

*The Ends of Aloneness* explores the role of solitude in nineteenth-century realist novels, arguing for the import of its radically partial nature. In doing so, it seeks to split a gap between Foucault's ideas about nineteenth-century life and Ian Watt's account of the novel genre's rise. It claims that in the first instance, it is easy to feel that distance is compromised, through social surveillance, only disempoweringly; while in the second, it is easy to read aloneness as public triumph as the basis of an ethos of economic independence. It therefore makes a point to study texts from the era that admit being alone cannot be "pure" in a mechanized modern world, yet which show that partialness in solitude can be a boon, helping subjects mediate the plural demands of modernity.

Building on the scholarship of Jeff Nunokawa, Christopher Lane, and Amanda Anderson, the current study departs from this by not privileging solitude that implies a rare event, but rather, attends to the mundane. Focusing respectively on women's time, women's space, and economic organization of women's time and space, the first three chapters make a case for reading a trio of texts—*Persuasion*, *Villette*, and *The Odd Women*—through an undernoted support for women's right to daily withdrawal. As for Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, it shows women gaining ground through co-opting alienation, yet cannot keep from wanting to contain female cleverness as a rule, making it resist and bolster strains of social hypocrisy.

Notably, each novel here crafts an ending that rewards strong solitaires with affection. Without erasing solo resilience, they imagine solitaires "alone together" in relations that take cues from canny ways of navigating self and world—in other words, that take cues from proactive distance itself. Thus, while the phrase "the ends of aloneness" speaks to aims and goals for conduct, another aspect has to do with the forms of closing scenes. Refashioning the marriage plot to acknowledge solo strength, the novels here make social distance anchor new

relational forms that combine eccentric views, yet further blend peculiarities with careful social concessions into patterns of compromise.