

EVERYDAY WORDS AND THE CHARACTER OF
PROSE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

Everyday Words is an original and innovative study of the stylistic tics of canonical novelists, including Austen, Dickens, Trollope, Thackeray, and Eliot. Jonathan Farina shows how ordinary locutions such as “a decided turn,” “as if,” and “that sort of thing” condense nineteenth-century manners, tacit aesthetics and assumptions about what counts as knowledge. Writers recognized these recurrent “everyday words” as signatures of “character.” Attending to them reveals how many of the fundamental forms of characterizing fictional characters also turn out to be forms of characterizing objects, natural phenomena, and inanimate, abstract things, like physical laws, the economy, and legal practice. Ultimately, this book revises what “character” meant to nineteenth-century Britons by respecting the overlapping, transdisciplinary connotations of the category.

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CHARACTER OF PROSE IN
NINETEENTH-CENTURY
BRITAIN

JONATHAN FARINA

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For Jennifer, every day

I've been telling you what we said – repeating the phrases we pronounced – but what's the good? They were common everyday words – the familiar, vague sounds exchanged on every waking day of life. But what of that? They had behind them, to my mind, the terrific suggestiveness of words heard in dreams, of phrases spoken in nightmares.

– Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899)¹

[T]he primary object is character, which is, as all know, of a mingled woof, good and evil, virtue and weakness, truth and falsehood, woven inextricably together.

– G. H. Lewes, *Life and Works of Goethe* (1855)²

The crown and glory of life is Character . . . That character is power, is true in a much higher sense than that knowledge is power.

– Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help* (1859)³

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Much shorter, early versions of Chapters 3 and 4 appeared as “Dickens’s ‘As If’: Analogy and Victorian Virtual Reality,” *Victorian Studies* 53.3 (Winter 2011): 427–36 and “*Middlemarch* and ‘that Sort of Thing,’” *RaVoN: Romanticism and Victorianism on the Net* 53 (February 2009): www.erudit.org/revue/ravon/2009/v/n53/o29903ar.html. A tiny portion of Chapter 1 derives from a longer article, “Flash Reading: The Currency of Knowing in *Tom & Jerry*,” *The Wordsworth Circle* 41.3 (Summer 2010): 150–54. And a shorter version of Chapter 5 appeared as an article with the same title in *Victorians* 128 (September 2015): 138–61. I thank all of the editors for their help and permissions to reprint that work here.

Preface

Everyday Words expatiates on a cluster of rudimentary words that are especially common in nineteenth-century British print: “turn,” “attention,” “as if,” “but,” “something,” “that sort of thing,” “particular,” “general,” and “character,” which is the multivalent keyword around which all of the others coalesce. Many novels foreground these everyday words as mediums of characterizing personages, but writers, then as now, readily ascribed character to things other than people and fictional personages – things as diverse as furniture and the financial market. Character was perhaps the most prevalent of Victorian “vernacular aesthetic categories,” to borrow a phrase from Sianne Ngai,¹ and the many connotations and discourses of character that now seem distinct were closely correlated throughout the nineteenth century: coincident, that is to say, were the notions of character as a psychological identity, personality, and reputation; a fictional personage or theatrical role; an amorphous moral and aesthetic value, embracing sincerity, perseverance, industriousness, and courage as well as interest, originality, and marked distinction (a room with character or a person who is a character, as in “a card”); and, finally, a taxonomical feature identifying the nexus of genera and species, general affinity and specific difference. Samuel Smiles’s exalted sense of character as “moral order embodied in the individual” (314) thus coincided with Charles Darwin’s sense of character in the *Origin of Species* (1859) as an “inflection” or “manner” of physiology:

Man can act only on external and visible characters . . . We care not how trifling a character may be – let it be the mere inflection of the angle of the jaw, the manner in which an insect’s wing is folded, whether the skin be covered by hair or feathers – if it prevail throughout many and different species, especially those having very different habits of life, it assumes high value; for we can account for its presence in so many forms with such different habits, only by its inheritance from a common parent. (*OS* 76, 337)

Everyday Words restores the connotative multiplicity of *character* and treats the signature stylistic tics of nineteenth-century writers as *characters* in the natural historical sense Darwin invokes in this passage.

The everyday words I describe can appear “trifling,” but they prevail across so wide a range of genres and situations that they bespeak a common epistemological, aesthetic, and moral objective. This objective – character – designated not the definitive essence of a person or thing, but a manner of relating persons or things. Darwin does not treat “external and visible characters” as symptoms of an underlying cause or interiority, but as the means of fitness – the means by which an organism adapts to the ambient world and relates to other organisms. Everyday words likewise indicate neither the definitive essence (or function) of a topic nor the thematic focus of a text, though some of the novels I discuss here do indeed thematize common words, but its “external and visible character” – that is, its style: its manners and attitudes toward its subjects, referents, and readers. *Characters*, as I describe them, thus produce the texture of prose as it implicates or addresses the reader and as it negotiates between its many subjects and objects. Characterization was a means of articulating meaningful superficiality.

Poststructuralism hampered *character* as a critical category by exposing it as a medium of ideology and as a fantasy of coherent selfhood,² but it has since resurged as an object of critical interest.³ Deidre Lynch recounts the emergence of an “economy of character” in which cultivating and affecting intimacy with and deep knowledge of literary personages circulated as a kind of cultural capital.⁴ Alex Woloch describes how the depth of such personages emerges as a function of “the definitively circumscribed form of a narrative” and the subordination of secondary characters in “a character system.”⁵ And Susan Manning, recognizing that character “is verbally and conceptually *relational*,” rekindles the eighteenth-century discourse of moral correspondence – analogy, comparison, fitness, sympathy, exemplarity, and allegory – to animate “a comparative criticism that supplements sequential historical narrative (with its implied linearity and progressive or regressive trajectory), with rhetorical structures able to hold competing or antithetical ‘truths’ in tense simultaneity” – rhetorical structures modelled on character relations.⁶ These studies inspire much of the work that follows, but they remain attached in different ways to an equation of *character* and personhood, psychologically realistic personages, and the moral values associated with them. But as even Lynch admits, “individuated, psychological meanings did not come naturally to British writers and readers” in the Regency period (9).

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Recognizing character less as personhood than as ethos, Amanda Anderson describes it as the premier category by which Victorians tautologically ascribed form and value to those modern practices that specifically seemed to threaten the principle assumptions of character: scientific reason, liberal critique, and objective detachment, all of which resurface in the succeeding chapters.⁷ Yet, these modern practices and the ideal of deep, secret subjectivity were perceived by many Victorians as additional impositions on the extant paradigms of a more social and external epistemology of character. As David Kurnick writes, many nineteenth-century novelists were rather reluctant to embrace the interiority for which they subsequently became famous: even, he says, as domestic fictions “push inward they fantasize about collective responses to the isolations of privacy” and exhibit “a frustrated will to performative exteriority and collectivity,” an “allergy to interiority.”⁸ Following Kurnick, *Everyday Words* restores a prose aesthetic that was more prevalent for much of the nineteenth century than the depth model of character that has since dominated studies of character but from which literary studies began to turn in the 1970s. As Michel Serres put it, “what is essential is neither the image nor the deep meaning, neither the representation nor its hall of mirrored reflections, but the system of relations.”⁹ Thinking of everyday words as the stylistic correlatives to epistemological assumptions and social manners, this book describes characterization accordingly as a grammar of relations.

The everyday words studied here all perform the taxonomical work of concomitantly affiliating and disaffiliating entities: like natural historical characters, they gesture at an affinity to a familiar genera of some sort even as they mark an individuating departure from that genera; they gesture at a known referent even as they deviate from it. Like manners, they accommodate individuality to social conventions even as, like mannerisms, they depart from them. Everyday words thus endow the prosaic with a frisson of tact and contact, an aesthetic affect produced by interactions of different sorts – friction, contingency, apposition, and affinity.

Character thus names a unit of knowledge that at times rivaled, at times supplemented, but formally differed from what Mary Poovey has described as the modern fact. Poovey describes the modern fact as “a mode of representation that seemed to be transparent,” a deracinated particular that seemed to represent accurately the object to which it refers and yet whose validity depended reciprocally upon its integration – as evidence – in systematic knowledge of some kind.¹⁰ Where facts proffered impassive, purportedly unmediated knowledge whose veracity was guaranteed by tangible or visible referents and upheld by “[jettisoning] the ornamental

excesses associated with rhetoric” (Poovey 13), *character* promised a markedly oblique relation to its objects. *Character* applies to prose that mediates its content aslant, prose that is mildly awkward or intriguing, at once appealing but unfamiliar. By “prose,” I should note, I do not exclude verse or poetry, which share the idioms this book details, but invoke and revise Hegel’s sense of a distinctly modern form of ironic description. However, where Hegel ascribed disenchantment or alienation to prose, many Victorians ascribed character; they felt a connection.

Writers like Hegel presume prose to be predominantly referential, but distinguishing the stylistic signatures of characterization reveals how regularly nineteenth-century prose refutes or complicates direct reference. George Levine has observed that “there was no such thing as naïve realism – simple faith in the correspondence between word and thing – among serious Victorian novelists,” and his claim still bears repeating, for realism is still too regularly reduced to an aspiration toward photographic mimesis.¹¹ Each of my subsequent chapters details how a different everyday phrase – and its synonyms and variants – disavows the referential correspondence that writers have most consistently associated with the prosaic and with realism and instead installs a formal discrepancy between representation and referent, people and things, interiority and exteriority. *Character* was the value ascribed to these kinds of performative deviations, which manifested in a range of discrete modes: turns, attentions, inductions, conditional conjectures, liberal abstractions, and tactful rebuttals. Characterization evoked a disposition distinguished by its ability to adhere to conventions even as it departs from them, a disposition defined by minute but iterative acknowledgments and dismissals of expectations, assumptions, and empirical facts.

This tension with mimesis had its moral analogue: moral character traditionally denoted sincerity, authenticity, and honesty, the correspondence between external expressions (emotions, physiognomies, clothes, actions, manners, words) and interiority. As Smiles writes in “Character – the True Gentleman,” the concluding chapter of *Self-Help*, “Integrity in word and deed is the backbone of character; and loyal adherence to veracity its most prominent characteristic. . . . A man must really be what he seems or purposes to be” (317–18). But both the realism and the charm of fictional personages owes to their deviations from expectations, types, and probability, as to the discordance between their appearance and their interiority. Over the course of the nineteenth century, discordance between categories – internal and external, particular and general, actuality and ideal – came to index truth via irony, free indirect

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discourse, and other formal features. Dazzlingly dissimulative personages such as Becky Sharp and Lizzie Eustace, or even Frankenstein's Creature, whose monstrous exterior and murderousness belie his potentially loving inner child, exemplify character precisely because character legitimated formal hypocrisy as a medium of moral and epistemic truth, whatever the morality of its contents. Realistic personages appear – to others as to themselves – differently than they prove to think or feel or otherwise be on the inside. Everyday words writ this irony small but distributed it throughout Victorian prose, affording all sorts of objects and abstractions a glimmer of the aesthetic interest of these personages.

If novels are not now routinely respected as epistemology per se, they are the pre-eminent medium of characterization, and they record routine assumptions about the relations between things in the world. I take novels here, then, as exemplary repositories of an epistemology of character than extended well beyond fiction into other genres and domains. Michael McKeon traces the epistemological negotiations of the novel as it justified its non-referential content as a form of “concrete virtuality,” knowledge that can be realized in actual particulars although it refers to none in particular.¹² This “concrete virtuality” applies but is not restricted to fictional personages. McKeon points out that the disaggregation of two modes of fictionality – falsity and fabulation, dishonesty and artistry, “made up” and “made” (109) – originated in modern empiricist epistemology that insisted on actuality, history, factuality, and concreteness. *Character* marks where prose shades from description into abstraction, generality, possibility, or fiction. The epistemology of character I describe resisted the hegemony of facts and utility, but also helped realize and moralize modern abstractions that facts could not wholly depict, abstractions such as the factory system and the financial market, the links between radically disparate organisms, the materiality of ephemeral mental life, the practice of science, and the extension of social etiquette into professional domains.¹³ Characterization was essential to realizing the ideas behind modernity.

Natural historians, other non-fiction writers, and novelists alike performed analogous modes of characterization, then, by isolating individual features (characters) that could be said to articulate individuality and typicality, eccentricity and exemplarity, materiality and abstraction. For natural historians, these characters were instantiated in features such as opposable thumbs, the bumps on an earlobe, and the vestigial femurs and pelvic bones embedded in a whale's sides; for novelists and critics they were, to be sure, instantiated in imaginary persons such as Jane Eyre but

also in diction, in the very language of exposition used to depict the interrelations of those personages and the things around them. Such characters were the natural historical correlatives to manners, but even natural history has its manners, its “epistemological decorum,” as Steven Shapin calls it, and everyday words served this decorum on the level of style.¹⁴

Decorum describes an attitude that ensured that proper procedures were being followed, and, as Nicholas Dames explains, “the sense of the novel as a process rather than a structure was a fundamental part of Victorian novel theory.”¹⁵ Victorians thought of novels and character both as processes rather than fixed contents. So prose was of course the performative medium of characterization, part of the *habitus* of a person with character. Like Ngai’s categories, character was both performative and descriptive: character accrued as much to the assertion of its presence (this building or that poem has character) or the iteration of the proper everyday words (the play was typical, but interesting; she has a certain something about her, as if I knew her already), as to any fixed attributes or properties belonging to a given person or thing.¹⁶ Victorian readers and writers tacitly adhered to an epistemology of character according to which character was produced by a repertoire of appropriate expressions, by the decorous treatment of subjects rather than by any innate or essential property of the subjects themselves.¹⁷ That the style of a text could bear the weight of its moral, aesthetic, scientific, and political character, independently of the character of its content and its author, is consonant with the emergence of what Elaine Hadley calls “liberal cognition” and “abstract embodiment” – modes of liberal subjectivity that purported to liberate individuals’ characters from their money, their estates, their ancestry, their gender and class, their nationality and locality, even the received ideas of a political party.¹⁸ Like manners, everyday words liberated them also from interiority, as they put the onus on relation, interface, and action rather than identity. In this sense, *Everyday Words* echoes D. A. Miller’s compelling description of the “open secret” of “secret subjectivity,” “a subject who can thus continue to affirm his subjectivity *as a form* even where it no longer has a content of its own.”¹⁹ Beyond the familiar components of “liberal cognition” itemized by Hadley – “disinterestedness, objectivity, reticence, conviction, impersonality, and sincerity” (9) – and the disciplinary interiority described Miller, I describe forms of asserting character via attention, inference, deference, difference, self-reference, and suggestion, which are all tangential to direct reference.

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I turn to everyday words as my evidence for at least three reasons, the first two of which are historicist. First, my approach approximates a nineteenth-century reading practice. Nineteenth-century Britons were rapt with philology of all sorts, and extracting phrases – slang, dialect, pithy quotations, taglines, puns, neologisms – as parcels of self-evident, affective knowledge was rather more fundamental to their mode of reading than was anything that we would recognize as interpretation or critique. However necessarily inflected by the institution of modern academic literary scholarship, my process strikes a chord with this largely overlooked mode of reception.

Second, turning to everyday words also makes evidentiary sense because the history of reading is embedded in form: at once remarkably prevalent and yet more often than not unremarked upon, these are the words that most readers take for granted, and therefore they might best evidence the attitudes, moods, manners, and assumptions that their culture took most for granted. I describe many nineteenth-century essays that explicitly ascribe *character* to texts and attend to philological peculiarities, but most acts of reading leave their trace in style rather than explicit accounts. “The history of reading,” Dames writes,

could be discovered not (solely) in records of individual reading acts – marginalia, journal reviews, histories of criticism, commonplace books, and autobiographies – but ossified in the very form of texts themselves, in the genetic code, so to speak, of genre itself, which evolves in a reciprocal relation with the reading modes they determine and are in turn determined by. (29)

Everyday words “ossify” the epistemology of character accordingly, though character was not restricted to any one set of genres. Publishers, universities, associations, and the reading public expected books of all kinds to have character and to promote character in readers.²⁰ *Everyday Words* addresses many genres, but each chapter focuses on a particular novelist who parodies, questions, or otherwise foregrounds a particular stylistic tic as a medium of characterization affiliated with a specific form of mediation. They bear witness to how writers obliged the prescription for character without explicitly personifying their objects in the form of personages or didactically moralizing them.

Third, however, my approach respects the allure of the present. While the everyday words in this book had a specific historical valence in nineteenth-century Britain, whose reading practices were attuned to the epistemology of character that has been eclipsed, as I’ve said, by the double

turn of Modernism toward psychological models of deep character and away from morality, they nevertheless remain common, and commonly taken for granted, features of everyday English prose. My attention to Dickens's "as if," for example, was accidentally prompted by a professor indulgently repeating "as it were" in a discussion of *Little Dorrit*, and plenty of television shows document the alacrity with which people ascribe "character" to houses, meals, commodities, and individuals. Everyday words retain their affordances as forms, as Caroline Levine might put it, even though the ideological heyday of character has passed.²¹ Everyday words mark how historical assumptions, manners, and aesthetics inflect everyday life in the present, and so my methodology here also marks how historicism can responsibly intersect with presentism at the level of form, without forfeiting historical difference or reducing literary study to thematic comparisons.

My formal presentism with historical content shares Nietzsche's faith in slow philological reading as a moral, political, and enchanting practice requisite to "an age of 'work', that is, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste."²² Nietzsche appraises this slowness – "*lento*," as he puts it – above conclusiveness, determination, and positive knowledge. The epistemology of character and *Everyday Words* are both about harboring "reservations, doors left open" (Nietzsche, 5) – forms of reading, writing, and being whose *lento* matters more than their takeaway, product, or accuracy of reproduction.

Is this close or distant, deep or surface reading?²³ I think it combines them all: it achieves distance by treating words that permeate nineteenth-century print and suggesting that my sustained interpretations tell us about all that print and not just individual novels; it attends to the surface by appreciating a surficial model of character as relations, manners, and processes, rather than the depth model of character, and more so by attending to the kind of artifact that Victorian readers tended to appreciate. Still, my readings certainly assume that deeper meanings – an epistemology, social conventions, moral ideology, and tacit aesthetic tastes – lie beneath and behind these words, and I do indeed privilege certain novels over the expansive corpus of nineteenth-century print. But I do not affect to expose or unveil some hidden identity. I aim to appreciate superficiality – manners, style, the prosaic – as mediums of an important, meaningful, moving form of knowledge that still affords us ways of negotiating a world that threatens to become too utilitarian and positivist. The idiom of characterization might help us responsibly legitimate our truth claims for fiction in a world all too liable to trade in blatant falsehoods and in

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universities all too bent on positivist, pragmatic, or commodifiable knowledges. Many of the chapters that follow touch upon how Victorian literary critics, at the advent of modern literary study, employed everyday words to characterize their work as genuine knowledge production in a world that seemed obsessed with facts and useful knowledge.

The latest appeal to positivism in literary studies comes via the Digital Humanities, which offer faster ways of gathering more data than actual reading. I merely make cursory use of searchable digital texts here to confirm the prevalence of words whose extraordinary frequency I noted the old-fashioned way, by slow reading; but I hope this book nevertheless models how technologically savvy data mining might serve interpretative ends without reducing literary scholarship to data and graphs, as if these numerical and visual representations were the only respectable forms of knowledge. Without interpretation and without respect for the kinds of knowledge inscribed within the formal rhythms and twists of prose, we risk forfeiting the now already tenuous epistemological value of the literary and the justification of our discipline. Prose produces meaning that is irreducible to numbers or to accurate correspondence to extra-textual reality, as Francis Galton discovered the hard way in “Hereditary Talent and Character” (1865), an essay which ineffectually attempts to explain originality of character by way of statistics culled from Sir Thomas Phillips’s *The Million of Facts*. Certain things, including character, can only be known in distinction from facts.²⁴ The following five chapters thus offer not only an alternative history of character, but also an aesthetic theory of modern English prose as a distinct medium of knowledge production.

Chapter 1, “Darwin’s View from Todgers’s: ‘A Decided Turn’ for Character and Common Words,” completes the introductory work of this Preface. It first exemplifies my methodology in an analysis of the word “turn” as Dickens parodies it at Todgers’s boardinghouse in *Martin Chuzzlewit* and as it recurs in *Jane Eyre* and *The Mill on the Floss* but also in Darwin’s *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*. These writings all mobilize *turn* as a figure of affective shock, rhetorical metabasis, histrionic gesture, and taxonomical relation that performatively evokes moral character and epistemic credibility. The chapter canvases the dizzying array of overlapping connotations at play in nineteenth-century uses of *character* and concludes by demonstrating its philological reading practices. Nineteenth-century writers such as Pierce Egan, Walter Pater, and George Meredith all raise inconspicuous locutions to the level of visibility and associate them with character.

My second chapter, “Inductive ‘Attentions’: Jane Austen in ‘particular’ and in ‘general,’” describes how Austen’s fiction translates the idiom of induction from natural philosophical discourse, whose moral and epistemic credibility was indexed by its purportedly Baconian abstraction of generals from particulars, into a medium of social relations. Austen socializes *particular* and *general* in the form of *attention*, an everyday word that encompasses manners, affections, tastes, and degrees of interaction. The consilience of these various *attentions* – like the consilience of inductions later described by William Whewell – aptly explains the character that Austen’s early reviewers ascribed to her fiction, whose realism is the effect of competing frequencies or scales of representation. I frame the discussion of Austen with accounts of the idiom of induction in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century natural philosophy and the emergent field of literary and aesthetic criticism. Critics such as Hazlitt, Horne, Pater, Masson, and others justified their writing as genuine knowledge production by affiliating it with induction and with characterization. The idiom of induction allowed them all to translate the epistemological problem of induction – how to generate empirically valid abstractions – and the modern problem of overwhelming data into an aesthetic value and a signature of credible intellectual labor.

Chapter 3, “‘Our skeptical as if’: Conditional Analogy and the Comportment of Victorian Prose,” addresses the role of the conditional analogy in Victorian fiction and science writing. Looking first at Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology*, it describes the way early Victorians legitimated regulative analogy as real knowledge in a culture skeptical of conjecture and wary of constitutive analogies. It then examines how Dickens ambivalently marshals *as if* as a principle medium of characterization, a medium for articulating how characters recognize but overwrite the factual world with their own fictional but no less real experience. Dickens’s *as if* exemplifies how Victorian prose stands in relation to its subjects. It assumes not just an Adam Smithian sympathy, according to which we can only ever approximate knowledge of others, but also a regulative notion of experience. Concluding with a discussion of John Tyndall, the chapter shows how *as if* reconciled relativism, modernity, and empiricism with the demands of sympathy and sociality.

Chapter 4, “‘Something’ in the Way Realism Moves: *Middlemarch* and Oblique Character References,” attends to missing referents in nineteenth-century literature, particularly George Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1872), which highlights *something* and *that sort of thing* as the signature features of both Mr. Brooke’s flatness and Dorothea’s depth. The idiom of *things*

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characterizes Eliot's world as poised between referentless detachment and the freedom of liberal self-representation. She shares this idiom with many novelists who employ *something* to stand in for the nexus where people and things, including prose and its readers, meet and are moved. After surveying a range of novels that also employ *something* to stand in for emotional contact, I turn briefly to the nineteenth-century discourse of realism, where Victorians employ *something* to account for the way prose moves them.

Finally, Chapter 5, "Whoever explains a 'but': Tact and Friction in Trollope's Reparative Fiction," describes how Anthony Trollope, above all novelists the one most affiliated with everyday life and with a documentary realism, employs *but* and other adversatives as a medium of tactful rebuttal. Trollope's *buts* allow him to touch upon without shamefully exposing his personages, whom he presents as "dual in character," as prone to good as bad. Trollope's style is therefore "reparative," in Eve Sedgwick's sense, to the extent that it finds interest in and affinity with all but its most egregiously immoral personages instead of delighting in shaming them. Adversatives extend this tact to everything in Trollope's fiction: they abet his productivity by tacking on clauses that contradict, qualify, or rebut the thrust of the preceding claims. Without rubbing anyone (except for maybe Henry James) the wrong way, Trollope's adversatives yield a frisson, a texture that resolves friction into ease. Given Trollope's reception and the wider use of *but* by Thackeray and others, this frisson seems to have been the feeling of everyday life, the prose correlative for the feeling of character in nineteenth-century Britain.

Abbreviations

Frequently referenced works are identified in parenthetical citations by the abbreviations below. Full references appear in the bibliography.

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| <i>AA</i> | <i>An Autobiography</i> |
| <i>AB</i> | <i>Adam Bede</i> |
| <i>BH</i> | <i>Bleak House</i> |
| <i>BT</i> | <i>Barchester Towers</i> |
| <i>DC</i> | <i>David Copperfield</i> |
| <i>DM</i> | <i>Descent of Man</i> |
| <i>DT</i> | <i>Doctor Thorne</i> |
| <i>E</i> | <i>Emma</i> |
| <i>ED</i> | <i>The Eustace Diamonds</i> |
| <i>FP</i> | <i>Framley Parsonage</i> |
| <i>HT</i> | <i>Hard Times</i> |
| <i>LCB</i> | <i>The Last Chronicle of Barset</i> |
| <i>M</i> | <i>Middlemarch</i> |
| <i>MC</i> | <i>Martin Chuzzlewit</i> |
| <i>MF</i> | <i>The Mill on the Floss</i> |
| <i>MP</i> | <i>Mansfield Park</i> |
| <i>NA</i> | <i>Northanger Abbey</i> |
| <i>OMF</i> | <i>Our Mutual Friend</i> |
| <i>OS</i> | <i>Origin of Species</i> |
| <i>PP</i> | <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> |
| <i>SC</i> | <i>Scenes of Clerical Life</i> |
| <i>SS</i> | <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> |
| <i>TC</i> | <i>The Three Clerks</i> |
| <i>W</i> | <i>The Warden</i> |