justice, and overleap them by a diviner instinct. (324-325)

As Thornton permits his emotions to form part of his deliberation, he also opens himself up to another perspective. Thus, Higgins becomes the catalyst for bringing about a changed perspective in both characters. The social problem novel prized the benefits that could be derived from empathy

across difference (Harrison “Narrative Relationships” 258). By taking on the perspective of the representative of the working class, both Margaret and Thornton enter into accurate knowledge of each other, and therefore sympathy founded upon intermental thought.

This development clears the way for Thornton to learn the real sequence of events at Outwood station. “‘Stop a minute, measter.’ Then going up confidentially close, he said, ‘Is th’ young gentleman cleared?’ He enforced the depth of his intelligence by a wink of the eye, which only made things more mysterious to Mr. Thornton” (422). Higgins’s link between his look and his knowledge creates the platform that Gaskell prized. While Thornton does not read him correctly at first, he discovers the truth of Higgins’s statement and allows that knowledge to change his thoughts. “‘It was her brother,’ said Mr. Thornton to himself. ‘I am glad. I may never see her again; but it is a comfort—a relief—to know that much. I knew she could not be unmaidenly; and yet I yearned for conviction. Now I am glad!’” (423). The man who had been described as “inflexible” and a “bulldog” has learned the art of perspective-taking needed to enter into sympathetic understanding. The ambiguity of Thornton’s new perspective-taking necessarily brings up the lack of justice as applied to gender roles. As Thornton’s opinion jumps from critical judgment to full understanding of Margaret’s situation, his relationship with her becomes more fully based on sympathy as his judgment is corrected. However, his judgment changes, not from any trust in Margaret, but from the information given to him by another man. It is possible that he would have changed his opinion if Margaret had spoken, but when he asks her for an explanation outside of Nicholas Higgins’s house: “Miss Hale, have you no explanation to give me? You must perceive what I cannot but think” (327), Margaret cannot respond, and instead remains silent out of loyalty to Frederick. Because of Thornton’s lack of trust in Margaret, his sympathetic response is faulty. However the gender inequality is reversed as Margaret and Thornton become economic equals.

When Mr. Thornton arrives in London to address business-related concerns for his mill, he and Margaret meet for the first time since she left Milton. Margaret looks straight up into his face “with her speaking eyes,”

and then drops them “under his eloquent glance. He gazed back at her for a minute, as if he did not know exactly what he was about” (432). For the first time Margaret watches Thornton and her thoughts are reported about him while his thoughts remain silent. “Margaret was watching Mr. Thornton’s face. He never looked at her; so she might study him unobserved, and note the changes which even this short time had wrought in him...For an instant, his glance instinctively sought hers, as if he wanted her sympathy” (430). This glance of sympathy, and of recognition that they understand each other’s thoughts, prepares the way for Margaret’s business proposal and Thornton’s marriage proposal:

Mr. Thornton did not speak, and she went on looking for some paper on which were written down the proposals for security; for she was most anxious to have it all looked upon in the light of a mere business arrangement, in which the principal advantage would be on her side. (435)

As Thornton responds to her business proposal with a proposal of his own, both their looks are as expressive as spoken dialogue and thus Margaret veils “her luminous eyes by dropping her forehead on her hands” (435) to hide the truth of her thoughts. Thornton asks her to speak: ““Look here! Lift up your head. I have something to show you!’ She slowly faced him, glowing with beautiful shame” (436). As she looks at him, and he looks at her, they finally read each other correctly with a mutual gaze that demonstrates their recognition of their own fallibility and their willingness to be read correctly: ““Oh, Mr. Thornton, I am not good enough!’ ‘Not good enough! Don’t mock my own deep feeling of unworthiness’” (435-436). This emphasis on equality and worthiness brings to a close the focus on the process of mental and moral maturation.

These instances of mutual focalization—she seeing, knowing, and reciprocating his look—and shared thought offer a sympathetic reading of the characters and the scene. By preserving distance: seeing others seeing her, rather than seeing as the other sees, Margaret is in a position to make a more objective judgment upon Milton, and the reader is able to make a more

enriched judgment of the narrative. This understanding of seeing relates to the difference between sympathy and empathy, ultimately enriching our understanding of immersion and estrangement as moments of sympathetic judgment. Through the distancing effects of privileging one character's mind over another, or focalization at the expense of another character, the narrator reveals the ethical power of sympathy. While empathy has received more recent critical attention in both literary and cognitive studies, the role of sympathy deserves a renewed focus. Sympathy relies on the need for distance to reach a correct judgment which matches the distance created in differences of thought and focalization. Empathy may impede, or temporarily suspend, our capacity to form judgments about a character, since we may become too close to view the character's reality objectively. Empathy makes it difficult to judge a character from the outside and asks for judgment from the character's point of view, but sympathy maintains the distance needed for characters to judge each other accurately. Margaret and Thornton attain this sympathetic reading of each other, but only after repeatedly getting it wrong.

Conclusion

As readers respond to the ethical situations of fictional minds and focalization, they are given the opportunity to react and reflect on the nature of emotions outside the fictional space. Mary-Catherine Harrison acknowledges that "readers' emotions can be engaged for fictional suffering, but not their subsequent behaviors. This limiting condition poses an interpretive—and ethical—dilemma for any account of empathy with fictional minds" ("Paradox of Fiction" 257). However, this attention to ethical behavior can obscure the real response to and influence of fictional minds, which is "the moral value of imagination" (263). Both in the emphasis in the realist novel of imagining the mind of the other, and in the recognition that emotional response is a feature of the moral imagination, Victorian novelists worked to cultivate both emotional and ethical responses that relied on the premium position of the imagination. Offering readers the opportunity to deliberate and evaluate through exposing them to how narrators and characters deliberate and evaluate, and demonstrating the

ethical impossibility of knowing someone else's mind thus leading to crises of misreading and misinterpretation, Gaskell guides her readers through the complexity of emotional and ethical response. Thus, the education of moral sensibilities through evaluative judgment is made possible but never predicted; the activation of sympathy is made potential but never assured; the development of the moral imagination is made probable but never proven. In this too did Victorian authors take the risk of writing to educate their readers' emotional response in the hope, but never the guarantee, of educating their ethical response.

CHAPTER FOUR: CHARLES DICKENS'S *OUR MUTUAL FRIEND*¹⁰

At the end of *Our Mutual Friend*, Charles Dickens included a postscript in which he wrote as follows:

When I devised this story, I foresaw the likelihood that a class of readers and commentators would suppose that I was at great pains to conceal exactly what I was at great pains to suggest: namely, that Mr. John Harmon was not slain, and that Mr. John Rokesmith was he. Pleasing myself with the idea that the supposition might in part arise out of some ingenuity in the story, and thinking it worth while, in the interests of art, to hint to an audience that an artist (of whatever denomination) may perhaps be trusted to know what he is about in his vocation, if they will concede him a little patience, I was not alarmed by the anticipation. (821)

Dickens was fully aware that the disguise of John Harmon as John Rokesmith was obvious to many readers because he had purposefully included clues within the design of the story to reveal the truth. The ease of discovery was initiated by the publication of paratextual material in the form of a slip of paper that was placed over the first paragraph with the following instructions: “The Reader will understand the use of the popular phrase *OUR MUTUAL FRIEND*, as the title of this book, on arriving at the Ninth Chapter (page 84)” (Hecimovich “The Cup and the Lip” 955). Upon reaching the page suggested by the slip of paper, the scene is that of Mr. and Mrs. Boffin’s visit to the Wilfers, directly after John Rokesmith has applied to Boffin as a secretary. Mr. Boffin asks Mrs. Wilfer about their lodger and says, “I may call him *Our Mutual Friend*... What sort of a fellow *is Our*

¹⁰ An earlier draft of this chapter was published as “Misdirections, Delayed Disclosures and The Ethics of the Telling in Charles Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend*” in *Narrative* (Oct. 2016). An even earlier draft of this chapter was presented as “The Friendly Move of Hypothetical Narration in *Our Mutual Friend*” at the 2015 MLA Convention in Vancouver. I am grateful for feedback received from the editor, reviewers, and conference participants.

Mutual Friend, now? Do you like him?...Because...you must know that I am not particularly well acquainted with Our Mutual Friend, for I have only seen him once” (Dickens 111). The jump into this chapter from the initial slip of paper alerts the reader that the plot device of John Harmon should be found out. Readers who had identified John Rokesmith as John Harmon, and John Harmon as the mutual friend, congratulated themselves on their own powers of judgment. But this initial success at interpretation poses problems for readers’ initial and later interpretation of not only the plot events but also the implied author. In the postscript Dickens continues:

To keep for a long time unsuspected, yet always working itself out, another purpose originating in that leading incident, and turning it to a pleasant and useful account at last, was at once the most interesting and the most difficult part of my design. Its difficulty was much enhanced by the mode of publication; for it would be very unreasonable to expect that many readers, pursuing a story in portions from month to month through nineteen months, will, until they have it before them complete, perceive the relations of its finer threads to the whole pattern which is always before the eyes of the story-weaver at his loom. (821)

The second “purpose originating in that leading incident” relates to the later surprise, or delayed disclosure, that Boffin’s miserly turn was only a performance, which is set up by the early success at reading Harmon correctly. This initial success creates a misreading of the reader’s own involvement in interpretation. I will explore this misreading later in the chapter in order to demonstrate the problems this surprise poses for the implied author-authorial audience relationship.¹¹

¹¹ Throughout the chapter, I will distinguish between the concept of the actual reader and authorial audience. The actual reader refers to the individual “real” reader and will be referenced as “the reader.” The authorial audience refers to the author’s ideal reader and will be referenced as the “authorial audience.” The difference between the two holds much significance for understanding how readers interpret and what kind of response the implied author hopes to initiate through the design of the text. I posit that when the implied author or narrator asks the reader for a certain response, he or she remains the actual reader. If the reader opts to respond according to the prompt, he or she joins the authorial audience (see Phelan *Experiencing Fiction* 4).

By seeming to reward readers who thought they had achieved success in their own judgment, the early misreading of the Harmon plot creates a misdirection for readers and highlights the distance between the implied author and narrator, a key feature of the ethics of the telling which I will explore below. By steering readers away from both the disclosure of truth and opportunities to read more deeply, misdirections refer to narrative features or plot events that emphasize incorrect or flawed reporting, interpreting, or evaluating. This misdirection of the early success at reading the identity of Rokesmith as Harmon sets up the later delayed disclosure of Boffin's performance. That is, the implied author holds back the truth from the authorial audience that Boffin is only performing while the narrator reports his performance, observed by several characters and finally by the reader exclusively, as true. The connection between the misdirection and delayed disclosure reveals Dickens's talent as a constructor of artifice and designer of fiction, both of which have a purpose that is aesthetic and ethical. These two elements of the progression are key pieces of the ethics of the telling of *Our Mutual Friend*.

In recent years, Dickens scholars have produced insightful commentary that provides a broader context for my inquiry into the ethics of the telling. The 2014 Dickens Universe focused on *Our Mutual Friend*, revisiting older research and providing a forum for newer works.¹² Several online reading projects designed to replicate the experience of the historical reader arose from this forum including the "Dickens *Our Mutual Friend* Reading Project," which brought readers together to read digitized versions of the original monthly parts and comment on them via blog. Another interactive project enabled readers to assume the role of a character from the novel on Twitter and retell the story via monthly "tweets." Scholarly articles have tended to focus on theme or the publishing history of the novel. Critical works that do address the form of the novel tend to omit the ethical

¹² The Dickens Universe is an annual conference sponsored by the Dickens Project at University of California Santa Cruz. "The Project creates opportunities for collaborative research on Dickens and the Victorian age, and disseminates research findings through annual conferences, institutes, and publications. It supports the professional development of graduate students and produces curricular material for teaching Victorian literature at both secondary and post-secondary levels" (<http://dickens.ucsc.edu/>).

consequences of formal choices. Sean Grass's recent monograph is an excellent analysis of the publishing history and textual revisions of *Our Mutual Friend*; however, it offers almost no mention of the idea of partnering or the relationship between Dickens and his readers *through form*. It does offer some insights on Dickens as designer but without analyzing the ethical implications of those choices. Gregg Hecimovich comes closer with his work on puzzles that offers a helpful analysis of the connection between clues, reading practices, and character functions but does not address the ethics of readerly judgments in response to the author. John Farrell uses a Bakhtinian theory of performance and partnering as a reflection of selfhood and social being but excludes the ethical consequences of performance and partnering as a reflection of readerly involvement and judgment. John Reed's description of Dickens's genre as "hyperrealism" offers a helpful explanation for Dickens's alteration of genre through realist techniques of naming, description, metonymy, and personification whereas I move to a synthetic understanding of character, narration by conjecture, and the double communication of author/narrator. Angelika Zirker's work on face reading offers helpful insights about reading and non-literary reading but applies a Victorian understanding of physiognomy that limits what I am doing here. Jonathan Farina offers a brilliant textual analysis of narrative uncertainty but connects it to Victorian epistemological uncertainty. And finally, Rosemary Mundhenk's excellent work on the education of the reader veers away from the necessary reconfiguration the authorial audience must do at the end of the novel to come to terms with the performance of Boffin and the sensation of being "tricked" by Dickens. While she alludes to issues of genre and realism, my essay revisits her conclusions in order to expand the consequences of this readerly involvement for genre.

Within this broader context, as I hone in on the ethics of the telling from a rhetorical perspective, I foreground the author-audience relationship by focusing on a wide range of Dickens's techniques. The techniques explored include the synthetic function of Wegg and Venus, the double communication of implied author and narrator to the authorial audience and narratee, the misdirection of readers' accurate identification of John

Rokesmith as John Harmon which leads to a misreading of the Boffin performance, the delayed disclosure of the Boffin masquerade, and narratorial devices that offer an ambiguous report (narrative refusals, as if, parentheticals) which set up a distance between the implied author and narrator. These techniques have consequences for the genre of realism, the ethics of readerly judgment, the ethics of performance and play, and the rewards of a reconfiguration of the novel through attention to the synthetic purpose of acts of reading, themes and characters. By approaching the ethics of Dickens's telling through the lens of rhetorical narrative theory, I offer some new directions for understanding Dickens's multi-layered relationships with his readers in *Our Mutual Friend*, including a focus on perception, interpretation and judgment, the cognitive pleasure of dealing with techniques that offer both immersion and defamiliarization, and the explicit awareness of the metafictional engagement offered by Dickens as designer. At the same time, by investigating the details of Dickens's performance, I suggest a new understanding about the nuances of implied author—narrator relationships in noncharacter, or heterodiegetic, narration, about the significance of mimetic and synthetic components of readerly and textual dynamics and their implications for genre, and about the ethics of the telling in narratives whose effects depend so much on misdirection and reconfiguration.

Critical Reception of *Our Mutual Friend*

There has recently been a surge in academic and popular interest in *Our Mutual Friend*. The 2014 Dickens Universe chose *Our Mutual Friend* as the novel of discussion, and new critical editions of the novel have been published including Clarendon (in progress), Ashgate (2014), and Blackwell (2008). *Our Mutual Friend* has become one of the most taught Dickens novels at the undergraduate and graduate level, and journal articles continue to grow in number in recent years (Grass 149-150). Where did this resurgence come from? From the beginning of the Modernist period until the 1950s, criticism focused on Dickens as a lightweight and comic author. The 1940s saw a turning point in biographical interest because of the revelation of Dickens's relationship with Nelly Ternan, but it was not until

the 1970s that criticism of Dickens, and especially of *Our Mutual Friend*, increased with regularity. Those years gleaned insights from poststructuralist theory; new critical attention to identity, gender, cultural materialism, and class continued well into the new millennium. Criticism from 2000 to the present day has continued to focus on social analysis while also exploring artistic technique. A return to reception studies and book history prepared the way for Sean Grass's *Charles Dickens's Our Mutual Friend: A Publishing History* which offers the latest analysis of reception history, publication details, and overview of critical works. He grounds his work in biographical, historical, and publication documents, and his is the first critical edition to provide access to all the contemporary reviews of *Our Mutual Friend*. Grass explains that the initial or contemporary criticism focused on the verisimilitude of Dickens's final completed novel. Did it represent reality? Was it true to life? Were the characters believable? While very helpful in contextualizing *Our Mutual Friend* within Dickens's historical situation and in comparison to his earlier novels, Grass's work demonstrates again that little research has been done on the narrative techniques of *Our Mutual Friend*. Very little attention has been paid to the role that narrative choices play in highlighting and illuminating an interpretation of the novel that goes beyond the mimetic or thematic.

Most of the early criticism of *Our Mutual Friend* arose in the context of the realist novel with "its objectivity, its verisimilitude, its stodgy intellectualism" (Grass 138). Henry James's negative review of *Our Mutual Friend* in *The Nation* on December 21, 1865 in which he proclaims the novel as a "the poorest of Mr. Dickens's works" (786) set the tone for reviews and critiques that came afterwards. Even the favorable reviews offer a mimetic reading, one that applies a realist frame to an analysis of the novel. On November 29, 1865, E.S. Dallas wrote in *The Times*:

We were more impressed with the exceeding cleverness of the author's manner than with the charm of his story...very soon, however, Mr. Dickens got into his story; the interest of it grew; the reader, busied with the facts of the tale, learned to forget all about the skillfulness of the artist, and found himself rushing on eagerly

through number after number of one of the best of even Dickens's tales...One thing is very remarkable about it—the immense amount of thought which it contains... In all these 600 pages there is not a careless line. (6)

Dallas acknowledges the craft of the novel as artistic, but ultimately distracting from the overall story. Although Dallas touches on the artistry of Dickens, he does not apply this to the level of communication between author and reader. A review published by *London Review* on October 28, 1865 states:

We shall therefore make but brief allusion here to the characters of Wegg and Venus, who appear to us in the highest degree unnatural—the one being a mere phantasm, and the other a nonentity—and shall pass on to a consideration of the more solid parts of the book, in which Mr. Dickens's old mastery over human nature is once more made splendidly apparent. (467-468)

As was made clear in the contemporary reviews of *Our Mutual Friend*, readers approached Dickens's novel with the genre conventions, or frame, of the realist novel in mind. Readers and reviewers expected, and were therefore disappointed when they did not find, the verisimilitude of characters, deep understanding of human nature and motivation, and reflection of society as it was which the rise of the realist novel promulgated at this time.

The disruption of the frame of realism is one that Victorian readers may not have been ready for. Owing to the frequent comments of reviewers that the plot was not logical, or that characters seemed irrelevant, it can be assumed that contemporary readers missed the relevance, and theatrics, of collaboration with the author himself. The focus of early reviews on the mimetic function of character, and mimetic reading strategies, dismisses any attention to the synthetic functions of Dickens's art: his self-awareness, elements of play, and illumination of the collaboration between writer and reader. Although Grass acknowledges a deliberate artistry in Dickens's final

completed novel: “*Our Mutual Friend*...is almost impossibly rife with thematic tensions, symbolic resonances, self-conscious artistry, and ideological force” (135), he does not analyse these features through the lens of narrative theory. A review by John Forster on October 28, 1865 in *The Examiner* did engage with Dickens’s technique and artistry but is one of the few to do so:

Nobody who reads this book as a whole can fail to be struck with the ingenious arrangement and skillful conduct of the story. Read piecemeal, it was satisfactory only to those who had faith in their author...We shall be surprised to see how skillfully and freely the novelist scattered what, with the key to it all in our possession, we see clearly enough to be indications of the true state of the case.
(682)

Indeed, recent scholarship has only begun to acknowledge the link between style and theme that goes beyond realism.

Our Mutual Friend, and indeed, most of Dickens’s novels, fits uneasily into the realist framework. While criticism in the early years of the publication of *Our Mutual Friend* focused on the expected conventions of a realist text with “believable” characters and a logical plot, Dickens’s final novel subverts these expectations. For example, the mimetic reading of the critic from *London Review* completely dismisses Wegg and Venus, two characters who, I argue, are crucial to understanding the author-reader relationship. Instead of a realist text, I suggest that what readers are faced with is a very satisfying puzzle that engages in author/reader collaboration, or partnership, to uncover the heart of the novel, and expose who the real mutual friend is.

Implied Author-Narrator Relationships

The opening of *Our Mutual Friend* creates the best starting point to examine the expectations Dickens calls forth from his readers, expectations that have to be reconfigured at the end of the novel. The paratextual slip of paper mentioned above created a gaming intervention for the historical

reader. This slip of paper is no longer published with the novel, and the initial tease by Dickens has been ignored by scholars until recently.¹³ If we rely on the slip of paper to create a frame for *Our Mutual Friend*, the authorial audience enters into a partnership with the author that asks for a detective-like reading.¹⁴ Readers were alerted to *Our Mutual Friend* as a puzzle by the initial slip of paper, and this riddle is continued throughout the text of the novel itself. By engaging in riddles, Dickens requires an audience who will participate. Indeed, this participation, or partnership, asks readers to re-examine their position both in relation to the implied author and to the narrator. I use the word “partner” in a deliberate way here as Dickens effectively initiates the relationship he seeks with his authorial audience, but, as we will see, complicates this partnership throughout *Our Mutual Friend*, a dynamic which is modelled synthetically through various character-character partnerships. The use of riddles also creates a frame for the genre of mystery and suspense rather than exclusively realist fiction. Proceeding from the motif of disguise and discovery initiated by the intervention of this slip of paper, the authorial address to the reader creates a much different frame from the realist-historian narrator. Instead, we have an alternative, playful, and flawed transmission of information, all of which rupture the genre of realism.

After the paratextual material of the opening slip of paper that suggests detection and disguise, the novel begins with a long passage of ambiguity as reported through the narrator who also invites the reader into acts of interpretation but offers no assurance of certainty of knowledge. This ambiguity sets up a distance between the implied author and narrator which has both epistemological and ethical consequences for the reader. Chapter One of Book One, aptly named “On the Look-Out,” asks the reader to interpret the scene through a blur of uncertainty:

¹³ Recent studies include Gregg Hecimovich’s *Puzzling the Reader. Riddles in Nineteenth Century British Literature* (2008) and Sean Grass’s *Charles Dickens’s Our Mutual Friend: A Publishing History* (2014).

¹⁴ Liesbeth Korthals Altes describes the process of applying a mental schema to the text, especially in terms of genre, as “framing” which assists the reader in interpreting and understanding. Readers attempt to organize the material of the text they encounter, and they do this largely through applying schemes of prior knowledge.

In these times of ours, though concerning the exact year there is no need to be precise, a boat of dirty and disreputable appearance, with two figures in it, floated on the Thames...The figures in this boat were those of a strong man with ragged grizzled hair and a sun-browned face, and a dark girl of nineteen or twenty, sufficiently like him to be recognisable as his daughter. (Dickens 1)

The narrator begins *Our Mutual Friend* with a status of uncertainty; claiming historical veracity (“In these times of ours”), a trope of realism, the narrator refuses to assert that he knows anything specifically (“there is no need to be precise”). He does not claim the dark girl **is** nineteen who **is** the strong man’s daughter. Instead, the dark girl **could be** nineteen or twenty, and is **recognizable** as (but is not definitively) his daughter. In such a way the narrator distances himself from the knowledge of the diegesis he reports and highlights the recurring theme of concealment and disguise, and the need for a “detective-like” reading practice.

Our Mutual Friend begins with a narrative refusal, thus setting the expectations for an unreliable, or at least, uncertain, reporting of the story. Robyn Warhol defines narrative refusals as “direct narratorial references to some of the specifics of *what might have been and yet is not*” (“Dickens’s Narrative Refusals” 46). In *Our Mutual Friend*, these narrative refusals highlight “the narrative engines driving the text” (52) which draw attention to the synthetic choices of narrating *this* rather than *that* while also maintaining a mimetic focus on plot. Ultimately, these narrative refusals also draw the reader into a more active position of interpretation, appearing to create what Roland Barthes has called a “writerly” text. Robyn Warhol describes what is not narrated as the “unnarratable,” specifically, “narrative elisions, suppressions, repressions, silences, gaps, omissions or lacunae” (48) and I propose that by paying attention to these “disnarrated” moments in the text, the reader is led to take on a more active role to reconstruct meaning. This participation sets up an initial false reward system which has consequences for the reader’s interpretation of the implied author.

Readers’ engagement hides the reality of Dickens’s control over both the narrative and readerly interpretation. The implied author’s ability to

control the transmission of events while also creating the impression that the narrator is giving over interpretation to the reader depends on distance. The implied author creates epistemological distance through narrative uncertainty and ethical distance through layered or delayed judgments. This distance is crucial to understanding the ethical and emotional demands placed on the reader, one that would be overlooked if the implied author and narrator were combined into one entity as Richard Walsh suggests in *The Rhetoric of Fictionality*. The authorial audience therefore takes on an active, and sometimes misguided, role to “articulate” the body of the text from the disparate pieces. Much as Mr. Venus articulates the human “various” of his craft, the authorial audience must puzzle out the various clues in order to distinguish what is necessary from what is superfluous to the recognition of a solution.

The passage continues with a series of negations: “no net, hook, or line, and he could not be a fisherman; his boat had no cushion...no paint, no inscription...” (Dickens 1). In the first lines of the novel, the reader is placed in an ambiguous position, having to identify for his or herself the reality of the scene through the appearances of what is not described. Thus, the roles of reader and narrator are unclear both in interpretation and meaning making. The first impression leads the authorial audience to reconstruct meaning and knowledge rather than depend on the narrator to transmit them intact. As the reader proceeds through the opening of the novel, he or she is cued to work, to help reconstruct, or reconfigure, not just events, but appearances and judgments. Largely, through the narrator’s ambiguous reporting, the authorial audience is under the impression that he or she is in control of the two missing pieces of the narrator’s functions: interpretation and evaluation. Because the narrator communicates in ways that disnarrate or suggest multiple possibilities, the reader must actively take on an interpretive and evaluative stance. Thus, the authorial audience assumes the narrator cannot fully be relied on for a complete report of necessary information. This assumption creates a delayed disclosure of both plot and narratorial ethos as readers are not aware of the full meaning of the narrator’s report. Through these narrative gaps, Dickens sets up a variation between the implied author and the narrator. While the narrator offers

limited information, the implied author has full control over that uncertainty, yet hides this very fact from both the reader and the authorial audience.

Understood synthetically, this distance between the implied author and narrator is modelled by characters who disguise themselves to deflect attention away from the real and towards an assumed identity in order to learn or use information that would be otherwise withheld. For example, John Rokesmith/Harmon disguises himself as a sailor to confront Rogue Riderhood and thus learn the truth of his unsuccessful murder, Sloppy disguises himself as the ever-watchful dustman to spy on Silas Wegg, and Bradley Headstone disguises himself as Rogue Riderhood to cover up his own involvement in the attempted murder of Eugene Wrayburn. Again, these moments of disguise create a mimetic/synthetic blend as they highlight how the implied author uses the narrator to distance the authorial audience from the knowledge of the implied author's control.¹⁵ This disguised control and deception create an ethical problem for readers who, having placed confidence in themselves to judge correctly because of early interpretive success, are later "shown up" by Dickens who has performed as the master mind behind the scenes.

The opening passage continues with an emphasis on reading via focalization and a thematic juxtaposition between surface and depth. The narrator reveals that Gaffer "looked for something, with a most intent and searching gaze." Lizzie "watched his face as earnestly as she watched the river." Gaffer "eyed the coming tide with an absorbed attention. So the girl eyed him." "His shining eyes darted a hungry look," while Lizzie remained "always watching his face" (1-2). Dickens creates a redundancy about the importance of reading action, faces, and movement.¹⁶ Throughout *Our*

¹⁵ The idea that the implied author can "use" the narrator is derived from James Phelan's helpful analysis of narrators as one of the resources at the disposal of the implied author (see "Rhetoric, Ethics, and Narrative Communication").

¹⁶ John R. Reed remarks that Dickens relies on redundant material to draw attention to both plot and theme, repeated motifs, and structural unity. He claims that this redundancy, or "a surplus of information in order to guarantee the transmission of meaning" is Dickens's characteristic technique. "In the later, well-planned novels, Dickens permitted very little that did not contribute to his design; the superfluity of information both in narrated detail and in the supporting imagery and allusiveness, despite immediate appearances, acts against

Mutual Friend Dickens relies on reading and misreading to demonstrate the connection of authorial control and the education of the reader, a relationship that is at the heart of the ethical vision of the novel. Through their link with focalization and performance, acts of reading set up surprises and misdirections for the authorial audience that ask them to re-evaluate their interpretation of both the story and the implied author. The abundance of reading practices pulls the authorial audience into an awareness of the synthetic: acts of reading become constructs that reveal Dickens's "finer threads" of the pattern on the loom. The connection between narrative technique and theme is drawn out through repeated readings of *Our Mutual Friend*. The attention to unconventional reading (reading faces, reading surfaces, non-literary reading, etc.) connects to both the themes of concealment and disguise, and the synthetic function of the narrator's posturing of concealment and disguise. Thus, acts of reading in the novel become clues to the reader and authorial audience to "read" the double communication more deeply: that of implied author to authorial audience, and narrator to narratee. By reading carefully, the authorial audience is able to identify the distance between the two types of communication and make a judgment of their own role in reconstructing the novel. I will explore reading and its consequences in more detail below.

The double communication of implied author- authorial audience and narrator-narratee is also reflected in the style of narration used throughout *Our Mutual Friend* but especially in passages concerning Wegg/Venus and Boffin/Harmon. When Wegg engages in negotiations with Mr. Boffin, the narrator remarks, "Silas...replied with an air; as if he were saying something extraordinarily generous and great: 'Mr. Boffin, I never bargain'" (51-52). Later, as Wegg begins to read "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," when Boffin asks him what he would like to drink, Wegg returns: "as if there were nothing new in his reading at all. 'I generally do it on gin and water'" (57). These moments of comparison are not specific metaphors, but instead create many possible interpretations by disguising explicit interpretation through an ambiguous style of narration.

this "reality effect," by narrowing the meaning of the narrative as a whole and confining it as strictly as possible to Dickens's own intended meaning" ("Redundancy" 15-16).

Wayne Booth defines this type of narration by conjecture as a form of evaluation that serves “general realistic demands—it is “as if” the author really shared the human condition to the extent of not knowing for sure how to evaluate these events. But morally the effect is still a rigorous control over the reader’s own range of judgment” (*Rhetoric* 184). Mary-Kate Arend calls narrative by conjecture “conditional narration” and claims that the use of phrasing including “as if,” “perhaps,” and other qualifiers has two purposes:

Either (1) the narrator, like the characters, simply does not know the truth about much of this story and reveals his limited knowledge through his discourse; or (2) the narrator knows the truth about everything in the story but withholds that information from readers because of some ulterior motive. (289)

Arend ultimately opts for the latter definition. This ulterior motive creates a gap between the implied author and narrator, as well as the two different audiences they serve. Indeed, as Wegg and Venus continue to negotiate their own terms of the friendly move, the style of narration continues to mask the tight control of judgment through attempts at uncertainty.

As I will explore below, the partnering of Silas Wegg and Mr. Venus offers a synthetic model of the implied author and authorial audience. Dickens plays with this relationship by creating a double communication of implied author/ authorial audience and narrator/ narratee that initiates, but also undermines, readerly judgment. Wegg, the character prized for his literary powers, and his ability to take “a powerful sight of notice” (Dickens 46), creates an opportunity for the authorial audience to interpret the distance between the communication levels of the implied author and narrator. After Wegg asks Venus what he thinks of John Rokesmith, Venus replies, ““that he has ‘a singular look.’ ‘A double look, you mean, sir,’ rejoins Wegg, playing bitterly upon the word. ‘That’s *his* look. Any amount of singular look for me, but not a double look! That’s an underhanded mind, sir”” (306). Venus describes the Secretary as having “a singular look,” implying unique or unusual but Wegg interprets “singular” to mean one.

Dickens's play with the word "singular" occurs earlier in the novel as well. When John Rokesmith tells Boffin he is lodging at the home of the Wilfers, Mr. Boffin, who has been thinking of Bella Wilfer the entire morning, remarks, "That's singular, too!" (97). The irony of the word "singular" derives from the truth that John Rokesmith is in fact John Harmon. However, on a deeper level, this play of singular/double draws attention to the dual communication in the narration. The communication offered to the authorial audience differs from that to the narratee. The narratee has no reason to read below the surface of Wegg's comment; however, the authorial audience will be able to reconfigure these sentences to highlight the occurrence of a double communication.

This back and forth verbal play between the two partners over the supposed "mutual friend" reveals Dickens's game of naming, words, and description, and highlights the theme of surface versus deep reading. Just as Riderhood, Gaffer, and Lizzie fish concealed bodies from the depths of the river, and Boffin, Wegg, and Venus "prod and poke" the depths of the dust mounds for the treasure within, so the reader must uncover the layers of the narrative. While Wegg claims he can unearth some things from the mounds, he relies on Venus's ability to dig more deeply to uncover what is hidden. The friendly move that Wegg initiates with Venus is based on:

the qualifications of Mr. Venus for such a search. He expatiates on Mr. Venus's patient habits and delicate manipulation; on his skill in piecing little things together...on the likelihood of small indications leading him on to the discovery of great concealments. (Dickens 303)

Although Wegg and Venus have received very little critical attention outside of thematic interpretations, I argue that their partnership serves a synthetic purpose which models the relationship between the implied author and authorial audience of *Our Mutual Friend*. At a first, or surface, reading, the partnership between the implied author and reader is unequal; upon a deeper reading, the reader can enter into the authorial audience for a reciprocal relationship with the implied author, as the reader becomes the

accomplice of Dickens. As the reader becomes aware of the distance between the implied author and narrator, he can choose to enter the authorial audience which requires more cognitive involvement to “keep up” with Dickens but offers more satisfying rewards of engagement.

Meta-Communication via the Focus on Reading

Readers’ early success with reading the doubling of Rokesmith/Harmon is crucial for understanding the significance of their later misreading of Boffin, and ultimately the need to re-read the implied author. Readers’ self-congratulation at reading the clues of John Harmon correctly creates a “reward system” for perceptive reading which is later undermined by a misreading of the Boffin pious fraud, thus raising questions about the kind of reading that Dickens does reward. The narrator’s concealment of his own knowledge asks the authorial audience to unmask the true identity of the narrator through perceptive reading. Being taught to read correctly also means being able to interpret the ethos of narrator and implied author correctly. Dickens uses reading for a synthetic purpose which reveals the difference between the narrator’s report and the implied author’s control and subversion of that report. In *Our Mutual Friend*, reading “correctly” is criticized by Dickens, who insists on another type of education for his readers. The educational practice of schools at that time followed the catechetical method as reflected by Mary Anne’s report on Lizzie Hexam which Miss Peecher turns into an instructive grammar assignment:

‘They say she's very handsome.’

‘Oh, Mary Anne, Mary Anne!’ returned Miss Peecher, slightly colouring and shaking her head, a little out of humour; ‘how often have I told you not to use that vague expression, not to speak in that general way? When you say *they* say, what do you mean? Part of speech They?’

Mary Anne hooked her right arm behind her in her left hand, as being under examination, and replied: ‘Personal pronoun.’

‘Person, They?’

‘Third person.’

‘Number, They?’

‘Plural number.’

‘Then how many do you mean, Mary Anne? Two? Or more?’

‘I beg your pardon, ma’am,’ said Mary Anne, disconcerted now she came to think of it; ‘but I don’t know that I mean more than her brother himself.’ As she said it, she unhooked her arm.

‘I felt convinced of it,’ returned Miss Peecher, smiling again. (220)

On the other hand, Rogue Riderhood, who is uneducated and illiterate, uses the same type of catechetical method to subvert the practice of reading with the intention of showing his own control over both the means to educate and the audience he intends to educate: Bradley Headstone. Thus, reading and education become acts of power that Riderhood knows how to wield.

Riderhood begins his lesson with a question to the students:

‘Wot is it, lambs, as they ketches in seas, rivers, lakes, and ponds?’

Shrill chorus (with some contempt for the ease of the question):

‘Fish!’

‘Good agin!’ said Riderhood. ‘But what else is it, my lambs, as they sometimes ketches in rivers?’

Chorus at a loss. One shrill voice: ‘Weed!’

‘Good agin!’ cried Riderhood. ‘But it ain’t weed neither. You’ll never guess, my dears. Wot is it, besides fish, as they sometimes ketches in rivers? Well! I’ll tell you. It’s suits o’ clothes.’ (794-795)

In this way, Riderhood reflects the implied author who knows how to “flip” the expected to suit his own purposes and demonstrate to his audience (in this case, Bradley Headstone) that he is the one in control. Riderhood’s subversion of technique depends on his full understanding and misappropriation of it. His display of authority and power earns the recognition of literary success. In a similar way, the implied author knows the “system” well enough to use it to his advantage, and to highlight the dangers of reading too literally.

This trope of surface reading, deep reading, reading between the lines, and education through reading is explored through other unconventional reading practices. For example, Lizzie reads the embers of the fireplace to which Charley Hexam remarks, “You said you couldn’t read a book, Lizzie. Your library of books is the hollow down by the flare, I think” (30). As he becomes a product of the school system, Charley’s admiration of Lizzie’s reading changes to derision at her “flights of fancy.” Mr. Boffin, who cannot distinguish between the Russian and Roman Empire on the spine of his “Decline and Fall” series, reads the dust mounds, “I ain’t a scholar in much, Rokesmith, but I’m a pretty fair scholar in dust” (185). Gaffer reads the “Body Found” notices on his wall: “I can’t read, nor I don’t want to it, for I know ‘em by their places on the wall” (22). Gaffer’s distrust of reading transforms into anger at Charley’s talent for it: “Unnat’ral young beggar” (75). Jenny Wren reads her customers, especially those she mistrusts such as Bradley Headstone and Eugene Wrayburn:

Screwing up one of her little bony fists, like an opera-glass, and looking through it, with her eyes and her chin in that quaint accordance...she made a double eyeglass of her two hands, looked at him through it, and cried, with a waggish shake of her head, ‘Aha! Caught you spying, did I?’(226)

Jenny is also the character to read Eugene properly and to identify the word “Wife” that he attempts to say to Mortimer. Finally Eugene offers a parenthesis on the practice of reading:

You charm me, Mortimer, with your reading of my weaknesses. (By-the-by, that very word, Reading, in its critical use, always charms me. An actress’s Reading of a chambermaid, a dancer’s Reading of a hornpipe, a singer’s Reading of a song, a marine painter’s Reading of the sea, the kettle-drum’s Reading of an instrumental passage, are phrases ever youthful and delightful.) (542)

Eugene's discourse on reading that encompasses character, theatre, music, and art is his most incisive comment that arises during a typical playful conversation with Mortimer Lightwood. With all of these examples, Dickens effectively creates a discourse on meta-reading with practical consequences for the real experiences of a reader and text. The characters with natural wisdom to read others well, albeit through unconventional methods, surpass a more intellectual or school-based reading. Fire, dust, the river, place, and people become the book that educates the illiterate characters. It is not enough to identify the words on a page. It is the connection between perception and interpretation, and the ability to reach the essence that Dickens prizes. Thus, the objects that are read properly are all natural elements—fire, dust, water, the body—or things in their essence. With the attention placed on what and how characters read, Dickens keeps the focus—both thematically and synthetically—interpretive, and ultimately instructive.

Dickens repeatedly points to reading, and especially reading (or misreading) faces to uncover the truth. Angelika Zirker claims:

The characters' success or failure in reading faces correctly raises questions about the effects of (mis)interpreting faces on reader response. Do those characters who (mis)read other characters in the novel teach us how to read? While what we read about characters' appearance is not necessarily reliable, it may hold information about role-playing and manipulation. (379)

The initial pages of *Our Mutual Friend* emphasize how Lizzie, Gaffer, and Rogue Riderhood read faces to come to a more accurate reading of character and purpose. Another key face-reading scene is that between Silas Wegg and Mr. Venus. After Wegg finds and conceals what he deems to be Harmon's latest will, he unveils it to Venus during the "speaking countenance" dialogue, nudging toward the connection between reading faces and reading plot:

'Comrade, what a speaking countenance is yours!'

Mr. Venus involuntarily smoothed his countenance, and looked at his hand, as if to see whether any of its speaking properties came off. ... ‘Says your speaking countenance to me: ‘Why didn’t you communicate that when I first come in this evening?’... ‘Your speaking countenance,’ said Wegg, ‘puts it plainer than language. Now you can’t read in my face what answer I give?’

‘No, I can’t,’ said Venus.

‘I knew it! And why not?’ returned Wegg, with the same joyful candour. ‘Because I lay no claims to a speaking countenance. Because I am well aware of my deficiencies. All men are not gifted alike. But I can answer in words... Your speaking countenance,’ said Wegg, ‘being answered to its satisfaction, only asks then, ‘What have you found?’ Why, I hear it say the words!’

‘Well?’ retorted Venus, snappishly, after waiting in vain. ‘If you hear it say the words, why don’t you answer it?’

... ‘N-no,’ returned Wegg, shaking his head at once observantly, thoughtfully, and playfully. ‘No, sir! That’s not your expressive countenance which asks that question. That’s your voice; merely your voice.’ (491-492)

Wegg’s attempt to read Venus correctly highlights his play on face-reading and communication. Although Wegg has invited Venus into a partnership as an equal, we see here his attempt to play with the surprise he is about to announce—that Wegg, without Venus, has found Harmon’s latest will. This moment of inequality hints to the reader that Wegg knows more than he reveals—indeed, as he says, his face is as expressionless and unreadable as a German wooden toy.

While my concern is not with physiognomy, I agree with Zirker that reading faces “sets up a model of reading in which temporary misinterpretations of the faces of others can be as morally and aesthetically significant as the unprejudiced sympathetic attention” (388). The emphasis on reading the faces of others, and reading them accurately is demonstrated by almost every character throughout the novel. Thus, the face reading between the two characters is necessary to work out the underlying truth of

their partnership, and indeed, all the partnerships in the novel. While the audience cannot read Dickens's face, as readers we do "read" the implied author in order to articulate an ethos and a set of expectations. This reading has to be reconfigured at the end of the novel, and that, in itself, may lead readers to alter their position in the partnership. The glee of Wegg at "playing" with Venus serves a synthetic purpose to reveal how the implied author plays with the authorial audience's expectations. Yet, through reconfiguration, this relationship that has been one of deception can be reconfigured into an equal partnership with ethical and cognitive rewards.

Meta-Communication via the Focus on Partnerships

Our Mutual Friend abounds with partnerships. Unequal ones that dissolve: Gaffer/Riderhood, Fledgeby/Riah, Wegg/Venus, Headstone/Riderhood, Harmon/Radfoot, Veneering/Twemlow, and equal ones that develop and grow: Eugene/Mortimer, Bella/Lizzie, Lizzie/Jenny Wren, Jenny/Riah. Each subplot depends on one of these partnerships, and a character from one partnership links in some way to a separate partnership. Rather than a splintered, divided novel, *Our Mutual Friend* is a vast network of partnerships with the collaboration of the reader and author at the very centre. These localized collaborations create a skeleton frame for the overarching story, and the central partnership therefore becomes the heart that gives life, connection, and meaning to each pairing of characters, and indeed relevance to each subplot. The chief partnership is that of the implied author and authorial audience which is alluded to by the partnership of Wegg and Venus, a partnership that is very much one of performance. Wegg asks Venus, "Will you perform upon a pipe, sir?" and Venus responds, "I am but an indifferent performer, sir...but I'll accompany you with a whiff or two at intervals" (298). It would be impossible to talk about Dickens without mentioning the influence of theatre on his writing. John P. Farrell suggests that:

Our Mutual Friend is a novel that persistently images for us the problematics of writing, of reading, of textual construction, and the performative tasks of narrator, characters, and audience. The novel

brings to a climax Dickens's long and profound reflection on narrative art as a performative act. It becomes essential to consider that performance is inherently a partnering. (760)

Indeed, *Our Mutual Friend* is a performance in every sense of the word. The characters perform for each other, the narrator performs his role both overtly and covertly, and ultimately the author performs a specific function of disguised control and power.

The unequal partnership of Silas Wegg and Mr. Venus is reflected by the word "Comrade" at the opening of the face-reading scene, echoing how Rogue Riderhood addresses Gaffer as "Pardner" in the opening pages of the novel, and how Dickens implicitly addresses the authorial audience. By opening his discourse with an allusion to collaborative work, Wegg initiates an equality that Venus draws back from. As Wegg continues with the progress of "the friendly move" (477), he alludes to their partnership by repeatedly calling Venus "brother." Venus's suspicions are aroused, however, by one of Boffin's miserly tales about the brothers who hid their wealth from each other: "'There!... Even from him, you see! There was only two of 'em, and yet one of 'em hid from the other'...Mr. Venus...had his attention recalled by the last sentence, and took the liberty of repeating it" (484). The inequality between Venus and Wegg becomes obvious as Wegg proceeds to describe how he found the will of John Harmon in the pump and read its contents without alerting his partner. Venus responds with indignation:

'Without coming to me!' exclaimed Venus.

'Exactly so, sir!' returned Wegg... 'I see I take you with me! Hear, hear, hear! Resolved, as your discriminating good sense perceives, that if you was to have a sap—pur—ize, it should be a complete one!... And now, as a fellow-man, and as a partner in a friendly move,' added Wegg, benignantly taking him by both hands again, and clapping him on both knees again, 'say, have I completed my labour of love to your perfect satisfaction, and are you sap—pur—ized?'

Mr Venus contemplated his fellow-man and partner with doubting eyes, and then rejoined stiffly: 'This is great news indeed, Mr Wegg. There's no denying it. But I could have wished you had told it me before you got your fright to-night, and I could have wished you had ever asked me as your partner what we were to do, before you thought you were dividing a responsibility.' (493-494)

Wegg's playful attitude only increases Venus's suspicion. While Wegg emphasizes the "surprise" element of finding and reading the will, Venus acknowledges the manipulation of roles that has taken place in pursuit of playfulness. Wegg's attempt at comedy and riddles alienates rather than includes Venus. Dickens also opts to "surprise" his authorial audience who thought they were equal partners in acts of interpretation only to learn later that they were deceived by Dickens. This moment of Wegg's misreading of Venus's reaction, and the consequences such a misreading entails for their partnership, mirrors Dickens's choice of control of rather than collaboration with the reader during the Boffin masquerade. Wegg fails to see that his performance has been deceptive to his "comrade." As Venus discovers Wegg's untrustworthiness, he begins to address Wegg as "partner" in an ironic attempt to demonstrate his own reading of the truth of their partnership. Venus's distrust of Wegg becomes apparent, alerting the authorial audience to second-guess Dickens's technique, and thus the final comment by Wegg is a moment of shared irony between Venus and the authorial audience at the expense of the author. Venus's emphasis on "dividing a responsibility" gives voice to the authorial audience's implicit reaction to Dickens as performer. Venus's rejoinder to Wegg echoes the attitude of the authorial audience who has been duped by Dickens out of what seemed to be a shared partnership of understanding and knowledge during the Boffin masquerade.

The Mimetic-Synthetic Relationship

Dickens's design of the misreading and misjudgment of both the narrator and the reader are also reflected in acts of narration that mask interpretive authority and call attention to the synthetic function of the

narrator. Both through the use of conditional acts of narration as discussed above and parenthetical intrusions, Dickens draws attention to the construction of illusion. As a performance, the narrator uses stage directions narrated as parenthetical intrusions. When Boffin comes to call, Wegg and Venus keep each other alert to his dropped clues through a series of parentheses:

(Here Mr. Wegg eyed his comrade and the room in which they sat: which had not been repaired for a long time.)...(Here Mr. Wegg repeated 'secret hoards,' and pegged his comrade again.)...(Here Mr. Wegg's wooden leg started forward under the table, and slowly elevated itself as he read on.)...(Here Mr. Venus looked at the wall.)...(Here Mr. Venus looked under himself on the settle.). (482)

While little research exists on the use of parentheses in novels in general, and in Dickens in particular, interpretations of parentheses tend to highlight its synthetic function. Alexandra Lyngstad connects Tolstoy's parenthetical use to multiplicity of points of view (405) and Robert Morrissey demonstrates that Flaubert's use of parentheses calls:

attention to narration, putting the narrative function on display in its different manifestations...Narrative authority is affirmed not in the form of justifying discourse but as the functional power of a self-conscious realism...In the exercise of these powers or in the refusal to exercise them, narrative control is never really relinquished, it is only disguised...[Parentheses] constitute signification precisely in their call to a reading, not at one with the narrator, but conscious of its own activity, of the discursive situation and of the limits of the realist illusion. (60)

Morrissey's explanation of parenthetical use falls closer to my own in the relationship between parenthetical intrusions, narrative control, and the subversion of realism. Dickens's choice to insert comments couched in parentheses has more to do with illusion rather than with the transmission of

story. Parentheses break the frame of the story and call attention to the *telling* of the story. With each parenthetical intrusion, the reader is called out of the story world and into an awareness of the narrator telling the story. This self-consciousness is a display of both artistry and authority. Since Dickens often included passages of thought without parentheses, his use of these narratorial intrusions can be explained as one way that he could assert a palpable presence in the world of his characters. John R. Reed explains, “[Dickens] wanted his readers to enjoy and participate in his texts as though they were equal partners, only in the end to reveal his control and the working out of his intentions as the author of the narrative” (*Hyperrealism* 24). Each parenthetical intrusion reminds readers of the author writing the text. The narrative authority that the use of parentheses claims is ambiguous, and thus creates a situation of disguised control (Morrissey 60). These parenthetical intrusions require a “knowing” narrator, even though he disguises his knowledge through parentheses which downplay his role.

These conditional acts of narration that qualify the narrator’s assurance or undermine his authority place the authorial audience in the position of judge by focusing on the synthetic aspects of the novel to draw out the connection between realism, omniscience, and the self-referentiality of fiction. Indeed, these techniques of parenthetical intrusions, use of “as if” comparisons, synthetic functions of characters, and redundant acts of reading actually demonstrate a self-consciousness to Dickens’s writing that relies on metanarration. Monika Fludernik offers Ansgar Nunning’s definition of metanarration which “thematizes the act and/or process of narration” (“Metanarrative” 4) which calls attention to a narrator who orders, interprets, and filters the events he or she reports. The awareness that there is a person or function “behind-the-scenes,” as it were, poses interpretive problems for realism. When the authorial audience becomes aware of the constructedness of the story, the illusion of realism should, based on its definition, break. However, while metanarrative comments call attention to their own artificiality, they may not disrupt the mimetic illusion of fiction. Therefore the authorial audience finds itself in the ambiguous position of distanced awareness of the narrative process (defamiliarization) and engaged with the story through that explicit awareness (immersion). In

this way, metanarration links very well with Dickens's attempt to both claim and undermine uncertainty through the distance between the implied author and narrator. The use of techniques that illustrate supposed uncertainty undermines, or at least *pretends* to undermine, the narrator's omniscience. By playing with omniscience, Dickens calls attention to the fictionality of narration and the problematic undertaking of realism.

The Ethics of the Telling

Dickens's choices of narration that undermine uncertainty and posture for concealed control link to the performance of disguise. Dickens questions the authority of the narrator through these conjectures and uncertain surmises which initiate the authorial audience's involvement in reconfiguration. However, this narrative voice of performed uncertainty invites the reader into a partnership that depends on and is complicated by the delayed disclosure of Boffin's performance. The performed partnership of Wegg and Venus serves to initiate suspicions of the authorial audience toward the implied author and thereby highlight the imminent undermining of readerly interpretation created by the Boffin masquerade. The delayed disclosure that Boffin's miserly turn is only a performance has ethical consequences for the reader. Rosemary Mundhenk claims that "Dickens deliberately makes the Boffin masquerade unsettling for the benefit of the reader, in an attempt to shock the reader with his own misjudgment, thereby to educate him" (42). Dickens plays with the reader by limiting both the focalization of Boffin to Bella and one key performance scene by Boffin to a non-audience: the only audience is the reader.

The use of Bella Wilfer as the filter and the one who focalizes the performance of Boffin creates a limited perspective for the reader. The reader views the miserly change in Mr. Boffin through Bella's perception:

Bella ventured for a moment to look stealthily towards him under her eyelashes, and she saw a dark cloud of suspicion, covetousness, and conceit, overshadowing the once open face...A deceiving Bella she was, to look at him with that pensively abstracted air, as if her

mind were full of her book, and she had not heard a single word!
(464-465)

And:

Bella went to bed with a weariness upon her spirit which was more than the weariness of want of sleep. And again in the morning, she looked for the cloud, and for the deepening of the cloud, upon the Golden Dustman's face. (466)

And:

A kind of illegibility, though a different kind, stole over Mr. Boffin's face. Its old simplicity of expression got masked by a certain craftiness that assimilated even his good-humour to itself. His very smile was cunning, as if he had been studying smiles among the portraits of his misers. Saving an occasional burst of impatience, or coarse assertion of his mastery, his good-humour remained to him, but it had now a sordid alloy of distrust; and though his eyes should twinkle and all his face should laugh, he would sit holding himself in his own arms, as if he had an inclination to hoard himself up, and must always grudgingly stand on the defensive. (472)

Because the Boffin masquerade is almost always filtered through Bella Wilfer's consciousness, the reader is dependent on Bella's interpretation that Mr. Boffin has been corrupted by money, and thus views the change in Mr. Boffin with only partial knowledge. Bella also engages in repeated acts of face reading, again highlighting the synthetic purpose of reading and misreading.

The one example of Boffin's performance without Bella's focalization occurs after Boffin departs from his meeting with Wegg and Venus at the Bower. Although he has no audience, Boffin continues his performance:

It was a cunning and suspicious idea, quite in the way of his school of Misers, and he looked very cunning and suspicious as he went jogging through the streets. More than once or twice, more than twice or thrice, say half-a-dozen times, he took his stick from the arm on which he nursed it, and hit a straight sharp rap at the air with its head. Possibly the wooden countenance of Mr. Silas Wegg was incorporeally before him at those moments, for he hit with intense satisfaction. (586)

In this case, the performance is a deception exclusively for the reader (Mundhenk 48). Indeed, Mr. Boffin's performance as miser was so realistic that many critics believed that Dickens intended that the miserly change would be real but changed his mind while writing *Our Mutual Friend*. Contemporary readers and reviews reacted strongly to feeling duped by Dickens, but, as John Farrell claims, "some critics and some readers have resented the ruse, but the consensus is now much in its favor as a highly effective instance of Dickens's performative art" (787-788). This recognition of Dickens's narrative prowess, and his skilful use of technical choices that follow the thematic content of concealment, riddles, accomplices, and disguise still does not do away with the fact that most readers do not enjoy being made aware that they are deficient in judgment or uneducated in some way. Rosemary Mundhenk's otherwise excellent analysis of *Our Mutual Friend* does not address the necessary reconfiguration readers must do at the end of the novel to come to terms with the performance of Boffin and the sensation of being "tricked" by Dickens. Because of the early success at finding out the Harmon ruse, the reader thinks he or she is in control of judgment and interpretation. However, this initial misdirection of interpretive accomplishment requires a reconfiguration of the reader's knowledge. This process of "re-reading" has far reaching consequences for readerly involvement and the genre of realism.

The challenge the Boffin masquerade makes to the reader's judgment brings us to the ethical situation of the relationship between the implied author and authorial audience. Understood synthetically, this

performance sets up a reconfiguration of the attempted reciprocity between the implied author and authorial audience. Through the errors of judgment, the reader learns of the difficulty of interpretation and knowledge. The aesthetic and cognitive awakening that Dickens offers his readers is tied to understanding the limited powers of perceiving and knowing (Mundhenk 51), and the connection between those two faculties. It also requires both an openness on the part of the reader to accept his or her limitations of judgment and the desire to enter the process of discovery and growth. As readers navigate their reactions to the delayed disclosure that Dickens knew more than he revealed, they respond in emotional, ethical, and cognitive ways, and this overlap of response has implications for the complexity of the reaction of readers to the ethics of the telling in *Our Mutual Friend*. By exploring the difference between the actual reader and the authorial audience, and the necessary reconfiguration that must be done through a process of re-reading, it is possible to come to some conclusions regarding the tension between the aesthetics and ethics of the performative nature of *Our Mutual Friend*. The surprise for readers that Boffin was only performing necessarily depends on a reconfiguration of the understanding of authorial responsibility. Dickens plays with this responsibility by confusing the reader's interpretation of narratorial knowledge. Both the implied author and narrator hold back the information from the reader that Boffin's miserly turn is only a performance and this delayed disclosure has ethical and aesthetic consequences for the reader.

James Phelan explains that the appropriateness of these surprises requires that:

(1) the author includes material in the progression that can retrospectively be understood as preparing the audience for the surprise... and (2) the audience's emotional and other investments in the characters are rewarded—deepened, used in the service of meaningful instruction, or otherwise enhanced—rather than undermined by the surprise. (*Experiencing Fiction* 95)

In *Our Mutual Friend*, the authorial audience is able to reconfigure much of the textual material: the narrator's "supposed" uncertainty, the relationship between Wegg and Venus, and the repeated attention to acts of reading are invitations to the reader to move from hurt surprise to a reciprocal relationship that acknowledges Dickens as designer of both the novel and the education of the reader's perception and judgment. This attention to interpreting correctly and judging accurately resonates with the synthetic and narrative techniques explored so far. Through a reconfiguration that highlights the synthetic function of Wegg and Venus as well as a redundancy of acts of reading and narrative uncertainty, the implied author has created a rewarding experience for readers willing to enter the authorial audience. The collaboration offered by Dickens to the reader creates a multi-layered experience that demonstrates the artifice of fiction as well as the subversive nature of realism. Moving out of the genre of realism and towards metafiction, Dickens invites his readers to join him in working at a higher level, which, for readers who want the challenge of deepening their interpretive skills, creates a relationship of respect between author and audience.

Conclusion

By approaching *Our Mutual Friend* not from intentionality but from the effects of Dickens's performance, it is possible to make an ethical response to the craft of that performance and to the challenge to the authorial audience's sense of equality with the author. John R. Reed explains:

[Dickens] was the one in control; he directed the way his readers' imaginations should go. He wanted his art to show ultimately, if not immediately. In his early writing he was willing to expose his tricks directly, but he became more and more crafty in both senses of the word as he matured, until in his late works he purposely masked clues to a correct reading of his narratives. (*Hyperrealism* 106)

The illusion of control affects the ethics of the author-reader partnership. To read correctly, the reader must put up with being wrong initially; however, on subsequent readings, Dickens allows himself to be caught at his own performance. After a surface reading, the reader may react with annoyance to the pious fraud, whereas a deeper reading empowers the reader to work, or play, in his own workshop among the narrative “human various” that Dickens has provided. As Gregg Hecimovich says:

Placed in the position of the riddlee from the outset, the reader becomes involved in a game of discerning identities and motives...The reader, confronted on the first page with a giant jigsaw puzzle of discrete fragments, finds himself, like the character of Mr. Venus, attempting to give structure to the “human various” of the fractured syntax, narrative perspective, and plot. The reader is placed in this position without realizing it. (“The Cup and the Lip” 960, 964)

Thus, the author and reader share the pleasures of deciphering the riddles of *Our Mutual Friend*; those that have been planted by Dickens, and those unearthed by the reader at his promptings. The reader, therefore, becomes the real mutual friend who brings the riddle up from the depths where it was concealed by connecting the various plot fragments with the narrative structure. In the end, the implied author of *Our Mutual Friend* is a master of trickery, but allows the reader to win, just as Venus wins against Wegg. Dickens plants the clues and applauds the savvy reader who is able to unearth them and articulate them into a whole piece. The reader as mutual friend of author, narrator, and characters joins Venus in his “patient habits and delicate manipulation” (303) to piece together the separate strands of the plot to reveal the concealed meaning of the whole. The reader who can scratch away at the veneer and read through surface appearances catches Dickens at his own performance, but instead of being rebuffed at uncovering this concealment, is rewarded by a partnership.

The performance of implied author and narrator as revealed through the ethics of the telling offers a rich experience to the reader who is invited

to participate at a heightened level of interpretive activity. This involvement demonstrates the new perspective offered by a synthetic reading of the text without losing the immersive joy of Dickens's novels. As partnerships grow and dissolve throughout the novel, the ultimate partnership that is brought to the surface is that of Dickens and his reader. In his subversion of realism, Dickens highlights the artificiality of his fiction, not to distance the reader, but to invite the reader to question his or her own assumptions, and to participate in the craft, and ethics, of play. By focusing on the ethics of the telling of *Our Mutual Friend* through the lens of rhetorical narrative theory, readers become aware that their relationship with Dickens is anything but simple. However, if readers are willing to work at his level of well-intended trickery, the cognitive and ethical rewards satisfy, and indeed placate, any first reactions of annoyance. The misdirections, delayed disclosures and necessary reconfiguration of *Our Mutual Friend* highlight the significant overlap of, and indeed dependence between, mimetic and synthetic strategies and reading practices. As seen in *Our Mutual Friend*, the importance of implied author—narrator relationships in noncharacter narration offer both narrative and ethical evaluation that showcase Dickens's ability to craft and conceal at the same time. The expectations aroused by *Our Mutual Friend* depend on the success of closure for them to succeed. Dickens offers his readers the role of closing the gap through their newly conceived perception and judgment. By re-reading and re-evaluating not just the story, but their own misconceptions, readers are brought to the metafictional awareness that literature, and fiction specifically, offers the power to help readers rethink not just what they read but what they understand about themselves.

CHAPTER FIVE: GEORGE ELIOT'S *DANIEL DERONDA*¹⁷

After finishing the last book of *Daniel Deronda*, an anonymous reviewer published the following in the *Saturday Review* on September 16, 1876:

The reader...can hardly be certain to what cause is due the impression that the present work is a falling off from *Adam Bede*, and *Middlemarch*, and a whole train of favourites. He knows very distinctly what his feeling in the matter is, but he has to ask himself whether the conviction that the author has fallen below her usual height is owing to any failure of power in herself, or to the utter want of sympathy which exists between her and her readers in the motive and leading idea of her story. This is a question which can hardly be settled. (356)

The reviewer's attention to the lack of sympathy is a damning indictment of the author whose sole aesthetic goal was to cultivate sympathy between the author and reader. George Eliot believed that the author's role was to cultivate sympathy, or moral emotion, in readers through the aesthetics of her art. Fellow feeling enabled readers to experience an active imagination that led them into an awareness and understanding of the perspectives of others. Eliot's ethical aim of cultivating sympathy was not an altruistic desire but a sense of the intellectual merit of being able to feel "for the peasant in all his coarse apathy, and the artisan in all his suspicious selfishness" (Pinney 271). The review's note of the lack of any sympathy asks whether *Daniel Deronda* is an aesthetic, and ethical, failure. To explore this "question which can hardly be settled," that is, whether the motive and leading idea of the story invites or alienates readers in their mutual feeling

¹⁷ A draft of this chapter was presented at the 2016 International Conference on Narrative in Amsterdam as "The Ethics of Temporal Ordering: George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* as Experiment in Realism."

with the author, requires an examination of the relationship between what critics called the “two plots” of *Daniel Deronda*. Carol Martin claims the “Gwendolen” plot and “Jewish” plot as revealed through the serial structure of *Deronda* provoked different reactions in Eliot’s readers and ultimately, “the dual thrust of the plot has been debated ever since” (237).

The lack of sympathy that some readers felt in response to unfamiliar characters and plot elements also demands an analysis of the narrator. In Eliot’s novels, the role of the narrator is crucial for activating this theoretical sympathy and for an understanding of the progression of a novel that received many negative reviews after the success of *Middlemarch*. This chapter explores the narrator’s three functions of reporting, interpreting, and evaluating in light of the critical response to *Daniel Deronda* which asks whether Eliot’s aesthetics and ethics combine successfully to invite her readers’ sympathy. In *Daniel Deronda*, the narrator fulfills these functions, especially through how she cultivates multiperspectivism, reports as a historian, and temporally orders the novel.

One of the ways Eliot attempted to cultivate sympathy was through alerting the reader to his or her limitations of perspective and exposing the reader to the perspectives of various characters. Multiperspectivity, according to Ansgar Nunning, links a shared point of view with shared emotions, which creates an ethical change in the reader that is perspective-driven rather than action-oriented (“Extension of our Sympathies” 117). Although ethical impact tends to be justified only if it can be empirically measured via actions, the ethical significance of change of perspective is more in keeping with the Victorian goal of cultivating sympathy through reading fiction. Rae Greiner has linked the cultivation of this sympathy of ideas to a novel’s representation of technique. Suzanne Keen has urged caution in connecting empathetic narrative techniques and altruism in any causal way. Other scholars, including Frank Hakemulder, Mary-Catherine Harrison, Lisa Zunshine and others have explored real-world implications for fiction-reading but ultimately demonstrate that the effect of fiction on readers is unique and potential, rather than general and definite. This dynamic of fiction-reading and readerly change is significant for understanding how Eliot tried to cultivate a sympathetic response from her

readers. Instead of desiring her readers to change their actions within society, Eliot aimed to cultivate a more sympathetic outlook from her audience. Thus, any moments that bring the reader face-to-face with his or her own viewpoint are moments of ethical awareness. The reader's awareness of the limitations of his or her point of view is brought about through sudden changes in perspective or focalization, and through narratorial commentary that directs the reader to feel for or with a certain character.

These moments of a sudden change in perspective combined with inside views make the narrator overt, thus calling attention to the artifice of fiction. George Levine demonstrates that while realism creates an illusion, it, at the same time, calls attention to that act of creation, fomenting a strong self-consciousness in the text:

[The Victorians] create their worlds while being intensely and often explicitly self-conscious about the medium through which they are doing it, and worrying not at all that the efforts at illusion will be undercut by overt exposures of the devices by which the illusion is being created. (*How to Read the Victorian Novel* 64)

The combination of that self-consciousness and creation of illusion create a dual defamiliarization and immersion, which I argue is necessary for the reader's own ethical awareness. Rather than undermining the aims of realism, Eliot works with the disillusionment that accompanies realist literature. At no point is the reader unaware of the call to his or her own cultivation of sympathy. Through showing a variety of points of view that undermine her readers' stock responses and encouraging them to examine their own attitudes, Eliot's narrator links readers and the story in the hopes of affecting the art of deliberation of the readers.

With changes in perspective, Eliot also provides inside views of select characters. As she had done with Casaubon in *Middlemarch*, Eliot gives us the full workings of Gwendolen's thoughts which take her from being a very egoistical character to one with whom the reader is encouraged to feel sympathy. The narrator's choice of whose thoughts to reveal is

always significant. Ultimately, the narrator reveals the fictional mind of a character, the overall scene or context, and the ethical or emotional hue with which to interpret, all within a constructed order of events.

The Narrator as Historian within the Genre of Realism

The presence of a historian narrator serves to link fictional events with real ones and to impose a temporal structure onto those events; therefore, the narrator performs a linking function in relation to time. Her power to order events and her omniscient reporting about characters is served by her role as historian. Because the historian chooses what to report and what to keep unreported, her act of reporting is always interpretive and evaluative. The historian role can be observed from the epigraphs of each chapter and in the narrator's comments about choosing to focus on this character or that one, as well as commenting on the characters' total lack of awareness of other events in the world.

The narrator uses her role to "mark the time, and connect the course of individual lives with the historic stream, for all classes of thinkers" (*Daniel Deronda* 74). The narrator defends her role as historian, saying:

Some readers of this history will doubtless regard it as incredible that people should construct matrimonial prospects on the mere report that a bachelor of good fortune and possibilities was coming within reach...let it be observed, nothing is here narrated of human nature generally: the history in its present stage concerns only a few people in a corner of Wessex—whose reputation, however, was unimpeached, and who, I am in the proud position of being able to state, were all on visiting terms with persons of rank. (76)

As the historian narrator defends her choice to focus on "a few people in a corner of Wessex," she navigates the irony of the situation, her readers' potential reactions, and her own power to tell the story. The narrator's "pride" in her characters' class status is slightly sardonic and yet by calling attention to the arbitrariness of these characters' importance, the narrator asks her readers to make a judgment about their own way of judging.

The connection between these few people in a corner of Wessex and larger nonfiction events is also ironic. Although the events in *Daniel Deronda* run parallel to the American Civil War, the characters are unaware of those events. When describing Gwendolen Harleth, the narrator notes:

Could there be a slenderer, more insignificant thread in human history than this consciousness of a girl, busy with her small inferences of the way in which she could make her life pleasant?—in a time, too...when women on the other side of the world would not mourn for the husbands and sons who died bravely in a common cause. (102)

Gwendolen is unaware of the events of the larger world outside of those that affect her personally. However, the narrator has also made an ethical decision to focus on Gwendolen exclusively. The narrator is being ironic at her own expense, acknowledging the insignificance of Gwendolen's history, but maintaining the focus on this insignificant thread. In so doing, the narrator positions herself with the other people of Offendene, and with human nature generally:

Eight months after the arrival of the family at Offendene, that is to say in the end of the following June, a rumour was spread in the neighbourhood which to many persons was matter of exciting interest. It had no reference to the results of the American war, but it was one which touched all classes within a certain circuit round Wancester... The news was that Diplow Hall...was being prepared for a tenant. (75)

By leading her readers into a greater awareness of their own priorities of importance, the narrator helps us to see that we are not so very different from this set of myopic characters. However, in taking this stance, Eliot creates a platform of intellectual and moral authority over her readers.

Eliot's reputation as a philosopher-novelist was off-putting for the Modernists who came after her, and it is only recently that critics have

begun to discuss Eliot without an apology for what was considered a heavy-handed and moralizing approach. What George Levine helpfully reminds us of is that Eliot's intellectual stance arose, not from moral didacticism (against which she was severely opposed), but from her own personal engagement with and rebellion against societal concerns:

George Eliot the writer built her art from a refusal of such conventions [of respectability], in resistance to the very kind of moral complacency and didacticism of which she has often, in the years following her death, been accused. Certainly, she disguised it, compromised it, resisted it; but George Eliot created her art out of a cluster of rebellions, particularly against reigning social, moral, and aesthetic conventions. ("Introduction: George Eliot and the Art of Realism" 1-2)

Eliot's literary seriousness and high art can be a point against her for contemporary readers who prefer a sense of equality or familiarity with their authors rather than a teacher/student relationship. But Eliot's authority came from her own personal grappling with intellectual, moral, and aesthetic ideas, not from an assumption of superior wisdom. Whether this awareness of her background assuages the reputation she has earned as a dogmatist will depend on her readers' specific traits and approaches to reading; that is, the willing reader must decide to accept the specific traits of George Eliot which make her unique from Gaskell and Dickens, especially as her narrative choices draw upon her authorial interests and style.

Like the author, the narrator's stance towards the characters is problematic: by focusing on an arbitrary group of fictional people, the narrator prioritizes the readers' attention for them. James Phelan refers to this arbitrariness of selecting and shaping the raw material as one of the features that readers tend to overlook when engaging with narrative. And yet, by reflecting on the metanarrative about narrative, we must question the

counter-narrative that is not told.¹⁸ By reflecting on the alternative *Daniel Deronda*, the narrative that is *not* told, readers need to question the advantages and disadvantages of the actual *Daniel Deronda* and the choices made to shape the narrative about some characters rather than others. Ultimately, this metanarrative leads us into the problematic relationship between the historian narrator telling a set of truths and a fallible narrator reporting characters and events according to her own preferences.

Indeed, the narrator maintains the focus on what she determines is important:

I am not concerned to tell of the food that was eaten in that green refectory...being just now bound to tell a story of life at a stage when the blissful beauty of earth and sky entered only by narrow and oblique inlets into the consciousness, which was busy with a small social drama almost as little penetrated by a feeling of wider relations as if it had been a puppet-show. (125)

The narrator's attention to the lack of feeling that the characters experience towards anyone outside their small existences is a blistering comment about our tendency to egoism. These moments serve to remind the reader that we also are at the center of our own existences. But, by realizing this truth, Eliot's narrator hopes to spur the beginning of a process towards sympathy. As the narrator focuses on Gwendolen's moral maturation, that is, her process of becoming more sympathetic from her egoistical beginning, the reader is brought into the awareness of the need to go through that same process. In the penultimate chapter, as Gwendolen realizes that Deronda will leave her, her center undergoes a sudden shift as she acknowledges her own insignificance:

The world seemed getting larger round poor Gwendolen, and she more solitary and helpless in the midst...There comes a terrible

¹⁸ Notes taken from James Phelan's presentation, "'But Why Always Dorothea?' The Inevitable Trade-Offs of Narrative" at "The Limits of Narrative" panel, MLA Conference 2015.

moment to many souls when the great movements of the world... enter like an earthquake into their own lives...That was the sort of crisis which was at this moment beginning in Gwendolen's small life: she was for the first time feeling the pressure of a vast mysterious movement, for the first time being dislodged from her supremacy in her own world, and getting a sense that her horizon was but a dipping onward of an existence with which her own was revolving. (688-689)

Gwendolen's moral growth, from an egoistical position to one that recognizes her own smallness and necessary connection to others, is the arc of sympathy that Eliot expected her readers to travel as well. This process is reflected by the historian's emphasis and connection between Gwendolen and larger events. The historian narrator's decision to focus on Gwendolen in her insignificance reflects the power of that role of reporting.

After Mrs. Meyrick finishes reading *Histoire d'un Conscrit* to her daughters, Mab claims, "I think that is the finest story in the world." Kate contradicts: "It is hardly to be called a story...It is a bit of history brought near us with a strong telescope" (168). The play on story/history reflects the understanding of the Victorian realist novel as the interplay between ordinary characters and the stage of world events happening around them, and the influence of those events, values, and cultural conditions on the creation and molding of individual characters. The image of the telescope is also significant for Eliot's narrative style. One of Eliot's favored techniques was to work from the particular to the general and back to the particular. As J. Hillis Miller says:

The basic mode of narration...is a form of indirect discourse in which the narrator first relives for the reader one moment of a character's experience, then moves out to generalize about that character, and then goes to a still wider level of generalization, the universal experience of mankind. (83)

By using close-up shots in conjunction with more distanced commentary, Eliot reflects on both the importance of the individual perspective and its relation to the context around it. Kate continues, “We can see the soldiers’ faces: no, it is more than that—we can hear everything—we can almost hear their hearts beat.” Mab answers her sister:

I don’t care what you call it....Call it a chapter in Revelations. It makes me want to do something good, something grand. It makes me so sorry for everybody. It makes me like Schiller—I want to take the world in my arms and kiss it. I must kiss you instead little mother! (168)

Mab’s reaction is an overt nod to Eliot’s hope that her readers would also want to do something good, which is tempered by the realization that her readers’ actions would most probably be confined to a change in feeling or attitude, rather than action. Indeed, Mab’s enthusiasm diverts her from her work and is confined to playing the scales on the piano while the others laugh at her misdirected sympathies.

The Ethics of Temporal Ordering: Prolepsis and Analepsis

As Kate and Mab discuss the literary representation of the method of telescoping from particular to general, the narrator demonstrates this method through its formal representation as applied to the reporting of events. The telescope image works in tandem with the function of temporal ordering—what is brought into the reader’s perspective and shown in relation to another character or event. Because the narrator is reporting a history, she must provide an order of events for her readers. Thus, the historian narrator recognizes and separates the form of the novel and the form of reality. K.M. Newton acknowledges that the form of the novel “does not mirror an order which is immanent in the world but is rather the narrator’s own ordering...[The narrator] is not seeing events as they happen, but viewing them from a future standpoint which shapes his judgment of them” (“Role of Narrator” 100). Therefore temporal ordering is crucial for understanding the ethos of the narrator. The choices the narrator makes in the temporal

ordering of events are interpretive and evaluative decisions, and, as such, need to be linked to the ethical and aesthetic situations they create.

Eliot's choices of temporal ordering, especially when combined with the serial publication of *Daniel Deronda*, encourage almost exclusive attention to the "Gwendolen" part of the novel to the detriment of the "Jewish" part. Eliot's narrator does not claim to possess omniscient knowledge or omnipotence in reflecting a certain order of the world. Instead, the narrator is recounting, or reporting, and in so doing evaluating and interpreting those events and characters, a process which is inherently ethical, as that shaping into an order sheds light on the narrator's values and judgments. Temporal ordering by the narrator creates one set of textual dynamics that initiate the progression of the novel and readerly dynamics in response to the text. Temporal ordering raises questions of aesthetics *and* ethics. Why is the narrator telling this *now* and not *then*? What effect does this sequence of events have on readerly expectations? What interplay of cause and effect does the narrator set up by exploring historical motivation before action? And ultimately, what can the reader infer from the narrator who chooses to tell the story *this* way rather than *that*? The textual dynamics call forth a response from the reader who must determine the direction of the narrative in order to position him or herself in relation to it. Thus, the reader's "processing of the narrative discourse is a crucial component of our entry into the narrative world" (Phelan *Experiencing Fiction* 16). The order of events represented to the reader shapes the reader's judgment about those events.

Throughout *Daniel Deronda*, but especially in the first two books, 'The Spoiled Child' and 'Meeting Streams,' Eliot relies on prolepsis and analepsis to order events. Prolepsis is the anticipation of a future episode that results in a non-chronological presentation of events; in other words, a flash forward. Prolepses reset the narrative clock by jumping to a new 'narrative now.' Analepsis goes backwards in time to cover an earlier episode, or a flashback. Eliot's use of analepsis is a reflection of the historian role of the narrator, but it also quite widely affects readers' expectations for the direction of the narrative. Prolepsis and analepsis initiate a series of questions about ordering and the relation between events,

and “assess the significance of that positioning as regards choices of perspective, turning-points of plot, narratorial priorities, aesthetic effects, and differences between expectation and realization” (Ireland 591). Any revelations of perspective, narratorial priorities, and discrepancy between expectation and realization do much to demonstrate the ethos of the narrator, and the desired response from readers compared to their real response. Figure 1 offers a chart comparing the chronological story events with their temporal ordering in the discourse:

Figure 1: [Events told via flashback (*analepsis*) are italicized]

Ch	Chronological Events/ Story	Sequence of Discourse
BOOK I The Spoiled Child		
1	(Oct 1864) Gwendolen arrives to Offendene, meets Aunt and Uncle.	(Sept 1865) Deronda meets Gwendolen in Leubronn gambling.
2	Mr. Gascoigne introduces Gwendolen to society.	Gwendolen’s loss of wealth. Deronda returns necklace.
3	Gwendolen in society.	<i>Flashback to when Gwendolen moved to Offendene, childhood.</i>
4	Rex meets Gwendolen.	<i>Gwendolen at Offendene.</i>
5	(Dec 1864) Gwendolen performs.	<i>Gwendolen in society.</i>
6	(Jan 1865) Rex in love, hunting accident, and his failed proposal.	<i>Gwendolen, cousins perform.</i>
7	Anna and Rex discuss moving to Canada.	<i>Rex in love, hunting accident, and his failed proposal.</i>
8	Diplow Hall prepared for Mr. Grandcourt. Anticipation of Gwendolen, Grandcourt.	<i>Anna and Rex discuss moving to Canada.</i>
9	(July 1865) Archery at Brackenshaw Park; Gwendolen meets Grandcourt. Deronda saves Mirah.	<i>Diplow Hall prepared for Mr. Grandcourt. Anticipation of Gwendolen, Grandcourt.</i>
10	Grandcourt discusses marrying Gwendolen. Deronda travels Europe, synagogue at Frankfurt.	<i>The Archery Meeting at Brackenshaw Park. Gwendolen meets Grandcourt.</i>
BOOK II Meeting Streams		
11	Gwendolen, Grandcourt begin courtship.	<i>Gwendolen at Archery Meeting.</i>
12	(Aug 1865) Picnic at Cardell Chase, Gwendolen meets Lydia, flees.	<i>Lush’s view of Grandcourt. Talk about marrying Gwendolen.</i>
13	(Sept 1865) Deronda meets Gwendolen in Leubronn; focused on Mirah, her mother.	<i>Gwendolen, Grandcourt begin courtship.</i>
14	(Sept 1865) Grandcourt makes plans to leave for Leubronn.	<i>Picnic at Cardell Chase, Gwendolen meets Lydia, flees.</i>
15	Gwendolen’s loss of wealth. Deronda returns necklace.	<i>Gwendolen home, Grandcourt meets Deronda in Leubronn.</i>
16	Gwendolen returns to Offendene.	<i>Flashback to Deronda’s childhood,</i>

		<i>role of Sir Hugo, Hans Meyrick.</i>
17	Grandcourt, Deronda meet in Leubronn. Deronda cannot marry Gwendolen.	<i>[July 1865]Deronda saves Mirah on Thames.</i>
18	Gwendolen writes to Klesmer.	<i>Deronda brings Mirah to Meyricks.</i>
BOOK III Maidens Choosing		
19	Klesmer and Catherine engaged.	<i>Deronda, Mirah, and Judaism.</i>
20	Klesmer's advice to Gwendolen about stage.	<i>Mirah tells story to Mrs. Meyrick. Concludes with the history of Deronda up to the time of Leubronn.</i>
21	Gwendolen prepares to be governess.	Real Time: Gwendolen writes to Klesmer.
22	Grandcourt returns to England.	Klesmer and Catherine engaged.
23	Grandcourt writes to Gwendolen.	Klesmer advice to Gwendolen.
24	(Sept) Gwendolen accepts Grandcourt.	Gwendolen prepares to be governess.
25	(Oct) Grandcourt visits Lydia. Deronda visits Mirah, Meyricks.	Grandcourt returns to England.
26	Gwendolen and Grandcourt engaged. Deronda prepares to negotiate estates.	Grandcourt writes to Gwendolen.
27	(Nov) Deronda to Diplow.	Gwendolen accepts Grandcourt.
BOOK IV Gwendolen Gets Her Choice		
28	(Nov) Gwendolen, Grandcourt wedding. Grandcourt's domination begins (6 weeks).	Gwendolen, Grandcourt engaged. Deronda visits Diplow.
29	(Nov/Dec) Deronda explores Jewish neighborhood, meets Cohens, Mordecai.	Gwendolen prepares to meet Deronda. Gwendolen reminds him of Leubronn.
30	(Dec) Deronda visits Cohens for Sabbath.	Grandcourt visits Lydia for diamonds.
31	(Dec) Deronda to Diplow for Christmas.	Gwendolen, Grandcourt wedding. Gwendolen receives diamonds.
32	(Dec) The Grandcourts spend Christmas at the Abbey.	Deronda returns to Sir Hugo. <i>Flashback to visit to synagogue and question about mother's family. Deronda visits Mirah.</i>
33	Deronda gets to know Gwendolen.	<i>Deronda looks for Ezra Cohen in Jewish neighborhood. Meets Mordecai. Plans to return to Cohens for Sabbath.</i>
34	Mirah as singing teacher.	<i>Deronda, Cohen's shop for Sabbath.</i>
BOOK V Mordecai		
35	Christmas festivities continue between Gwendolen, Deronda.	Deronda meets Gwendolen at Abbey, pity for her.
36	(Feb 1866) Deronda goes to London. Hans's sketches Mirah as model.	Deronda offers Mirah as singing teacher. Gwendolen wears "Deronda's" necklace.
37	Klesmer hears Mirah sing. Deronda meets Mordecai on Thames.	(Feb) Deronda visits Hans, sees his sketches of Mirah.
38	Deronda, Mordecai at club.	Mordecai's background.
39	Deronda, Mordecai conversation.	Klesmer hears Mirah sing.
40	(March) Gwendolen to London with Grandcourt.	Mordecai sees Deronda on the Thames, insists he is Jewish.

BOOK VI Revelations		
41	(June) Klesmers' party. Mirah sings.	Deronda thinking about Mordecai.
42	Gwendolen meets Deronda at the Klesmer's party in June.	Deronda visits the Cohens. Deronda, Mordecai at the Philosophers' Club.
43	Deronda tells Mordecai he has found his sister.	Deronda promises to help Mordecai (Ezra), learns he has a sister.
44	Mirah and Mordecai meet.	Gwendolen home, thinks of Deronda
45	Gwendolen visits Mirah, asks of Deronda.	Grandcourts in London, attend party at Lady Mallinger's. Mirah sings.
46	Deronda's mother asks to meet.	Deronda tells Mordecai about Mirah
47	Grandcourt finds Gwendolen, Deronda	Mirah and Mordecai meet.
48	Grandcourt takes Gwendolen yachting on the Mediterranean.	Gwendolen visits Mirah, asks of Deronda. Lush gives her the will. Grandcourt finds Gwendolen, Deronda, announces trip.
49	Deronda to Genoa to meet his mother.	Sir Hugo tells Deronda about his mother and father.
BOOK VII: The Mother and the Son		
50	(July) Gwendolen, Grandcourt stop in Genoa. Deronda meets mother.	Deronda goes to Genoa.
51	Deronda sees Grandcourts at hotel.	Deronda meets his mother.
52	Deronda meets his mother.	Letter from Hans about Mirah. Insight into Mirah's feelings.
53	Gwendolen, Grandcourt sail. Grandcourt's death.	Deronda meets his mother again.
54	Gwendolen's confession. Scene in Pennicote with Rex. Telegram announces Grandcourt's death.	Gwendolen, Grandcourt yachting. Gwendolen meets Deronda at the hotel. Final sailing scene.
55	Mirah's father arrives.	<i>Deronda's thoughts occupied with ancestry. Sees Gwendolen.</i>
56	Mirah's father meets Mordecai.	Gwendolen confesses to Deronda.
57	Deronda, Gwendolen meet again.	Deronda, Gwendolen meet again.
BOOK VIII: Fruit and Seed		
58	Sir Hugo discusses will in Genoa.	Telegram of Grandcourt's death.
59	Deronda claims papers, identity.	Sir Hugo discusses will in Genoa.
60	Mirah's anger with Hans.	Deronda claims Jewish identity.
61	Deronda announces he is Jewish.	Mirah's anger with Hans.
62	Deronda meets Mirah's father.	Mirah's father arrives.
63	Gwendolen recovers.	Deronda announces he is Jewish.
64	Gwendolen returns to Offendene.	Gwendolen returns to Offendene.
65	Deronda and Hans discuss Mirah.	Deronda visits Gwendolen.
66	(Oct) Mr. Lapidoth steals ring. Deronda proposes to Mirah.	Mirah's father meets Mordecai.
67	Deronda visits Gwendolen.	Deronda meets Mirah's father.
68	Deronda tells Sir Hugo he is engaged.	Mr. Lapidoth steals Deronda's ring. Deronda proposes to Mirah.
69	Gwendolen remains at Offendene. Deronda tells her he is engaged to Mirah.	Deronda tells Sir Hugo he is engaged. Visits Gwendolen, tells he is engaged.
70	Deronda, Mirah's wedding, make plans to leave for the East. Mordecai dies.	Deronda, Mirah's wedding, make plans to leave for the East. Mordecai dies.

Excluding Deronda's presence in chapter one, Book I reveals Gwendolen's history told mostly through analepsis. Although the reader is briefly introduced to Deronda in the first chapter, he does not re-enter the story until Book II, published the following month. Book II continues to focus on Gwendolen but at the end returns to Deronda, through analepsis, to recount his rescue of Mirah which occurs at the same time as Gwendolen's archery party, which was narrated in Book I. Book III initially focuses on Deronda's reaction to finding Mirah, and then immediately transitions to Mirah's history, told as a continued analepsis. Halfway through Book III, the narrative switches back to Gwendolen in "real time" and the immediate events leading up to her engagement to Grandcourt. Excluding the gambling scene at Leubronn, this point of the novel is the first moment of dealing with events in real time. Book IV continues to focus on Gwendolen but does not remain in the present; instead it includes another flashback of Deronda's history and his introduction to Mordecai. Book V begins in the present with a focus on Gwendolen and Deronda meeting at the Abbey at Christmas. Because of the extensive attention to Gwendolen, and her almost complete dominance of events narrated in the present, readers were rightly shocked when halfway through Book V, published in June 1876, the direction of the narrative changed drastically to focus on a prophet and his quest for a Jewish homeland. Book VI continues to focus on Mordecai with little attention to Gwendolen until she plots a rendezvous with Deronda which is interrupted by Grandcourt. In Book VII the two stories finally begin to intertwine in Genoa and Book VIII resolves the two separate plots.

Because the order of the discourse focuses almost exclusively on Gwendolen and her history, especially initially, readers' expectations were roused to follow Gwendolen as the heroine and protagonist. The novel opens in "real-time" with Gwendolen gambling in Leubronn, giving readers the expectation that the story will follow this ambiguous woman, an expectation that is maintained throughout the next three books. Outside of the scene of Gwendolen gambling in Leubronn, the first three books are largely expository, with no present-tense action until the proposal and engagement of Gwendolen and Grandcourt. Any action before the proposal

is told through analepsis and is retold to inform the reader of select characters' histories. The focus on Deronda in Book II is only minimally attentive to the scene after Gwendolen flees Leubronn, and almost immediately switches to a long recounting of Deronda's history separate from Gwendolen. So, before we know who he is, or why he is important (besides being the character who shares the title), we are brought back in time via analepsis to be introduced to him as a thirteen-year-old boy.

These unnarrated gaps, or being plunged into the past or future without the corresponding present to fill it out, create tensions in the discourse regarding temporality. Robyn Warhol explains:

Every time a narrator elides, represses, suppresses, passes over, leaves out, or ignores some action, utterance, feeling, or impression that implicitly occurs in the storyworld, that gap or lacuna represents an element that is unnarratable for that genre in that era...George Eliot employs both unnarration and disnarration to indicate elements of her storyworlds that her narrator can't or won't narrate, but that the implied author is not willing to leave entirely unremarked. ("George Eliot's Narrative Refusals" 49-50)

She explains that disnarration supplies "the actual reader with glimpses at possible alternate worlds that could have been better or worse for the characters involved. Unnarration, by contrast, relies on the actual reader to fill in the blanks of what gets marked as un-said" (51). Although she relates it more directly to the creation of subjectivity and consciousness, Warhol's exploration of these narrative refusals can be applied to the gaps that arise between the chronological events of the story and the analeptic and proleptic ways of telling that story. Narrative refusals are also key ways that the implied author invites the reader to take on the role of closing the gap, or uniting the separation between story and discourse.

The tensions of chronology and their effect on the shape of the narrative have consequences for the genre to which *Daniel Deronda* has been assigned. Sarah Gates links these tensions with the form of realism they create:

The desire for closure created by this format is for a revelation of “the true beginning”—the transcendent *origin* that can give shape and meaning to this otherwise “unceasing journey”—rather than for the consummation of a transcendent *marriage*...Stripped of transcendence, it is replaced as closure by the finding or making of a “true beginning”: Daniel’s setting out for the East to found a Jewish nation. (701)

This attention to beginnings creates the first series of indications “that the realism in *Daniel Deronda* will be woven as much from strands of epic as from those of romance” (701). Robin Riley Fast remarks that *Daniel Deronda* may encourage false expectations on the part of the reader but these are quickly qualified and “the movement of the plot remains a straight progress through repeatedly reinforced foreshadowings to their ultimate, expected confirmation” (203). While Fast explores the plot events and their symbolic and thematic anticipations as predictable, I disagree that the same can be said of the choices of temporal ordering. However, what both Gates and Fast demonstrate well is the problematics of genre in *Daniel Deronda* and to what extent realism is limited in its application to the novel.

Realism continues to depend on the reader as the element that gives closure to the fiction and unity to the separate narrative strands. Alex Woloch explains that the narrative structure in *Daniel Deronda* “confirms Gwendolen’s perspective” by using the affair of the necklace as the event that receives emphasis due to the:

astounding temporal organization of the novel, which snakes back twice towards its own beginning, each time newly revealed as a middle. In this way the famous commitment of *Daniel Deronda* to “set[ting] off *in media res*” (3; ch. 1) is also a way to hold the reader within the self-enclosed grip of the narrative structure, where the tensions between gain and loss, exclusion and inclusion, and the daring confusion of egotism and sympathy continue to reverberate. (176)

The link between readers and realism is a problematic one. Debra Gettelman links realism with Eliot's desire to control her readers' imaginations. Although Eliot wishes to cultivate active imaginations in her readers so that they would be more disposed to sympathy, this over-imagining posed problems for how readers, usually incorrectly, predicted the next series of events. Readers naturally had their own preferences for the direction the narrative would take. Gettelman argues that:

George Eliot comes to define realist fiction as relying on the author's discipline over the reader's unruly imagination. On the one hand, the private imagining that takes place in the reader's mind proves crucial to the deepest ambitions of Eliot's fiction. On the other hand, as her readers demonstrated, wayward wish-fulfillment actually hinders reading. (26)

The goal of using her fiction to cultivate a sympathetic response in her readers' minds is very much linked to Eliot's desire but inability to control those imaginative workings. While her readers demanded a happy ending through a traditional marriage between Deronda and Gwendolen, Eliot attempted to forestall her readers' quick jump to conclusions.

Because the nature of serial publishing provided a month for readers to discuss the latest events of the novel and the possibilities of the developments of the plot, there was considerable speculation about what the next installment of *Daniel Deronda* would bring. On March 4, 1876, a reviewer in the *Examiner* remarked:

Opinions during the last month have been much divided as to what she intends to make of her heroine; bets have been freely laid, and if the gifted authoress were open to secret negotiations, she might add indefinitely to the profits, if not to the artistic unity, of her work, by consenting to accept suggestions from interested parties. (265)

Eliot reacted to this speculation in an April 18, 1876 letter to John Blackwood:

People in their eagerness about my characters are quite angry, it appears, when their own expectations are not fulfilled—angry, for example, that Gwendolen accepts Grandcourt etc. etc. One reader is sure that Mirah is going to die very soon and I suppose will be disgusted at her remaining alive. Such are the reproaches to which I make myself liable. (Haight *Letters* 241)

On May 18, 1876, John Blackwood passed on Eliot's sentiments to William Blackwood:

She remarked that it was hard upon her that people should be angry with her for not doing what they expected with her characters, and if people were no wiser in their speculations about more serious subjects such as theories of creation and the world than they were about the characters one poor woman was creating it did not say much for human wisdom. These are not her exact words but the meaning was how vain and foolish was the wisdom of the wise with their dogmas about what they could not know. (Haight *Letters* 253-254)

The mixed responses to the actual ending and attempts to rewrite the novel (an anonymous sequel was written titled: "Gwendolen: A Sequel To George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*") demonstrate that for all of Eliot's ethical concerns and formal manifestations of craft, the ambiguity of the narrative distanced her audience from both the aesthetic and ethical goals of her final novel.

Daniel Deronda begins ambiguously: "Was she beautiful or not beautiful? and what was the secret of form or expression which gave the dynamic quality to her glance?...She who raised these questions in Daniel Deronda's mind was occupied in gambling" (3). The voice and focalization of this passage are unclear. Is the narrator speaking, or are we hearing Deronda's voice? Is the narrator seeing this unnamed woman, or Deronda?

This ambiguity initiates a tension in the discourse of the novel. Without knowing the characters or the narrator, it is impossible to differentiate between Deronda and the narrator, an overlap that continues throughout the novel, and one that will pose problems for Eliot in her attempts to cultivate sympathy in her readers. At the same time, the opening initiates an instability. Who is this woman, who is Deronda, what is their relationship (if any), and why is the discourse focused on the two of them? Readers' engagement with this progression creates a dynamic that engages them in the process of dealing with the complexity of the telling. Woloch explains:

An incipient sense of self-consciousness is almost unavoidable: Eliot's opening is conspicuously experimental, unfolding only in contrast to the reader's normative expectations of how a novel starts. Reading can subtly split in this circumstance, catalyzing a double awareness of both story and discourse, mutually implicated with one another but not sealed securely together. (166)

And yet, just as the reader is warming to the ambiguity, the narrator begins a flashback in chapter three to a year earlier, which seems to refocus attention on Gwendolen exclusively. Deronda is pushed to the background until halfway through Book II. The narrator begins:

Offendene had been chosen as her mamma's home simply for its nearness to Pennicote Rectory, and it was only the year before that Mrs. Davilow, Gwendolen, and her four half-sisters (the governess and the maid following in another vehicle) had been driven along the avenue for the first time on a late October afternoon when the rooks were cawing loudly above them, and the yellow elm leaves were whirling. (16)

This entry into Gwendolen's history continues for the next two books and provides the build up of events that caused her to flee to Leubronn. Eliot also positions this moment within a chronological history. By noting specifically the month that Gwendolen moved to Offendene (October), the

narrator creates a chronological structure to the order of events and thus a factual order to what happened.

The reference to a real history, or an actual chronology of events, occurs many times throughout the novel. For example, the opening sequence of the novel notes, “It was near four o’clock on a September day” (3) so we know at this point that the events preceding Leubronn occurred throughout the year previously. These overt moments of temporal and historical contextualizing match turning points of the plot. “It was an exquisite January morning” (55) begins the sequence of Gwendolen and Rex’s failed hunting expedition. “Eight months after the arrival of the family at Offendene, that is to say in the end of the following June, a rumour was spread in the neighbourhood which to many persons was matter of exciting interest” (75), refers to Grandcourt’s arrival in the neighborhood. “No wonder she enjoyed her existence on that July day” (84) refers to Gwendolen at the Brackenshaw archery party. The narrator creates an overlap of chronology by putting Deronda’s rescue of Mirah at the same time as Gwendolen’s archery party: “On a fine evening near the end of July, Deronda was rowing himself on the Thames” (157). Deronda meets Gwendolen in Diplow during her engagement in November: “In the agreeable sombreness of the grey November afternoon, with a long stratum of yellow light in the west, Gwendolen was returning with the company from Diplow” (283). As can be seen, Eliot painstakingly noted the actual seasons and months in which the events took place, often referring to the months when an event of larger magnitude occurred, and yet narrates the order of events outside of that chronology. As Graham Handley says in the appendix to *Daniel Deronda*:

The emphases in the chronology have a dual function. They act as a unifying device, underlining parallels and contrast of situation in each of the sections sharing a common time: they also connect the small personal world of fictional experience with the greater world of solid historical fact, thus establishing a ‘separateness with communication.’ (Eliot 725)

This separateness with communication is a problematic positioning of chronological events with reported events. But it also relates to the separate Gwendolen and Jewish plots. Whether Eliot is successful in maintaining “communication” in their separation will be seen.

This extended sequence of analepsis of Gwendolen’s childhood, initial meeting of Grandcourt, and flight to Leubronn concludes with Deronda’s childhood and recent history of his travels throughout Europe, including Leubronn. The narrator says, “This was the history of Deronda, so far as he knew it, up to the time of that visit to Leubronn in which he saw Gwendolen Harleth at the gaming-table” (193). With that statement, we return to events in real time as Gwendolen returns to Offendene after receiving news of her family’s fall into poverty. Because the sequence of the discourse quickly departs from Deronda’s story to Gwendolen’s, and follows her story for the next two and a half books with only a brief tangent into Deronda’s rescue of Mirah, the initial trajectory of the narrative seems to head in a completely different direction from the end when the two plots of Gwendolen and Mordecai are tied together. Michael Wolff says:

Simply noting that, as the stories progress, the plots of *Middlemarch* converge whereas those in *Daniel Deronda* diverge may not sound like much, but the illumination lies in the details and in the different sort of moral and compositional struggle that George Eliot was undertaking in her last novel. (274)

Part of what Wolff calls Eliot’s “moral struggle” was her goal of increasing sympathy for the Jewish people among her English readership. In an October 29, 1876 letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe she remarked:

I...felt urged to treat Jews with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to... There is nothing I should care more to do, if it were possible, than to rouse the imagination of men and women to a vision of human claims in those races of their fellow-men who most differ from them in customs and beliefs. But towards the Hebrews we western people who have been

reared in Christianity, have a peculiar debt and, whether we acknowledge it or not, a peculiar thoroughness of fellowship in religious and moral sentiment. (Haight *Letters* 301-302)

However, the challenges of the attention to “the carefully drawn Jewish scenes, which are less interesting to the careless reader” (762), as a reviewer from the *Athenaeum* noted on June 3, 1876, or those reading for pleasure, made such aims difficult to fulfil. In her attempts to cultivate a reaction of fellow feeling between her readers and the Jewish community, Eliot’s ethical concerns, and the critical reaction they sparked, lead us to ask whether the author’s ethical concerns override her aesthetic concerns.

Publication and Critical Reception

The publication method of *Daniel Deronda* is a helpful way of exploring her readers’ reactions to the plot events but also the relationship between the two main stories of the novel. Although Eliot published *Daniel Deronda* in eight monthly installments, she wrote well ahead of the individual publication dates of each installment. Eliot decided to publish *Daniel Deronda* in 8 monthly parts in October 1875, and had finished writing Book V in December 1875. When Book I was published in February 1876, Eliot was completing Book VI. She finished writing in June 1876, when Book V was published. Because Eliot had written in advance, the serialization of *Daniel Deronda* avoided the pressure of deadlines that Gaskell and Dickens faced when writing *North and South* and *Our Mutual Friend*. However, the decisions regarding what to include in each installment were similar among the authors. Eliot worried about the length of the early installments. The original arrangement ended Book I after chapter 11 (the published version ends after chapter 10), and Book II after chapter 22 (the published version ends after chapter 18). While Eliot focused on the length of the individual installments and the volume length the two books would combine to form, and John Blackwood left the structure up to Eliot’s judgment, in the end, George Lewes decided the division of each part. He opted to close Book II at chapter 18 (after Deronda leaves Mirah with the Meyricks), and transfer the final few pages of

Deronda's thoughts about the adventure of finding Mirah onto a new chapter, and a new book. Lewes defended this choice in a November 18, 1875 letter to John Blackwood, stating:

At each close there is a strong *expectation* excited—the best of all closes. The end of the scene in Mrs. Meyrick's moves me so that I can't patiently read the few pages which follow—they come as anticlimax but would open volume 2 [Book III] quite pleasantly. (Haight *Letters* 189)

Eliot and Lewes were well aware of the conventions of serialization and this decision to transfer *Deronda* to the next book depended on readers recognizing the technique of narrative summary “as a familiar “warm-up” before the drama resumes—a technique used by other serial writers, but especially favored by Eliot in the openings of most *Middlemarch* installments” (Martin 221).

Eliot's choice to publish *Daniel Deronda* in monthly installments brought both positive and negative critical reactions throughout the publication process and at the end. Although *Deronda* enjoyed greater financial success than *Middlemarch*, on April 12, 1876, Eliot wrote in her journal that she was worried about “the feeling of the public as the story advances... The Jewish element seems to me likely to satisfy nobody” (Haight *Letters* 238). A storm of negative reviews focused on the clumsy structure of the novel, reflecting the sense that readers were unprepared for the turn of events. This “surprise factor” asks whether Eliot cued her readers enough to lead them in a certain direction with their expectations. The interaction between reader expectations and the progression of the novel relies heavily on the ordering of events which provides a focal point for the attention of the reader. A review from the *Athenaeum* comments on the April publication of Book III:

As for the clumsiness of construction which we allege: in the First Book we had the visit of the heroine to the German gaming-place; we were then carried unaccountably back to earlier scenes: in the

Second Book, it will be remembered that Gwendolen's history was brought up to the German times; that a page of laboured explanation was there given, and then that we were carried past them. In this Third Book, Deronda's history, in turn, is taken from the earlier days and brought, first up to, and then past, the German gaming-scene. (461)

On January 29, 1876, upon reviewing the first installment, a critic from the *Athenaeum* remarked that "publication by parts...is wholly unsatisfactory as applied to *Daniel Deronda*" (160). Although a reviewer from the *Examiner* wrote on March 4, 1876 that publication in parts gave the advantage of "ample time thus afforded for the study and free social discussion of the characters, for speculation as to their unrevealed past and their unreachd future" (265), a review in the *Athenaeum* on the same day said, "If "*Daniel Deronda*" should at the last prove to be a novel worthy of its author, she will have only herself to blame for having by an unwise publication in parts made it, up to the present at all events, unpopular with her admirers" (327).

Readers who expected an experience similar to the one offered in *Middlemarch* were to be sorely disappointed as Eliot's final novel drastically departed from the safe and familiar "picture of English life" that it promised to give without clear textual indications as to the new direction of the narrative. By pushing Deronda into the margins until Book II and Mordecai until Book V, Eliot focuses the reader's sympathy on Gwendolen. After the final installment was published, Eliot faced a stark division in reaction. The general public loved the Gwendolen half of the novel and rejected the Jewish half, whereas eminent Jewish theologians and scholars wrote reviews of praise for how realistic the Jewish part of the novel was. F.R. Leavis criticized the "two plots" of *Daniel Deronda*; he called the good part of the novel *Gwendolen Harleth* and "as for the bad part, there is nothing to do but cut it away" (122). Eliot responded to this critical reaction to "cut the book into scraps and talk of nothing in it but Gwendolen" by stating in an October 2, 1876 letter to Mme. Eugene Bodichon, "I meant everything in the book to be related to everything else there" (Haight *Letters* 290). Eliot's desire to "widen the English vision...and let in a little

conscience and refinement” was met with “repugnance or else indifference...and of some hostile as well as adverse reviewing” (Haight *Letters* 304, 314). Blackwood warned Eliot on September 7, 1876 that “it is almost impossible to make a strong Jewish element popular in this country and it was perfectly marvellous to see how in your transitions you kept your public together. Anti-Jews grumbled but went on” (Haight *Letters* 281-282). Dr. Hermann Adler, the Chief Rabbi in London, wrote an extensive review in the *Jewish Messenger* on October 29, 1876 which celebrated the realism of Mordecai. George Lewes wrote to Blackwood, “The Jews seem to be very grateful for *Deronda*—and will perhaps make up for the deadness of so many Christians to that part of the book which does not directly concern Gwendolen” (Haight *Letters* 303). Although Blackwood assured Eliot on November 5, 1876 that “the discussion [of *Daniel Deronda*] would not exist if the book were not felt and doing its work even among those who most dissent” (Haight *Letters* 305), George Lewes acknowledged in a February 1877 letter to Edward Dowden that Eliot was “pained to find many dear friends and some of her most *devoted* readers, utterly dead to all the Jewish part” (Haight *Letters* 336).

Deronda, the supposed hinge between the two plots, could not garner enough sympathy to win readers to his story. By creating a sympathetic character in *Deronda*, as she had with Dorothea in *Middlemarch*, Eliot could have salvaged her disillusioned readers but reactions to the principal character were hostile. Most reviewers commented on *Deronda*’s lack of mimetic appeal which diminished any reaction of sympathy from readers. In a September 9, 1876 review for the *Academy*, George Saintsbury wrote:

The blameless young man of faultless feature who clutches his coat-collar continually...who never does a wicked thing, and never says one that is not priggish—is a person so intolerably dreadful that we not only dislike, but refuse to admit him as possible...The dull man may fairly retort, ‘If you are a great novelist, *make* me believe in your characters.’ (253)

Saintsbury also reacted to the overt narrator's incessant historicizing about each character:

No one can read *Daniel Deronda* without perceiving and regretting the singular way in which the characters are incessantly pushed back in order that the author may talk about them and about everything in heaven and earth while the action stands still. Very sparingly used this practice is not ineffective, but the unsparing use of it is certainly bad, especially when we consider in what kind of language these parabases or excursus are expressed. (253)

On the same day, a review in the *Spectator* also commented on the problems of characterization that *Deronda* presented:

The hero himself is laboured....So much pain has been expended on *studying* rather than on *painting* him, that throughout (say) three-quarters of the story, we are rather being prepared to make acquaintance with *Deronda* than actually making acquaintance with him. (1131)

Readers had to suffer through being perpetually told *about* the characters, and never actually seeing the characters live.

Sympathy vs Empathy

On a formal level, Eliot could have made *Deronda* much more dynamic and iridescent, like *Gwendolen*, by showing him in process, rather than at the end of his learned sympathy. Barbara Hardy remarks, "His tragic lesson is learnt too early—before the novel begins—and retailed to the reader only in exposition, and...he is only shown in actions and relationships which have a strict relevance to the moral theme" (110). Because *Deronda's* moral growth occurs before the events of the novel, the reader fails to understand *Deronda's* motivations or actions, and therefore refuses to accept the part he plays among the instabilities on a character level. Hardy argues that Eliot anticipated the reader's difficulties with

accepting Deronda as a realistic character and so she uses other characters' dialogue about Deronda to acknowledge their shared feeling. For example, Hans Meyrick comments "that for any danger of rivalry or jealousy in relation to Mirah, Deronda was as much out of the question as the angel Gabriel" (397-398). The narrator also shows Deronda's feelings of indignation at always being supposed to be above the normal feelings of others. After Deronda confronts Hans, who has used Mirah as a model for his paintings:

He was conscious of that peculiar irritation which will sometimes befall the man whom others are inclined to trust as a mentor—the irritation of perceiving that he is supposed to be entirely off the same plane of desire and temptation as those who confess to him. (397)

Later, when the Meyrick sisters compare Deronda to the Buddha who gives himself to the tigress to save her from starving because he "thought so much of others [he] hardly wanted anything for [himself]"(399), Deronda again reacts with impatience at the sacrificial perfection that is attributed to himself. The Meyricks' devotion to Deronda stems from "all the virtues that Hans had reported of him." Hence Kate burns a pastille before his portrait, Mab carries his signature in a black-silk bag around her neck to keep off the cramp, and Amy says the multiplication-table in his name (191). This passage takes on further irony because it opposes the Meyricks' religious tradition of a mixture of Scotch and French Calvinism (317) which prohibits any form of icons or veneration of saints.

The only one who comes to Deronda's defense against this supposed perfection is Deronda himself, but his annoyance at his own virtues is not supported by the delineation in the narrative of any real imperfections. Deronda's overarching sympathy for every character, and his ability to perceive as each one does, seems to demonstrate what Eliot desired for her readers, and yet does not offer an attractive picture of embodied perspective-taking. Deronda's one flaw is that his sympathy is not selective enough. He places no boundaries on his feelings for the other characters, a fact which compromises his own principles. Deronda has cultivated the

capacity to think and see as others do. Early in his life, he tells Sir Hugo, “I want to be an Englishman, but I want to understand other points of view” (155). Sir Hugo’s response is comical but insightful:

But, for God’s sake, keep an English cut, and don’t become indifferent to bad tobacco! And—my dear boy—it is good to be unselfish and generous; but don’t carry that too far. It will not do to give yourself to be melted down for the benefit of the tallow-trade; you must know where to find yourself. (156)

Sir Hugo acknowledges the real possibility that Deronda’s sympathies will stretch too far. After Deronda discovers that he is Jewish, Sir Hugo remarks, “For God’s sake, don’t go into any eccentricities!... You have a passion for people who are pelted, Dan. I’m sorry for them too; but so far as company goes, it’s a bad ground of selection... I hope you are not going to set a dead Jew above a living Christian” (615). Sir Hugo’s comments offer a reflection of readerly opinion regarding Deronda’s decisions. While good-hearted and considerate, Sir Hugo’s ideals are much lower, and his sympathy is limited to the loyalty of family ties. The reflection of a selective sympathy is juxtaposed to Deronda’s all-encompassing feeling. Without a check on his ability to imagine how things affect other people, Deronda will lose his very self—alluding back to the image of the Buddha consumed by the tigress.

When Deronda tells Sir Hugo of his recent visit to Diplow where he saw Gwendolen, the narrator again offers an explanation for Deronda’s many-sided sympathy which paralyzes him rather than spurs him into action:

His early-wakened sensibility and reflectiveness had developed into a many-sided sympathy, which threatened to hinder any persistent course of action... His imagination had so wrought itself to the habit of seeing things as they probably appeared to others, that a strong partisanship, unless it were against an immediate oppression, had become an insincerity for him. His plenteous, flexible sympathy had

ended by falling into one current with that reflective analysis which tends to neutralize sympathy. (307)

The narrator's early acknowledgement of Deronda's over-extended sympathy begins an exploration of the dangers of "a reflectiveness that threatened to nullify all differences" (308). As Rebecca Mitchell explores in *Victorian Lessons in Empathy and Difference* (2011), the Victorian understanding of sympathy sought for a recognition and acceptance of alterity, not a pursuit of identification. This understanding of sympathy respects the difference of the other without seeking after the "subjection of self" that both Princess Halm-Eberstein and Gwendolen fear.

As Thomas Albrecht argues, Deronda's moral growth occurs as he directs his sympathy from his boundless, cosmopolitan feeling to a partial and particularized response (391). As Deronda finally makes the decision to accept his Jewish identity and acknowledge his love for Mirah, the narrator says:

This new state of decision wrought on Deronda with a force which surprised even himself. There was a release of all the energy which had long been spent in self-checking and suppression because of doubtful conditions...his judgment no longer wandering in the mazes of impartial sympathy, but choosing, with that noble partiality which is man's best strength, the closer fellowship that makes sympathy practical—exchanging that bird's eye reasonableness which soars to avoid preference and loses all sense of quality, for the generous reasonableness of drawing shoulder to shoulder with men of like inheritance. (638)

Deronda's ability to finally particularize his unbounded sympathy into a specific response demonstrates his moral growth, both in himself, and as apart from the narrator.

As Albrecht notes, the one difference of understanding that opens between Deronda and the narrator is their understanding of and reaction to the Princess Halm Eberstein. He states:

Daniel simply overlooks his mother's "tones and her wonderful face," which to the narrator are signs of her emotional—and thus moral—deadness. His consciousness is wholly taken up by his eagerness to hear what she will tell him about herself and by his compassion for the suffering and inner conflict he intuits from her account. So even as the passage thus calls attention once again to Daniel's empathy, it also suggests the narrowness of its scope. It does this by revealing Daniel's presumption of Leonora's intelligibility, his tendency to overlook differences in the interest of a presumed underlying connection with her. (405)

Deronda's inability to perceive his mother's difference from himself is his fundamental flaw. Because he has tried to cultivate wide sensibilities throughout his life, Deronda has refused to accept that difference in sensibility, history, and emotion is real and can be shared; that to sympathize, or feel with another, he does not need to take on or live through a different set of experiences.

Eliot's desire to instill in her readers a "separateness with communication" is the way she blends the two separate plots and brings about Deronda's ethical growth. This revelation of the need for distance in moments of shared feeling offers an interesting answer to our contemporary attention to the merits of empathy as opposed to sympathy. Deronda's growth is noted by his comment to the Princess who asks him whether he will turn himself into a Jew like his grandfather. He replies:

That is impossible. The effect of my education can never be done away with. The Christian sympathies in which my mind was reared can never die out of me...But I consider it my duty—it is the impulse of my feeling—to identify myself, as far as possible, with my hereditary people, and if I can see any work to be done for them that I can give my soul and hand to, I shall choose to do it. (566)

And so, Deronda does learn to navigate the complexities of his own emotional response by maintaining the closeness of love with the distance of respect in his subsequent actions. Deronda's moral growth into a partial sympathy that preserves distance from the one with whom he sympathizes is modelled by the narrator who draws the reader in through engaging techniques, only to extend her attention outwards, contextualizing one character's experience within larger human nature.

Because Deronda's character is already formed, Gwendolen and her story become the salient point for the novel. Part of this is the relatability of her story; the other part is that the narrator and Gwendolen are different from each other, and Gwendolen is given the space to reveal her egoism while also inviting sympathy at the same time. By maintaining the attention on Gwendolen with frequent inside views, and frontloading the order of her story, Eliot reveals her own bias as to cultivating sympathy for Gwendolen. Eliot uses Deronda as the hinge on which the separate stories of Gwendolen and Mordecai turn, but his sympathetic appeal is far weaker than Gwendolen's due to the ways in which the narrator reports his thoughts and actions, and at what point of time in the order of events. The instabilities of relationships between characters invite readerly judgments in reaction to the interactions of those characters. We rarely see two characters positioned against each other and interacting with each other with all the epistemological and mimetic concerns this would raise. Unlike Gaskell's characters, Eliot's characters are displayed for the audience, not for their effect on each other: "The characters...are usually unaware of the significance of the images they use. They are not part of the characters' deliberate musing and commentary but part of an elaborate chain which binds character, unknowingly, with character" (Hardy 218). At times, characters' thoughts *about* each other are revealed to the audience, but this information is always for the reader, not another character. This author-reader irony at the character's expense sets up an active reading process.

This positioning of character also draws on voice and focalization. Frequently the narrator appears to switch to the voice of a character through free indirect discourse which gives the impression of authority and independence of the character. George Levine comments that:

Free indirect discourse is...extremely good at creating the illusion that consciousness is being rendered without authorial intervention, and that the language is the strictest representation...of the workings of a real character's mind. (*How to Read the Victorian Novel* 63)

Free indirect discourse creates a space for a character's ethos to be revealed, especially as separate from the narrator, and invites the reader to participate in decoding that ethos. Levine continues:

Free indirect style encourages the reader to be an active participant in the narrative rather than a passive receiver of "fact" and judgments, and thus further gives the sense that the narration is like life, in which there are no omniscient narrators to help us decide what to think about what we experience. (63)

Such a tension invites readerly engagement in the decoding of what Liesbeth Korthals Altes describes as "ethos attribution" of characters and the deliberation of judgment and evaluation. However, the narrator's use of free indirect discourse is only an illusion of narratorial or authorial absence. Therefore, what the characters think, although narrated in their own voices, is still under the control of the narrator.

This situation of narratorial control poses problems for the multiperspectivism the narrator tries to bring about in the reader. Deronda's thoughts as revealed through free indirect discourse do not sound very different from the narrator's voice. In the following passage, Deronda reflects about what he knows of Gwendolen. Although the passage is placed in quotation marks, it is an instance of free indirect discourse:

I fancy there are some natures one could see growing or degenerating every day, if one watched them... I'm afraid she married [Grandcourt] out of ambition—to escape poverty. But why did she run out of his way at first? The poverty came after, though. Poor thing! She may have been urged into it. How can one feel

anything else than pity for a young creature like that—full of unused life—ignorantly rash—hanging all her blind expectations on that remnant of a human being! (345-346)

Deronda asks the same questions and conjures up the same sympathy that the narrator does when dealing with Gwendolen. Although free indirect discourse should create a sense of a real shift to the character's voice, Deronda's voice continues to sound like that of the narrator. The overlap between them causes the reader to react to Deronda in the same way Gwendolen does after her "confession" to him: "[His words] widened his spiritual distance from her, and she felt it more difficult to speak" (595) and "the distance between them was too great" (601). Because the narrator's voice is not so different from Deronda's, the sympathy with which Deronda approaches the other characters is distancing rather than inviting for readers. This similarity between Deronda and the narrator is problematic for Eliot's attempt at cultivating perspectivity in her readers. However, if we were to see Deronda as the character who most shares the narrator's value of multiperspectivism, then their close alliance is a positive sign that Deronda has achieved what the narrator wishes to cultivate in her readers.

Alternatively, Gwendolen's thoughts are very different from those of the narrator and when they are reported through free indirect discourse, her singularity stands out. As she reflects on whether or not to accept Grandcourt's imminent proposal, she thinks:

All the while there was a busy undercurrent in her, like the thought of a man who keeps up a dialogue while he is considering how he can slip away. Why should she not let him come? It bound her to nothing. He had been to Leubronn after her: of course he meant a direct unmistakable renewal of the suit which before had been only implied. What then? She could reject him. Why was she to deny herself the freedom of doing this—which she would like to do?
(248)

Gwendolen's egoism and grasping for power are realistic, as are the quick tempo and constantly changing focus of her thoughts. Because Gwendolen's thoughts are believable, she becomes sympathetic through her familiarity rather than through her values. A reviewer for the *Academy* on September 9, 1876 reacted to her as "an overwhelming success: and the minutest and least friendly examination will hardly discover a false note or a dropped stitch" (253). On September 16, 1876, a critic in *Saturday Review* noted, "In family circles Gwendolen has been as much the heroine—if we may so term the central and most prominent female figure—as if there were no Mirah" (357). Others, such as the *Examiner*, took Gwendolen's character further, proclaiming her on September 2, 1876 as a moral example to "girls more or less like Gwendolen among George Eliot's readers, and the exposure of her shallow frivolous aims is meant to make them ashamed of themselves, and to lift them into a higher conception of their duties and destinies" (994). One female reader even wrote to Eliot to thank her for helping her avoid a disastrous marriage after reading Gwendolen's story. Readers' attention to Gwendolen and her fate dominated the general conversation surrounding each monthly installment.

Compared to Deronda, Gwendolen is a realistic character, with motivations and reactions that invite understanding and sympathy from the reader. This attitude towards Gwendolen is frequently modelled by the narrator who asks the reader to understand her through instances of engaging narration. The narrator often states "poor Gwendolen" or transitions from a passage of psycho-narration to a sentence of "we" narration that draws her audience into a commonality with Gwendolen's predicament. Dorothea Barrett writes, "[Gwendolen's] vanity and selfishness are treated with a narratorial gentleness quite at variance with the apparent narratorial aversion to Hetty and Rosamond" (159). Thus, the events that make up Gwendolen's struggle with and against Grandcourt, and with and against herself, are appeals to the reader's sympathy.

Seven weeks into her marriage, Gwendolen's desire to dominate has vanished: "She had a native love of homage, and belief in her own power; but no cold artifice for the sake of enslaving. And the poor thing's belief in her power, with her other dreams before marriage, had often to be thrust

aside now” (354). Grandcourt’s subtle cruelty has transformed Gwendolen’s confidence into dull acceptance of her suffering: “Gwendolen, indeed, with all that gnawing trouble in her consciousness, had hardly for a moment dropped the sense that it was her part to bear herself with dignity, and appear what is called happy” (364). Thus, while Gwendolen berates herself for her choice to marry Grandcourt, knowing that another woman has a claim on him, the narrator garners sympathy for her situation.

Klesmer’s visit to Gwendolen also invites this sympathy. As one of the few characters who can see through the others and reject what society thinks, Klesmer carries an authority that other characters merely grasp after. He tells Gwendolen:

You are a beautiful young lady—you have been brought up in ease—you have done what you would—you have not said to yourself, ‘I must know this exactly,’ ‘I must understand this exactly,’ ‘I must do this exactly’...In sum, you have not been called upon to be anything but a charming young lady, whom it is an impoliteness to find fault with. (216)

In delineating these “three terrible *musts*,” Klesmer orients Gwendolen away from homage and admiration, and towards excellence and striving. In this way, Klesmer reflects the narrator’s role of cultivating multiperspectivism and draws the reader’s attention to a character’s growth from egoism to sympathy.

Narrative Power and Narrative Silence

Because the narrator frequently comments or tells her characters’ stories through psycho-narration, when characters are given space to recount their own history without commentary from the narrator, the progression of the novel, ethos of characters, and readerly expectations change. There are four instances of a character narrating his or her own history: Mirah’s long monologue recounting her own history, Gwendolen’s confession to Deronda of the history of her guilt and dread leading up to the drowning of Grandcourt, Mordecai’s long discourse in the club where he elucidates his

ideals for Zionism, thus building his own history, and the Princess Halm-Eberstein's revelation of Deronda's ancestral history. These examples of characters narrating their own history are significant because, except for Gwendolen, all of them are Jewish and their histories focus the reader's attention to the theme of identity. Through the absence or silence of the narrator, Eliot offers extensive inside views of the characters who would be unfamiliar to her readers in order to invite her readers' sympathy in response to their new knowledge. Because the narrator retreats from telling the stories of these characters, the reader is the one to interpret and evaluate the character's ethos and perspective. While all four narrate their histories through dialogue, only Mirah's story is relayed without interruption by the listener or by the narrator.

Mirah is the first to tell her story. In conversation with Mrs. Meyrick, Mirah provides a monologue on her upbringing with very little commentary by the narrator. The narrator's coyness is reflected by Mrs. Meyrick's observation that "this quiet might be the best invitation to speech on the part of her companion, and [she] chose not to disturb it by remark" (179). As Mirah warms to her story, she repeats, "I must tell you—I must tell you everything" (180). Gwendolen repeats this phrase in her confession to Deronda: "I will tell you everything as God knows it. I will tell you no falsehood; I will tell you the exact truth" (593). The Princess Halm-Eberstein also insists on telling the truth in her history: "I will confess it all, now that I have come up to it...I shall have told you everything" (545). After very few promptings by Mrs. Meyrick to "Go on, go on: tell me all" (184), Mirah speaks uninterruptedly for six pages. As George Levine says, "For the realist, there is a lot at stake in getting it right, in telling the "truth," and it is no accident that realism tended to be the dominant narrative mode of a Victorian England in which perhaps the greatest of all virtues...was truth-telling" (*Realism, Ethics and Secularism* 188). The significance of Mirah as the narrator of her own story needs to be understood in the characterization of her as the quiet, "non-heroine" of *Daniel Deronda*. As the first Jew that is presented in the novel, Mirah won over her readers with her tale "full of pathos." Additionally, by focusing on the premium of truth, the narrator gives an insight into the female character whose actions do not

derive from confused or hidden motives, as Gwendolen's do, or from a background of acting, as the Princess's do.

However, Mordecai's long discourse not of his personal history, but of the history and identity of the Jewish people is told in a different way, and was received in a different manner. In Book VI, as Mordecai and Deronda venture towards the *Hand and Banner*, Mordecai comments, "I have gone when I could, for there are other men of my race who come, and sometimes I have broken silence" (445). The significance of silence and its relation to truth-telling and narration is repeated later in his conversation: "Is it not truth I speak?" (450). Mordecai's long monologue in the philosopher's club is a conversation among several men rather than told to one listener as Mirah's is. But Mordecai's personal history is caught up with the history of his forefathers and so his speech reflects a larger cultural memory than do the other three. Mordecai also insists on truth: "Let their history be known and examined" (453) which matches the narrator's insistence on the history of individual characters: "This was the history of Deronda, so far as he knew it" (193). In this case the narrator could rephrase her sentence to say, *This was the history of Deronda, so far as the narrator knew it*. Throughout *Daniel Deronda* the narrator comments on Deronda's love for and connection to history. "He had been making conjectures about his own history, as he had often made stories about Pericles or Columbus, just to fill up the blanks before they became famous" (142). It is no coincidence that when we meet Deronda as a young boy, he is reading a history book. The parallel here between Mordecai's ideals for the history and identity of his people, and Deronda's constant searching for his personal history creates a fusion of identity. However, the conversation in the *Hand and Banner*, while loved by Eliot's Jewish readers, was alienating to the rest.

The significance of silence and speech is reflected by both the Princess Halm-Eberstein and Gwendolen in their parallel dialogues with Deronda. In her second conversation with Deronda, the princess comments, "I think I have told you everything that could be demanded of me" (565). The narrator adds to this, "The fact was, she had said to herself, 'I have done it all. I have confessed all. I will not go through it again. I will save

myself from agitation.’ And she was acting out that theme” (566).

Deronda’s response is to feel “himself under the ban of silence” (566).

Gwendolen’s use of speech and silence is similar, but presented in a different way stylistically. She asks Deronda who she is to tell of her crime (591). Deronda, who had urged his mother to speak, tells Gwendolen repeatedly to hush, to quiet herself (587), to say no more (597). As Gwendolen tells him what occurred throughout her marriage and on the boat, her speech is frequently interrupted with dashes:

Getting wicked was misery—being shut out for ever from knowing what you—what better lives were. That had always been coming back to me in the midst of bad thoughts—it came back to me then—but yet with a despair—a feeling that it was no use—evil wishes were too strong...till, in the midst of them—I don’t know how it was—he was turning the sail—there was a gust—he was struck—I know nothing—I only know that I saw my wish outside me. (596)

This sequence of hurried speech is interrupted by moments of: “She was silent a moment or two” (592), “There was silence” (593), “She unconsciously left intervals in her retrospect, not clearly distinguishing between what she said and what she had only an inward vision of” (594), “After a little silence” (594), “She was kept silent” (595), and “She sank into silence” (596). The significance of speech and silence is brought to a point when Gwendolen notes, “The dread of his leaving her [brought] back her power of speech” (595).

For Eliot, the power of speech is an ethical concern in *Daniel Deronda*. Choosing who to give a voice to, and whose voice to comment on, the narrator demonstrates the ethical power of speech. To enter the perspective of another, both readers and characters must enter the thoughts of another which by default must be narrated through speech, even though readers and characters can also observe thoughts through actions. The narration of the individual histories of these characters offers an opportunity for the reader to be exposed to various perspectives. Additionally, the

narrative silences ask the reader to work to reconstruct what is not revealed from those thoughts.

Conclusion

This interaction between reader and text brings us back to the question of genre. Barbara Hardy describes *Daniel Deronda* as “an experiment in realism” due to its open ending (153). Caroline Levine suggests that:

to assume that realism depends on a naïve characterological coherence would be to miss what I think is at the heart of Eliot’s realism, which is the potential to change one’s mind. Surprises are the moments in her fiction when character is opened up to transformation. If realism is oriented toward otherness, seeking to prompt both sympathy (feeling for another) and knowledge (setting aside projections and conventions to recognize alterity), it must always be working against the repetitions of the imagination, which is constantly spinning its own predictable versions of the world...It would be a mistake to claim that Eliot’s realism strives for consistency of character, or for a settled community of values; it strives, rather, for crises of broken expectation. (“Surprising Realism” 72)

The narrator’s role in cultivating multiperspectivity, acting as historian, and temporal ordering contextualize and nuance the genre of realism. As historian, the narrator becomes part of the genre frame that cues the reader’s expectations for the direction of *Daniel Deronda* as a realist text.

Fundamentally, realist texts are self-conscious and disillusioning; the author knows she is representing rather than presenting reality. Thus Eliot’s overt appeals through her narrator are fully in tune with the aims of realism—not to disguise but to highlight the artifice of fiction—but to do so in a way that the reader is invited to change. The difference between the historian narrator and implied author affects the engagement offered to the reader. The real reader is invited to join two audiences simultaneously: that of the authorial

audience who understands the fabrication of events, and that of the narratee who unquestioningly follows the history. The difference between these two audiences affects the reader's ethical and aesthetic interpretation and evaluation of both the events (the told), and the way they are reported (the telling). The progression of *Daniel Deronda* brings together these textual dynamics of tensions and instabilities and readerly dynamics that follow from those situations. Therefore, how a reader identifies the genre of a work affects his or her expectations and involvement.

Readers were cued to expect a realist text that asked them to enlarge their sympathetic response. But, to understand the expectations of realism, we must break preconceived ideas about the genre. For Eliot, sympathy was the bridge between her narrative technique and the ethical appeal of her work. Eliot's writings about the relationship between author and reader found in "The Natural History of German Life" declare how the narrative technique and ethics work together to arouse and cultivate sympathy in the reader. The author's description of "a picture of human life such as a great artist can give" which avoids generalizations and statistics, but instead appeals to "the raw material of moral sentiment" in the reader is the invitation (Pinney 270-271). The reader's response of "the extension of our sympathies" is dependent upon the craftsmanship of the author but also on the willingness to cultivate these feelings in oneself. As critics have noted, the disagreement over the "two plots" of *Deronda* is fundamentally a disagreement over genre. While the temporal ordering of the novel did not encourage the recognition of a new direction for Eliot's writing, the multiperspectivity cultivated by representing different characters' consciousness through direct speech and inside views into their fictional minds, and the parallel histories of the characters and commentary on the meta-history of the novel, offer a new engagement for readers. This appeal to their sympathy follows Eliot's belief that readers must confront their own limitations of perspective, or prejudice, in order to become ethically aware and open to a new fellow feeling outside of what is familiar. Because Eliot wanted to call her readers' attention to their prejudgments, critical reactions to *Deronda* and the Jewish plot of the novel suggest that Eliot's aesthetics were successful; readers were made uncomfortable because their

expectations were not met. But that lacuna of readerly satisfaction offers the potential for readers to realize their own expectation for the safe, familiar, and pleasing, which is a moment of ethical awareness and, simultaneously, an invitation for transformation. The reaction, then, of her contemporary readers offers more of an analysis of the prejudice of her readers than a judgment of Eliot's craft.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How do fictional narratives invite a response from readers and in what way is this ethical?
2. What are the implications of the interplay between textual and readerly dynamics for the genre of realism?
3. What is the relationship between the ethics of the telling and heterodiegetic (noncharacter) narration?
4. How we can foreground the ethical effects of narratives without veering into empirical methodologies?
5. How can mimetic and synthetic strategies work together to create a more enhanced invitation and reading experience for the reader?

Fiction has the potential to evoke a response from readers that invites not only changes in perspective, deliberation, and judgment but also *self-awareness* of these practices. That is, the invitation to become self-aware of one's practice of perspective, deliberation, and judgment and the invitation to change those same practices are effective in themselves even if they do not lead to specific changes. This self-awareness and self-knowledge is the necessary starting point to understanding how readers read, what preconceived attitudes and ideas they bring to the text, and what cognitive, emotional, intellectual, and ethical practices they engage in in their ordinary lives, both when experiencing fiction and when immersed in real life. Self-awareness, or meta-awareness, is not necessarily something fiction can teach, but fictional narratives can create enough distance so that readers become aware of their cognitive and ethical starting point, and how or whether this changes during and after the reading experience.

As human beings, we make judgments all the time. These judgments are predicated on our perceptions and deliberative practices about people, events, situations, ourselves, etc. By being exposed to the way narrators and characters perceive, deliberate, and judge, readers increase their arsenal of

strategies for these fundamental practices and use of language to describe what they are reading and experiencing. However, they also gain on another front: readers become aware of what they do when in “default” mode.

The choice of three Victorian novels demonstrates the importance of genre for creating a framework of readerly expectation. The novels chosen also subsequently break that framework by altering readers’ expectations for the genre of realism, and their own engagement with the demands of it. In *North and South*, *Our Mutual Friend*, and *Daniel Deronda*, specific textual techniques are used that both immerse the reader, which is an expectation that readers have for engaging with realist fiction, and, *at the same time*, distance the reader. This defamiliarization, however, does not cause a loss of engagement on the part of the reader as long as the reader becomes aware of the benefits of distance: more objective judgment, a more universalized perspective, engagement on the level of intellectual and emotional reaction at the same time, ironic understanding, and a larger payoff due to more involvement in decoding and interpreting. The awareness of the plot and the craft of that plot, the theme and the design of that theme, the characters and narrator and the synthetic nature of those entities creates a fuller response as the reader can respond mimetically to the fiction and synthetically to the metafiction. Fictionality, therefore, is not an escape, but an entry point into being fully engaged in two worlds. Such a crossover respects readers’ abilities to experience and vicariously experience; to think and to engage in metacognition; to be a part of while at the same time be apart from. This ambiguity of response demonstrates the rich experience realism can offer if readers let their guard down to engage but increase their cognitive level of engagement at the same time.

A unique way in which these three novels demonstrate this self-reflexivity is through the ethics of the telling. Each novel employs heterodiegetic (noncharacter) narration. Although much research explores character narration and its connection to unreliability and fallibility, noncharacter narration, because of its closeness to the implied author, actually catches readers by surprise in its use of similar strategies to character narration. By breaking assumptions of omniscience and a direct line to the author, noncharacter narration, through setting up a non-

personalized, and yet fully “in charge” narrator, asks more from its readers, and ultimately offers more in the way of respect, cognitive pleasure, play, and self-reflection.

Because of the focus on narration and textual dynamics, this thesis enters into the gap in conversation regarding how to study the ethical effects of narratives without veering into empirical methodologies. While empirical methodologies are valid and insightful and offer much scope for understanding, they engage with different tools than those of literary analysis, and, therefore, as with any tool, they both do different things and come to different conclusions. On the one hand, by foregrounding the experience of story, we return the discussion to the realm of ethos and the negotiation of values, the role of judgment, and the interplay between key communicative players. On the other, we respect the reader’s experience while also noting that all readers come to a text differently and therefore, readerly dynamics must be understood in relation to the textual experience rather than dictating that experience. The implications of this focus have consequences for the way in which literature is taught in universities today. This research also offers a defense of the humanities in themselves even though they do not produce qualitative or quantitative conclusions that are empirically-driven.

Finally, this thesis has raised awareness of the synthetic strategy of reading *and* writing practices and interpretation. The mimetic and thematic levels receive much attention both from individuals reading and the communal experience of reading in the classroom. By combining approaches, especially the mimetic and synthetic, readers are invited into a different experience of reading. This combined approach highlights the limitations of current genre specifications and demonstrates that nothing is lost when readers become aware of the fictionality of a text. Rather, a more heightened experience of engagement and response is created because of the understanding that immersion and defamiliarization can be a both/and experience, rather than either/or.

In chapter 3, I showed how Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South* creates a possible change in perspective via techniques that connect focalization to fictional minds. Using a covert narrator allows the reader to

act as judge, entering into sympathy with both Mr. Thornton and Margaret Hale, and also creates expectations to work through narrative silences towards intermental, or shared, thought. Thus, readerly desire, or expectation, is initially aroused and then complicated by instabilities that prioritize Thornton's view over Margaret's silent one, thus leaving the reader to work to fill the gaps. Because of the narrative silence, the reader is actually distanced from Margaret Hale, but without losing sympathy for her. Because readers are more aware of the characters' thoughts and feelings than are the characters themselves, readers are in a position of ironic knowledge that leads them to judge with sympathy the misjudgments of the characters. Ultimately, both characters must engage in mutual focalization which leads to emotional and ethical development, highlighting the importance of process, or becoming. This moral development is brought about through narrative techniques of speech acts, fictional minds, and narrative silences. Therefore, readers are brought into an awareness of the need for acts of judgment to be related to acts of perception, thereby connecting thought and seeing, or fictional minds and focalization. Thus, difference is respected, leading to a triumph of sympathy.

In chapter 4, I demonstrated how Charles Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend* offers a very different realist reading. By using the ethics of the telling for a text that employs noncharacter narration, I suggested that the multileveled communication and difference (and distance) between the implied author and narrator is crucial for the reader's ethical and emotional response. The performance and partnership offered by *Our Mutual Friend* also helps readers to see that judgment is flawed and must be educated by new ways of perceiving. Furthermore, *Our Mutual Friend* develops the answer to the research question that mimetic and synthetic strategies can work together without losing readers. That is, the novel offers an immersive experience that also rewards the cognitive pleasure of unmasking the riddle, or working at a higher level of cognitive power. In this way, *Our Mutual Friend* is also connected to irony—and irony at the reader's expense. The novel highlights acts of reading to suggest the connection between reading and judgment as well as to suggest the inherent expectations of reciprocity. By merging the readerly and writerly acts and expectations, Dickens

provides a metacommentary on the craft of fiction and artifice of art that offers many levels of rewards. Because readers can enter at any level, and because mimetic strategies of character or plot offer one reading, the ability to jump to the synthetic level without losing the mimetic cohesion is a demonstration of expertise in the writing process. Fundamentally, too, the combination of mimetic and synthetic strategies is a mastery of the reading process as it allows readers to be cognitively engaged—both emotionally and intellectually—without dismissing either one in pursuit of educational purposes. Thus *Our Mutual Friend* shows that ethics does not have to be didactic; rather, that ethics and interpretation can be playful.

Finally, chapter 5 showed the connection between temporal ordering and perspectivism in George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, suggesting that the narrator's role of reporting cannot be separated from the role of interpreting and evaluating. The order of the novel suggests its experimental nature within the genre of realism especially as changes in perspective are linked to the reader's ethical awareness. That is, readers are brought face to face with their own intrinsic judgments and are asked to evaluate those judgments in light of their expectations brought about by the textual dynamics of progression. *Daniel Deronda* offers a reading in the limited nature of judgment—the judgment of narrator, characters, and reader—thus suggesting that the implied author's judgment can also be limited both in what works for readers and what does not. This discussion leads into an analysis of the limits and possibilities of shaping a novel in a certain way which automatically must dismiss alternatives. The expectations created by focusing on *this* rather than *that* are important for understanding a reader's response to the ethics and aesthetics of the text. The way the narrator performs this shaping is through prolepsis and analepsis. The fact that *Daniel Deronda* was initially published in monthly parts has serious consequences for the focus of the reader and the misplaced expectations. The order of narrated events complicates the response of the audience; the authorial audience understands the fabrication of events and the narrative audience unquestioningly follows the history which highlights Gwendolen. The progression of *Daniel Deronda* brings together these textual dynamics of tensions and instabilities and readerly dynamics that follow from those

situations. Because readers were cued to expect a realist text from the initial pages, their ability to join the authorial audience is blocked until they can reconfigure the events, recognizing the need to change their ideas about genre. Ultimately, readers are asked to develop their sympathetic response while also undergoing a change in expectation for the ethics of the telling and the ethics of the told.

Through all three of these novels, the reader is asked to step in to close the gap—the gap of the unnarrated, the gap of differences in sympathy or attention, the gap of a covert narrator, the gap of reported thought. Readerly involvement is therefore crucial for rhetorical narrative theory to “work.” The realist novel, as understood by the critical discussion surrounding it, aimed to change readers’ moral awareness, leading them to a more sympathetic and altruistic perspective towards the poor, working class, and “other.” It aimed to do this through many ways: by offering the perspective of characters different from the reader, by giving a voice to the marginalized, by offering omniscient commentary on the actions of characters. However, the critical discussion has tended to neglect the relationship between implied author and narrator, especially in heterodiegetic novels, or those with noncharacter narrators. This relationship is crucial because scholars tend to assume that heterodiegetic narrators in Victorian realist novels represent their authors, or could be relabelled as “authorial narrators” instead of being a separate entity in their own right. This difference between implied author and narrator is crucial for understanding the synthetic construction of these texts. Gaskell, Dickens and Eliot all knew what they were doing both in creating a good story and in offering readers the opportunity to read and evaluate in new ways that take them into a deeper awareness of the narrator’s control over the reporting of that story. Thus while the three authors desired to cultivate sympathy through art, they also managed to cultivate cognitive pleasure and intellectual involvement through design, and it is this latter effect that needs more attention.

This thesis has given attention to the latter—the synthetic construction of these three novels—by exploring the ethics of that progression. Through focusing on fictional minds, focalization, sympathy,

the ethics of the telling, the ethics of gaming and play, acts of reading, temporal ordering, analepsis, prolepsis, perspective, and the function of the narrator, this thesis offers a robust conclusion regarding narrative judgments. Ultimately we are left with the realization that texts that make the reader work because of multilevels of reporting, interpreting, and evaluating offer something more than just pleasure or shallow sympathy. They offer a process of development, a decoding that is completely linked to a rebuilding, and an understanding of the reader as someone with potential to change. As Liesbeth Korthals Altes says, “The more intense cognitive work it [ambiguous writing] makes readers do increases the attention one brings to the themes and attitudes that are thematized and “performed” in the reading...” (247). Thus the texts that work the best are those that offer the reader the potential to be the equal of the implied author—to work with him or her in interpreting the novel and to come to conclusions for the reader, genre, and literary studies in general.

As I mentioned in the introduction, I have left the qualitative or quantitative application of this theoretical understanding to social scientists and cognitive literary theorists who wish to design a study to prove the metahermeneutic approach. I have limited myself to answering the gaps pointed out by Liesbeth Korthals Altes, Ansgar Nunning, Alan Palmer, and James Phelan to offer a reconstruction of the vision of three novels in hope that readers will come to a better understanding of their own potential for growth. The lasting potential on a reader’s moral imagination, or ethos, is not provable here. However, by paying renewed attention to the factors that go into the writing process as well as processes of evaluation and interpretation, and by emphasising the relationality of author/ reader, narrator/ narrative audience, I suggest that we maintain a focus on literature as communication, and communication always contains the potential of persuasion.

While there has been a renewed interest in both ethics and narratology, both strands require further development and integration in order to offer literary studies a more refined set of tools. I hope that this thesis contributes to “the development of a narratologically-grounded form of ethical literary criticism” that Ansgar Nunning calls for, one that will “be

an important force in the current reconceptualisation of literary studies and the ongoing development of new forms of ethical literary criticism” (“Narratology and Ethical Criticism” 17). By returning to the language of expectation, desire, fulfillment, hopes, fears, emotional language of frustration, and disappointment, literary scholars will be able to reintroduce affect to literary studies, thus reuniting the intellectual and emotional under the cognitive umbrella, and linking the cognitive to the ethical. We will also be able to offer a generation of readers the tools to use language to describe their own processes of becoming in relation to the becoming that is offered in a text, by the author, narrator, and characters. Narrative theory offers much potential to literary studies. This thesis suggests the benefits that can be attained by adopting this methodology and entering into the language of the rhetorical and ethical effects of narrative choices. In this way the value of literature and literary studies will receive a renewed impetus that will open up new horizons for the next generation of writers and readers.

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Note on the Publication of the Texts:

North and South was serialized weekly in Charles Dickens's periodical *Household Words* (September 2, 1854- January 27, 1855) and then issued in 2 volumes in 1855 by Chapman and Hall.

Our Mutual Friend was first published in twenty monthly parts from May 1864- November 1865. It was issued in 2 volumes by Chapman and Hall; the first in February 1865, consisting of Book I and II, and the second in November 1865, consisting of Book III, IV, and Postscript in Lieu of a Preface.

Daniel Deronda was published in 8 monthly parts from February-September 1876 in *Blackwood's Magazine*. The novel was issued in 4 volumes in 1876 by William Blackwood and Sons.

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