

ABSTRACT

of a thesis on

Marriage and the position of women, as presented by
some of the early Victorian novelists.

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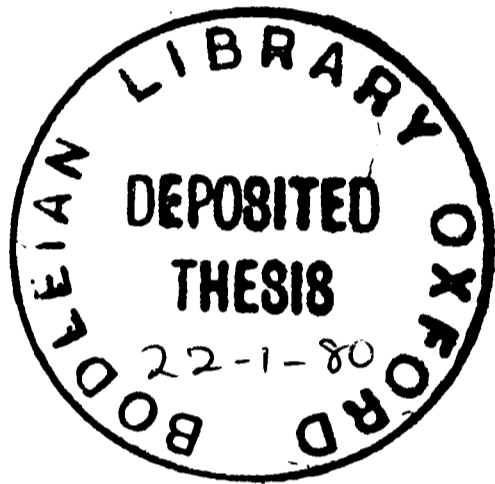
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by

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The subject of this thesis is the unusual nature, in the presentation of courtship and marriage, of Trollope's depiction of women as compared with that of other novelists of the first part of the Victorian age. To demonstrate Trollope's remarkable objectivity and realism, I consider first the treatment by him and by three other male novelists of the period of the motivations towards marriage of women. In the first chapter I sketch out the concept of marriage that actually prevailed and suggest thereby the importance of its achievement for women; and also give a rough idea of the restrictions imposed on the treatment of the subject by the critical consensus of the times. In the next four chapters I illustrate the artificiality, according with these restrictions, with which Dickens, Thackeray and Kingsley deal with the subject of courtship, and contrast with this the sympathetic understanding towards women that Trollope exhibits. I examine in detail in the sixth chapter critical reactions to the works of these writers, in an attempt to show to what extent the distinctions I have made were noted by the Victorians and by more recent critics. In the second part of the thesis I deal with the treatment of relations in marriage itself. Having first considered the singularly few instances in the novelists discussed earlier of the workings of marriage treated on an independent basis, I examine the approach of George Eliot who, along with Trollope, expands upon the subject at length. Arguing that a dogmatic view of the marital relation vitiates her treatment, in the final chapter I explore the contrast offered by Trollope's realistic presentation of the topic.

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early Victorian novelists.

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P A R T I

THE COURTSHIP OF MEN

CHAPTER 1

A GLANCE AT THE BACKGROUND

Literature is impoverished beyond our counting by the doors that have been shut upon women. Married against their will, kept in one room, and to one occupation, how could a dramatist give a full or interesting or truthful account of them? Love was the only possible interpreter. (1)

The complaint Virginia Woolf had made earlier in her study of women and fiction, that 'all the great women of fiction were, until Jane Austen's day, not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex,' (2) remained largely true, particularly with regard to the latter quality, well into the Victorian era; and it is the aim of this study to show that the works of Trollope provide a very distinct exception to the rule. First, however, in this chapter, I intend to consider the background to the complaint and to indicate, as the first quotation above does, that there were limitations independent of themselves within which novelists had necessarily to work. It is unnecessary for this purpose to prove that in actual fact the principal occupation open to women during the earlier part of the Victorian age, an occupation that often excluded the possibility of any other, was marriage; what is important is that this view was generally accepted, and found widespread expression in the non-fictional writings of the period. Having illustrated this with some passages from Victorian periodicals, I shall go on to consider a few contemporary remarks of general import on the treatment of women and marriage in fiction, to provide a framework for the detailed discussion as to how Trollope and his peers dealt with the subject.

The Edinburgh Review, writing on 'The Education of Women' in 1887,

(1) Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own, London, 1929, Ch.5, p.126.

(2) ibid., Ch.5, p.124.

claimed that

Time was when.... Her mission was to make an eligible marriage, if possible a rich one, and to subside for the rest of her life into a state of thankful inferiority to that member of the nobler sex, who became her husband.... If the scheme matrimonial was a failure, or came to grief, after careful and unwearied effort, and much patience, as in many cases was inevitable, she must be content to wither quietly into an old maid. All this, however, belongs to the days of long ago, when George III was king. (3)

but, nevertheless, went on to say that marriage was for women

their destined vocation, for which they were created, are born, and intended by nature; for which they are specifically fitted by a character and intelligence in some respects differing essentially from those of men. (4)

The article could, however, claim to have been a progressive one, for it had taken some space to refute what might be termed the extreme position on female education, a position to which the Edinburgh itself had subscribed in a review in October 1869 of Mill's On the Subjection of Women: (5) the position that the outlay on female education was hardly worthwhile, since the vast majority of women were destined to marry, and for that educational development was not at all essential.

Such arguments proved powerless, and female education developed rapidly in the period under consideration; but it still remained the case that nearly every article on the subject, written from whatever point of view, asserted the fact, whether with approval or disapproval, of the primacy of marriage as

(3) Edinburgh Review, 'The Education of Women', July 1887, Vol.166, pp.98-9.

(4) ibid., p.107.

(5) An amusing reaction to Mill may be found in William Acton, The Functions and Disorders of the Reproductive Organs, in Childhood, Youth, Adult Age and Advanced Life, Considered in their Physiological, Social and Moral Relations, London, 1875 (pp.142-3, compared with the original 1865 edition). The work is of present interest in its powerful preconception of female passivity, the absence of which was associated with prostitution. The general prevalence of this dichotomy, explored conscientiously in Eric Trudgill, Madonnas and Magdalens: the origins and development of Victorian sexual attitudes, London, 1976, had its effect on the novels of the time, notably, as will be suggested later, on those of Thackeray.

woman's occupation. Even the more fervent proponents of progress in the field subscribed with enthusiasm to the creed. The Quarterly Review, for instance, in an encouraging discussion in March 1850 of Queen's College, the first institution of higher education for women, quoted with approval from an account of the origins of the college its aims as being to render women "what God intended them to be, helps meet for men"⁽⁶⁾; a theme developed in the lectures, also quoted, on English Literature prepared for the college by Charles Kingsley, one of the novelists I intend to consider, who had been a patron of the institution from its inception -

"This I take to be one of the highest aims of women - to preach charity, love, and brotherhood.... We must incite them to realize the chivalrous belief of our old forefathers among their Saxon forests, that something Divine dwelt in the counsels of women; but on the other hand we must continually remind them that they will attain that divine instinct, not by renouncing their sex, but by fulfilling it...by claiming women's divine vocation, as the priestess of purity, of beauty, and of love; by educating themselves to become, with God's blessing, worthy wives and mothers."⁽⁷⁾

Discussing 'Female Education' again in 1866 the Quarterly insisted once more that 'The primary and divine idea of woman is "a help meet for man"⁽⁸⁾ but also recognised that there was a case for educating for more than domestic duties; it was by then impossible to ignore the simple fact that census figures had made abundantly clear, that there were so many more women than men that a large number of the former would necessarily have to remain unmarried. Even so, as late as 1878 this particular point had to be established anew in another article in the Quarterly justifying further developments in female education. That article indeed went so far as to attack Englishmen for being willing, alone of Europeans, to marry uneducated women which it was claimed had led to the assumption that women had to be

(6) Quarterly Review, 'Queen's College - London', March 1850, Vol.86, p.367.

(7) *ibid.*, pp.380-1.

(8) Quarterly Review, 'Female Education', April 1866, Vol.119, p.500.

kept ignorant; but it also rebuked the more strident claimants for improved vocational training for women, declaring that they should 'realize more gracefully the toil incurred by most brothers and husbands to secure to them homes of softness and ease.'⁽⁹⁾ The Contemporary Review, again, having noted in March 1866 that the census of 1861 showed women outnumbered men far more than had been supposed, returning to the subject of women's education in 1868 nevertheless asserted that social realities justified 'talk of bringing up girls to be good wives and mothers, and boys not indeed to be good husbands and fathers, but good lawyers, doctors, officers, tradesmen, and what not'⁽¹⁰⁾ since these were the more likely livelihoods of either.

The Contemporary was, however, to introduce a less complacent note into later discussions of the subject. In 1870, writing on 'College Education for Women', it declared that it was

the abject idleness into which girls are generally plunged from the time they leave the school-room till they marry...that tends more than anything else to place the woman in a position of intellectual inferiority to the man, which the girls did not occupy as compared with the boy.⁽¹¹⁾

Two years later it reiterated this concept of female intelligence and its development as being independent of some sort of fixed marital destiny, in attacking the treatment of

attractiveness to men as the basis and the end of all instruction conferred upon the weaker sex.... Till we get rid of the peculiarly English notion that the domestic ideal is the highest...we shall not free ourselves of the error of bringing all girls up with the view that they are to try to get married, and that it is not only a misfortune, but in some sense a disgrace, to miss that career.⁽¹²⁾

(9) Quarterly Review, 'The Englishwoman at School', July 1878, Vol.146, p.69.

(10) Contemporary Review, 'On the Education of Women', February 1868, Vol.7, p.245.

(11) Contemporary Review, 'College Education for Women', August 1870, Vol.15, pp.62-3.

(12) Contemporary Review, 'The Religious Education of Women', June 1872, Vol.20, p.3.

The loss to women that the prevailing prejudices entailed had been put even more strongly by the Fortnightly Review review four years previously -

the notion that it is right to educate a girl solely with the view of her marrying has its rise in the universality of public opinion as regards the functions of womanhood. As long as...women are considered useful members of society in proportion to the number of their children, so long will their intellectual and moral faculties be neglected. (13)

Whatever the effect developments in education were to have on the prevailing concept of marriage, it is clear then that the prevalence of that concept was something which all writers on education had to acknowledge and take account of in the exposition of their views. The same can be seen to have applied as well to other writers on various aspects of the position of women. The Quarterly, for instance, considering in 1844 'The Rights of Women', insisted on female limitations - 'The whole dignity of woman depends upon the grandeur of the male character on which she exerts her influence; it is this that is the sole foundation of her power' - and went on to cite with approval two works, Mrs. Ellis' The Wives of England and Mrs. Jameson's Characteristics of Women: Moral, Practical, and Historical, because their tendencies were

all in the right direction; they persuade the wives of England, remitting public duties, to come and adorn their own homes; and if by force of such counsels one single fireside shall be made more bright and happy...they will not have been given in vain.' (14)

This playing up of woman's domestic role is to be seen more particularly in articles critical of political demands, as in the review from the Edinburgh, already cited, of Mill, which declared that a wife was one with her husband and desired to serve him, so that there was no need to duplicate political rights; even if the need were granted with regard to single women, few would

(13) Fortnightly Review, 'The Medical and General Education of Women', November 1868, N.S. Vol. 4, pp. 567-8.

(14) Quarterly Review, 'The Rights of Women', December 1844, Vol. 75, pp. 98 & 121. Some sort of development can be discerned with regard to articles on education; but as far as the simple assertion of feminine domesticity was concerned, what diffidence there was, it will be seen, depended more on individual writers' predilections than on any advancements in the role of women connected with chronology.

fall into that category due to what were termed the natural claims of marriage and childbirth. The review of the same work in the Contemporary similarly declared that woman's primary aim was to be lovely, and to prevail by loving, an argument similar to that used in a book entitled Woman's Suffrage; the Reform against Nature that had been reviewed with approval the previous year. The Contemporary had concurred with some of the argument -

He fully admits the quite peculiar elements which women must always bring into the arena of human life - benignant, softening, and elevating influences, calculated to control men subtly, by twining themselves around his stronger and more self-asserting nature -

and did not challenge the conclusion that, as

"all women alike are made to be married, whether they are or not...the whole female order would be most effectively represented in the whole male order". (15)

This was not, however, quite the most extreme argument to be used against enfranchisement of the unmarried woman: the Nineteenth Century, as late as 1886, having declared it disruptive for the married since

the normal relation between husband and wife must be one of control and decision on the husband's side, and deference and submission on the wife's, rejected a distinction on behalf of the unmarried since that would

except from enfranchisement precisely that half of the female sex which has most experience of life, most training in practical affairs, most sense of the claims of others...speaking generally, those persons who fulfill all the normal relations of life will be, caeteris paribus, wiser, more experienced, more informed than those who do not. (16)

This relentless exaltation of a 'norm' of marriage was not without its critics, and one of the obvious points they made concerned the pressures to which it gave rise towards marriage simply for its own sake. The Contemporary writing in 1884 on 'The Ministry of Women', declared that

It seems the conventionally right thing to say...that wifhood and motherhood are the crown, almost the limit, of her functions in the body politic....

(15) Contemporary Review, 'Notices of Books', October 1869, Vol.12, pp.307-8.

(16) Nineteenth Century, 'Women's Suffrage', April 1886, Vol.19, p.568.

Translated by the grim humour of the satirists, the "ministry of home" means for one set of women "marry for money or a title...and train your daughters to follow your example".⁽¹⁷⁾

while the Nineteenth Century, as late as 1901, averred that

There has always been a type of woman who has been ready to sacrifice everything she ought to hold sacred for the sake of "a good marriage". There is now a type in every class, but more particularly, in the lower and middle classes, which will sacrifice all for marriage.⁽¹⁸⁾

and went on to say that marriage should be more than just an incident in a man's life, and not the whole in a woman's, which was regrettably what was generally inculcated.

Previous writings on the same theme had displayed a greater charity to the women whose conduct was under review, which was perhaps fairer. The Contemporary, reviewing Women's work and Women's Culture in 1869, said of a plea therein on the indirect effects an extension of the suffrage would have, that it showed admirably 'the injury to married life itself from its being made the one object of a woman's interest, the still greater injury to unmarried life'⁽¹⁹⁾. An article on 'The Future of Englishwomen' in the Nineteenth Century in 1878, replying to the contention that emancipation was relevant only to the single woman and that its proponents should consider that fulfilment of the not specifically feminine capacities of women would lead to a downgrading of marriage and a diminution of love, argued that the exaltation of marriage led to women not being able 'to judge calmly of an offer when it comes. This state of things is surely not at all conducive to the realisation of a high ideal of marriage.'⁽²⁰⁾

(17) Contemporary Review, 'Ought Women to Preach - The Ministry of Women', January 1884, Vol.45, p.34.

(18) Nineteenth Century, 'The Modesty of Englishwomen', April 1901, Vol.49, p.597.

(19) Contemporary Review, 'Notices of Books', September 1869, Vol.12, p.147.

(20) Nineteenth Century, 'The Future of Englishwomen', August 1878, Vol.4, p.355.

Emancipation, it claimed, would allow freedom of choice, and therefore enhance the possibility of a happy marriage.

The article, indeed, went so far as to suggest that singleness might be best for some, and proposed that practical occupations for women might be encouraged. Conversely, as might have been apparent from some of the passages already quoted, the generally prevalent view of marriage was heavily tied in with an abstract concept of women's occupation and work, that went far to confining it to what the 1844 Quarterly article already cited contentedly described as a 'subtle power whose sources we can hardly trace, but which yet so irradiates a home that all who come near are filled and inspired by the deep sense of womanly presence,'⁽²¹⁾. A suitable commentary on what might be called this accidental effect was unwittingly provided a few months later in an article on 'Lady Travellers' - 'one of her greatest charms...is that very purposelessness resulting from the more desultory nature of her education...the almost total absence of responsibility'⁽²²⁾; as also in a much later article in the Contemporary which took to task Catholic countries where 'woman, intellectually, has become degraded curiously to the utmost, the notion of her spiritual eminence having, as it were, stifled any other.'⁽²³⁾. Two years later, in an article on 'The Religious Education of Women', already cited, it is Comte's 'apotheosis of women as the "self-constituted priestesses of humanity"' that is attacked, as it proves itself by

supreme calm and perfect inactivity, by complete withdrawal from all the cares and anxieties of life, burdens to be borne entirely by men henceforth, who are to adore, in default of a visible concentration of humanity, women as vice-deities, but not because they are wiser, stronger, higher than men,

(21) Quarterly Review, 'The Rights of Women', December 1844, Vol.75, p.124.

(22) Quarterly Review, 'Lady Travellers', June 1845, Vol.76, pp.99-100.

(23) Contemporary Review, 'The Powers of Women, and how to use them', July 1870, Vol.14, pp.533-4.

since every pains is to be taken, by secluding them, in more than Oriental fashion, from all public duties, and all private ones also, save the inevitable one of matrimony, to make their existence an entire blank.

The closer application of this criticism, to the social situation in which he himself was placed, may however have been noted by the writer as well, for he regretted the fact that

Our social laws, though now much ameliorated, have yet been based on two theories - that marriage is the normal and highest vocation of women, and that the normal and highest vocation of marriage is that the wife should please her husband; (24)

and had remarked that the ascription of greater piety to women than to men generally involved contempt both for piety and for women. (25)

The basically irreverent attitude underlying this attribution of a spiritual influence to women may be seen in some of Disraeli's novels. In The Young Duke, for instance, the hero is not especially flawless at first and the novel purports to be a record of his development under the guidance of May Dacre: not only does he become conscious of his previous personal insensitivity to others, he is also made capable, under her inspiration, of a great effort of selfless devotion to a political cause. Yet Disraeli also suggests that the inspiration is effective only because it works upon a nature that is in any case fundamentally sound. The passage describing the Duke's escape from addiction to gambling exemplifies this -

He felt a criminal. In the darkness of his meditations, a flash burst from his lurid mind.... He thought of May Dacre, he thought of everything that was pure, and holy, and beautiful, and luminous, and calm. It was the innate virtue of the man that made this appeal to his corrupted nature. (26)

(24) Contemporary Review, 'The Religious Education of Women', June 1872, Vol.20, p.24.

(25) See Trudgill, op. cit. Duncan Crow, The Victorian Woman, London, 1971, also has a great deal of useful information on the general position of women, though not so helpfully organized.

(26) Disraeli, The Young Duke, London, 1831, Bk.4, Ch.8; Vol.3, p.74.

The description of the marriage of Lucius Grafton, whose wife had thought to reform him, further underlines the point -

Lady Aphrodite was at length persuaded, that she alone could confirm the reformation, which she alone had originated.... A year had not elapsed, ere Lady Aphrodite woke to all the wildness of a deluded woman. (27)

Grafton was incapable of redemption, whereas the Duke's repentance, though it may have been precipitated by May Dacre, had appeared all along to be inevitable because of his own innate decency.

However, the Duke had had his faults, so that the influence attributed to May Dacre is immediately plausible; certainly so in comparison with that in Sybil, where the hero Egremont has hardly any deficiencies and also an awareness sufficient to feel political anxieties that Sybil's introduction on the scene can only mildly reinforce. As such, Sybil's influence has to be displayed in other spheres, and at frequent intervals throughout the book angelic associations are freely asserted, not only when she is on errands of mercy but also on perfectly ordinary occasions. Yet it is difficult to see what practical effect she has upon Egremont, while as for her less heroic admirers, they by no means do anything inspired. Again, in Tancred, though Eva is said to exercise a commanding influence over her foster-brother Fakredeen as well as appearing as a sort of divine guide to Tancred, the latter's development is suspended, perhaps because of racial difficulties, when the continuation of Eva's inspiration must be in doubt, while Fakredeen is explicitly asserted to ignore her suggestions when out of her presence. In effect, Disraeli's concept of his male characters precluded them from being effectively guided by women. It is therefore the more suggestive that blasts on a heavenly trumpet tend to herald the appearance of his heroines. It is almost as though, because there is no other sphere in which they can exercise their talents, they must be relegated to the heavenly one.

(27) Disraeli, The Young Duke, London, 1831, Bk.1, Ch.8; Vol.1, p.57.

The position is somewhat different in Disraeli's last two novels, in both of which there are more heroines than one, all of them playing fairly prominent parts. It is still true that their main role is that of influencing the hero, but it is no longer a question simply of assisting him to fulfil his own potential. In Lothair, indeed, the women attempt to lead the hero in very different directions, which indicates the acceptance of independent motivation; and even if this motivation does not display itself in any very active fashion, this is more than made up for in Endymion where the effects of female interference are practical in the extreme. Far from just providing spiritual control and direction, both Myra Ferrars and Lady Montfort not only run Endymion's career, but may be said to have provided him with it from the first.

Yet the dynamism attributed to these women cannot be said to be wholehearted, inasmuch as it is depicted, in both cases, with regard to men who are remarkably lacking in initiative themselves; as such, there is no possibility of any sort of interaction of compulsive interest between the characters, and in the case of Endymion at any rate, the successes attributed to him seem so incompatible with his passivity that the female manoeuvres on his behalf are barely credible. Far from being a realistic assessment of the feminine contribution to politics, the story appears to be a frivolous fantasy; as was noted by the review in Fraser's Magazine -

Women move through his pages with unceasing zest and charm...but they are seldom, as with other great novelists, the centre of impassioned and powerful emotion, colouring all the flow of his narrative and working itself into supreme crises. (28) -

and even more trenchantly by the Fortnightly, when it referred to the

(28) Fraser's Magazine, 'Endymion', December 1880, N.S. Vol. 22, p. 714.

descriptions of that feminine influence in politics which he so willingly admits, but always with a condescension by no means flattering to the serious claims of the advocates of the equality of the sexes, and hardly compatible with a respectful and elevated affection. (29)

These reviews, though, were written towards the end of the period to be considered, and even then the view they expressed was by no means universal: the Edinburgh took the novel to task for suggesting that

The Feminist principle is the spring not only of society, but of politics... the task of ruling empires, and even of rising in the world, demands sterner virtues; and it is a degrading conception of a great mission in life to represent it as the plaything of fanciful attachments and feminine intrigue. (30)

Only a few months earlier, Ruskin too had expressed distaste for the exaltation in the novel of romantic attachments, in an article in the Nineteenth Century on 'Fiction - Fair and Foul'. Making a comparison there between the novels of Scott and modern ones, he referred in particular to a distinction that he considered stemmed from

Scott's larger view of human life. Marriage is by no means, in his conception of man and woman, the most important business of their existence; nor love the only reward to be proposed to their virtue or exertion... upon analyzing with some care the motives of his principal stories, we shall often find that the love in them is merely a light by which the sterner features of character are to be irradiated.... An era like ours, which has with diligence and ostentation swept its heart clear of all the passions once known as loyalty, patriotism, and piety, necessarily magnifies the apparent force of the one remaining sentiment which sighs through the barren chambers, or clings inextricably round the chasms of ruin. (31)

Given the situation sketched out in the last section, it might have been thought that the development Ruskin so deplored in the modern novel was a step in the direction of realism, at least as far as women were concerned, with regard to the actual business of existence. A previous passage, however, wherein he expands on his accusation of an increasing licentiousness

(29) Fortnightly Review, 'Notes on Endymion', January 1881, N.S. Vol. 29, p. 75.

(30) Edinburgh Review, 'Endymion, by Lord Beaconsfield', January 1881, Vol. 153, p. 111.

(31) Nineteenth Century, 'Fiction - Fair and Foul', June 1880, Vol. 7, pp. 951-3.

such that it was

accepted as nearly an axiom in the code of modern civic chivalry that the strength of amiable sentiment is proved by our incapacity on proper occasion to express, and on improper ones to control it

and compares this with the conduct of a 'gentleman of the old school' indicates that his criticism had a more limited application. In referring to the forceful representation of love, he had been provoked primarily by the ascription of what he considered improper to men; with regard to women, a fair amount of restraint was still expected and exercised. A notice on 'International Novelists and Mr. Howells' in the Contemporary of the month before draws attention to the general characteristic -

it is striking that in every other mark of mental independence, if not of mental culture, the women are not inferior to the men. Mr. Howells does not stand alone in the prominence which he gives to women. It is shared by his countryman Mr. James, and by novelists as different from them and from each other as our own Mr. Hardy and the author of "The Egoist". But it seems to us peculiar to the American mind to vindicate this prominence without recourse to exceptional types, and without the aid of an infatuation to be explained or a theory to be illustrated. Mr. Hardy's heroines have all the qualities which are supposed to turn a man's head, but they seldom appeal to him in any more intellectual way; and where Mr. Meredith's women are mentally stimulating he has had a special motive for making them so. In those of Mr. Howells, however moderate be their pretensions to either culture or intellect, there is a degree of spontaneity which makes mental friction possible, and bears the character of their sex without reflecting upon it... their worst faults and sillinesses are a relief from the intractable virtues and conventional originality of our popular female types. (32)

The Edinburgh, then, in resenting the initiatives exercised by the heroines of Endymion may be seen to have been upholding in some sense a convention about the presentation of women in novels that had not yet, despite the other criticisms of the novel cited, been wholly superseded. At the beginning of the period to be considered, its enunciation of aspects of that convention had naturally been more forceful: reviewing Disraeli's

(32) Contemporary Review, 'International Novelists and Mr. Howells', May 1880, Vol. 37, p. 744.

Henrietta Temple in 1837, it had imposed even more rigid restriction on the self-expression tolerable in a woman -

The love which is here depicted is...the sudden awakening of a slumbering fire... Under such a form the passion may indeed be rare in life, but this is undoubtedly the romantic, the truly poetical aspect under which it should be treated by the dramatist, the novelist, and the poet - as a paramount and omnipotent feeling, before which all other feelings and duties and considerations give way

which is almost immediately followed by

A genuine passion such as that by which she is represented as actuated, would combine calmness with force, - perfect confidence in the beloved object, with timidity and caution in the expression of feeling. At any rate, if the case be otherwise, we cannot help thinking that a greater degree of retenue, - a more sparing use of terms of endearment, is becoming, when the language of lovers is to be transferred to the pages of a novel. (33)

What this meant was that in the treatment of love a sudden and absolute devotion had to be postulated in the woman, which she was on no account to be allowed to express. A further instance of this is to be seen in the Edinburgh review in 1859 of Tennyson's Elaine and Lancelot which was criticized because

the love of Elaine...takes the least attractive form of love in woman, namely, that in which she becomes the suitor. Not all the skill and delicacy of Mr. Tennyson's language, nor all the "extenuating circumstances" brought to bear, are sufficient to render this inversion of right order altogether pleasing; (34)

while the extremities to which it could lead are apparent, as late as 1888, from an article in the Contemporary which attacked Meredith's revelation in The Ordeal of Richard Feverel of Clare's love for the hero. The revelation has been made by means of Clare's diary, but the Contemporary claimed that

(33) Edinburgh Review, 'Disraeli's Novels', October 1837, Vol.66, pp.64-5.

(34) Edinburgh Review, 'Tennyson's Idyll of the King', July 1859, Vol.110, p.258.

even that was revolting, and that the diary should have been burnt. (35)

In such a context, of course, any female initiative that was unconnected with love was deplored all the more. The Quarterly in 1848 looked upon Tennyson's The Princess with approval because it retailed

the simple truth that woman, in soul as in body, is no duplicate of man, but the complement of his being; that her sphere of action is not commensurate or parallel with his, but lies within it, sending its soft influence throughout his wider range; (36)

an attitude that Kingsley put more bluntly in Fraser's when he wrote

He shows us the woman, when she takes her stand on the false masculine ground of intellect, working out her own moral punishment, by destroying in herself the tender heart of flesh...her naughtiness is after all one that must be kissed and not whipped out of her. (37)

A more profound example of independence in George Eliot's The Spanish Gipsy received, nearly twenty years later, a correspondingly more severe rebuke from the Edinburgh -

Whether or no it is a secret object of the poem to depress the manly and elevate the feminine character we know not, but, assuredly, Fedalma absorbs all the dramatic interest within herself, and exhibits not only the conventional struggle between love and duty, but the victory of the latter in a form that is usually and historically attributed to men alone.... The common ideal gladly recognises Jeanne d'Arc in her soldierly manhood...but it would not add to the dignity or beauty of the historic figure if the Maid of Orleans had cut down her lover.... In the discussion respecting the equality, or rather the moral identity, of the sexes, it must never be forgotten, that whatever be the natural or social gains, the abolition of

(35) Lloyd Fernando, 'New Women' in the Late Victorian novel, Pennsylvania, 1977, has an interesting account of Meredith's contribution to the subject. The title of that work, indeed, indicates the reason for my own concentration on earlier writers than those with whom it deals; for these latter, there was a general social question at issue; in the earlier period, it was simply particular situations that were under consideration, and it is Trollope's achievement that he emphasized their importance for the individuals concerned without proceeding to exceptional extremes. As Humphry House said of another difficulty in The Dickens World, London, 1941, 'In Pickwick a bad smell was a bad smell; in Our Mutual Friend it is a problem.'

(36) Quarterly Review, 'Tennyson's Princess: a Medley', March 1848, Vol.82, p.442.

(37) Fraser's Magazine, 'Tennyson', September 1850, Vol.42, pp.250-1.

a great diversity in Nature or in Art is in itself a mighty loss. (38)

The woman, then, who was put forward as a model had to be essentially simple, subordinate, and stultified; which in part explains Taine's objections to what he saw as the counsel of English taste - 'George Sand paints impassioned women; paint you for us good women. George Sand makes us desire to be in love; do you make us desire to be married.' (39) Love had to be depicted within the confines of the proprieties; the model woman had to be a paragon of self-restraint even, in the expectations of some, at any rate, as the comments on Meredith's Feverel indicate, to the extent of keeping her feelings from herself. At the same time, Taine's view seems to require some sort of modification in the light of some of the other passages quoted above; the comments on Henrietta Temple indicate that passion, indeed, was not unacceptable. Rather, the denial of self-expression even when such passion was in question can be seen to be in line with the general denial of self-expression, the diffidence about recognising any sort of independent aspiration for women. It is perhaps, for this very reason that the review of Henrietta Temple recommends a 'sudden awakening' of passion; cerebration and consideration about the particular relation would have implied a personal

(38) Edinburgh Review, 'The Spanish Gypsy', October 1869, Vol.128, pp.527-8. I do not deal with poetry in this study, and Wendell Stacy Johnson, Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry, Ithaca and London, 1975, suggests why, with its concentration on abstract issues. As to the points I make about personal interests, the same writer's 'The Theme of Marriage in Tennyson' in Victorian Newsletter, Autumn 1957, indicates that female ones were of less importance to Tennyson even than to the novelists I find wanting; while Patricia M. Ball, The Heart's Events: the Victorian Poetry of Relationships, London, 1976, confirms this view with regard to other poets, concentrating as it does on the one reaction, and that the masculine one, to each relation.

(39) Taine, History of English Literature, Paris, 1863-4, Bk.V, Ch.1; trans. H. Van Laun, Edinburgh, 1871, Vol.2, p.355.

motivation that detracted from the primacy of the other sex. To use Virginia Woolf's phrase it is love, therefore, that is the interpreter; it is not marriage, which is what her argument might have suggested, as well as the concept of it that has been noted above. Women were to be 'seen only in relation to the other sex', whereas marriage would have provided an external interest that would have bestowed on them some sort of independent status.

It will be my contention in the following chapters that Trollope did, in contrast to his peers, acknowledge some such status. With regard to female novelists of the time, I do not intend to make any particular claim on Trollope's behalf, though I would suggest that he employed in dealing with the wider social connotations of the subject an objectivity that some of them did not achieve.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The more notable distinction is that between Trollope and his male contemporaries, of whom I intend to deal with Dickens, Thackeray and Kingsley, as being worthy and diverse representatives of the times. They, in dealing with the marriageable girl, tended to ignore her own personal situation and to concentrate either on their male characters or on general social questions without, in this latter regard, considering to any appreciable extent their effect on the girl herself; Trollope, I hope to show, in approaching the subject of motivations towards marriage without prejudices or preconceptions, presents a more realistic as well as a more sympathetic portrayal of the woman of the day.

(40) See Patricia Beer, Reader, I Married Him, London, 1974, for an excellent exposition of this.

CHAPTER 2

MARRIAGE AS SACRIFICE

Of women about to be married, initiative could most plausibly be denied to those who were presented as victims of what might be called the marriage market, and it is the treatment of such women by the novelists I have mentioned that I intend to consider first. Usually in such cases the woman was merely an instrument of the author for the exposure of the market or some aspect of it; those who fall into this category must be distinguished from those women, with whom I intend to deal in a later chapter, who are presented as protagonists in the mercenary approach to marriage. For the present I shall concentrate on those women who are treated as merchandise on the market, those women who could attribute elsewhere the responsibility for the marriage with which they are confronted. The assertion, however, of total passivity in this context would seem to involve some sort of special pleading: the simple fact of assent to being disposed of in marriage implies, except in very special cases, a conscious decision that would seem to preclude the complete denial of responsibility; any exception would presuppose an absence of awareness that would tend to reduce interest in the character involved and minimize the impact of the incident. It will be seen, indeed, in the majority of the cases to be considered, that the woman in question is presented as being aware of the implications of her consent to the proposed marriage; the juxtaposition of such awareness in some cases with a denial of responsibility indicates, I would suggest, authorial concentration on other aspects of the situation to the extent of falsifying the position of the woman involved.

The works of Dickens exhibit some remarkable examples of this trait. His most striking presentation of the marriage market occurs in Dombey and

Son, appropriately enough since that is a work dealing with the stultifying effects of commerce. The inadequacy of Mr. Dombey's ethos having been shown very satisfactorily, it seems to me, with regard to little Paul,⁽¹⁾ it is then examined in the light of his attempt to obtain possession of a wife. That a mercenary transaction is involved Dickens never lets one forget for a moment, frequently through the agency of Edith herself. She makes the point to her mother - "You know he has bought me.... There is no slave in a market: there is no horse in a fair: so shown and offered and examined and paraded, Mother, as I have been, for ten shameful years"⁽²⁾; to Carker - "I have been offered and rejected, put up and appraised, until my very soul has sickened"⁽³⁾; to Mr. Dombey - "There is no wealth...that could buy these words of me.... We are a most unhappy pair, in whom, from different causes, every sentiment that blesses marriage, or justifies it, is rooted out"⁽⁴⁾; and even to herself, in comparing with her own the fate of Alice Brown -

And yet, however far removed she was in dress, in dignity, in beauty, Edith could not but compare the younger woman with herself, still. It may have been that she saw upon her face some traces which she knew were lingering in her own soul, if not yet written on that index.... "What is it that you have to sell?" said Edith. "Only this," returned the woman.... "I sold myself long ago."⁽⁵⁾

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- (1) The essay on the book in F.R. and Q.D. Leavis, Dickens the Novelist, London, 1970, investigates this thoroughly.
- (2) Dickens, Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son, Wholesale, Retail, and for Exportation, London, 1848, Ch.27; Chapman and Hall Crown Collected Edition, London, 1890-95, p.317. All future page references with regard to Dickens will be to the relevant volume in this edition.
- (3) *ibid.*, Ch.54; p.610.
- (4) *ibid.*, Ch.40; p.456.
- (5) *ibid.*, Ch.40; p.461.
A.O.J. Cockshut, The Imagination of Charles Dickens, London, 1961 points out how forced the recognition of this association is.

The subtlety that had characterised the depiction of Mr. Dombey's attempt to restrict Paul's nurse to being simply a piece of merchandise is totally absent; the thematic significance of the marriage is hammered out relentlessly and almost grossly.

The reason for all this is a simple one. Mr. Dombey's view of a nurse is entirely his own business: Polly Toodles cannot but become attached to little Paul but, though Mr. Dombey can and does disapprove of this, for the exposure of his attitudes her acquiescence in them is not required; indeed, had her attitudes coincided with his, the deficiencies in these would not have been easily obvious. With regard to a wife, however, the situation is clearly different. For the full horror of the market to be readily apparent, Edith had to marry Mr. Dombey while being aware of, and able to articulate, the implications of her actions. Yet this meant that in some sense she subscribed to his concept that a wife was a commodity that could be bought and sold. At the same time, it had to be suggested that Edith was basically good herself, not only so that she could be kind to Florence, but also because it was the market itself that was under attack and not simply a particular instance of it; had Mr. Dombey ended up dissatisfied with the goods he had got merely because Edith was difficult, the moral would have been not that one ought not to trade in marriage, but simply that one should be very careful in so doing. For these reasons Edith has to allow Mr. Dombey to buy her and then, with what seems to be a moral justification, fail to give him satisfaction.

To do all this and remain both self-conscious and self-consistent through it all is, however, too heavy a task to impose upon anyone. The final impression Edith Dombey leaves is of a mass of incoherent regrets and unbalanced motivations. The simple fact is that she entered upon an

agreement by which she failed to abide; and because she is to be considered, in the context of her marriage and in comparison with Mr. Dombey, a good character, the nature of that agreement is obscured so that her failure should not be noticed. The point is that Mr. Dombey did not simply want a wife, he wanted a wife to be presented before the world. Their first quarrel takes place when Mr. Dombey finds her lacking in attention to his own associates - "Your duty, madam," pursued Mr. Dombey, "to have received my friends with a little more deference"⁽⁶⁾ - and on the occasion when the breach becomes irreparable the complaint is repeated -

"You will further please, madam," said Mr. Dombey, in a tone of sovereign command, "to understand distinctly, that I am to be deferred to and obeyed. That I must have a positive show and confession of deference before the world, madam."⁽⁷⁾

In the preamble to this last scene Dickens declares that Mr. Dombey had thought Edith would in fact subordinate herself to him, while she herself thought that allowing herself to be married to him completed her part in the transaction - 'He little knew how much she thought she had conceded, when she suffered him to call her wife'. Yet the references in his speech to external impressions indicate that such simplifications are a travesty of the more balanced relation that that particular incursion into the marriage market might have been thought to entail. In their great scene Edith suggests that Mr. Dombey wanted her to yield up to him her 'whole will and being', and if that were so Mr. Dombey would clearly be making an unreasonable

(6) Dickens, Dombey and Son, Ch.36; p.417.

(7) *ibid.*, Ch.40; p.453.
Even Barbara Hardy, who in The Moral Art of Dickens, London, 1970, in general characterizes the inconsistencies in Edith as complexities, recognizes how awkward her deficiencies as a hostess are; which confirms my opinion that the defence advanced, that Edith is to be seen simply as a fascinating and internally confused character, is an inadequate one. Those deficiencies emphasize that her role in the scheme of moral retribution was for Dickens important enough to override all else.

demand, and Edith's defiance would be entirely justifiable; but Dickens, though he suggests that, also indicated that what Mr. Dombey really wanted was public deference. The reason for this ambiguity, it seems to me, is that the former extravagant demand would not be consistent with Mr. Dombey's character for, however exacting he would have been within the terms of the compact, he is not likely to have wanted more than he had paid for; while a dogmatic refusal to grant the latter would have been an arbitrary provocation on Edith's part. During their courtship he had not minded her coldness to him, while she had conformed with his desires - 'frigid and constrained, yet prompt and pointed acquiescence with the wishes he imposed upon her'⁽⁸⁾; a refusal to unbend in private, even scorn, Mr. Dombey could have, and probably would have, ignored; it was the public humiliation that he resented, and such humiliation he could with justification have considered a violation of the spirit of their agreement. In Little Dorrit, in a brief reference to a similar situation, Dickens is quite clear about what was required -

Mr. Merdle wanted something to hang jewels upon, and he bought it for the purpose.... The bosom moving in Society with the jewels displayed upon it, attracted general admiration. Society approving, Mr. Merdle was satisfied.⁽⁹⁾

Edith, on the contrary, separated herself from her husband as far as society was concerned, and in doing so defeated the primary aim of his marriage. There was, therefore, a reason for Mr. Dombey's resentment, the reason that Edith was in fact difficult.

The fact remains that this is as far as possible obscured, and that her responsibility for the fiasco is minimised. The reason for this is that the moral protagonist in the tale is Mr. Dombey; he must be brought not into a

(8) *ibid.*, Ch.27; p.316.

(9) Dickens, Little Dorrit, London, 1857, Bk.1, Ch.21; p.202.

situation in which his calculations are simply amiss, but into one whereby his whole approach to life can be shown to be unsatisfactory, so that his moral regeneration can take place. Edith is only an instrument in this process, and a moral life for her would have been an unnecessary luxury. Thus, while it might have been possible to have shown her trying to abide by her bargain but finding it too great an effort in view of Mr. Dombey's total lack of sympathy, it was far easier to aggravate her resentment from the start; it is to justify this, so that Mr. Dombey would not attract sympathy, that exaggerated expectations are attributed to him. In addition, perhaps because that was neither plausible nor sufficient of itself, Edith's resentment is further justified by the attempt to remove all responsibility for the marriage from her. Hence the passive manner in which she refers to herself in the complaints quoted above, hence the continual bitter reproaches to the unfortunate Mrs. Skewton, which are not accompanied by any effort to avoid the transaction. In the case of Alice Brown, the impression is very easily conveyed that the principal responsibility for whatever occurred belongs to her mother rather than to her, because of the physical situation and circumstances involved; with regard to Edith, her articulacy and the diffidence her mother displays when directly confronted by her, both of which are used to establish the strength of the character that later resists Mr. Dombey, make it very difficult to avoid holding her responsible for her own marriage. There are occasions when Dickens seems to recognise this, as when Edith declaims, "I forgive you your part in to-morrow's wickedness. May God forgive my own!"⁽¹⁰⁾ But the effect both of that scene and of the later similar one

(10) Dickens, Dombey and Son, Ch. 30; p. 349.

at Mrs. Skewton's deathbed, as also of the frequently drawn parallels to the case of Alice Brown, is to minimise Edith's own part. The prevailing picture of Edith is that of a victim, albeit a very self-willed one, whose participation in error has been forced upon her; and this is inconsistent with the initiative Edith displays in other spheres, and the strength of character that sustains the dramatic confrontations consequent upon her marriage. Furthermore, the inconsistency is an extremely grave one, since her participation in the marriage is central to the depiction of her character. In making this point about marriage in the abstract, Dickens has ignored the individuality with which he is concerned, thus detracting from the general import of his case as well as of the character concerned.

Dickens' depiction of a similar situation in Hard Times involves similar, perhaps even more glaring, inadequacies. There too the attribution of responsibility, both for the marriage and for the catastrophe that ensues upon it, is at the very least an extremely confused business. Louisa Gradgrind is supposed to accept Bounderby both because she hopes thereby to serve her brother and also because the manner in which her father has brought her up has deprived her of all sentiment so that she sees no reason not to acquiesce in the arrangement proposed to her; she is in a position to be tempted by Harthouse after her marriage not only because Bounderby is so repulsive but also because

Upon a nature long accustomed to self-suppression, thus torn and divided, the Harthouse philosophy came as a relief and justification. Everything being hollow and worthless, she had missed nothing and sacrificed nothing. What did it matter, she had said to her father, when he proposed her husband. What did it matter, she said still. With a scornful self-reliance, she asked herself, What did anything matter - and went on. (12)

(11) Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen-forties, Oxford, 1954, acknowledging the disparity between the conception of Edith's character and the part she is called upon to play, suggests that Dickens may himself have recognized later how preposterous her posturings were, and hence steered clear of such antics in later works.

(12) Dickens, Hard Times, London, 1854, Bk.2, Ch.7; pp.471-2.

The reason for these references to her past is made clear when, in resisting the temptation, she emphatically denies that her upbringing or training had in any way influenced her decision, and reiterates that they had deprived her of "the immaterial part of my life, the spring and summer of my belief, my refuge from what is sordid and bad in the real things around me,"⁽¹³⁾; Dickens' aim is to associate the Gradgrind philosophy with the absence of firm principle and thereby with immorality, to connect the feelings in Louisa that her upbringing ignored with the moral imperative to escape Harthouse, and in that way to insinuate that the release offered by Harthouse, opposed though it was to the clutches of Bounderby, was more importantly in opposition to the sort of release that Louisa's purportedly better nature required.

This is not an entirely untenable position, and in what is intended primarily as a moral fable it is perhaps not a very strong ground of criticism that the position is advanced without diffidence. Nevertheless, there are enough inconsistencies in view to render questionable the use made of Louisa. For instance, with regard to her acceptance of Bounderby's proposal, the attempt to make Gradgrind's system of hard facts responsible is gratuitous: Louisa's concern for Tom was her primary motive, and even if it could be argued that it was the system that crystallized her intrinsic sentiment into that particular concern by shutting out other outlets, it was a motive, however laudable, in opposition to the system. It is certainly true that Gradgrind would not have encouraged Louisa to look to him for any sympathy she might have needed to enable her to act in accordance with her personal feelings; but, given the strength of those feelings and that they made clear to her the disparity that existed between her and Bounderby, the Gradgrind system alone would not have compelled her acquiescence - as her

(13) *ibid.*, Ek.2, Ch.12; p.507.

brother knows and Harthouse rapidly gathers - had it not been for an eminently unpractical sentiment of Louisa's heart. Again, the charm and sympathetic understanding of Harthouse, following upon Bounderby's repulsiveness, would of themselves have been enough to attract Louisa without the postulation of a tenuously argued extreme reaction to the system of hard facts; which, in addition to being unnecessary, fails to make its case. It is all very well to insist on the breach between hard facts and humanity; but the former could quite plausibly lay as strong a claim as the latter to the system of morals that Harthouse's temptation attacked. What Dickens is suggesting is that the Harthouse hedonism laid siege to solid moral principle, that had somehow developed independently of the system under which Louisa had been brought up, and that that system tended to weaken; and these are propositions that require more than simple dogmatic assertion.

What there is, seen clearly, is a basically good girl who, for the sake of her brother, marries a man she detests and then, when about to succumb to some very able seduction, based on an exploitation of her weaknesses, gathers up enough strength to flee to the only refuge she knows. It is difficult to comprehend, therefore, the responsibility for evil that is attributed on the strength of this to the system of hard facts. Indeed, it may be instructive to consider what effect not a hedonistic Harthouse, but an earnest, sincere, amiable Harthouse would have had on Louisa had he loved her. Of course he might not have tempted her then. But, even so, had she loved him too, the conflict between so natural a feeling and the claims of her antecedent morality would have provided a less loaded view of the system of hard facts. Would it have been convicted, had she eloped with Harthouse, of undermining morality for the sake of natural if naughty sentiment? - or, had she remained with her husband, would moral efficacy

have been attributed to it? The irrelevance of such questions is obvious, and this is so for a very instructive reason: Louisa's dilemmas are of interest not because they concern her, not because an independent moral choice confronts her, but because the system of hard facts can be shown up through their means. Moral progress in the novel is the prerogative of Gradgrind. Hence Louisa's two scenes with him, which together form a powerful indictment, even though the basic error with which they deal was principally caused by Louisa's own selfless feeling. That feeling, though it also bears on Tom's own very central story, was essential to make Louisa's acceptance of Bounderby comprehensible. Seeing through him as, unlike her father, she did, having enough of sound good sentiment in her to make him personally repulsive to her, she could never, despite the system, have taken him without an ulterior motive. That supplied, she can herself be an articulate spokesman against the system and attribute responsibility to it for the marriage that she had chosen. As in the case of Edith Dombey, the horror of what it is claimed is being forced upon her can only be fully brought out if she is aware of the consequences; but in the articulation of this, the claim of force can be seen to be unsubstantiated. It is for this reason that Louisa's reason for making the choice, though by no means as reprehensible as was that of Edith, is also obscured and the suggestion made that the ethos attacked in the book as a whole was responsible. Yet there can in fact be no doubt that Louisa, like Edith, made a free choice and a choice that she knew in making it, to be reprehensible. Appalling though Gradgrind's system may have been, the attempt to hold it responsible for every ill does not convince; and reveals again a willingness to subordinate the treatment of a woman in marriage to an exterior purpose.

Towards the end of his career, however, it would appear that Dickens

adopted a more realistic attitude towards women so that his treatment of them becomes less arbitrary. Traces of this are apparent in Great Expectations, where occurs his only other presentation of a sacrificial marriage carried through this time in a much less constrained and unconvincingly pointed manner than in the previous examples examined. Significantly, the history of the marriage itself takes place outside the main bounds of the story. This is because the novel is concerned with Pip rather than with Estella; but, that factor acknowledged, the omission of the particulars of Estella's story registers a development, since the implication is that there is a story there, even if there was no place for it in the narrative. The alternative, previous experience suggests, would have been inclusion and subordination, with Estella being a static figure simply subservient to Pip's own development. In the novel as it is, on the contrary, Estella has her own moral awakening and awareness, parallel to that of Pip. When they come together at last in the muted ending, the impression is of two individuals who have both suffered by their own faults or failings, who have recognised this fact, and in accepting it have prepared themselves better for a future they are capable of sharing. (14)

For in sharp contrast to Edith and Louisa, Estella firmly asserts her own responsibility for the disastrous marriage upon which she embarks. Where before their betrothals the other two have powerful scenes with the

(14) Cockshut, *op.cit.*, and Hardy, *op.cit.*, find Estella inadequate, the one because of her regrets for feelings she has never had, the other because of developments and distinctions in her moral outlook that are not explored thoroughly. Even if, however, inconsistency were granted - and it need not be - the general point is not affected, that the attribution of independent moral evolution to a woman represents an advance for Dickens; as is recognized, in varying degrees, by John Carey, The Violent Effigy: a study of Dickens' imagination, London, 1973, J. Hillis Miller, Charles Dickens: The World of his Novels, Cambridge Mass. & London, 1958, Patricia Thomson, The Victorian Heroine: A Changing Ideal 1837-73, London, 1956 and Angus Wilson, The World of Charles Dickens, London, 1970.

persons on whom the chief blame is cast, Estella specifically clears Miss Havisham of the guilt - "I am going," she said again, in a gentler voice, "to be married to him.... Why do you injuriously introduce the name of my mother by adoption? It is my own act."⁽¹⁵⁾ This is not to assert that the circumstances which have led to the marriage were always within her control; Estella is very much a victim of her upbringing, sees herself as such and goes on to say so in the same scene -

"On whom should I fling myself away?" she retorted, with a smile. "Should I fling myself away upon the man who would the soonest feel (if people do feel such things) that I took nothing to him? As to leading me into what you call this fatal step, Miss Havisham would have had me wait, and not marry yet; but I am tired of the life I have led, which has very few charms for me, and I am willing enough to change it."

But, as she herself grants later, the point is that she could have transcended that upbringing -

"There was a long hard time when I kept far from me, the remembrance of what I had thrown away when I was quite ignorant of its worth. But, since my duty has not been incompatible with the admission of that remembrance, I have given it a place in my heart."⁽¹⁶⁾

As that last sentence indicates, even in her marriage and not only as a consequence of her sufferings in it, Estella had been conscious of a sense of duty, of human obligations; her tragedy had been that, following the logic of her upbringing, she had claimed to be impervious to such feelings. Yet that she had an awareness of them is apparent, if not from the other presentations of her when grown up, in the gentleness with which she breaks the news of her marriage to Pip. The decision, therefore, as she herself claims, to abide by the early expectations of her is a conscious one of her own; it is understandable if only in that refusal, even from benevolent motives, to live up to expectations is difficult, but it is definitely to be attributed not to

(15) Dickens, Great Expectations, London, 1861, Ch.44; p.274.

(16) *ibid.*, Ch.59; p.366.

Miss Havisham but to herself.†

As such, the retribution that falls upon Miss Havisham is much more effective than that suffered by Mrs. Skewton and Gradgrind, those mythical movers of earlier fiascos. They, after all, could have claimed that their systems were satisfactory, it was only the particular husbands their daughters got who were not. Miss Havisham, on the other hand, suffers from the logical extension of the system she had imposed upon Estella: having brought Estella up to have no heart, she has to face the fact that Estella has no heart for her. The irony is compounded by the probability that, by this stage at any rate, Estella does have a heart that she is deliberately suppressing, perhaps that she might fulfil what she sees as her obligation to Miss Havisham; and it is because of the effort required for such suppression that she is so unnaturally hard to the older lady. Certainly, the situation is a very peculiar one, and so clearly distinct from the general objects of satire Mrs. Skewton and Gradgrind might be supposed to represent. Nevertheless, the treatment is comparatively so unforced that it highlights the heavyhandedness of the previous examples.

If Estella is a character with a discernible life of her own, Georgiana Podsnap in Dickens' next and last complete novel, Our Mutual Friend, is most emphatically not. She too is intended to be a marital sacrifice, though in her case the sacrifice is averted; and, peculiarly as far as instances of the genre go in Dickens, she is not the planned victim of parent or effective equivalent, but of total outsiders. A corollary of that, peculiar too, is that the harm to be done to Georgiana is explicitly recognized by those who seek to hand her over in marriage. From this, indeed, springs her preservation, since Mrs. Lamble in the end comes to feel that the operation is too evil to be persisted in and accordingly arranges for it

to be stopped by deliberately rousing the interference of Georgiana's parents, having had indicated to them the threat that she herself presents to the girl. Where the victimising parent figure in previous examples, by virtue of being the activator of the proceedings, had smoothed over to itself or ignored the consequential harm to the girl in question, the Podsnaps are detached enough from this particular plan to be able to acknowledge the threat and forestall it. Nevertheless, there is a strong impression that they are themselves, at least in part, responsible for the impending catastrophe in that they have failed to provide Georgiana with the discernment necessary to deal with such predators as the Lammlers. The wickedness of the Lammlers is, as it were, their rationale so that in the context of the book they demand extraordinary standards by which to be judged: simply because she decides that she cannot go through with the sale of Georgiana to Fledgeby, Mrs. Lammler is converted into a sympathetic figure. The Podsnaps, on the contrary, in laying claim to some sort of normal standard of decency, have to be judged on their inadequacy to provide their daughter with even an elementary discretion. Their responsibility, indeed, is graver than that of Mrs. Skewton or Gradgrind, whose daughters are clearly possessed of at least a modicum of awareness. It is the lack of that in Georgiana that makes the possibility of her being forced into marriage entirely plausible and permits the transference of responsibility to be accomplished without a sense of excessive authorial manipulation. Yet this is achieved by attributing to the Podsnaps a system of upbringing that, in addition to being excessively rarefied, creates in Georgiana a character of little independent interest. In previous examples the interest of the story had been assisted by the dynamism of the character involved, even though that had had the effect of rendering questionable the formula of innocent acquiescence that Dickens had promulgated;

its acceptability in this particular instance depended on a lack of awareness that had required a very special preparation.

In his earliest example of a planned marital sacrifice, Dickens had portrayed awareness as well as acquiescence, and without inconsistency; but here too extravagance had been required, in this case in the form of making the person responsible, a parent, an absolute monster. Mr. Bray in Nicholas Nickleby is most preposterously selfish, but at the same time knows so well how to play on Madeline's feelings that it is quite understandable that she should have felt herself obliged to sacrifice herself for him. Even so, Bray finds it necessary to justify his actions to himself and, given the spasm from which he suffered when first contemplating the deed, it is possible that his death too was supposed to be caused by conscience. Whatever the cause, the death came just in time for Madeline to be saved without there being any hint of her consulting her own feelings or indeed anything but her father's convenience. Had she gone through with the marriage, despite Nicholas' energetic pleas to the contrary, she could hardly have been blamed since she is so clearly meant to be nothing but a model of selflessness. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which she bears some responsibility in that the, admittedly very deep and obscure, traces of her father's conscience indicate that she might have dealt with him more firmly. Certainly, Bray is basically a monster, which William Dorrit is not, and Nicholas Nickleby is a much less subtle work than Little Dorrit but in the latter there is a similar situation in that a selfish father attempts to marry off a selfless daughter for his own convenience, and there Little Dorrit gently but firmly makes it clear to her father that she is not prepared to go that far. Dorrit's maudlin contrition then is something of which Bray would not have been capable, and Madeline would probably not have won her

battle as easily as Little Dorrit did, but the latter work does indicate that such a battle need not have detracted from an ideal of selflessness. The implication is that Madeline's complaisance is itself on a level of extravagance as is Bray's importunity; but this is an implication that the book, in its singleminded concept of the girl, does not explore.

In addition to their resentful but unresisting acquiescence in the marriages imposed upon them there is another factor common to Dickens' sacrificial victims, from which both Estella and Little Dorrit are again exempt, namely that they are not in love with anyone else; Estella and Little Dorrit, conversely, have at the very least a previous predilection for Pip and Arthur Clennam respectively, which may be intended to have assisted them to their own more strong-minded response to the particular calls made upon them. Such predilections they have in common with the victims in The Newcomes, Thackeray's only major novel to deal with the ills of the marriage market. That novel, indeed, is concerned with the subject itself far more than are those of Dickens, where the projected sacrifice arises from some independently deplorable ethos on the part of persons other than the victim: and it is that ethos, whether of Mr. Dombey, Gradgrind or Miss Havisham, that is particularly to be condemned. In The Newcomes, on the other hand, the central theme itself concerns young people being driven into marriage by their elders; in the two most prominent cases, those of Ethel Newcome and Clara Pulleyn, for the simple motive of practical gain, in the others for less orthodox reasons as well, in that the parental pressure to which acquiescence is given is not in itself caused by an obviously selfish or reprehensibly grasping motivation. (17)

(17) The devotion of a whole book to the subject of arranged marriages accords with John Carey's theory, in Thackeray: Prodigal Genius, London, 1971, about Thackeray's feelings concerning his mother's own arranged marriage to his father.

In both these other cases, however, there are also mercenary aspects, a fact that serves to enhance their more obvious application in the two principal affairs. With regard to Leonore, the compulsion to give up Thomas Newcome and instead marry de Florac arose straightforwardly from a principle of parental honour which she herself was unwilling to violate. This unwillingness, however, she associates with the acceptance of parental influence prevalent in France which was, in the main, mercenary in origin. She does this, of course, with the aim of warning Ethel away from her own mercenary aims; but the association also serves to enhance Thackeray's general attack on the marriage market -

"I could not be wanting to the word given by my father. For how many long years have I kept it! But when I see a young girl who may be made the victim - the subject of a marriage of convenience, as I was - my heart pities her. And if I love her, as I love you, I tell her my thoughts. Better poverty, Ethel - better a cell in a convent, than a union without love. Is it written eternally that men are to make slaves of us? Here in France, above all, our fathers sell us every day." (18)

The implication is that Leonore was sold, just as much as if she had been attached to a great fortune; and the associations are developed and the impression strengthened in the discussion of the marriage of her kinsman, the Duc d'Ivry, to 'a virgin of sixteen' -

France is the country where that sweet Christian institution of mariages de convenance (which so many folks of the family about which this story treats are engaged in arranging) is most in vogue.... It is but a question of money on one side and the other. (19)

Thus the origin of Thomas Newcome's separation from his family is connected with the central theme that is mentioned here as governing the conduct of that family.

(18) Thackeray, The Newcomes, Memoirs of a Most Respectable Family, London, 1854-5, Ch.47; The Oxford Thackeray, Collected Edition, 1908, pp.628-9. All future page references with regard to Thackeray will be to the relevant volume in this edition.

(19) *ibid.*, Ch.31; p.406.

Clive's own more prominent first marriage has a more direct contribution to make to the general subject, albeit at a minor level. It is Rosey who is affected by a mercenary parental impulse towards marriage, and she is far less important to Thackeray than Clive is; as such, the ironies of her position are not as closely examined. Her status as a sacrifice is a peculiar one since, though her death that arises from the marriage probably evokes the greatest sense of waste in the novel, she herself does not view her marriage as inherently an unsatisfactory one; she is too tender and submissive and obedient to doubt when her mother dictates to her that she is in love with Clive, and as such looks forward to the marriage. It might, indeed, have been argued then that her sufferings arise from the fact that Clive is not in love with her and that, had he been so, she would have been happy and her mother's mercenary motivation justified. This conception Thackeray challenges by making it very clear that Rosey's submission to her mother continues after her marriage, and has the effect of alienating whatever affection Clive does feel for her in that she fails to provide him with the loyalty he requires. Such alienation, of course, may have occurred only because Clive's affection was essentially superficial. Even so, the suggestion is conveyed that the very complaisance which prompted Rosey's acquiescence in her mother's schemes was necessarily a cause of disaster, if not reprehensibly in the way resentment might have been, at least consequentially enough to invite condemnation of the system that encouraged it. Yet the implications of the situation are not carefully considered, because Rosey is very much a secondary character, both to Clive and to Mrs. Mackenzie who, in the process of being enthusiastically exposed as a harridan, is granted a marked precedence over her daughter.

The predominance of Mrs. Mackenzie is apparent in the very cursory

treatment bestowed upon the possibility of Rosey's other predilections; it is the parental role in the marriage that is emphasized, at the expense of Rosey's own individual concerns. With regard to Clive, on the other hand, though he does marry Rosey in obedience to his father's wishes, it is made clear that his own prevailing disappointment as to Ethel had been instrumental in creating the disposition to acquiesce. The various strands in his motivation are distinctly conveyed -

To please the best father in the world; the kindest old friend who endowed his niece with the best part of his savings; to settle that question about marriage and have an end of it.... One great passion he had had and closed the account of it; a worldly, ambitious girl - how foolishly worshipped and passionately beloved - no matter - had played with him for years; had flung him away when a dissolute suitor with a great fortune and title had offered himself. Was he to whine and despair because a jilt had fooled him?⁽²⁰⁾

Colonel Newcome's encouragement is made clear and, in that he is very fond of Rosey and hates the idea of his son being devoted to Ethel, it is apparent that he is not entirely selfless; the suffering he has to undergo at the hands of Mrs. Mackenzie later on, though almost incredibly excessive, is to be seen as a consequence of his own initiative. But the depiction of Clive's state of mind at the time makes it clear that the deciding factor in and the basic responsibility for the proposal were his own, and it is in that light that his own sufferings must be considered.

With regard to Clara Pulleyn, however, as with Rosey and Leonore, the responsibility is very clearly attributed to her parents -

You proud matrons in your May Fair markets, have you never seen a virgin sold, or sold one?...about the selling of virgins...should the reader haply say, "Is thy fable, O Poet, narrated concerning Tancred Pulleyn, Earl of Dorking, and Sigismunda, his wife?" the reluctant moralist is obliged to own that the cap does fit those noble personages;⁽²¹⁾

and her innocence and helplessness in the face of a determined compulsion

(20) *ibid.*, Ch.62; pp.817-8.

(21) *ibid.*, Ch.28; pp.360-3.

not only to give up Jack Belsize but also then to accept Barnes Newcome is convincingly portrayed. She in fact does not have as much objective justification as Clive does, in that Jack, far from being about to marry another, continues to be in love with her and even cannot help making this clear despite accepting that he ought to go away and leave her alone; the convenient deaths that befall Jack's relations and make his fortune seem designed to emphasize how regrettable her acquiescence was, inasmuch as she need have resisted for only a brief period longer in order to have got what she wanted. Nonetheless, she is not blamed for having given in, nor is there any real suggestion that she might not have done so. That Jack should, under the circumstances he was in, have been given up not even the most amiable, such as Lord Kew, doubt for a moment; which established, the manner in which Barnes' courtship is irresistibly pursued and accepted seems entirely natural. Of course there is a deliberate moral point underlying all this, as is obvious from the lengthy comparison with the Indian suttee, and from other references to sacrifice that accompany Thackeray's account of the fable referred to in the above quotation, and in accordance with these is the rather ghastly fate that awaits Clara.⁽²²⁾ But, though this might have been predictable from the previous narrative that had exhibited Barnes

(22) Thomson, op.cit., recognizes that it is the sacrifice that is important to Thackeray, even in his description of Clara's misery after she has left Barnes. Correspondingly, in Hard Times, where Dickens describes two marriages in obvious need of dissolution, it is also under the shadow of the main target of attack, in his case the system that is Bounderby's prop. It is this, the absence of an independent examination, that makes it difficult to ascertain attitudes to divorce amongst the novelists under discussion. Trollope too approaches the subject only obliquely: in for instance both The Belton Estate and Dr. Wortle's School, it is the reactions of others to the separated woman seeking to mate again that are in question. Nevertheless, at least in the first case, the balance between Mrs. Askerton's withdrawn life and the moral approval given to her supporters might appear to some extent prescriptive.

in a very unsavoury light with regard to his other associations, as far as the marriage alone is concerned, Thackeray is at pains to point out how Barnes could have presented an attractive prospect not only to Clara's parents, but also to her, after she had accepted the need to part from Jack.

However, though he thus accomplishes the immediate purpose of showing how simple the compulsion of Clara was, in making the acceptance of Barnes so natural, Thackeray obscures the status of the fault of which Clara's parents are to be found guilty. Obviously, had they been more careful they might have discovered in time that Barnes was an accomplished and hypocritical horror. But, his particular character being the source of the trouble, the moral of the fable which concerns mercenary marriages in general fails to be established; and this is the more significant in that the prospect of Clara's fate is meant to provide Ethel with a conclusive reason for rejecting a similar marriage for herself. It is plausible that, as she tells Laura, after her engagement she should have discovered more about Farintosh's character to make her dread the marriage; but it is by no means so that it was contemplation of "the wretched consequences of interested marriages" as exemplified by that of Barnes and Clara that made her resolved "not to commit that first fatal step of entering into a marriage without - without the degree of affection which people who take that vow ought to feel for one another"⁽²³⁾. It is not only that Ethel, as she herself declares, would never have fallen as Clara did, it is also that Farintosh is by no means as ghastly as Barnes, is certainly not calculating or hypocritical, and could probably have been managed by Ethel with a fair amount of success: the ostensibly moral reasons for refusing Farintosh had existed long before Clara's debacle and Ethel,

(23) *ibid.*, Ch.59; pp.794-5.

indeed, had been aware of Clara's misery before she accepted Farintosh and had mentioned this knowledge in the course of the dialogues with Clive in which she affirms her mercenary purpose. Clara's escapade simply serves to provide Ethel, and in turn Thackeray, with a long desired excuse to break her engagement without obloquy. There had never, after all, despite the doubts Pendennis occasionally expresses, been any serious suggestion that Ethel was in pursuit of Farintosh's rank. The motive she admits to is to be considered the true one, namely that she wanted to secure Lady Kew's money for herself and thereby for her family, and that to do this she had to fall in with Lady Kew's own ambitions. With Lady Kew dead and the money hers, there was no longer any necessity for her to marry Farintosh. However, had she given him up immediately, her guilt would have seemed great, and the desirability of her marriage to Clive thereby reduced. As it is, though her renunciation is extremely satisfactory to her, under the circumstances it still has the nature of a renunciation, and she emerges from it as a much more praiseworthy person. In addition, though the delay of the breaking off of the engagement allows for Clive's own marriage which postpones further the final desirable pairing, in the end that pairing seems even the more richly deserved on either side because of the intermediate suffering. Certainly, apart from the postponement, things could not have turned out better for Ethel; she gets her money and gets rid of Farintosh for what seems the best of motives. The concluding scene with Farintosh is interesting in this context, since it is unnecessary in terms of Ethel; her renunciatory letter to him, and the reasons for it she gives to Laura, would have adequately expressed the activation of her conscience if that was indeed what Clara's fate induced. That Farintosh did not accept the letter but came to her himself present him in an amiable light, and may suggest that Thackeray's sense

of fairness balked at leaving him identified with Barnes; which is what, in concealing the basic fact of the jilting, the circumstances of Ethel's purportedly highminded renunciation would otherwise have been.

Clara's marriage, then, has two purposes to serve: it is meant to show up the full horror of the marriage market, and it allows Ethel, having been shown as caught in the toils as well as Clara, to escape while still preserving her heroically good status. The brilliance of this is that sympathy is roused for the victims of the institution by displaying the odium both of the marketing period and of the resultant marriage, by conflation of basically distinct occurrences. It is Ethel who keeps insisting that she is being sold, as to whom it is that the vendor, Lady Kew, takes on the character of a wicked witch, and the bitterness of whose enforced separation from Clive is immediately present to the reader. Nevertheless, the fact remains that it is she who is allowing herself to be sold albeit, like Madeline Bray, for the best of motives; as a strong-minded heroine she is above being an object of manipulation, which at times Thackeray himself grants -

to whatever purpose Miss Ethel Newcome, for good or for evil, might make up her mind, she had quite spirit enough to hold her own. She chose to be Countess of Kew because she chose to be Countess of Kew; had she set her heart on marrying Mr. Kuhn, she would have had her way. (24)

Clara it is who really suffers for reasons beyond her control; but, though her victimization after her marriage is forcefully depicted, in the period leading up to the marriage at any rate her predicament by no means arouses as much sympathy as does that of Ethel. Her parents' motives in discouraging Jack and substituting Barnes are by no means as intrinsically discreditable as are those of Lady Kew with regard to Ethel and Clive, and various eligible suitors; and, though Clara does faint very touchingly at the sight of Jack,

(24) *ibid.*, Ch. 28; pp. 362-3.

the feelings in her that the marriage market ignores are not portrayed to any great depth. It is only after her marriage, in the depiction of her reactions to Barnes' monstrosities, that she takes on a definite character. Where Ethel, while in the toils of the marriage market, is examined in relation to Clive, to Lady Kew, and, if not to Farintosh, to Lord Kew, Clara is on the whole simply announced to be in the relevant condition for her characterization as a victim. As with Georgiana Podsnap, though the reality of the forces that compel her can be accepted, it is also at the expense of depriving her of an inner life of her own. It is for this reason that Ethel's compelling situation and articulacy have to be used to spell out the horrors of the marriage market. At the same time, Ethel being strong-minded like Edith Dombey, and also more comprehensibly motivated than she is, catastrophe would not have been inevitable in her case and so the sacrifice is not carried through to a finish; the other marriages attributable to a market, therefore, though less evocative of pity in their arrangement than those planned for Ethel, have to be used to enunciate the misery consequent upon such marriages. The attack on the marriage market that Thackeray thus launches is an effective one; but a close examination reveals a significant degree of sleight of hand.

In the novels of Trollope, no such formulaic slanting is at all apparent. Stories based on similar themes are allowed, in his hands, to resolve themselves without reference to any fixed preconceptions. For instance, one of the more enduring dogmas propagated by Dickens and Thackeray is that marriages that have been fixed, that is caused by pressure on a female victim, must necessarily be unhappy: Trollope's longest and most sustained study of a marriage is an attempt to show that this is not the case. Glencora M'Cluskie may have been propelled into a marriage with Plantagenet

Palliser against her wishes, but the marriage does not therefore become what might be called a moral showpiece, where the consequences of such a virginal sacrifice are shown to be inevitably disastrous; on the contrary, the situation is allowed to develop itself according to its own internal logic.

The marriage itself, however, need not be considered at this stage. What is relevant here is Trollope's presentation of the events and emotions leading up to it. This is not particularly easy to follow, as the story is told mainly in retrospect, and usually with reference to the trials that beset Glencora after her marriage. Nevertheless, Trollope's view is clear enough when traced. In his Autobiography he makes the absolute basis on which it is constructed quite plain when he says of Glencora,

She had received a great wrong, - having been made, when little more than a child, to marry a man for whom she cared nothing; - when, however, though she was little more than a child, her love had been given elsewhere. (25)

This is in fact a personal statement of the view he had seemed to authorize when having it enunciated by Glencora herself in Can You Forgive Her?, where she makes her first personal appearance. She insists there to Alice Vavasor that she was wrong in not having helped her, Glencora, to elope with Burgo Fitzgerald and in that she does this even after she has come to accept fully the permanence of her marriage bond, it would seem to be a measured statement; the Autobiography certainly suggests Trollope thought the marriage unwarranted. The impression, then, is that Trollope believed, no less than Dickens or Thackeray, that it was fundamentally wrong to force a girl into marriage against her will. The vital difference is that Dickens and Thackeray establish this by showing that the marriage itself turns out badly; and this

(25) Trollope, An Autobiography, Edinburgh and London, 1883, Ch.10; World's Classics, Oxford, 1923, p.166. In the absence of a collected edition, all future page references with regard to Trollope will be to the World's Classics Edition, as mentioned in the Bibliography; except where none was available, in which cases the edition used may be found in the Bibliography, as well as at the first instance of citation.

either for a cause that can be distinguished from the wrong that is being attacked, as with Barnes Newcome's personal nastiness, or for a cause so related to the wrong as to nullify the moral conclusion, as with Edith Dombey's strong-minded resentment that prevents her from being seen as truly a sacrifice. Dickens and Thackeray, that is, end up by making not a moral point but a practical one: marital sacrifices are bad because - and they make no claim that would prevent a conditional connection being substituted for the causal one here - they turn out badly.

Trollope, on the contrary, is quite content that the consequence should be relatively satisfactory, for the simple reason that it should have no bearing on the value attached to the basic transaction, the essential wrongness of that he conveys in this case by other means, namely the despair and misery of Glencora in her married situation, based on the regrets and responsibilities she feels towards Burgo that prevent her from trying to come to terms with her relation to Palliser. It is true that Palliser's very nature is unsympathetic to hers; but this is not simply a characteristic of a particular man, but part of the steady seriousness that was thought essential for her. Marriage to Palliser was not simply victimization, it was considered good for Glencora, as an antidote to irresponsible romanticism. In that very fact lay the wrongness of the marriage, for it denied an integral part of Glencora's nature. The passion and sparkle, the essential youthfulness, that so forcefully characterise her Trollope presents in a very attractive manner, and thus indicates very plainly how much of herself her marriage was intended to lay under restraint. This represents another contrast to the sacrificial victims we have seen so far in the other authors: they are hardly seen except in the sacrificial role, and there is little else about them to attract interest. There is no separate nature to be considered

beyond the confines of the plot, and for that reason it is difficult to conceive of an alternative fate in terms of personal preferences: it is, indeed, part of the role allotted to Edith Dombey and to Louisa Gradgrind to complain that any independent motivation has been crushed out of them, a device that restricts sympathy effectively, however essential it may be to the intellectual conception of their stories. Glencora, conversely, has a strongly recognisable independent personality, and the discordance presented between that and the oppressive limitations of her marriage emphasizes the tragic nature of the compulsion exercised upon her.

The portrayal of Glencora's exuberant personality is the more noticeable in that it is accomplished without the slightest doubt being cast on the fact that the compulsion exercised upon her was effective. Unlike in the case of Ethel Newcome, no extraneous moral considerations are introduced to render acquiescence in a loveless marriage on the part of a good person both credible and excusable. Nor is Glencora merely a cipher, as, say, Rosey was, so that her acquiescence is hardly noteworthy. On the contrary, forceful as are the pressures applied to her, Glencora attempts to resist them, and to elope with Burgo. It is not clear whether she would have succeeded, even had Alice helped her, nor, given the absence of absolute recklessness later ascribed to her, can it be assumed that her mind was determinedly made up. What is clear is the character that would have conceived of the plan, would have trusted to a close friend for encouragement, and would have been shaken enough when that was denied to be unable or unwilling to prepare an alternative method of escape. (26) A dejected Glencora could

(26) Juliet McMaster, Trollope's Palliser Novels: Theme and Pattern, London, 1978, analyses carefully the limits of Glencora's indiscretion. In general, McMaster's account is full of extremely valuable insights; she seems to me at fault, however, with regard to her evaluation of Alice's advice to Glencora, in ignoring the distinctions in the situations of the two: the fact of Glencora's marriage and, before, the secrecy inherent in her attempt to avoid it being obviously of a relevance that effectively dissociates the two women.

very well have succumbed to pressure and accepted Palliser; convinced that there was no avenue of progress left for her love, she could plausibly be said to have accepted that she would have to give it up and, on the rebound as it were, on the grounds that love would henceforth be dead to her, have acquiesced in marrying someone else. The failure, then, of the effort to escape had brought it home to Glencora how inextricably she was caught within the confines of propriety; and it was only after that, incapable of any further resistance, that she succumbed. There is no need therefore, given the way the story has been presented, for any special pleas of exculpation or explanation.

Alice, indeed, has a double duty to fulfil in the account of the pressures on Glencora. The very fact that so distant a connection was Glencora's sole refuge in her trials indicates how universal and all-powerful were the interests concentrated on driving her in a contrary direction. In addition, the keen and oppressive interest taken by Alice's relations of all degrees of proximity in her own marital affairs brings home very powerfully how extremely intense must have been the concern roused by Glencora's own much more important problems. Alice's own capacity to resist is aided both by the existence of a father, who had clearly a greater right to interfere than these relations but who did not and therefore made their interference seem gratuitous (even though his own abstinence was only due to the fairly peculiar egalitarian relations that had been established between him and Alice); and by the fact that her relations had, on the whole, not taken much notice of her before, which made their attempts to govern her actions at this stage alone quite clearly invidious. Glencora had neither of these advantages. Since she had been guided by her relations for an extended period, and since that guidance had been on a very formal basis, her own

threshold of resistance was bound to be very much lower than was that of Alice. Glencora herself, in considering the matter, even so felt that she ought to have resisted further - 'For herself, she had been sacrificed; and, - as she told herself with bitter denunciations against herself, - had been sacrificed through her own weakness,'⁽²⁷⁾ Nevertheless, her helplessness, and the overwhelming nature of the interests ranged against her, had been depicted forcefully enough for the concept of a sacrifice to make great sense, and for her own description elsewhere of her fate not to seem fraudulently melodramatic - "'I did it like a beast that is driven as its owner chooses. I know it. I was a beast.'"⁽²⁸⁾

Trollope's other exclusive achievement is that, notwithstanding the acceptability of the above description, he remains fair to the motivation behind the pressures which are thus denounced. The manipulators in Dickens and Thackeray, though usually not personally selfish as Mr. Bray or Mr. Dorrit, are always described derogatorily: Lady Kew is a witch, Mrs. Skewton and Mrs. Mackenzie are ghastly in their own separate ways, the failure of Gradgrind's ideology is the subject of Hard Times. Mrs. Skewton and Mrs. Mackenzie may, indeed, be said to have been on the make in their own right, but their manipulation is basically for the sake of their children; Gradgrind's business connection with Bounderby can hardly be said to be deliberately turned to profit in the disposition of Louisa, while Lady Kew's snobbery is not at all personal, but emphatically on Ethel's own behalf; yet though these individuals are acting in what they see as their children's interests, the impression, except in the case of Gradgrind - and he is

(27) Trollope, Can You Forgive Her?, London, 1864-5, Ch.58; World's Classics, Oxford, 1938, Vol.II, pp.221-2.

(28) *ibid.*, Ch.25; Vol.I, p.329.

condemned on a much larger scale than one only concerning marital manipulation - is not that they are wrong because they are insensitive, but that their whole ethos is a very nasty and consciously cruel one. This may, of course, be because insensitivity cannot be postulated as the victims, strong-minded as they are and conscious that they are, as they claim, being pressurised, point out their wrongs quite plainly to the source of the pressure; and, the victims being therefore a stage more self-conscious than the innocent Glencora, the manipulators have to be that much worse. The fact remains that a consciously cruel process is presented as being carried out on subjects whose interests are claimed to be dear to the individuals carrying out the process; and as such their actions seem to be unclearly motivated, indeed almost arbitrary.

This is not to say that the pressure exercised upon Glencora was wholly kind, or that its effect was necessarily beneficial to her. Indeed, in mentioning the reality of Burgo's affection, Trollope seems to accept the possibility of Glencora's dream being fulfilled, that had they married things might have been satisfactory in the end; and in his account of the efforts of those who opposed the affair he indicates that it was possibly not her happiness alone that influenced them, but a distinct question of the interest of her property -

It is possible that her love and her wealth might have turned him from evil to good. But who would have ventured to risk her, - I will not say her and her vast inheritances, - on such a chance?⁽²⁹⁾

Nevertheless, in the Autobiography he affirms that it was right to prevent her from marrying Burgo; and, if he does make a very clear distinction between that and getting her to marry someone else, it is apparent that the

(29) *ibid.*, Ch.24; Vol.I, P.304.

actual motivation behind the care exercised on behalf of Glencora and her interests he regards with unqualified approval. It is, of course, easier to have such a view when the actual conflict between that care and Glencora's desires is not actually presented; but, had such a conflict been presented, though Trollope may have opposed the form such care took, he would have kept separate the fact of such care and would have attempted to do justice to its motivation. Though wrong may have been done in this case in that Glencora was driven into a loveless marriage, its perpetrators are not thereby placed forcibly on the wrong side of a great moral divide.

Such objectivity is apparent too in Is He Popenjoy?, Trollope's other study of a marriage that has been successfully thrust upon a girl not in love, where the treatment is similarly unforced. There is, indeed, less reason for blame there in that Mary Lovelace is not in love with anyone else, and therefore doesn't suffer as Glencora does; but inasmuch as, the need for rescue not then entering into it, her father's motives are the less worthy, Mary is unquestionably a sacrifice, and Trollope makes this clear in the very first paragraph when he gives as a foretaste of the novel an account of a girl who

"was engaged to marry Harry Jones, and said she wouldn't at the church-door, till her father threatened her with bread and water; and how they have been living ever since as happy as two turtle-doves down in Devonshire, till that scoundrel, Lieutenant Smith, went to Bideford! Smith has been found dead at the bottom of a saw-pit. Nobody's sorry for him. She's in a madhouse at Exeter; and Jones has disappeared."⁽³⁰⁾

If more subtle than bread and water, the pressures applied by Dean Lovelace are equally forceful; there is no doubt, as with Lady Kew and Ethel, that

(30) Trollope, Is He Popenjoy?, London, 1878, Ch.1; World's Classics, Oxford, 1944, Vol.I, p.1.

Mary and her dower are being bartered for noble rank; but the transaction turns out successful in the end, and the Dean emerges as an amiable, if extremely shrewd, individual. The criticisms in the introductory chapters had by no means been mild: the Dean's ambitions had been characterised as distinctly worldly, and his methods of achieving them even as vulgar, and his indifference to Mary's romantic aspirations was ruthlessly depicted; but even then, though obviously delighted with the glory that would be reflected on himself, he is shown as concerned about Mary, not only with regard to her rank, but particularly as to her comforts and amusements. The truth of his assertion to her that, had she 'married a spendthrift lord, even a duke devoted to pleasure and iniquity, it would have broken his heart'⁽³¹⁾ is not to be doubted. The novel of course, is about the marriage itself, and I shall deal elsewhere with the manner in which it was fashioned into being a success. Yet the introduction, while detailing the unromantic way in which it was made up, also indicates the essential benevolence of the Dean in forcing through such a marriage; and, even more forcefully than in the case of the powers that governed Lady Glencora, provides a welcome corrective to the jaundiced dichotomy presented elsewhere between interest and goodness.⁽³²⁾

(31) *ibid.*, Ch.2; Vol.I, p.17.

(32) Contemporary reviews expressed dissatisfaction with the happy marital resolutions in these two books, as witness the New York Nation, 28th September, 1865 and the Spectator, 2nd September, 1865 on Can You Forgive Her? and the Saturday Review, 1st June, 1878 on Is He Popenjoy?, all three reprinted in Trollope: The Critical Heritage, ed. Donald Smalley, London, 1969. Not particularly in the first, which was by Henry James and showed some attention to Trollope's concern with Glencora's cerebrations, but in the other two there are traces that the attitude was governed by resentment of the unorthodox, and superficially immoral, satisfactory outcome of the conventional sacrifice. In addition, in the description by the Saturday of George Germain as 'a stiffer, duller, Mr. Palliser', there is a suggestion that, if the women were meant to be heroines rather than victims, the deficiencies in their husbands were inappropriate to romance - the only alternative, it would seem, to the rigours of a moral fable of sacrifice.

There are, certainly, in Trollope cases where the pressure applied towards a particular marriage being made is shown to be pernicious in its effects, and where indeed kindness is conspicuously absent from the person applying such pressure. Yet even in these cases an attempt is made to appreciate the underlying motivation, and it is definitely not meant to be deliberately and, as it were, dogmatically, evil in intent. A very conspicuous example of this is Lady Anna, where Lady Lovel becomes almost demented in her attempts to make her daughter marry the Lord Lovel who succeeded her own husband. The suggestion that such a marriage should take place strikes her first as indicating 'the fruition of that for which she had spent so many years in struggling... that she and her daughter might be acknowledged to be among the aristocrats of her country',⁽³³⁾ but it is made clear that the determination to have the legitimacy of her marriage recognised was more on behalf of her daughter than herself, and Lady Lovel recognises that the marriage now desired would separate her daughter from her and leave her solitary. As such, her initial anxiety for the marriage is predominantly selfless and eminently understandable. At that stage, indeed, she cannot conceive that her own ambitious anxiety for justification should not be shared by her daughter. It is only on Anna's insistence that such a marriage was absolutely impossible that she begins to suspect that Anna is in love with the tailor Daniel Thwaite; and then, in addition to the horror of the mesalliance itself, she is upset by what she sees as 'thorough deception as to the girl's own appreciation of her rank. The sympathy tendered through so many years must have been always pretended sympathy',⁽³⁴⁾.

(33) Trollope, Lady Anna, London, 1874, Ch.8; World's Classics, Oxford, 1936, pp.72-3.

(34) *ibid.*, Ch.37; p.392.

Looking upon marriage to a tailor as assured disgrace for one of her daughter's rank, she even feels that it might have been better not to have struggled for her rights at all since then, at least, there would have been some doubt about that rank; the irony is that it is the help the tailors, father and son, gave her in her struggle that led to the association in the first place. Given the intensity of her struggle for what she saw as her rightful position, the wretchedness of Lady Lovel at Daniel Thwaite's claims is singularly appropriate, and it is her anxiety to thwart them that primarily motivates her extravagant and often unkind support for Lord Lovel's proposal. He is principally a safeguard against Thwaite, and she shows herself prepared to jettison him in the scene at the Bluestones when she appeals again to Anna to give Thwaite up. The pressure, then, in favour of the marriage is not due to some sort of general ambition, to persist in which against Anna's own desires would have been persecution of a highly reprehensible sort; but arises from an understandable and very specific motive, which involves a very close attention, though to oppose them, to Anna's own desires.

Those desires are equally fully explored, thus rendering successful because complete and comprehensible the presentation of the conflict between the mother and the daughter; which is in fact the theme of the book and not, as has been seen elsewhere, an instrument for enunciating a moral point. This does not mean, nor would one expect it in Trollope, that he is not himself clear about the moral course of action: not only in the Autobiography when he is discussing the book, but right through in detailing Anna's celebration, he makes it clear that the right thing for her to do was to stick by the tailor to whom she had committed herself already - 'she had lost the right, could she ever have had the right, to live his life' (35) with

(35) *ibid.*, Ch.11; p.109.

reference to Lovel, and again with reference to Thwaite, 'How could she be forsworn to one who had been so absolutely good...who had been the only play-fellow of her youth, the only man she had ever ventured to kiss, - the man whom she truly loved?'⁽³⁶⁾ Yet, despite the unquestionable nature of her obligation, the force of the temptation as it presented itself to her is clearly depicted, and in such a manner as to excuse, not wavering, for of that she could never be accused, but contemplating the attractions of a world in which she would not have associated with Daniel Thwaite but would have been able to have loved the other. She realises the gentility of the world into which the successful outcome of her mother's struggle would lead her, and finds it personified in Lovel's chivalrous ease; and comparing that with Daniel's bluntness regrets the deprivation of her youth that had prevented an earlier and formative familiarity with the former. But, though that is about to be established as her birthright, circumstances had cast her with the latter, and the association is one to which she is irrevocably committed.

Anna, then, though firm in her love, recognises clearly the relation it bears to her unfortunate upbringing; and this very clarity about her position, the realisation that it had certain aspects which might have seemed regrettable, contributes to her capacity to resist the pressures brought to bear upon her. The basic positions of mother and daughter were incompatible, as Trollope relates -

Had they confined themselves to the argument of present fitness...their chance of moulding her to their purposes would have been better. As it was they had never argued with her on the subject without putting forward some statement which she found herself bound to combat. She was told continually that she had degraded herself; and she could understand that another Lady Anna might degrade herself most thoroughly by listening to the suit of a tailor.⁽³⁷⁾

(36) *ibid.*, Ch.16; p.165.

(37) *ibid.*, Ch.36; p.379.

The point is, for Lady Lovel, the period when she had been supported by the tailors was simply an interlude when she had not been in possession of what she saw as her inalienable rights, whereas for Anna it was the only life she had ever known. She could not be expected to deny the fitness of anything that had occurred then, because there was nothing else to which she could hold. Lady Lovel is in fact right in her realisation that Anna could not have truly sympathised with her. Affection had led to sympathy for the struggle her mother was engaged in, just as pity for her mother was the chief incentive to Anna to give Daniel up; but her view of her own position and its concomitant obligations was fundamentally at variance with that of her mother. That being the case, being as Trollope points out her mother's daughter, she was bound to cling tenaciously to that view and struggle to uphold it with all her strength. Apart from that she endeavours not to hurt her mother; but, despite their concern for each other, Trollope has so sketched the basic motivation of each, that the importance of the point at issue and the bitterness of the struggle is readily comprehensible.

The conclusion is for Lady Anna a satisfactory one but there are equally examples in Trollope of pressure exercised in favour of a particular marriage leading to disaster. The best known and indeed most dramatic incident of this sort occurs in The Eustace Diamonds and concerns the efforts of Mrs. Carbuncle to marry her niece Lucinda Roanoke to Sir Griffin Tewett. It has the distinction of being one of the few presentations in the fiction under consideration of the marriage market in what might be called its unmodified state, dealing as it does with a girl whose only asset is herself who is to be given over to a gentleman whose only attraction is his money. The transaction is easily presented as a purely financial one, goods being bought for money. Such a simple situation is rare in the fiction under consideration,

and inevitably brings to mind other instances, as happened with Michael Sadleir when he wrote in his preface to the novel,

Is it possible that Lucinda was suggested to her creator by Edith Dombey? Admittedly differences between the episodes involving the two women are more marked than similarities. Edith Dombey marries, which Lucinda does not; Dombey and Tewett, though both brutes, are very unlike in their brutality; Edith ultimately breaks out into tragic rhetoric, whereas we leave Lucinda retreating farther into her shell of bitterness. But the contrasts are as much the contrasts between Dickens the dramatist of the macabre and Trollope the novelist of polite manners, as between one story and another. Up to the moment when Edith disdainfully submits to the ceremony of marriage, her mood and Lucinda's run parallel. Thereafter no comparison is possible. Lucinda revolts. (38)

Sadleir's statement of the distinctions between the two stories is useful, but the reason he then goes on to give for them is a dubious one. As the difference in the brutality of Dombey and Tewett should make clear, as the varying reactions of Edith and Lucinda indicate, it is Trollope who is dealing with the bizarre if not the macabre, and it is Dickens who is purporting to present a criticism of polite manners. Sadleir is nearer the mark when he says at the end of the paragraph,

it was equally like Dickens to follow Edith through her time of suffering, so that at the last she should have a share in the discomfiture and downfall of the man whom she hated.

Though there is more in which Edith has a share, she is indeed an instrument for Dickens, with which to inculcate lessons against the errors of a marriage market he thought general as well as against the deficiencies of Dombey's philosophy of life.

Trollope, on the contrary, in presenting Lucinda Roanoke is not in the least concerned with making general points. He is concerned with the particular character and the particular situation, and they are both so bizarre that there can be little

(38) Michael Sadleir, introduction to The Eustace Diamonds, Oxford Trollope Crown Edition, 1950, Vol. I, pp. xi-xii.

question of the story dealing with 'polite manners'. Lucinda's own personal peculiarities are very strongly put, her almost physical aversion to Tewett, the running 'a muck among the finery, scattering the laces here and there'⁽³⁹⁾, her attitude when finally refusing the marriage just as it was due to take place - 'There had come over her face a look of fixed but almost idiotic resolution; her mouth was compressed, and her eyes were glazed, and she sat twiddling her book before her with her fingers.'⁽⁴⁰⁾ Tewett too, though less extraordinary, is odd enough in his determination to have Lucinda precisely because she so openly expresses her scorn for him and her desire to be free of the engagement. There is no possibility therefore of the attitudes on either side being mistaken, nor for the likely consequences not to be obvious; which makes the impropriety of the scheme being pushed through perfectly obvious as well, and increases the moral obloquy attaching to Mrs. Carbuncle. The decision, nevertheless, was Lucinda's own, as may be seen from the conclusion when nothing Mrs. Carbuncle can do or say can alter her resolution not to go through with the marriage. There is no need to postulate decent restraint as Sadleir does when he writes in the passage quoted, 'It was like Trollope to stop short in the church porch rather than exploit the poor girl's misery'; the process stops where it does simply because a girl as determined as Lucinda could not be forced against her will into an action to which she was so thoroughly averse. There is no question of exploitation with Trollope, for he has no external axe to grind: Mrs. Carbuncle is responsible only for the pressure she applies, and there is no necessity to saddle her with any greater guilt. As for Lucinda, Trollope allows the character he has created to act in consistency with itself, and for that

(39) The Eustace Diamonds, London, 1873, Ch.69; World's Classics, Oxford, 1930, p.517.

(40) *ibid.*, Ch.70; p.528.

reason the resentment, the bitterness and the force of character forestall the marriage.

Yet there is no inconsistency either in Lucinda having agreed to the marriage in the first place. She has a sense of obligation to her aunt, and it fits with her intense independence that she should have chosen even to sacrifice herself to live up to it - "I have struggled so hard, - simply that you might be freed from me"⁽⁴¹⁾ and again, "He is not bound to anybody as I am bound to my aunt. No one can have exacted an oath from him."⁽⁴²⁾ This last statement is made when she is trying to persuade Lizzie Eustace to get Tewett to call the marriage off himself, and pinpoints her attitude to the whole business. Perhaps at the very beginning, before she was properly aware of the effect he had upon her, she was prepared to marry him; for the most part, certainly, her aim was that the marriage should not take place, but that the break should not be openly on her part, so that it would seem as though she had carried out to the end what she saw as her duty. When this appeal fails, and it is clear that nothing else will intervene, she is fully prepared to take the initiative herself. The pressures Mrs. Carbuncle had applied had kept clear her niece's dependent position; but they had been only a part of Lucinda's general appreciation of her situation, and when they became unacceptable, she could dispense with them and act in her own right.⁽⁴³⁾

Carefully studied as it is, though, it is difficult to take Lucinda's story entirely seriously. What Sadleir considered wholly tragic seems to me often to be merely melodramatic; and the names, the context, threats of murder and mention of oaths, as in the last passage quoted, indicate that this

(41) *ibid.*, Ch.69; p.522.

(42) *ibid.*, Ch.66; p.498.

(43) See A.O.J. Cockshut, Anthony Trollope: A Critical Study, London, 1955, for a fuller examination that takes account of the wider implications of the situation.

approximates to Trollope's view. Sadleir, indeed, may have been on the right lines in the connection he drew, in that Lucinda may be seen as a burlesquing corrective to Edith Dombey. It was not that Trollope denied the existence of a marriage market, but that he saw that it was inconsistent to postulate both acquiescence on the part of the victim as well as strongly expressed resentment unless the circumstances were shown to be decidedly peculiar: Lucinda's motivation escapes being highly confused only at the price of her being, at the very least, eccentric. Except in conditions of heavy dependence, Trollope thought that, on the whole, as in Lady Anna and in other examples to be considered, a girl could resist attempts to marry her to someone she disliked. Lucinda's acceptance of Tewett is deliberately disdainful, as Edith's of Dombey should have been were she anxious to make her position clear; it was reprehensible of Tewett to carry on regardless, and it justified Lucinda's further treatment of him; and even so she got out of the marriage. If there is a general point in the story, it is that the marriage market is mainly what one makes of it and that to blame it for personal peculiarities is misleading.

Possibly to emphasise the atypicality of the situation, Lucinda is stated to be an American. In Trollope's only other work in which similar compulsion also leads to tragedy, the special nature of the situation is again underlined by the protagonists being alien. Linda Tressel was one of the novels Trollope published anonymously in order, as he put it in the Autobiography, 'that I might see whether I could obtain a second identity'⁽⁴⁴⁾. It is set in Nuremberg, again about an aunt and a niece, and the motivation behind the pressure exerted by the aunt is directly related to an extreme Protestant ethos -

(44) Trollope, An Autobiography, Ch.11; p.186.

should she hesitate between heaven and hell, between God and devil, between this world and the next, between sacrifice of time and sacrifice of eternity, when the disposal of her own niece, her own child, her nearest and dearest, was concerned? Was it not fit that the world should be crushed in the bosom of a young girl? and how could it be crushed so effectually as by marrying her to an old man, one whom she respected, but who was otherwise distasteful to her - one who, as a husband, would at first be abhorrent to her?⁽⁴⁵⁾

It is that almost manic religious intensity that in the first instance extracts acquiescence from Linda - 'For three hours Linda lay there, hearing this, mingling her screams with those of her aunt, half fainting, half dead'⁽⁴⁶⁾ - who is reduced to a state in which she is prepared to grant almost anything so that she might halt the hysterical assault.

But, dreadful as she finds the hysteria, it only succeeds in actually overcoming her when her resistance has been previously weakened - both by her illness and by the unexpected opposition of her father's friend Herr Molk. He, indeed, had been not so much in favour of the proposed marriage to Peter Steinmarc as anxious about the person Linda really loved, whose politics he thought seditious. The effect, though, was to strengthen her aunt's case, so that the hysteria finally lays Linda low. Even so, like Lucinda's, her acquiescence is accompanied by the hope that something would put off the marriage; so she elopes with Valcarm, and when that comes to nothing and the renewed arrangement is again forced upon her, she runs away herself. Acquiescence then means nothing to her, except that in arousing the expectations of everyone else, it lays upon her the need for some sort of dramatic action, such as running away. The implication is that such an effort is less difficult for her, than putting up with her aunt's insistence, so that in effect the only achievement of the pressurising is to make Linda able and willing

(45) Trollope, Linda Tressel, Edinburgh and London, 1868, Ch.1; World's Classics, Oxford, 1951, pp.209-10.

(46) *ibid.*, Ch.9; p.310.

both to lie and to cut herself off from her aunt. Since the wear and tear of the whole business costs her her life, Trollope's view can hardly be said to be a comfortable one, and even without Linda's death the reactions pressure could rouse are seen to be pretty grim; but the conclusion nevertheless is that such pressures can be resisted, and inasmuch as even Madame Staubach is shown as softening at times and even coming very close to relenting, the implication is that resistance could usually quell such pressures. It is only in the highly rarefied atmosphere of Trollope's Nuremberg, or amongst the very peculiar characters of The Eustace Diamonds, that the marriage market proceeds to violent extremes. In the latter case the part Lucinda's own independent spirit plays is made clear; in the former, though Linda is very much a victim, though by no means a passive one, the very specialised motivation behind her aunt's relentless persecution is treated, if not with sympathy, with an understanding that yet succeeds in isolating it and denying it a general application.

In The Way We Live Now the protagonists in the marital fracas are again alien. Far in excess, too, of others we have seen, with the possible exception of Mr. Bray, Melmotte's motives for marrying off his daughter are intrinsically selfish - 'His daughter was valuable to him because she might make him the father-in-law of a Marquis or an Earl'⁽⁴⁷⁾; the advance in his social position her marriage could bring him would increase his financial prestige and thus make his speculations easier for him. His intrinsic indifference to his daughter's own interests makes him comprehensibly less susceptible to her aversion to the match. Even so, he is in no way able to overcome her resistance. Indeed, had the man she did want to marry shown

(47) Trollope, The Way We Live Now, London, 1875, Ch.25; World's Classics, Oxford, 1941, vol.I, p.233.

more initiative and anxiety for the marriage himself, there is no doubt that, regardless of her father's wishes, she would have had her way in that too.

The determination of his daughter confounds Melmotte, and the more in that at first she had seemed to be entirely subservient to his will. The original proposal of Lord Nidderdale she had accepted, and that had been broken off only because of his own dissatisfaction with the terms under which he was to have her. Both when Grasslough was suggested to her, however, and when Nidderdale came back again, Marie knew her own mind and was determined to abide by it. Trollope examines the reasons for the change in a fairly long and significant passage -

She had, no doubt, consented to accept the addresses of others whom she did not love, - but this she had done at the moment almost of her first introduction to the marvellous world in which she was now living. As days went on she ceased to be a child, and her courage grew within her. She became conscious of an identity of her own, which feeling was produced in great part by the contempt which accompanied her increasing familiarity with grand people and grand names and grand things...at that time she had been childish.... But a few months in London had changed all this, and now she was a child no longer. (48)

The relevance of the alien background of the Melmottes is clear: not indeed in that they are foreign since Marie could very well have had in England an upbringing that kept her dependent through lack of knowledge and experience, but in that the world she had lived in before was not such as to demand of her active participation in social life. The new world she had been placed in does demand such participation, which would broaden her experience and naturally tend to increase her confidence in herself; and it is in that new world that the marrying and giving in marriage in which Melmotte manipulates takes place. The particular evil that is contemplated breeds, as it were, its own antidote. As Marie's own former obedience indicates, of course,

(48) *ibid.*, Ch.25; Vol.I, pp.233-4.

the formula is not always successful, and sacrifices could be carried through without opposition; though even in those cases it could be argued that the lack of alternative interests, as say in the case of Mary Lovelace in Is He Popenjoy?, would increase the chances of ultimate happiness for those who were married in such a fashion. Leaving aside that moot point, what Trollope appears to be suggesting with Marie is that the capacity to have an alternative interest is bound up with the capacity to cling to it tenaciously. What might be called the cynicism of the marriage market in which Marie finds herself rubs off on her, so that she has no qualms about pursuing single-mindedly what she sees as her own interests. Melmotte's attitude to Marie had not changed from the days when he would order her about, and entrust part of his fortune to her for reasons of security in the perfect confidence that he could continue to do with it, through her, what he willed; it is Marie's social life that has changed and, as the passage quoted makes clear, made her independent and able to face up to her father when she saw that her desires were in conflict with his.

The irony is that Felix Carbury is by no means for her good either. Trollope amusingly connects her love for him too with the change in her way of life -

she had taught herself this business of falling in love as a lesson, rather than felt it...she had learned from novels that it would be right that she should be in love, and she had chosen Sir Felix as her idol (49) -

which may seem to refute the charge that cynicism was bound up with that life. But the cynicism referred to governed only method and manners. It denied obligation and inculcated singlemindedness in pursuing one's ends, but it did not necessarily govern one's view of those ends. Melmotte is sincere to the point of desperation in his belief as to the desirability of

(49) *ibid.*, Ch.98; Vol.II, pp.451-2.

allying himself with the aristocracy, just as Lady Monogram is ridden with anxiety to be asked to the Melmotte party for the Chinese Emperor; the sincerity of the aspirations themselves cannot be doubted in these cases. So the artificiality of Marie's conception of love is by no means incompatible with the world she inhabits, nor with the hardheadedness of the calculating capacity that world induced. Her obsession with sentiment in no way inhibits the perfect equanimity with which she acts to bring it to fruition, rejecting Nidderdale, planning an elopement and carrying out her part of it, sticking to Felix even though he fails to accompany her and she is brought back, and refusing, in the vain hope it might help to bring Felix and her together, to sign over the money her father had kept in her name.

It is only after Felix has refused her offer of forgiveness she knows he has not deserved, and with it herself and the money that is legally hers, that she determines to forget him and that, 'go where she might, she would now be her own mistress' (50). This determination she sticks to through all the troubles that follow and, without her father, manages to settle herself satisfactorily in the end. Though what had happened had not made her much in love with matrimony generally.... On consideration of the whole subject she was inclined to think that she would do better in the world as Mrs. Fisker than as Marie Melmotte, - if she could see her way clearly in the matter of her own money. (51)

Very coolly she makes her position clear to Fisker, who accepts it, being fully conscious of her capacities; the result is that she makes just as much a marriage of convenience as her father had intended, the difference being that it was to her convenience and not to his. Melmotte had, in essence, been attempting with his own money to buy Nidderdale or the equivalent,

(50) *ibid.*, Ch.82; Vol.II, p.310.

(51) *ibid.*, Ch.98; Vol.II, pp.452-3.

and Marie had been simply the instrument by which Nidderdale was to be attached, which perhaps makes her resistance easier in that she is conscious that nothing is being done for her benefit; for, though it is her affair with Felix that lends strength to her resistance and it is possibly too much to see the affair itself as a reaction to the ignoring of her own interests, the conclusion certainly reinforces the anxiety she shows throughout to establish interests of her own. The pressure, then, that Melmotte applies is to be seen - once Marie has ceased to be a child - as perhaps inculcating contrariety: it is her refusal to be used as an instrument that encourages discovery of a field in which Marie can express herself.

A situation similar to this, if far less serious, is portrayed in Ralph the Heir, where in the efforts of Neefit the breeches-maker to marry his daughter to Ralph Newton, the motive is social advancement. There is an important difference, however, in the two works, in that Neefit, unlike Melmotte, sees such advancement as an end in itself, and that not on his own behalf but mainly on behalf of his daughter -

He must find some gentleman who would marry her, and then would give that gentleman all his money, - knowing as he did so that the gentleman would probably never speak to him again. And to this conclusion he came with no bitterness of feeling, with no sense of disappointment that to such an end must come the exertions of his laborious and successful life. There was nothing else for him to do. He could not be a gentleman himself. (52)

It is in that sense that there is a certain amount of indifference to his daughter in his plans, in that they result from the realisation that there is nothing else he can do with his money, since he has found out that what he can buy with it for himself gives him no pleasure; and therefore this social upgrading of the next generation, as a concrete sign of what he has achieved, becomes to him a duty and in time develops into an obsession.

(52) Trollope, Ralph the Heir, London, 1871, Ch.5; World's Classics, Oxford, 1951, Vol.I, p.59.

For this reason he can persist in his plans even after his daughter has made it clear to him that she will have none of them. Nevertheless, basic to this picture of her social exaltation as tantamount to a fulfilment of himself is affection for her in herself, so that not only are the pressures he applies much less savage than those of Melmotte, but he even falls in completely with her views in the end and receives as her future husband the simple social equal she advances.

Polly Neefit's reaction to her father's social ambitions is similar too to that of Marie Melmotte, in that her rejection of them serves to crystallise her own feelings about herself. She is presented at first as a girl with a strong sense of romance, whose attitude to Ontario Moggs is that he is all very well, but not quite glamorous enough. This criticism is modified in the course of the novel, partly because Moggs becomes more noteworthy by standing for Parliament, and partly because his irritation at what he sees as the intrusion of Newton leads him to press his suit with a vehemence that Polly considers to be properly romantic; but, more importantly perhaps, because Polly's dealings with Ralph Newton have brought her to a less extravagant idea of romance and a more realistic view of her own position. Though, in accordance with the agreement Newton reaches with Neefit that the latter should pay his debts and see him solvent, he proposes not once but twice to Polly, it is quite obvious to her that he is not in love with her; and he is unable to disguise from her the fact that, were they to marry, he should want to see as little of her family as possible. This last in particular makes it clear to Polly that, fitting object of an ideal romance though he is, there could never be anything serious or satisfactory between her and him. Despite his ugliness and his lack of gentility Moggs, derided as he is by her father in pursuit of the plan that Polly plainly recognises

is preposterous, seems much more suitable to her and, there being no doubt of his devotion, she accepts him.

Trollope indeed is much more concerned with the amusement to be got out of Neefit's attempts to make Ralph stick to their bargain, even after Polly had refused him twice and after the financial problems that had driven Ralph into making the bargain had resolved themselves separately. There is therefore an authorial reason for Polly's determination to resist what must have presented a strong temptation to a romantic girl in her position to participate in the life about which she had only read hitherto: the clear-sightedness with which she reacts points up by contrast Neefit's own extravagant ambitions. Trollope endeavours, though, to make this convenient reaction plausible both by detailing the process of thought sketched above and by presenting a period when Polly might have acquiesced, the balance swinging the other way only when she had had an opportunity to compare Ralph, in his lack of ardour, with Moggs. It must be granted nevertheless that Polly and her motivations are much less immediately present to the reader than are those in the other cases we have considered so far; there may be no obvious inconsistencies, but in that Polly's story, at least from the Neefit angle, is primarily to provide amusing interludes, there is a certain looseness about it which perhaps makes it not a suitable subject for comparison with the other works considered.

Though there are several occurrences in Trollope of pressure being applied by relations and even friends on a girl to marry someone in particular, the only other one where the application is heavily earnest is in The Golden Lion of Granpère; and there, as with the Neefits, the story is not very serious. Trollope originally intended to publish this anonymously, for the same reason as with Linda Tressel. Accordingly, the story is set

abroad, but it is shorter and less intense than the other or its companion, Nina Balatka, and while those two are intended to be governed by the atmosphere of the towns in which they are set, there is nothing very rarefied about the mood of The Golden Lion; Granpère being much less evocative of any particular feelings, this was presumably intended from the start. The only factor which the foreign setting seems to affect is the absolute openness with which Michel Voss declares that it is his duty to see to the satisfactory marriage of his niece: and that avowed duty, though it may have initially prompted the plan of the marriage to Urmand had a minimal part to play in motivating his insistence to Marie on her adopting that plan. That was due principally to an anxiety to have his own way that had nothing to do with an acknowledged duty which would have been equally well fulfilled had Marie married his son George as they both wanted to. Trollope hints that in Michel Voss's original rejection of that possibility his desire for self assertion had played its part -

he would not probably have objected to a marriage between the two young people, had the proposition for such a marriage been first submitted to him, with a proper amount of attention to his judgment and controlling power.... To him George was still a boy, and Marie not much more than a child. (53)

But, if easily touched, Michel calms down as quickly, and his great affection for both George and Marie makes him yield very quickly once he discovers how determined they are. Marie's firmness about her commitment to George cannot be shaken once their own misunderstandings are settled, and albeit after some very heavy blustering, Michel recognises that he can have no authority against such firmness and the story reaches its happy conclusion without any great drama.

Walpole, in his introduction, describes the plot as similar to that of

(53) Trollope, The Golden Lion of Granpère, London, 1972, Ch.1; World's Classics, Oxford, 1946, p.15.

The Small House at Allington, The Belton Estate and Can You Forgive Her?, being

The story of the charming girl who, through a sense of duty or a confused conscience, engages herself to the man she doesn't love and needs three hundred pages to free herself and be re-engaged to the man she does love. (54)

This may describe the plot fairly accurately, but the comparisons are wrong-headed, in that in those stories there is love, of some sort at any rate, for the 'wrong' man. The Golden Lion is similar rather to these stories and the others discussed above, in that there is pressure in each on a girl to marry someone she doesn't love. The fact of this pressure, when it is in conflict with the love of the girl for someone else, Trollope always considers wrong; but in each case the motive for the pressure is clearly portrayed and very often shown to be eminently understandable. Because he avoids simple moral divisions, Trollope's approach displays a very welcome degree of realism. There wasn't a simple dichotomy between good marriages based on love and evil ones that were planned; just as the character of the person loved had to be considered, so had the motivation behind the plan; and since this last usually involved the happiness of the girl concerned, dogmatic insistence on the plan in the face of strong arguments against such happiness resulting was hardly realistic however useful it was schematically. At the same time, Trollope's ability to put those arguments strongly springs from his close attention to the feelings and reactions of the girls involved; unlike the other authors considered he is concerned with the institution of the marriage market not in the abstract, but in terms of its actual impact on independent individuals. (55)

(54) Hugh Walpole, introduction to The Golden Lion of Granpère, Everyman Library, London, 1924, p.viii.

(55) The above account is noteworthy from a negative point of view; I shall simply mention, as an extreme example of the critical works that make no mention of this aspect of Trollope's contribution, Robert Tracy, Trollope's Later Novels, Berkeley and London, 1978; which, while examining the marital manipulations described in a number of novels discussed above, hardly considers Trollope's characteristically unique depiction of the reactions of the individual girls involved.

CHAPTER 3

MARRIAGE AS PREDACITY

The marriages considered in the last chapter were ones of convenience rather than of love, and the same will be true of those in the category to be considered now; the women in question, however, will be of a very different sort: where those were given in marriage by someone else, these seek to dispose of their own selves by some means or another in some sort of marriage. As such, these would be expected to display some degree of consistent and coherent initiative, a quality, it may have been noted, that was conspicuously lacking in the Dickensian examples amongst the more predictably passive women examined in the last chapter. It is in keeping with this trait that with regard to the present category, where an active personal determination is to be anticipated, relatively few examples are to be found in Dickens. Indeed, what might be called the only full-blooded specimen of the breed is to be found in Our Mutual Friend, the significance of which has been noted before, in the suggestion that towards the end of his career Dickens' portraiture of women became less constrained.

Even so, as was the case with Great Expectations, the removal of restrictions in Our Mutual Friend is also primarily a conceptual one: as with Estella, though a surprising amount of initiative is ascribed to Sophronia Akersham, the details of the working out of that initiative are largely ignored. This can, of course, be ascribed to the interest taken in Sophronia's aims and position after her marriage. Her adverse interference with Georgiana Podsnap, which has been mentioned before, arose out of the compact of mutual interest into which she had entered with her husband after their marriage, and his reactions had to be taken into account in her regrets about that

interference and her attempts to reverse its effects. Yet even if for this purpose the marriage had to be entered into as soon as possible, the absence of even the most cursory treatment of Sophronia's inner life prior to her marriage detracts from the depiction after it of her conscience being activated. There is a variance in the depth of treatment accorded to her before and then after her marriage that is not entirely satisfactory. A similar variance may be observed to apply with regard to her husband as well, but in his case it is the less important in that his aspirations and activities after the marriage are in accordance with the one-sidedness of the nature that had been presented before. In the case of Sophronia, however, the exclusive concentration on the mercenary motivation for the marriage offers no trace of the complex nature that was to emerge in connection with the Podsnaps. Though no essential inconsistency need be postulated, a broader view of Sophronia before her marriage would have been a better preparation for the difficulties with which she is confronted afterwards, and the manner in which she deals with them. (1)

Yet criticism of the stark simplicity with which Sophronia is at first presented is perhaps misplaced, since at that stage she is emphatically part of the Veneering side of the story and exaggerated unsubtlety is a hallmark of the way in which that side is treated: if it was understandable that a woman should want to settle herself comfortably in life and should choose to marry to do so, in the context of the direct presentation of the social aims of the Veneerings any detailed examination of such aspirations would have been misplaced. Correspondingly, the lack of deep thought and concentrated effort in the fulfilment of the aspiration were in keeping with the

(1) Jenni Calder, Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction, London, 1976, does indeed suggest that the characterization of the Lammles is vitiated by the change of heart allowed to Sophronia.

superficiality of the Veneerings, and the consequences of these deficiencies could be used to provide an early revelation of the emptiness beneath the glitter of the Veneering world. In the urge to provide symmetry with that world, however, no attempt is made to explain the discrepancy between the lack of thought and the aspiration itself which is undoubtedly to be seen as a serious one. Complete faith in the Veneerings is given as the reason Sophronia erred as to the financial advantages of the marriage and this is, at the very least, unlikely in itself, however helpful it may have been in the exposure of the Veneerings. Of course, the same applies to Mr. Lammle's identical misplaced faith; both characters being at this stage simply instruments in the presentation of an aspect of Veneering life, cerebration and consideration Dickens would have thought unnecessary for them. This discrepancy, as well as the other, then, can be explained in terms of the fabulous texture of the plot in which the two characters are at this stage engaged. It seems to me significant, nevertheless, that so deliberately artificial an approach governs the occasion in Dickens when the greatest degree of initiative is, at any rate in theory, ascribed to a woman with regard to a projected marriage.

A similar subordination to plot is to be seen in the only other affair in Dickens that may be said seriously to belong to the present category. Fanny Dorrit certainly does not marry Edmund Sparkler for his money, but it is by no means for love either; in effect she marries him in pursuit of her own ends, so that though he passionately desires her to be his wife and is perfectly satisfied when she accepts him she may be seen to regard him as 'prey' in that he is an instrument in her hands. What in fact her ends are it is not easy to express. She herself gives two reasons for her acceptance of Sparkler, that it would place her in a position of strength vis-à-vis his

mother, the Mrs. Merdle who had scorned and patronised her in the days of her poverty; and that it would provide her with the secure social position the newfound wealth of the Dorrit family had failed to provide due to the diffidence resulting from their previous poverty. In addition there is the point Little Dorrit makes when Sparkler renews his courtship to an enriched Fanny, that her encouragement might make the association one from which it would be difficult for her to break loose. Yet even if this did lead to the engagement, even if

she was sufficiently identified with the gentleman to feel compromised by his being more than usually ridiculous; and hence, being by no means deficient in quickness, she sometimes came to his rescue (2)

which perhaps helped accustom her to the idea of a permanent association, the encouragement may be seen to have been prompted originally by Fanny's satisfaction at the change in her position and her new capacity to patronise; so that, however difficult to distinguish they are, it is clear that Fanny's ends in the marriage are to be attributed to her consciousness of her Marshalsea origins. (3)

The symbolic value of the marriage is enhanced by the other projection of a marriage that runs parallel to that of Fanny; as to which, indeed, Mrs. General is accused by Fanny of husband hunting. There is certainly no doubt that Mrs. General would not be averse to a proposal from Mr. Dorrit, but she is by no means to be described as in pursuit. Rather, it is Mr. Dorrit who is seen as actively desiring the match; given the significance

(2) Little Dorrit, Bk.2, Ch.14; p.482.

(3) F.R. Leavis displays a characteristic myopia, in Dickens the Novelist, when he recognizes that Fanny's marriage may be traced to the imprisonment but represents her, in her accession to the 'civilization' he so deplores, as being simply a morally educative contrast to the ideal Little Dorrit; he ignores completely what sympathy Dickens does bestow in his portrayal.

of Mrs. General's name, and the fact that her primary use to him lies in her ability to lay down the bounds of propriety, given indeed that the decision to propose to her comes on his way back to Italy when 'he began to feel safe, and to find that the foreign air was lighter to breathe than the air of England'⁽⁴⁾ where John Chivery's visit had enhanced his insecurity considerably, it does not seem fanciful to connect Mr. Dorrit's desire for marriage with Fanny's anxiety for a secure social position. There is confirmation, then, for the view that Fanny's marriage is to be seen as a recognition on her part that some sort of confinement was necessary to her; and the glimpses of her after her marriage certainly accord with this view. The point is skilfully made, and unforced, so that Fanny's position wins comprehension and sympathy; mention, for instance, of 'the last time Fanny ever showed that there was any hidden, suppressed, or conquered feeling in her on the matter' conveys a strong impression of her hopeless confusion on the subject before the determination that 'the way she had chosen lay before her, and she trod it with her own imperious self-willed step'⁽⁵⁾. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Fanny is not - of course - a free agent; and though the logic of her motives and actions may be faultless, she remains a very special case, her marriage essentially symbolic.

Dickens, then, is seen to have treated the subject under present consideration in subordination to the main theme of his novel, just as he had done with the subject treated in the last chapter. Thackeray, conversely, had devoted a whole novel to that subject; and the present one, similarly, is of central importance in other of his novels. The most obvious example of this is, of course, Vanity Fair, where Becky Sharp is one of the principal

(4) *ibid.*, Bk.2, Ch.18; p.522.

(5) *ibid.*, Bk.2, Ch.14; p.490.

characters, if not the most prominent: and is the very type of the husband hunter in that in the story of her progress through the world it is made obvious that her chief weapon is her attraction to men. Even where such a story is not, however, the subject matter of his novel, Thackeray displays a great deal of attention to the fortunes of the husband hunter. At times as in Henry Esmond and Pendennis, this may be due to a schematic need for contrast, so that, as David Cecil put it, 'Each gentle virtuous heroine, Amelia, Helen, and Rachel Castlewood, has her heartless, artful Becky or Blanche or Beatrix as counterpart.'⁽⁶⁾ I shall consider this need later; but first I should like to look at The Virginians, where the phenomenon appears in the guise of Maria Castlewood, quite simply, and without fulfilling the role of anyone's counterpart. As such she does not obviously seem a morally reprehensible character as do her peers whom Cecil mentions. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that in her conceptions, at any rate at first, she was heartless, and that she was as artful as she had the capacity to be. The adjectives suit her as much as they do the others; the reason they are inapplicable to her is that they carry unfortunate moral connotations, and in contrast to the others she is so drawn by Thackeray as to seem eminently undeserving of such condemnation.

This is achieved by endowing Maria with two as it might be termed whitewashing characteristics. The first of these is a strong degree of susceptibility. This may seem to conflict with the charge of heartlessness, but Thackeray in fact succeeds in discriminating between two aspects of her character so finely as to rebut the charge of inconsistency. All the way through her pursuit of Harry Warrington and, as it becomes clear in the narration, before that, all Maria's actions of note are governed by her

(6) David Cecil, Early Victorian Novelists, London, 1934, Ch.3, p.94.

calculations: that is, in the determination of her ends and in the employment of means towards those ends Maria is heartless as to the man she seeks to marry. Within those limits, however, the emotions she develops towards the man in question are governed by her susceptibilities, and in what might be called unimportant actions, in her reactions to third parties for instance, this aspect of her is the dominant one. Thus, when Harry is arrested for debt, she is genuinely very upset, and is bitter towards her family because they have used him; but she herself only goes to Harry after her brother has pointed out to her how she could use the fact of his arrest to bind him closer to her by an assertion of sympathy. Again, when Harry is apparently left without any resources, she detaches herself from him; but with regret, and there is no doubt that she is very fond of him. The sincerity of this fondness is impressed upon us so forcefully that its impact survives even Maria's subsequent swift affair with the Irish actor Hagan. That, indeed, serves to reinforce the sense of Maria's softness, in that it is clear that a desire to marry such a man could not have been the result of any very careful calculation. If it was, then desperation must have weighted the scales, and that too evokes sympathy. Maria's final marriage, then, sets the seal upon Thackeray's most remarkable achievement in her portrayal, which was to concentrate attention on her weakness, despite the heartlessness of her aims.

It must be remembered, however, that what makes all this much easier is the second characteristic referred to above, namely Maria's age. Since she is forty one, more than twice Harry's age, the danger to be apprehended from her to him is immeasurably lessened. Maria is weak not only because of her emotional susceptibility, which is indeed a strength in the pursuit of this particular man because of his chivalry; but because too she is lacking in the physical weaponry so useful normally in her aim. This difficulty is underlined

by the fact that Harry succumbed to her when he thought she was young and consequently beautiful, and before he has seen others of the same class with whom he could compare her. Once he views her ungroomed, after a journey, the efforts of their aunt to call off the match are bound to be effective in that what she reveals of Maria's age he must judge plausible after what he has seen; acquaintance with younger beauties confirms his regrets about the engagement. There is nothing Maria can do about this physical repulsion; and her knowledge of this serves to make her anxieties about his getting away from her much more compelling to the reader than any danger to him. At the same time, though she herself demands sympathy, there is no question of sympathy for her aims: the disparity in their ages has been made too clear for that ever to be a practical possibility. The same impossibility might, indeed, almost be predicated of the marriage itself: Maria is too diffident about it to press for a date, and if Harry is too chivalrous to jilt her himself, he is equally determined to advance no further than he is forced to; so that the marriage seems likely to be indefinitely postponed. Maria's aims then, far from being dangerous, are seen to be pathetic, and the point is further emphasised when Baroness Bernstein tells Harry that she has destroyed the letter Maria held that bound him to her: Harry's insistence that his honour still binds him not only makes clear that he is not in the slightest a victim but also suggests how barren of resources Maria is, and that there are no stratagems left to her.

Harry's imprisonment for debt does change the situation. Maria's act of sympathy places him under obligation to her. Given the calculation that prompted that sympathy, Harry is in the position of being manipulated, and is once more seen as a victim. But this is of brief duration, and its conclusion underlines the basic difficulty under which Maria labours. It is when Harry

is in a position of weakness that he succumbs to Maria's charms; at first his lack of experience and diffidence in strange surroundings had made him an easy prey to Maria but it does not take long for him to arrive at the position of strength in relation to her that was natural given their respective situations; to be restored to a position of weakness he has to lose his money, and that of course means that he has lost the prime incentive for Maria to pursue him. She can succeed in her aim of marrying only on the negation of her further aim, that of marrying well. Her age, or rather the inevitability of its being revealed, caused her this insoluble problem; and it was perhaps her recognition of this that led to a reversal of priorities and the acceptance of Hagan as a fate preferable to solitude. The mobility of her emotions allowed her to love Hagan dearly and to be quite satisfied with that fate; this, contrasted with the coldness of the other relations of the Warringtons, elevates her sufficiently to obscure the calculating nature of her previous mode of life. Yet the acceptability of her sudden switch of priorities depends on the absurdity of her previous aims being palpable, and that is due to her age; to which finally Thackeray's unusually sympathetic view of a husband hunter must be attributed.

Age, again, is one of the primary materials in the characterization of the Baroness Bernstein, in the same book. When she had appeared before, in Henry Esmond, as Beatrix Esmond, she had been very different: harder, more brittle, obviously deserving of the epithets Cecil applies to her and of their unfavourable moral connotations. To Baroness Bernstein in The Virginians, the application of such a description would have been inappropriate. In my view, it is not that the same woman cannot be recognised in the second book; on the contrary, Thackeray has succeeded admirably in portraying the same woman at two different periods of her life; but the time span has so

changed the Baroness that the description, apt enough for her previous appearance, has become meaningless. Age, it is most plausibly suggested, has mellowed the Baroness, it has allowed her to acknowledge the existence of her heart, it has allowed her to subordinate her arts to her feelings. She can still be ruthless about the feelings of others, still display craft in achieving her ends, but the old intensity that had governed her no longer exists. Age has done this for her; and the suitability of this becomes obvious when we consider the characterization of her that earlier asserted her villainy because that villainy, for what it is, is not to be associated with old age.

For Beatrix is not essentially heartless and that, I believe, is sufficiently clear in Esmond to render her affectionate gestures in the other book not inconsistent; nor was her conduct early on essentially mercenary or ambitious, at the expense of her feelings, in which case something of the same degree of calculation should have emerged in The Virginians. Rather, as Beatrix reveals in the course of the many conversations with Esmond in which she tries to explain both her rejection of him and her other affairs, though the motivations mentioned above did contribute to her conduct, her acceptance of them was due to her failure to find satisfaction for another ideal. Though she is prepared to attribute that failure to a possible flaw in herself, the expression of her desire for such satisfaction indicates an underlying romanticism in her -

"But I think I have no heart; at least, I have never seen the man that could touch it.... I would do anything for such a man, bear anything for him: but I never found one. You were ever too much of a slave to win my heart; even my lord duke could not command it. I had not been happy had I married him.... I knew his great and noble qualities, greater and nobler than mine a thousand times, as yours are, cousin, I tell you, a million and a million times better. But 'twas not for these I took him. I took him to have a great place in the world, and I lost it. I lost it, and do not deplore him - and I often thought, as I listened to his fond vows and ardent words, Oh, if I yield to this man

and meet the other, I shall hate him and leave him! I am not good, Harry"(7).

When, in the later book, she is touched by her nephew Harry Warrington, the reaction Thackeray describes is of a piece with this -

"Wait," says Conscience, the dark scoffer mocking within her, "Wait, Beatrix Esmond! You know you will weary of this inclination, as you have of all. You know, when the passing fancy has subsided, that the boy may perish, and you won't have a tear for him; or talk, and you weary of his stories; and that your lot in life is to be lonely - lonely." Well? suppose life be a desert? There are halting-places, and shades, and refreshing waters: let us profit by them for to-day.(8)

The difference is that by this stage the Baroness has nothing to lose. Earlier on she could not have afforded to give way to sentiment, simply because that sentiment could not have given her the absolute satisfaction she sought and might have stood in the way of its achievement; hence her conduct through the main body of the book, hence her rejection, if firm, intended to be kind, of Esmond, hence her coquetry and the relentless but unsuccessful search for something better. As the course of her engagement to Lord Ashburnham shows, she is not in the least diffident about providing her lovers with reasons not to take her; by the time of the Duke of Hamilton, realising that perhaps her ideal might be incapable of fulfilment, she is more serious about the engagement, but even so her actions confirm her statement that she was dubious about the marriage in that she quarrels with the Duke in such a manner as to make her think he might have wanted to break off from her. Had he broken off, she would have been angry, but that would have been due to the disgrace; her conduct is by no means that of a woman anxious for the marriage in itself. If, as her mother said, "'Were a duke to ask her, she would leave an earl whom she had promised"'(9) it is because she required

(7) Thackeray, The History of Henry Esmond, Esq., London, 1852, Bk.3, Ch.7; p.397.

(8) Thackeray, The Virginians, London, 1857-9, Ch.14; p.139.

(9) Henry Esmond, Bk.2, Ch.15; p.300.

adequate compensation for what she would have to give up, and as her attitude to the Duke makes clear, even him she could think inadequate. By the time of The Virginians, indeed by the time she decided to marry Tom Tusher, she had given up the ideal as unattainable and, as the passage quoted above from that book suggests, that because of what she recognised as a flaw in herself. As a result, she is much smoother, much better able to indulge whatever kind sentiments she felt. The previous intensity, that grated against her fellows, has vanished. But that it could have so grated ought not to obscure the fact that it arose from a real need and that underneath what seemed simple flirtation there lay what might be called a not totally negative heart.

It might be argued, however, that Thackeray himself could well have mellowed with age, and that by the time he came to write The Virginians, his concept of Beatrix had in fact altered; that the fairly sympathetic presentation of the Baroness there is an independent issue, and that the villainy of Beatrix, taking Henry Esmond by itself, cannot be mitigated. I should make it clear at this stage that the favourable account given of Beatrix above is not intended to assert that she is meant to be a heroine or in any way on the side of the angels in that novel: the effects of her conduct, the grief she causes to so many individuals, even the simple facts of her subsequent career as related in the preface, indicate that that was by no means Thackeray's view. All I am suggesting is that in the course of the novel Thackeray takes sufficient pains to expound her character to put in question the simplistic derogatory remarks that Cecil makes. Yet there are occasions in the book when even this limited claim seems to be put in doubt.

Some of these occasions can be explained. For instance, though her mother's criticism of her conduct in the central portions of the book suggests something worse than what her explanations to Esmond would justify, it must

be remembered that it is Beatrix's constant complaint, apparently sincere and with no clear motivation for deceit, inasmuch as she herself displayed a marked affection towards her mother, that the latter has never loved her, and that Esmond himself remarks on Lady Castlewood's jealousy of her daughter.⁽¹⁰⁾ Again, with regard to the activities involving the Pretender, though Beatrix might be blamed for her original appreciation and encouragement of the admiration of so important a person, the reprehensibility of this pales beside the consequence, and Beatrix's responsibility for that can be seen to be limited. It was only after she was banished to Castlewood, unfairly, as she felt, by the rest of her family that she intrigued to get the Pretender there to the detriment of his interests; and even then Thackeray makes it clear that the Pretender's journey was on his own initiative, and owed nothing to those intrigues. Besides, though her actions were irresponsible, the banishment was understandably provoking, which seems to me to reduce the culpability of the selfishness. Beatrix could very well have thought that the motives of her family, and certainly of Esmond himself, in banishing her were not selfless; given the way she took care of herself, whatever the intentions of the Pretender, on the night they were alone together at Castlewood, it is unlikely that her retention in London would have led to the trouble anticipated. Indeed, Thackeray's mention of Lady Castlewood's jibe, just as Beatrix was leaving, which Esmond also regretted, seems intended to draw attention to the prejudiced nature of the consultations about Beatrix. Her part in the plot she had just fulfilled satisfactorily at the moment of being sent away, and allowance must be made in

(10) Carey, Thackeray pp. 155-6, in claiming that the infantile things Beatrix says to her mother damn her as 'the product of an age that demanded its females retarded', fails to recognize the diffident tension that characterizes the relation Thackeray has depicted.

judging of her consequent actions for her resentment at being treated as an unwelcome distraction.

The criticisms of Beatrix are not, however, always qualified. A notable example of what might be called Thackeray's more severe attitude occurs early in the book in the description of Beatrix's childhood antics, her efforts to set other people at odds, that Esmond connects with her later conduct - 'her power became more fatal as she grew older - as a kitten first plays with a ball, and then pounces on a bird and kills it.'⁽¹¹⁾ The context of this judgment makes clear that it is not meant to reflect on Esmond at all, or to indicate, as is sometimes the case, the subordination of his judgment to his wife's. Rather, it is meant to be a reasoned judgment, and the implication is that Thackeray intended it to guide the reader in his view of Beatrix. I have suggested already that Thackeray later takes pains to show that Beatrix's use of her power is much more restrained than this judgment would suggest; and it seems to me that there is an ambiguity here, to be attributed to a distinction between Thackeray's original conception of the girl and the sympathetic modifications he made in filling in the details of that conception.

That original conception might have justified Cecil's criticism which, I hope I have shown, the detailed portrayal of Beatrix does not do. The unsatisfactory nature of that criticism emerges more clearly when Beatrix is compared with Blanche Amory of Pendennis, who is equated with her in that criticism, but who can be very clearly distinguished. The closest Blanche comes to Beatrix is in that she too is shown to be incapable of sustained feeling -

"The pirate would have wearied you like the rest," said Pen.... For this young lady was not able to carry out any emotion to the full; but had a

(11) *ibid.*, Ek.1, Ch.12; p.134.

sham enthusiasm, a sham hatred, a sham love, a sham taste, a sham grief, each of which flared and shone very vehemently for an instant, but subsided and gave place to the next sham emotion ; (12)

but the passage itself indicates the differences. Where Beatrix was conscious of her failing, Blanche was not; so that where Beatrix could try to enlighten others, Blanche could not help involving others in deceit, and indeed even goes further in that she deliberately adds to the deceit herself. Being completely without a sensitivity to other people, she is ruthless in her determination to use them to make or break marriages without the slightest concern about other people's interests. She, therefore, is to be seen as the extreme example of the husband hunter, whose predacity can claim no mitigation.

For what the main body of the narrative bears out is that the particular weakness of Blanche that has been mentioned, her propensity to delude herself about her own capacities and inclinations, that might have been thought to alleviate her responsibility for her misdeeds, is in fact irrelevant to the substance of her manoeuvres. The shallowness, for instance, of what she thinks a sincere feeling for her father has nothing to do with her refusal, in pursuit of her own ends, to consider the feelings of Pen or Foker. Even where a connection is postulated, it is apparent that no excuse can be recognised. For instance, her exalted conception of her own romantic nature is by no means a pretence, and her consequent resentment against her decidedly unsophisticated family might have seemed the reason for her treatment of them -

She was a young lady of some genius, exquisite sympathies and considerable literary attainments, living, like many another genius, with relatives who could not comprehend her.... And as Miss Amory felt very keenly that she was not appreciated, and that she lived with persons who were not her equals in intellect or conversational power, she lost no opportunity to acquaint her

(12) Thackeray, The History of Pendennis, London, 1848-50, Ch.73; p.939.

family circle with their inferiority to herself, and not only was a martyr, but took care to let everybody know that she was so. If she suffered, as she said and thought she did, severely, are we to wonder that a young creature of such delicate sensibilities should shriek and cry out a good deal?(13)

But, as the immediately preceding account of her step-father makes clear, it is not only those against whom such resentment could, if not justifiably by no means incomprehensibly, have arisen that she attacks; her brother, her maid, the governess are all victims of her cruelty, which is arbitrary and general enough not to require to be roused by resentment. The point of mentioning the misery of all such persons must be to indicate that Blanche is an absolute horror; and if that is the case, the purpose of detailing her superficial if sincerely held view of herself cannot be mitigation of her conduct; it would therefore seem likely that those details are meant to contribute to the adverse view of her, that her capacity to delude herself is held to be not an excusable and justificatory weakness, but a manifestation of the falseness that pervades her thoroughly.

Had that falseness been entirely conscious, had Blanche's romanticism been simply a ploy in her campaigns, it might have been thought that her reprehensibility would have been increased; but in fact it is difficult to see how she could be less appealing than she is, and her very weakness contributes to this characterization. This is so, it seems to me, because Thackeray shows that, whether deliberately induced or not, Blanche's romanticism is always made use of to her advantage, and never affects her adversely. Thus, her sensitivity justifies her treatment of her family, her literary efforts provide her with opportunities of flirting, her attitude to her father allows her to skate over her treatment of her suitors; she might not have been able to see through herself, but she had no desire to do so

(13) *ibid.*, Ch.23; p.283.

either. Her attitude is typified by the stages in which her recognition of her father's existence is established; when she first met him she began to suspect, but suppressed her suspicions until he was forced, by being recognized by her maid, to confess to her; she keeps the news from Pen but admits her knowledge freely to him after he has heard from elsewhere; even when it is clear that the secret is generally out, against Pen's advice, she conceals it from Foker; right through her line is that of least resistance, to do or accept what is least troublesome to her. So it is with her lack of self knowledge, in which she is so different from Beatrix. What Thackeray highlights is the refusal to make any effort, because of the advantages of the prevailing state. It is no wonder, therefore, that the impression of Blanche's villainy is unrelieved by what seemed weakness but is seen to be an integral part of her solipsism.

All this, of course, means that when she fails to achieve the marriage she had been aiming for, like Beatrix, though less clearsightedly, she remains heartwhole. Like Beatrix again, and perhaps more importantly, the failure does not disappoint her deeply in any other way. Foker's fifteen thousand a year was to be regretted, just as was the position of Duchess of Hamilton, but not to any very remarkable extent. The point is, that for both these women there was no actual urgency about any particular marriage. They were both of an age when further offers were bound to come, and could certainly be culled; not in the least like Maria Castlewood, in whose case desperation was understandable. Again, they are both, though Beatrix more than Blanche, in a fairly satisfactory social position, they both have more than enough for their immediate needs, and can count on being left with adequate resources at any future date. More money and prestige would be

welcome, but neither has been so lacking in them as to make any motivation grounded on them imperative. In being declared illegitimate at the end of the book, Blanche is certainly left less secure; as indeed was Beatrix, even if it was essentially of her own doing, after her quarrel with her family; but Thackeray does not deal with their consequential conduct, except in fact to indicate that their future marriages, disappointing though they are, and doubtless to be viewed as punishments of a sort, nevertheless might be seen to have had their roots in their previous plenitude. Sharply distinguished as they are, they are alike in this, that their dealings with men are carried out from a position of strength that has nothing to do with their personal characteristics.

This it is that distinguishes both of them from Becky Sharp, so clearly and so sharply indeed, as to reduce the impact of any comparison to a minimum. Becky's motivating force is the deprivation she had undergone when young, and Thackeray takes every opportunity available to drive the point home. In the chapter in which she is introduced she speaks of her resentment at having "been treated worse than any servant in the kitchen"⁽¹⁴⁾ and soon after Thackeray records her determination to develop her accomplishments to compensate for her lack of wealth since 'The happiness - the superior advantages of the young women round about her, gave Rebecca inexpressible pangs of envy.' When she goes to Queen's Crawley and begins her campaign with the family there, the note of necessity is introduced again - if there entered some degree of selfishness into her calculations, who can say but that her prudence was perfectly justifiable? "I am alone in the world," said the friendless girl. "I have nothing to look for but what my own labour can bring me...let us see if my wits cannot provide me with an honourable maintenance, and if some day or the other I cannot show Miss Amelia my real superiority over her."⁽¹⁵⁾

(14) Thackeray, Vanity Fair, London, 1847-8, Ch.2; p.14.

(15) *ibid.*, Ch.10; p.105.

This last passage, indeed, introduces what ought perhaps to be classed as a separate issue that could be pleaded in mitigation of Becky's exploits, namely that in addition to being poor she is also an orphan. This, too, Thackeray had already mentioned, in the account of Becky's first venture in the field, with Joseph Sedley, and with what might even be described as a higher degree of authorial approval of the excuse -

If Miss Rebecca Sharp had determined in her heart upon making the conquest of this big beau, I don't think, ladies, we have any right to blame her; for though the task of husband-hunting is generally, and with becoming modesty, entrusted by young persons to their mammas, recollect that Miss Sharp had no kind parent to arrange these delicate matters for her, and that if she did not get a husband for herself, there was no one else in the wide world who would take the trouble off her hands. (16)

This deficiency Thackeray points out contributes to the fact that the running Rebecca makes is fairly blatant -

It was an advance, and as such, perhaps, some ladies of indisputable correctness and gentility will condemn the action as immodest; but, you see, poor dear Rebecca had all this work to do for herself. (17)

The point is made the more forcefully in the description of the ease with which Joseph could take himself off even though he had obviously indicated his intentions, albeit without expressing anything to which Rebecca herself could hold him; as Thackeray points out, a parent could have challenged Joseph, and made him commit himself, which Rebecca unaided could not do -

All she wanted was the proposal, and ah! how Rebecca now felt the want of a mother! - a dear, tender mother, who would have managed the business in ten minutes, and, in the course of a little delicate confidential conversation, would have extracted the interesting avowal from the bashful lips of the young man! (18)

If less frequently than in these opening chapters, throughout the book these factors are mentioned in accounting for Becky's behaviour. They

(16) *ibid.*, Ch.3; p.26. But see p.94 below for another aspect of this.

(17) *ibid.*, Ch.4; p.34.

(18) *ibid.*, Ch.6; p.62.

are indeed, so central to Thackeray's conception of her that, in addition to providing a basis for her particular exploits in the field of husband-hunting, they also contribute to her activities after marriage, as in her attempts to build up a hoard as a form of security. For the moment, though, the important point is that Thackeray has taken great pains early on to establish how important the outcome of Becky's exploits is to her, how arbitrary seem to her the disadvantages with which she begins life, how unsupported and isolated her campaigns must be. Selfishness in Becky was a very different phenomenon from that which he was to consider in Beatrix or Blanche. Without considering yet Thackeray's view of Becky's moral status, it is nevertheless clear that there is a sense in which her culpability is diminished. This aspect Thackeray develops further, by a technique that is unrelated, though also clearly central to his conception of character in the novel. Vanity Fair is subtitled 'A Novel Without a Hero'. The eponymous hero of Pendennis may not be an ideal, but his basic values provide a standard by which Blanche's may be measured, and this is true to an even greater extent of Henry Esmond; even Foker in the former book and Frank Castlewood in the latter, are warmly generous enough to point up the coldness of Blanche and of Beatrix. In Vanity Fair, on the contrary, though they may not be obviously cold, most characters are distinctly egotistical; they are presented as, if not selfconsciously, nevertheless on the whole deliberately, making use of other people. This is in particular true of the men whom Becky seeks to captivate. Joseph Sedley, for instance, though perhaps too weak to be considered reprehensible, is, as his father feels, 'vain, selfish, lazy, and effeminate.'⁽¹⁹⁾ He is by no means a victim to be pitied, as is Esmond, or even Pendennis or Foker, and Becky is accordingly the less

(19) *ibid.*, Ch.6; p.61.

to be condemned. The manner in which Jos throws Becky over after his performance at Vauxhall when he had intended to propose to her but got drunk instead indicates how misplaced pity for him would be. He knows what she expects, and what he had given her a right to expect, but he succumbs to George Osborne's bullying, abandons Becky as Osborne had intended, and runs away. The impression left at the end of that episode is that he was fair game for Becky; his vanity was there to be taken advantage of, and Becky was simply unfortunate that Osborne entered the ranks against her; what pity there is appears to belong to Becky rather than to Jos.

With regard to the Crawleys, with whom Becky next tries her skills, what might be called the negative recommendations are even more marked. Significantly, the one she is least able to manipulate is the younger Pitt, and he is the least reprehensible of the lot. He is certainly susceptible to flattery, so she does succeed in getting into his graces, but what is perhaps his most prominent defect, his meanness, along with his vanity, prevents him from being easily drawn into making an offer, and Becky can hardly be described as taking excessive advantage of him. As for his father, 'who had the habits and the cunning of a boor: whose aim in life was pettifoggery: who never had a taste, or emotion, or enjoyment, but what was sordid and foul;' (20) Becky's treatment of him cannot really be faulted. Given his treatment of his wife, it almost seems as though in whatever play Becky might be making for him it is she who suffers rather than him. The price she has to pay in order to be able to attempt to make use of him, namely the fact that she is in a position of paid subordination to him and even without her ulterior motives would have to conciliate him, might even be thought to excuse any schemes she might concoct. Similarly, though she is not as loathsome as her

(20) *ibid.*, Ch.9; p.103.

brother, with regard to Miss Crawley: when Becky insinuates herself into her favour, it is very much as one of the toadies by whom Miss Crawley was used to being surrounded, and whom she treated with such selfishness as to make their service unenviable. Becky may have managed better than the others, but in principle Miss Crawley put her own interests above those of anyone else, and in accommodating herself to that system Becky removes herself from the possibility of any form of detached criticism. The system may have been a horrid one, but Becky herself is only as guilty as is Miss Crawley, who might be said to consciously control the system, and to lay down the necessity for Becky's attempts to manipulate her. Finally, as for Rawdon Crawley, whom Becky marries, at the expense of the favourable relations she has established with the other members of the family, though by no means as clever or self-aware as Becky, in essence he is engaged in the same sort of game as she is: his principal means of livelihood is young men who are more stupid even than himself, of whom he makes money by taking advantage in gaming of their relative lack of skill, capacity or experience. Indeed, although what Becky was playing for was much more serious, in that Rawdon too got something out of her exploits after their marriage, it might almost be said that his gaming was the more mean of the two; at any rate, Rawdon was certainly a predator himself. (21)

Becky's capture of him, therefore, is placed very firmly, by the characterization of Rawdon himself in addition to that of the other Crawleys, in a world where such dealings are the norm rather than the exception: in a world where people naturally make use of each other, where wealth buys

(21) Juliet McMaster, Thackeray: The Major Novels, Manchester, 1971, mentions Rawdon's complicity even with regard to Lord Steyne; a point made before by W.D. Howells, Heroines of Fiction, New York, 1901, but in general not recognized, so skilful was Thackeray's depiction, as he himself noted, of Rawdon's reaction on seeing Becky and Steyne together while he was meant to be languishing in prison.

people, and where any means to hand are employed in the pursuit of wealth. It is not Becky alone who uses marriage. Her very marriage to Rawdon is sought also by Mrs. Bute Crawley, for the simply selfish reason that Miss Crawley might be upset thereby and induced to leave her money to Mrs. Bute's family. She therefore supplies Becky with more opportunities than she might otherwise have had of meeting Rawdon; and when the marriage is announced is on hand to try to take control of Miss Crawley. In such an atmosphere, full of self-interest, where the only restraint that seems to be in operation is lack of capacity to plan, Becky's own exploits pale considerably. Given the forcefulness with which Thackeray has sketched the motivating effect of her background, given the characters with whom she is depicted as dealing, there seems to be an urge on Thackeray's part to mitigate as far as possibly the error of Becky's ways in her career of husband-hunting.

This mitigation must, however, be seen in the context of the condemnation of Becky that is in evidence throughout the book. It increases, indeed, after her marriage, which may suggest that the justification for her aggression that derived from her helplessness was no longer supposed to be in operation. This view seems to be supported by the fact that her continuing need of security, which I mentioned before in connection with her ruthless accumulation of a hoard to fall back on, is no more than barely suggested, while attention is concentrated instead on the misery she wreaks on others. For this purpose Rawdon who, as emerged above, was very much a predator himself, is converted into an amiable buffoon, with a charming predilection for his son; the hurt Becky causes him confirms the attribution to her of the responsibility for whatever joint damage they do. The stain that is thus attached to Becky's character persists into the period when, her

marriage having broken down, she is once more in a pitiful position; and, as though that were not enough, when she is in the process of clambering up again with the help of Jos, Thackeray's criticism of her reaches a climax with the suggestion that she might have poisoned Jos. Perhaps because such a suggestion seems inconsistent with even the worst view of Becky advanced before, it is only tentatively made. That it could have been made, however, is only an extreme illustration of what the transformation of Rawdon indicated, that Thackeray had some sort of conception of Becky that permitted the suspension of the natural flow of the novel in order that a moral point might be made against her. (22)

Even in the early part of the novel that was concerned with Becky's less disreputable moments, this attitude may be gathered from various isolated criticisms of her, authorial as well as on the part of neutral personages whose views might be presumed to be objective in intent. For instance, at her very introduction, Thackeray writes 'All the world used her ill, said this young misanthropist, and we may be pretty certain that persons whom all the world treats ill, deserve entirely the treatment they get.' (23); when Becky leaves the Sedleys the whole household except Amelia is said to be anxious for her departure, and the housekeeper's consolation to Amelia is '"But none of us in the house have liked her except at first. I saw her with my own eyes reading your Ma's letters. Pinner says she's always about your trinket-box and drawers, and everybody's drawers"' (24); again, having used

(22) Carey, Thackeray p.178, puts it bluntly - 'There's no denying that the tritely moralistic segment of Thackeray's personality...continues to put its oar in from time to time throughout the book, reminding us how wicked Becky is, and what a bad effect it has on her complexion.... But the more we learn about her, the more inclined we are to defend her against her creator's primmer assessments.'

(23) *ibid.*, Ch.2; p.15.

(24) *ibid.*, Ch.6; p.74.

a letter of Becky's to describe the Crawley devotions that he himself might have found eccentric, Thackeray goes on to deny responsibility for the description - 'the laughter comes from one who has no reverence except for prosperity, and no eye for anything beyond success' (25).

An explanation for all this may lie in the words that follow immediately - 'Such people there are living and flourishing in the world - Faithless, Hopeless, Charityless: let us have at them, dear friends, with might and main'; though he specifically declares that Amelia is not a heroine, and indeed suggests later that Becky might be one, Thackeray's basic conception of his work does seem to have involved a scheme of contrasts, with Amelia being on the side of the angels and Becky most emphatically not. The establishment of Becky's reprehensibility did not, however, come easily. Thackeray's treatment of motivation is never quite straightforward and with regard to Becky, as a consequence, the schematic contrast is obscured: Thackeray deals so fairly and even sympathetically with the motivation behind Becky's pursuit of a husband, that moral judgment is suspended and even seems irrelevant or at least inapplicable readily to so complex a situation. Since this is the chief relation in which Becky is presented during the introductory chapters, the scheme would seem to be wholly forgotten, were it not for the commentaries quoted above; and because the whole tenor of the narrative is to suppress the scheme, such commentaries seem oddly out of place and even arbitrary. The passage in which Becky's laughter at the Crawleys' devotions is considered may be sarcastic, but the particular passages quoted about Becky herself are noticeably sharper in tone: the original denial of Becky's demand for indulgence on account of her previous sufferings is hopelessly at odds with the surrounding account of her which does grant that indulgence,

(25) *ibid.*, Ch.8; p.96.

so that the denial sticks out oddly; the Sedley housekeeper's story introduces an aspect of Becky not hitherto seen and not noticed again; that, like the others, seems to be making a point about Becky that goes against the prevailing story. If so, since that point is not subject to the vicissitudes of the plot, it must be Thackeray's basic view; that it recurs, as has been seen, through all stages of Becky's story seems to confirm this analysis.

In this sense, then, Cecil's categorization is justified, in that Becky is meant to be a counterpart to the 'virtuous heroine', and in that Thackeray would have subscribed to the derogatory connotations of the adjectives used to describe her; and the fact that this emerges in spite of what might be termed the practical considerations in accordance with which Becky was slotted into that particular category sheds a fresh light upon the others Cecil associates with her, as well as upon the general impression intended in ascribing that role to anyone. As we have seen, the three husband hunters are very carefully to be distinguished from each other: for Blanche there is no excuse, she is quite content to be heartless, a state that Beatrix regrets, and that Becky does not contemplate since she is preoccupied by practical necessities. Yet, though the narrative, and often also authorial comment, provide excuses for the latter two, they come in for condemnatory comment as well, so that Cecil's assumption that they are on a moral level with Blanche is understandable. If we go further and, recognizing that in each case there is condemnatory comment at the very introduction, assume that that underlies Thackeray's allocation of the role all three have in common, that of the husband hunter, the picture becomes clear: Thackeray could deal sympathetically with the motivation of Beatrix and Becky, simply because basically there was no ambiguity in his view. However unfortunately, Beatrix's requirements are extravagant, and the people she manipulates are more deserving of our sympathy

than she is. In Becky's case, the excuse is even less acceptable: in the first place, when Thackeray suggests that Becky has to make up for the lack of a mother in husband-hunting, it must be remembered, as demonstrated in the last chapter, that Thackeray's view of such proceedings was not morally neutral, but highly condemnatory; again, by rousing pity for Becky in proportion to her dependence on dreadful people, Thackeray makes such pity conditional upon such dependence and such people; it is in relation to them that Becky can be justified, in herself in terms of Thackeray's scheme she is to be condemned.

Thackeray's basic view, then, of the husband-hunter was an adverse one; so much so that one of the breed seems to have been almost an automatic necessity whenever he wanted a contrast for a basically kind and loving woman. As a consequence, his husband-hunters share other characteristics: they are sharp, they are ruthless, any romanticism they might feel is strictly subordinated to a calculation of their own interests and they betray no feelings of their own in their relations with men. Further, as a consequence perhaps of these characteristics, they are detached from everyone else around them, and therefore have to carry out their schemes in isolation; Amelia's sympathy for Becky over Jos is not really an exception to this, for their attitudes are so different, and the former is so totally ignorant about Becky's initiatives, that the solitary nature of the activity is almost enhanced. All this does not take away from the interest of the particular portraits of the genre that Thackeray presents, but it does underline that for him the phenomenon was a very special one. When it was not an absurd activity, as with Maria Castlewood, it had to involve exceptional talents, powerful self-control, and fundamental moral reprehensibility; in short, it

required not ordinary women but redoubtable monsters. (26)

In considering Trollope's contribution to the subject, it may be helpful to follow the guidelines in categorization suggested by the variations in Thackeray's examples; which approach will, I trust, assist in making clear the relative lack of restrictions in Trollope's presentation of the type, what might perhaps be called his fairly open-ended generosity and his rejection of a fixed moral dogma. This is apparent even in relation to what ought to be considered the most reprehensible category of the three that are to be considered, namely that into which Blanche Amory and Beatrix Castlewood fall, that of the woman who hunts principally for her own diversion with hardly any practical necessity to do so. Trollope's first exposition of a husband-hunter, the characterization of Sophia Furnival in Orley Farm, is of this sort: Sophia has very little to gain from her flirtations, she has her own considerable fortune, the men she deals with are not to any great extent her social superiors and, indeed, the one she prefers of them is the one whose birth is less impressive; there can be no doubt that she would find prey as satisfactory as Lucius Mason in the future without any great social advance on her part. The cause of her obvious dedication to the skill she cultivates lies entirely in herself. This is because, like Blanche or Beatrix in part, she is too cold to feel any real affection for anyone - 'Lucius was quite honest in all that he said and did upon the occasion; whereas Miss Furnival was only half honest. Perhaps she was not capable of a higher pitch of honesty than that' (27) - and can therefore play her own game without worries

(26) Tillotson, *op.cit.*, p.245, suggests however that 'It was perhaps more gratifying to the woman of the eighteen-forties, and certainly rarer, to see herself presented in fiction as a clever rogue than as an amiable fool'.

(27) Trollope, Orley Farm, London, 1862, Ch.55; World's Classics, Oxford, 1935, Vol.II, pp.154-5.

that she might be making a sacrifice of herself; but, being clear-sighted about this from the very beginning, which the other two are not, she can preserve herself from being fickle or volatile: because she is aware that there can be no personal incentive for her to change her mind, her actions can always be such as cannot be convicted of being in breach of expectations. The coldness that renders such conduct possible is much greater than that of Beatrix or Blanche, who might both be described as subscribing to some sort of ideal, however misguided, and Sophia Fumival might therefore be considered as by far the least appealing of the three. Nevertheless, it is a consequence of that very coldness that Sophia can pay a greater attention to the claims of her victims. They are therefore never susceptible of suffering from sudden changes of mood or priorities; Sophia plays her game according to what may be called impersonal rules on which her victims can, and indeed, apparently do, rely.

The characterization of those victims too contributes to the reduction of Sophia's reprehensibility. Lucius Mason, for instance, is very distinctly a prig and Trollope asserts this, as well as on other occasions, with reference to his courtship of Sophia, as when he comments on a letter of his, 'I am inclined to think that it would have been a better love-letter had there been more nonsense. At any rate there should have been less about himself, and more about the lady.'⁽²⁸⁾ Further, with regard to Augustus Stavely, who is much more his sort of person, Trollope makes clear that his involvement with Sophia was intended primarily as a diversion for himself. It is only because she is so much more skilful at the game than he is that he is led to make her an offer, piqued by her refusal to take him seriously; a tactic indeed that serves a dual purpose both in driving him to become serious in his flirtation and in enabling her to put off giving him a serious reply so that she could

(28) *ibid.*, Ch.66; Vol.II, p.264.

have time to sort out her relations with Mason whom in fact she prefers. Stavely, in the end, does not renew his offer, and so gets off even though Sophia dismisses Mason after he is disinherited; this escape, coupled with his own original irresponsible approach, renders Sophia guiltless. With regard to Mason, of course, there is a degree of guilt in that she jilts him when he is left with nothing else. Nevertheless, given that this is what he himself anticipates, given too the coldness of his courtship that places him at a greater distance from the reader than, say, Henry Esmond, the absence of love and outwardly directed concern on Sophia's part is to be seen as the less extraordinary. The bleakness of her approach to marriage is placed in a context in which, if not entirely blameless, it is at the very least readily understandable.

With Lizzie Eustace in The Eustace Diamonds Trollope's exposition is also unforced, so much so indeed that it might almost be described as compassionate. Though he himself describes her as an 'opulent and aristocratic Becky Sharp',⁽²⁹⁾ those very adjectives indicate that she belongs, strictly speaking, to the category distinguished above of those whose attempts to manipulate the affections of men are based on no immediate practical necessity. However, Lizzie is to be distinguished from the others described as being in that category in that she has, as the introductory sketch of her makes clear, been subject to such necessity; a fact that is used to mitigate the heartlessness that motivates the manipulation described in the actual story. The heartlessness of Beatrix, as indeed of Sophia Furnival, is to be accepted without question, the product of some sort of psychological deficiency that is unexplained and to which, therefore, sympathy is not attached. Lizzie's, on the contrary, is attributed to the deprivations of her early life -

(29) The Eustace Diamonds, Ch.3; p.15.

She had not a heart to give. It had become petrified during those lessons of early craft in which she had taught herself how to get the better of Messrs. Harter and Benjamin, of Sir Florian Eustace, of Lady Linlithgow, and of Mr. Camperdown.⁽³⁰⁾

This does not, of course, excuse Lizzie's behaviour to the persons mentioned here, nor therefore her conduct later on to which she had become habituated; but it provides an explanation that marks it as not being gratuitous and therefore unnecessarily cruel to her victims. Further, where Becky, by virtue of the compatibility Thackeray asserts between her necessities and her intrinsic character, as displayed even after those necessities have been met, is condemned, Trollope by emphasizing Lizzie's vulnerability later on as well, again diminishes her responsibility for her earlier actions. Thus, where Becky though driven by necessity also appears to relish her role, the impression created as to Lizzie at that early stage is that she was struggling against heavy odds, in a state of despair about her oppressive circumstances.

By the time of the action of the novel, of course, she has overcome those circumstances by her marriage, the very generous settlement that had been made on her, and her widowhood; but though she could therefore have ceased her machinations, which seem no longer to have an objective motivation, the story of the diamonds does suggest that there is a sense in which she is oppressed and that there is a practical point to her predacity. The lesson she learns is that

a woman by herself in the world can do nothing.... To her it was essentially necessary that she should have the protection of a husband who might endure on her behalf some portion of those buffetings to which she seemed to be especially doomed.⁽³¹⁾

Her career must be judged in the light of her brother-in-law's concluding comment on her, "She is a very great woman...and, if the sex could have its rights, would make an excellent lawyer"⁽³²⁾: the reason basic to all her

(30) *ibid.*, Ch.21; p.159.

(31) *ibid.*, Ch.79; p.595.

(32) *ibid.*, Ch.72; p.546.

failures is her diffidence, and that is caused by her ignorance, an ignorance about facts that extends therefore to values. Early on, for instance, she had attempted to deceive her husband about her debts, when she ought to have known that he was bound to find out anyway, and also that they were not so serious that he would not have readily forgiven her for them whereas the deceit would upset him more; later, it is her false shame that leads to her downfall after the robbery at Carlisle, which is compounded by her incapacity to understand the implications in law of her concealments. Despite her comfortable settlement, then, Lizzie might be said to have been in real need of a husband to guide her on the issues about which she was ignorant but in which her settlement itself involved her. In her reactions to Lord Fawn's proposal certainly recognition of this can be traced - 'Even though her husband should give up the diamonds, she would not in such case incur the disgrace of surrendering them herself,'⁽³³⁾ - and again -

She was frightened about the diamonds, and was, nevertheless, almost determined not to surrender them. At any rate, in such a strait she would want assistance, either in keeping them or in giving them up.... As Lord Fawn was so poor, perhaps he would adhere to the jewels.⁽³⁴⁾

As the two quotations show, she is uncertain about her rights, stubborn but at the same time diffident, incapable of relying on anyone who disagreed with her but at the same time conscious that she could do nothing by herself. Because she is not desperately needy she does not have to and will not subordinate herself totally as she did to Sir Florian Eustace; but unaccustomed as she is to her new situation she is in fact in need and her failure to satisfy that need may be traced to her previous success that had confused her

(33) *ibid.*, Ch.8; p.58.

(34) *ibid.*, Ch.10; pp.72-3.

sense of priorities. (35)

Thus her confusion is further increased by the romanticism that she now feels free to indulge -

For Florian Eustace she had never cared.... Now she desired to be so in love that she could surrender everything to her love. There was as yet nothing of such love in her bosom.... But she was alive to the romance of the thing, and was in love with the idea of being in love. (36)

Accordingly she immerses herself in Byron and dreams of a Corsair. But she cannot abandon her other interests and, indeed, indulges in so much deceit over the diamonds that Lord George whom she thinks of as the daring Corsair is frightened off by the dangers in which she seems to involve all who associate with her. Similarly, with her cousin Frank Greystock it is the same deceit that supplies him, whom also she had thought strong enough to support her wholeheartedly over the necklace, with the initiative to break away from her definitely. Even her romanticism as to these two, however, could not affect her heart for the reasons indicated above; but what her failure with them does do is force her to a marriage with even less discrimination involved, to the Rev. Emilius who 'coveted fish, but was aware that his position did not justify him in expecting the best fish in the market' (37). Trollope makes no bones about how awful he is but at the same time makes it clear that Lizzie could think herself attracted by him; which serves to indicate further both how hollow her previous romanticism had been and also how desperate she is to be married by this stage. The effect is to enhance the pathetic nature of all her efforts throughout the book. Though she is skilled enough in making

(35) McMaster, Trollope, fails to consider these weaknesses, that might be pleaded in mitigation of Lizzie, in the otherwise comprehensive account of her essential falsity.

(36) *ibid.*, Ch.5; p.36.

(37) *ibid.*, Ch.66; p.495.

an immediate impact, she is without the knowledge or the capacity to calculate things through; the superiority her wealth and her style confer is easily proved to be artificial, and is swiftly dissipated by contact with the real world of affairs. Unlike the others who seem of the same sort, Lizzie's isolation is too thorough for her to carry through an independent initiative.

Lizzie, then, is to be seen as in part a victim herself in the course of her pursuits, being in a sense in a state of *désperation* as to her circumstantial situation despite her advantages. Given this balanced presentation of someone who could very easily have been a monster, it is of course to be expected that Trollope's approach to another sort of husband-hunter, one who acted under more compelling circumstances, would also be sympathetic. The first example he presents of the type is Lady Alexandrina De Courcy in The Small House at Allington. Her role there is intrinsically a very nasty one, for she is the object for which the heroine, Lily Dale, is jilted by Adolphus Crosbie, and furthermore Lady Alexandrina actively encourages him to do this. Nevertheless, Trollope presents the compulsion for her to do all this in a manner that makes it seem understandable, though nasty, and that, by drawing attention to the alternative open to her almost makes her conduct excusable. Life at Courcy Castle is not at all pleasant, and the only way she can get away is by marriage; and by the time when she determined to act ruthlessly and hook Crosbie, the prospects of marriage without any such action had grown decidedly dim -

Her glass and her maid assured her that her sun shone still as brightly as ever; but her spirit was becoming weary with waiting, and she dreaded lest she become a terror to all, as was her sister Rosina, or an object of interest to none, as was Margaretta. (38)

(38) Trollope, The Small House at Allington, London, 1864, Ch.17; World's Classics, Oxford, 1939, Vol.I, p.225.

The urgency is brought home the more readily in that her mother is shown to participate in her schemes. This also has the effect of making Lily Dale's position much sadder, in that it is clear her interests would find it much more difficult to be upheld with such powerful and thorough opponents ranged against her; but, given the countess' strong feelings about her rank, the fact that she activates herself with regard to Crosbie indicates how anxious she is about her daughter -

Such a man as Crosbie was certainly no great match for an earl's daughter. Such a marriage, indeed, would, one may say, be but a poor triumph. When the countess, during the last season in town, had observed how matters were going with Alexandrina, she had cautioned her child, taking her to task for her imprudence. But the child had been at this work for fourteen years, and was weary of it...she pouted, saying that she knew very well what she was about, scolding her mother in return, and making Lady De Courcy perceive that the struggle was becoming very weary. (39)

The emphasis on the De Courcy rank also, oddly enough, marks Trollope's unforced treatment of the situation. It might have been expected that much would have been made of the De Courcy position and Lily's comparative insignificance and vulnerability; but Trollope's treatment of Lady Alexandrina emphatically denies that her social advantages increase her guilt in coveting Crosbie. The bleakness of her single life and the desperation to get married are, in this case, not alleviated at all by her rank and the comparative lack, with regard say to Becky Sharp, of a requirement to support herself. In the previous cases, with Sophia Furnival and earlier in this chapter, we have seen such social and financial self-sufficiency implying that husband-hunting was an amusement of a sort; with Lizzie Eustace there was more, but it was based on her own separate desires and ambitions, without which the role of the wealthy widow might have been satisfactory; with Alexandrina de Courcy we see for the first time a theme that was to become fairly common

(39) *ibid.*, Ch.18; Vol.I, p.245.

in Trollope, and is unique in him amongst the authors considered here, that of the need for the single girl to be married, regardless of her financial and social circumstances. Husband-hunting is hardly ever in Trollope just a diversion for the subject, and even when as here the subject has only a supporting part to play in the story, an attempt is made to explain as far as possible the incentive behind such predacity.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Because Trollope does not see the husband-hunter as necessarily abnormal, he deals, as well as with the fairly forceful females noticed so far, with weaker specimens who are more obviously vulnerable. Lady Alexandrina, as Sophia Furnival, and Lizzie Eustace, plays her cards with a fair amount of skill, and has the man in question under control during at least a substantial part of the pursuit. Georgiana Longestaffe, in The Way We Live Now, is quite different. She is seen only in relation to the one suitor, but her behaviour there suggests a decisive incapacity for skilful management. It had previously been stated that her conception of her own attractions had always, though adjusted downward with the years, been too high - 'now she was aware that hitherto she had always fixed her price a little too high'⁽⁴¹⁾ - and she makes the same mistake again with regard to the instance detailed; because Mr. Brehgert is Jewish and much older than herself, she thinks that she is in a position to dictate terms as to their establishment after marriage, but he is not attracted to her to such an extent as to be prepared to give in, and accordingly breaks off the engagement on the grounds that he cannot comply with her demands. It is only after that, with the added incentive of having to

(40) Particularly after the preceding discussion of Lady Alexandrina and Lily Dale, it is therefore odd to find Thomson, *op. cit.*, p.118, asserting Trollope's lack of sympathy - 'Trollope saw no redeeming feature in celibacy and said so bluntly'.

(41) The Way We Live Now, Ch.60; Vol.II, p.94.

make up for accepting a Jew and then failing to marry him, that she realises that her best chance of marrying is to have no conditions as to the situation she wanted to occupy afterwards; and then she succeeds, having first thought of wealth and a coronet, in marrying a curate, and appears to have been quite happy.

In addition to Georgiana's exaggerated estimation of herself, the most prominent cause of her failure in the field is the lack of sympathy between her and her parents. They are, it is true, behind her in theory -

No doubt the battle had been carried on for many years so much under the auspices of her father and mother as to justify her in thinking that their theory of life was the same as her own. Lady Pomona had been very open in her teaching, and Mr. Longstaffe had always given a silent adherence to the idea that the house in London was to be kept open in order that husbands might be caught -

but their support is not followed through, and is subject to their own concerns or whims -

And now when they deserted her in her real difficulty, - when they first told her to live at Caversham all the summer, and then sent her up to the Melmottes, and after that forbade her marriage with Mr. Brehgert, - it seemed to her that they were unnatural parents. (42)

Georgiana's sphere of action is restricted by the limitations of her parents' sojourns in London; her father's prejudices prevent her from staying with people there who would give her the contacts she, and they, preferred; and their attitude to Brehgert, though she had met him through the Melmottes who had been inflicted upon her by them, encourages her to despise him and therefore make the demands that lead to the breach. At no stage, despite the vigour of her protests, can Georgiana ever really stand up to them or act contrary to their impositions. She succeeds in marrying ultimately only after ignoring her parents completely; and only after they too determine to ignore her proceedings, with the justification that they are with a local clergyman

(42) *ibid.*, Ch.95; Vol.II, pp.423-4.

so that 'There was no room to apprehend anything wrong on that side' and, given the Brehgert fiasco, '"Anything...would be better than the Jew"' (43). There is perhaps an implication here that desperation on Georgiana's part and detachment from her parents were necessary, which points up the fundamental weakness: she and they were attempting to abide, or to appear to do so, by standards that can best be described as genteel, that were wholly inappropriate to the matter in hand. That required firm dealing and dedication which could only be applied when not only aims but also materials were discerned clearly. It was Georgiana's misfortune that she was subject to external concerns that complicated the task which was set before her.

The point is made the more strongly by the extremely favourable presentation of Brehgert himself. It is quite clear, and particularly to him, that he is being accepted only for his money, but he has no objection in principle to being used by Georgiana in this way, is quite confident that their marriage would be satisfactory, and only withdraws when her demands become excessive. His dealings both with her and her father set him in an attractive light, and his charity towards Melmotte marks him as one of the better characters in the book. The impression is therefore conveyed that an arrangement in which he acquiesces cannot be too bad: it is not the marriage, whatever its motivation, that is to be condemned, but the false values on the part of the Longestaffes that prevent it. Trollope, when he does comment on husband-hunting, makes it clear that none of the women he considers fit to be heroines would engage in it actively; but The Way We Live Now suggests that in a context where it is practised, and that with justification -

Lady Pomona, looking forward as well as she was able to the time at which she should herself have departed, when her dower and dower-house would have reverted to Dolly, acknowledged that Georgiana should provide herself with a

(43) *ibid.*, Ch.95; Vol.II, p.427.

home of her own before that time⁽⁴⁴⁾ -

it should be directly, without distracting illusions.

Both Lady Alexandrina and Georgiana are relatively minor female characters in the novels in which they appear. In The American Senator, though she is certainly not the heroine, Arabella Trefoil is undoubtedly the centre of feminine interest; and her attempts to get married are considered in very close detail.⁽⁴⁵⁾ It is no secret between her and her mother that this is her principal object, and indeed Lady Augusta is more candid about it than Lady De Courcy, and far more anxious than Lady Pomona to contribute her own assistance. Such devotion provokes distaste, and leads to clear expressions of disapproval from their relations, as well as from various other women who come across them; but because it is so obvious and is recognised as such by men whom Arabella does seek to entrap, the danger she presents, and thereby her reprehensibility, are reduced. It is as though, like Sophia Furnival, she were playing a game the rules of which were clear to all concerned so that, however anxious she herself was to succeed, the less capable she is of harm. As Trollope puts it,

Other men had petted her, had amused themselves with her, and then thrown her over, had lied to her and laughed at her, till she had been taught to think that a man was a heartless, cruel, slippery animal, made indeed to be caught occasionally, but in the catching of which infinite skill was wanted, and in which infinite skill might be thrown away.... To Lord Rufford she had simply behaved after the manner of her class, heartless of course, but only in the way which the "custom of the trade" justified. Each had tried to circumvent the other, and she as the weaker had gone to the wall.⁽⁴⁶⁾

(44) *ibid.*, Ch.60; Vol.II, p.94.

(45) Tracy, *op.cit.*, in accordance with the fairly rigid morality he enunciates throughout his book, is less sympathetic to Arabella than Trollope was; but he expounds clearly the parallels throughout The American Senator that help to illuminate the various plots and, in particular, that concerning Arabella.

(46) Trollope, The American Senator, London, 1877, Ch.75; World's Classics, Oxford, 1931, pp.517-8.

In such a situation, where her proceedings are recognised and indeed taken advantage of, the guilt that can be attached to her seems minimal.

The passage quoted does indicate an exception; and in this context John Morton is most certainly a victim. Arabella is quite ruthless about charming him into proposing to her, about accepting him and then treating him inconsiderately, about planning to throw him over if she could get Lord Rufford while being determined to hang on to him if she failed with Rufford. Though she is stricken with remorse at the news of his impending death, touched by his desire to see her despite her lack of consideration for him, and upset by the legacy he willed to her even after she had confessed her iniquities to him, Trollope makes it clear that all this is due simply to residual traces of an original unspoiled self, and that none of it would cause any drastic change for the better in her. But if this is condemnation, it is condemnation with an effort to provide some sort of exculpation. The very traces of remorse, for instance, would not have been mentioned with such prominent reference to the girl's character by any other of our novelists: Trollope uses them not only to indicate traces of a better nature, but also to mitigate her habitual worse pursuits. John Morton's conduct contrasts not only with hers but with that of the other men with whom she had to deal, and even if her attempts to justify her conduct by reference to this are unacceptable and the treatment of Morton affirms the unacceptability of such arguments, the context in which Arabella generally operates is brought home fully enough for her to demand a degree of sympathy in spite of her sins.

What might be called Trollope's refusal to load the dice against the guilty is apparent too in his treatment of Lady Augustus. She is certainly used, a process seen before with, say, Edith Dombey and Mrs. Skewton or Ethel Newcome and Lady Kew, to modify the effect of Arabella's iniquities.

Lady Augustus is vulgar, grasping, meddlesome and far more ruthless than Arabella in their joint pursuits. Trollope marks the distinction between them in describing Arabella's remorse -

the purport of the death of this man whom she had known so intimately and who had behaved so well to her, - to whom her own conduct had been so foully false, - for a time brought her back to humanity. But Lady Augustus had got beyond that and could not at all understand it. (47)

But the fact that she is worse is not used to gloss over Arabella's own efforts; and, indeed, Arabella is seen to be unjust in her attempts to blame her mother for actions which are clearly her own responsibility, as was the throwing over of Morton. Furthermore, the miseries of Lady Augustus' own position are sketched clearly enough almost to justify the intensity of the inconsideration she manifests on behalf of her daughter's pursuits. The final account of her after Arabella has at last got married even manages to achieve poignancy -

As soon as the carriage was gone, she went to her own room and wept bitterly. It was all done now. Everything was over.... There had been something to fear and something to hope. The girl had always had some prospect before her, more or less brilliant. Her life had had its occupation, and future triumph was possible. Now it was all over. The link by which she had been bound to the world was broken.... She knew that she was an old woman, without money, without blood, and without attraction, whom nobody would ever again desire to see. (48)

What seems her meanness with regard to a settlement for Arabella is understandable in view of the fact that, not having had a secure one herself, her husband had wasted all her fortune; deserted as she virtually is by her husband, it is understandable that she should be so involved in Arabella's pursuits, and the more pathetically in that success there would leave her destitute. She could claim, indeed, that she was doing throughout only what she saw as her duty towards Arabella, and this could be extended even to the

(47) *ibid.*, Ch.55; p.378.

(48) *ibid.*, Ch.76; pp.529-30.

bargain she enters into with Rufford, that he should discharge whatever expectations Arabella had by settling a large sum of money upon her.

Arabella is, of course, furious at what she sees as a sale of "my hopes and my very name and character, for £8,000!" But Lady Augustus' own view of this reaction has also a point -

Together they had fished in turbid waters for marital nibbles, and had told mutual falsehoods to unbelieving tradesmen. And yet the younger woman, when tempted with a bribe worth lies and tricks as deep and as black as Acheron, now stood on her dignity and her purity and stamped her foot with honest indignation! (49)

Arabella was candid about her rejection of romance, and though some sort of establishment was her aim, at least the money would keep her from destitution; given that Rufford was almost certain to get away, the money would be something gained, and that wholly on Arabella's behalf. If unquestionably and obviously sordid, the transaction could still be seen as a logical extension of the philosophy to which Arabella subscribed, and Lady Augustus might almost be forgiven for seeing it as a satisfactory conclusion to that particular episode. In the end the discord roused by this deal leads to their separation; and it is while separated from her mother that Arabella meets the man she does marry, so that Lady Augustus has no part to play in the final arrangement. That arrangement does represent a comedown for Arabella, for indeed she sees Mounser Green himself as 'one of those of the other sex who would most probably look out for prey, - who, if he married at all, would marry an heiress!' (50); her attractions for him being ironically the connections that were in the process of repudiating her because of her predatory conduct, and the legacy from Morton. The marriage, therefore, may be said to have provided Arabella with someone suitable in that he would be capable

(49) *ibid.*, Ch.62; pp.428-9.

(50) *ibid.*, Ch.75; p.519.

of looking after their joint interests.

Both Georgiana and Arabella are settled fairly satisfactorily; with Lizzie and Lady Alexandrina, the drawbacks of widowhood and singleness are expounded clearly so that, though their last state might be worse than their first, the sort of marriage they make has in itself a form of justification that the particular characters of the men they marry cannot affect. There are, however, two cases in Trollope where a mercenary marriage entered into on deliberate principles has disastrous consequences that are presented as having some sort of moral links. In neither case, indeed, is the term husband-hunting appropriate, in that the man is fully anxious, without being practised upon, for the marriage, and the woman has an opportunity for independent choice; and in both cases, that of Julia Brabazon in The Claverings and that of Lady Laura Standish in Phineas Finn and also Phineas Redux, the main interest belongs to other sections of this study rather than here. For the present, it is sufficient to remark that both women determine to marry without love and accordingly make use of the financially suitable man who offers himself, and that both so determine while being in love with someone they consider too poor for them comfortably to marry. In both cases, though in different ways and for different reasons, the tables are turned in that they become in some sense the victims of the men they do marry. There is a hint here that what might be called the heartless approach to marriage cannot be successful when there is a heart in question. We shall consider in detail later whether this sort of formulaic suggestion is in fact present, and if so whether it is made convincingly or with an obtrusive artificiality.⁽⁵¹⁾ For

(51) James R. Kincaid, The Novels of Anthony Trollope, Oxford, 1977, while accepting as basic - which I do not - in the two Phineas books a contrast in character as well as in their fortunes between Lady Laura and Violet Effingham, who marries the man she does love, nevertheless insists that there is no moral message attached.

the moment is simply worth considering how convincing are the arguments Trollope gives to these women to hold them on the course they choose; as when, for instance, Julia tries to persuade Harry Clavering that she is right to marry Lord Ongar -

"By the time you are entering the world, I shall be an old woman, and shall have lived my life...you are selfish enough to wish to continue a romance which would be absolutely destructive to me, though for a while it might afford a pleasant relaxation to your graver studies. Harry, you can choose in the world...if debarred from love now by the exigencies of labour, you will be as fit for love in ten years' time as you are at present.... I have had no choice, - no choice but to be married well, or to go out like a snuff of a candle."(52)

This concentration on the actual position as opposed to the ideal is characteristic of Trollope; given that an immediate marriage based on love is impossible, the bleakness of the solitary life facing the woman, even if it does not justify a mercenary marriage, provides a comprehensible motivation towards one.

The third of the categories of husband-hunters seen in Thackeray is also to be found in Trollope, namely those as to whom their own motivation for the pursuit is of minimal importance in comparison with the authorial purposes of providing some lighthearted diversion. The earliest examples of the breed as presented by Trollope are both to be found in relation to the same man; a point that serves to emphasise the fact that what interest of character there is in the episodes is by no means attached to the women in question. Amelia Roper in The Small House at Allington and Madalina Demolines in The Last Chronicle of Barset are very much appendages of Johnny Eames, who could be described as the hero of both works. What I posit to have been Trollope's very distinctive approach to the presentation of women in the novel is certainly recognizable by the time of these books, but regrettably these

(52) Trollope, The Claverings, London, 1867, Ch.1; World's Classics, Oxford, 1924, pp.4-5.

particular women do not benefit from it to any great extent. Amelia is a stock character, something like the Fotheringay in Pendennis if more active in her marital predacity, important chiefly because of her contribution to the portrayal of Johnny and his increasing maturity. The early emphasis on Johnny's youth, the mention of Amelia's other efforts in the field, draw attention to the unsavoury nature of her aims, and though there is an attempt later on when Johnny is quite clearly not going to be a victim to hint at her desperation and a love for him, it is too late and too slight to win much sympathy for her. Besides, she is married off to Cradell, and though he is also a figure of fun, the impression left is that she has not done too badly for herself, and any deeper consideration of her would be unnecessary.

The account of the activities of Madalina Demolines is even more absurd and deliberately frothy. The episodes involving Madalina, as also Mrs. Dobbs Broughton, contrast very forcefully, as they were doubtless intended to do, with the main body of the novel; but it is arguable that, even if they are not quite as vulgarly obtrusive as, say, the Greenow sections of Can You Forgive Her?, they could have been very well done without. Madalina's efforts at seduction are quite amusingly portrayed, and the image of Lady Demolines scuttling around in her nightdress conveys effectively the bizarre nature of their joint hunt, but there is no doubt that, as Conway Dalrymple puts it to Johnny,

"The bird is a bird of prey, and altogether an unclean bird. The bird wants a mate and doesn't much care how she finds one. And the bird wants money, and doesn't much care how she gets it. The bird is a decidedly bad bird, and not at all fit to take the place of domestic hen in a decent farmyard."(53)

All this could conceivably have made for excitement had it not been clear to

(53) Trollope, The Last Chronicle of Barset, London, 1867, Ch.75; World's Classics, Oxford, 1932, Vol.II, p.368.

Johnny, and Johnny's heroism clear to the reader. As it is, all the story offers is a predictable and almost static diversion.

With He Knew He Was Right, however, and 'the two Miss Frenches from Heavitree, who had the reputation of hunting unmarried clergymen in couples',⁽⁵⁴⁾ the comedy obtained from the pursuit is subtle and evenly balanced. The element of contrast is still prominent, the gloom of the story of the Trevelyan marriage being relieved by scenes of delicious absurdity, as that for instance when Arabella launches her great offensive -

"There comes a presentiment that something is going to happen, and a kind of belief that something has happened, though you don't know what; and the heart refused to be light, and the spirit becomes abashed, and the mind, though it creates new thoughts, will not settle itself to its accustomed work. I suppose it's what the novels have called Melancholy." "I suppose it is," said Mr. Gibson, "But there's generally some cause for it. Debt for instance -"⁽⁵⁵⁾

But in spite of all the preposterous situations which the Frenches create for themselves, they are very far from being simply figures of fun. This is perhaps in part because they are presented in conjunction with Mr. Gibson who is no hero himself. Where Johnny Eames was made, as it were, to escape, there is no definitely desirable conclusion to the hunt here. Given Gibson's character, the Frenches are not doing anything that cuts them off from the reader's sympathies. Rather, the fact that the prize is so paltry underscores the desperation of their single state: Arabella's longsuffering hopes, Camilla's hysterical anxieties, are brought home, no less than by direct description, by the account of Gibson's subsequent view of the proceedings, the suggestion that he was able to 'Take some glory to himself for his good fortune with women, and pride himself amidst his self-reproaches for the devotion which had been displayed for him by the fair sex in general.'⁽⁵⁶⁾

(54) Trollope, He Knew He Was Right, London, 1869, Ch.15; World's Classics, Oxford, 1932, Vol.II, p.368.

(55) *ibid.*, Ch.47; p.441.

(56) *ibid.*, Ch.83; p.783.

Yet the Frenches are not simply pathetic. As the passage goes on to say, if Gibson gloried, he was deceiving himself. He had tried to escape and it was by taking judicious advantage, singly and together, of the slightest weaknesses on his part, that the Frenches conquered; he could only make his own choice between them because of what support he received from the family itself. Arabella, at least, gets exactly what she wants in the end, and if she is to be pitied, as Trollope suggests, Gibson is even more pathetic because, even if to his own satisfaction, he has been manipulated throughout. He is overcome by the singlemindedness of his victimisers, and it is Trollope's achievement to have made clear their success while at the same time indicating the triviality of their aspirations; and also showing justification for such aspirations, as when he illustrates a general view of marriage that led to an increase of prestige for Dorothy Stanbury after her own engagement in the same book -

There was once a family of three ancient maiden ladies, much respected and loved in the town in which they lived. Their manners of life were well known among their friends, and excited no surprise; but a stranger to the locality once asked of the elder why Miss Matilda, the younger, always went first out of the room? "Matilda once had an offer of marriage," said the dear simple old lady, who had never been so graced and who felt that such an episode in life was quite sufficient to bestow brevet rank. (57)

It is his realistic acceptance of this attitude to life, and his appreciation of the reasons for it, that permit and produce Trollope's concept of the husband-hunter; and this concept allows him to deal with approximations to the subject, that are not distinctively such, in appropriate terms. The characters of his that have been considered so far in this chapter are recognisably of the breed, if not as emotively so as are those of the other authors discussed. There are in addition two books which are relevant here because

(57) *ibid.*, Ch.72; p.675.

of Trollope's presentation in them of the principal female character, whose claims to be mentioned here would probably not have been suggested by any of the other writers considered. Of The Vicar of Bullhampton Trollope wrote in his autobiography, 'I have myself forgotten what the heroine does and says' (58) and in favour of his lack of enthusiasm it must be granted that the plot as it concerns her seems at times perverse. Nevertheless, the basic dilemma that confronts Mary Lowther is forcefully and interestingly conveyed. While at Bullhampton she refuses the man whom all her friends and relations consider a very good match, because she does not love him. Back at her own home, she comes to love and accept her cousin, but the match proves impracticable because of their poverty. So back she goes to Bullhampton, knowing that Gilmore would look upon this as encouragement, and that she should not have gone unless she did mean to accept him: but she is quite convinced she does not and could not love him. In deciding to go, the question she asks herself is, 'Could she be right if she married a man without loving him? To marry a man without esteeming him, without the possibility of loving him hereafter, she knew would be wrong.' (59) In summing up the story, Trollope declares firmly against -

He has endeavoured to describe a young woman, prompted in all her doings by a conscience wide awake...but yet causing infinite grief to others, and nearly bringing herself to utter shipwreck, because, for a while, she allowed herself to believe that it would be right for her to marry a man whom she did not love. (60)

Yet, despite the firmness, Trollope had done full justice before to Mary Lowther's conscience particularly in a long passage pinpointing her difficulties that deserves to be quoted -

When a girl asks herself that question - what shall she do with her life? - it is so natural that she should answer it by saying that she will get

(58) An Autobiography, Ch.18; p.303.

(59) Trollope, The Vicar of Bullhampton, London, 1870, Ch.45; World's Classics, Oxford, 1924, pp.323-4.

(60) *ibid.*, Ch.71; p.513.

married...the whole theory of creation requires it; but it is required that the person most concerned should falsely repudiate it, in order that a mock modesty may be maintained, in which no human being can believe!... Mary Lowther, though she had never encountered condemnation as a husband-hunter, had learned all this, and was well aware that for her there was but one future mode of life that could be really blessed.... She could make, - indeed, she could not fail to make, - comparisons between her aunt and her dear friend, Mrs. Fenwick. She saw, and could not fail to see, that the life of the one was a starved, thin, poor life, - which, good as it was in its nature, reached but to few persons, and admitted but of few sympathies; whereas the other woman, by means of her position as a wife and a mother, increased her roots and spread out her branches.... The life to which she had looked forward had been the life of a married woman; and now, as that was taken from her, she could be but a thing broken, a fragment of humanity, created for use, but never to be used. (61)

That Mary Lowther should, therefore, contemplate the possibility of accepting Gilmore, in spite of her principles and her indubitable love for someone else, is both credible and forgivable: this for Trollope is the sort of situation into which husband-hunting could so easily shade, and if general judgments are easy, the particular question is not so simple. (62)

A similar line of thought provides the very theme of the earlier fairly extraordinary Miss Mackenzie, which, Trollope wrote, 'was written with a desire to prove that a novel may be produced without any love' (63). The book itself makes clear that in excluding love he did not mean to leave out courtship, which is from the beginning an integral part of the story; and in a passage that also deserves to be quoted he explains why Miss Mackenzie's position necessitates all this -

(61) ibid., Ch. 37; pp. 259-62.

(62) William Cadbury, 'The Uses of the Village: Form and Theme in Trollope's The Vicar of Bullhampton', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, September 1963, claims that Mary decides to marry Gilmore out of a sense of duty, and that Trollope's belief is that marriage without love is equal to self-immolation: a claim that seems to me to take no account of the passage quoted above, that expounds the social situation and Mary's view of how it bore upon her personally.

(63) An Autobiography, Ch. 10; p. 172.

A woman's life is not perfect or whole till she has added herself to a husband. Nor is a man's life perfect or whole till he has added to himself a wife; but the deficiency with the man, though perhaps more injurious to him than its counterpart is to the woman, does not, to the outer eye, so manifestly unfit him for his business in the world.... Miss Mackenzie could not by any means bring herself to own it, and yet it was there strong within her bosom. A man situated in outer matters as she was... would have declared to himself clearly that it would be well for him to marry. But he would probably be content to wait a while and would, unless in love, feel the delay to be a luxury. But Miss Mackenzie could not confess as much... but yet she desired to be married, and dreaded delay.... Who was she, that she should be allowed to be in love?.. she despised herself, thinking herself to be too mean for a man's love. (64)

In the end, as Trollope admits in the autobiography, he failed in his attempt, love worked its way in and Miss Mackenzie made a romantic marriage; but the book suggests that that love is of a particular sort, and that it arose from Miss Mackenzie's own very special circumstances. When John Ball first proposed to her, she turned him down because of a residual anxiety for the love she did not feel; it was only after she had suddenly become poor, and she had indulged in the romantic fantasy that he would still stick by her regardless, that the fact that he does so makes her attachment to him total.

As though to make the point clear, Trollope writes of her other suitors, as to one of whom he declares it required a maniacal tendency in Miss Mackenzie to give serious considerations to his pretensions,

In either case she was sure that, had she married the man - the one man or the other - she would instantly have become devoted to him. And I... feel equally sure that it would have been so. (65)

The suggestion seems to be that any commitment would have induced love in Miss Mackenzie; it just happened that with John Ball there was an opportunity for commitment to be expressed before marriage. The further suggestion is that while it may be best to love before contemplating marriage, the idea of marriage as an end in itself need be no barrier to love of a sort. As

(64) Trollope, Miss Mackenzie, London, 1865, Ch.11; World's Classics, Oxford, 1924, pp.136-8.

(65) *ibid.*, Ch.15; p.197.

appeared in the last chapter, Trollope was decided in his belief that it was wrong for a woman in love with someone to marry or to be made to marry someone else. But in itself the urge to marry was not for him necessarily a bad thing. Where for others such an urge, without reference to a particular person or with no antecedent love, was to be treated with contumely, as indicative of some deep and far-reaching moral deficiency, Trollope saw it as very often a social necessity. The fact that it could, as he illustrates, lead in practice to deficiencies, a decrease in susceptibility, callousness, and whatever, did not put it irrevocably beyond the pale. Trollope is concerned to consider in detail the motivations in such cases; and in doing so brings it home that for many women the ideal could not be attained, that accordingly their conduct might very well have to be modified, and that such modification to practical considerations was not to be judged by an ideal standard.

CHAPTER 4

MARRIAGE AS REDEMPTION

As with marriages of convenience, so with regard to marriages based on love, there may be observed in the novels under review a distinction between those in which some sort of initiative is ascribed to the woman in question and those in which there is none. It will be seen that a very high proportion of the women to be discussed here are of the latter sort, which possibly makes the present category the most astonishing in its artificiality of all those to be considered. Though it has been noted before that the passivity of the sacrifices discussed in the second chapter was not usually of an entirely natural kind, it is understandable that in the conception of such victims passivity had to play a prominent part; with regard to women who are portrayed as exhibiting an active redeeming influence, however, a lack of initiative could be at best an accident. As such, the near universality of such a lack seems to indicate formulaic preconceptions that pay little independent attention to the individuals in question.

The phenomenon has, indeed, been observed already in the first chapter with regard to Disraeli. In Dickens too the formula is pervasive, and often endowed with associations that enhance its significance. Oliver Twist presents an early example, in its pristine state, of what may be seen as a gratuitous conjunction of romance with reformation: after the resolution of everyone else's problems, nothing but a culpable hypersensitivity could prevent Harry Maylie from marrying Rose while persisting in his original plans for life, yet he gives up his public activities to do so. He enunciates the view that successes in that field are nothing in comparison with her love, a recognition that evidently has authorial approval. Unnecessary as

this radical change is, it heralds Dickens' view of the wife as redeemer, of marriage as being both inspiration and reward for goodness and maturity.⁽¹⁾

In later works the view is advanced with consistent symbolic overtones, a foretaste of which is provided by what might be called a comically slight enunciation of the theme in The Old Curiosity Shop. Dick Swiveller there is, exceptionally, hardly affected by Little Nell's pervasive goodness; because of that, it might be suggested, he is the only character in the book to undergo a moral change for the better. Though signs of amiability were certainly to be seen in him before, they required to be brought to fruition by a woman's affection, and the change in him is wrought by the Marchioness' devotion to him in his sickness.⁽²⁾ At the same time it must be noted that it is from a fever that he arises to his new life; the strong sense of responsibility that he develops is to be related not only to the emotional contact with the Marchioness, whom he ultimately marries, but also to a decisive physical experience. In his case this was an illness, in others Dickens insists on protracted travel abroad. These factors are, indeed, introduced even when no form of spiritual regeneration is required for the hero, the most extreme example of this being with reference to Allan Woodcourt in Eleak House. He only declares himself to Esther on his return from a long voyage, the fact of Esther having lost her looks due to the smallpox allowing it to be recorded, despite her being the narrator, that he loves her for her moral qualities -

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- (1) John Lucas, The Melancholy Man, London, 1970 (p.51) is quite vehement in his criticism of the marriage, which he sees as 'of such incredibly dilute Rousseauistic prescriptiveness that it comes near to making a mockery of the novel's mimetic power in its treatment of a corrupt and corrupting society.'
- (2) Gabriel Pearson, in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, Ed. John Cross and Gabriel Pearson, London, 1962, seems to me, in stressing the importance of Dick as a force in terms of the conflicts traced in the novel, to underestimate the fundamental nature of the alteration that takes place in him.

"when I...found you newly risen from a sick bed, yet so inspired by sweet consideration for others, and so free from a selfish thought...Esther Summerson, how many hearts she touches and awakens, what sacred admiration and what love she wins." (3)

In this instance no causal connections are postulated: Allan Woodcourt is good enough from the beginning not to require to develop an appreciation of Esther's moral qualities. It is nevertheless interesting that a voyage is attributed to a hero who is so definitely asserted as being attracted by the heroine's diffuse goodness.

In Dombey and Son similar elements appear in the story, with a causal connection of a sort attached. It is stated there that Walter Gay decided, during his sentimental parting from Florence to go on his sea voyage, 'to garner up her simple faith, inviolate; and hold himself degraded if he breathed upon it any thought that was not in her own breast when she gave it to him' (4), and he mentions on his return his idealization of that moment of parting. Yet, as is indicated by the fact that Dickens could quite readily have contemplated a conclusion in which Walter did go to the bad, the ultimately unshakable nature of his goodness was an entirely independent issue; as in the case of Allan Woodcourt, neither his virtues nor his perceptions had any essential need of feminine guidance. It is therefore the more instructive that the inspirational concept he held of Florence should have been emphasized, as though the effectiveness of her goodness on Mr. Dombey alone were not considered sufficient. It is quite plausibly shown in that relation how her resigned devotion could have affected him after the catastrophes in which he had been involved, so as to have led to his softening and to his reliance upon her; but in addition an impact on Walter is asserted in an

(3) Dickens, Bleak House, London, 1852-3, Ch.61; pp.667-8.

(4) Dombey and Son, Ch.19; p.213.

indefinable manner that suggests dogmatism. (5)

A more pronounced example of this attitude is to be found in Little Dorrit, when Arther Clennam attributes to Little Dorrit an inspirational influence on himself -

"When I first gathered myself together," he thought, "and set something like purpose before my jaded eyes, whom had I before me, toiling on, for a good object's sake, without encouragement, without notice, against ignoble obstacles that would have turned an army of received heroes and heroines? One weak girl!..in whom had I watched patience, self-denial, self-subdual, charitable construction, the noblest generosity of the affections? In the same poor girl!" (6)

As a prelude to this enunciation, Clennam had been sent to the Marshalsea, which appears to be the equivalent in his case to illness or travel, and had consequentially developed a heightened awareness of Little Dorrit's devotion to him; apart, however, from the lack of that awareness, and even that could hardly be described as particularly culpable, he had not seemed to be at all in need of reformation. This condition of decency had been his from his original appearance in the book, which had preceded his introduction to and association with Little Dorrit. (7) Yet his reflections, as recorded above, in addition to indicating a novel recognition of Little Dorrit, also attempt to grant to her the credit for his previous moral positivism, and the authorial material surrounding these reflections, in simply echoing his claim, indicates that Dickens intended that claim to be upheld. Little Dorrit carries glorious enough a burden in controlling her family, and fulfils convincing enough a role in shedding light and sweetness about her daily round, for Clennam's personal exaltation of her to be redundant. Where an

(5) See Julian Moynahan in Dickens and the Twentieth Century for a brilliant delineation of this aspect of the novel.

(6) Little Dorrit, Bk.2, Ch.27; pp.593-4.

(7) F.R. Leavis makes the splendid observation, in Dickens the Novelist, that it is Flora Finching who represents those qualities in life in which Clennam is deficient; this, I think, is a much more plausible view than Dickens' own.

enhanced recognition on his part of her qualities would have been sufficient, the assertion of inspiration reveals Dickens' formulaic concerns. Little Dorrit's own goodness must be the prop of as much as possible of the goodness with which she comes into contact; there must be a personal moral aspect to Clennam's need of her, which had indeed to be presented as the root of any other aspect of it.

With the minor exception of Dick Swiveller, the heroes considered so far have been markedly free from deficiencies. With regard to David Copperfield, however, his failings of enthusiasm and naivete are an essential part of the book, as is the contrast of them with Agnes Wickfield's serene maturity. As such, his attribution to her of direction and guidance seems less forced than that noted in the previous examples. At the same time, the formulaic connotations adduced before are to be seen in the three years David has to spend in exile, a period he describes as 'a long and gloomy night that gathered on me, haunted by the ghosts of many hopes, of many dear remembrances, many unavailing sorrows and regrets.'⁽⁸⁾ It is only after this that he expresses his appreciation of Agnes' influence; she can be his only after his chastened and contrite return. The delay is for David's sake, so that he could go through the whole process of regeneration. As far as Agnes is concerned, she has got to wait for him to be ready, as indeed she had been waiting from the moment of her first introduction, even then with connotations of stained glass, to be the reward of his maturity.⁽⁹⁾

(8) Dickens, The Personal History of David Copperfield, London, 1849-50, Ch. 58; p. 644.

(9) Hillis Miller, *op.cit.*, discusses the conjunction of religious language with romantic love, in Little Dorrit as well as in Copperfield; Lucas, on the other hand, ignoring the spiritual aspects of Agnes' guidance, claims that she could have had no practical effect on David and states, (*op.cit.*, p. 199), in terms of his own autobiographical interpretation of the novel, 'the invention of Agnes is a concession to ideals of aspiration which at his deepest and truest Dickens did not really need.'

As might have been expected from what has been said already about the change in Dickens' attitudes over the years, a more balanced view of the feminine role is to be seen in Great Expectations, the only other novel Dickens wrote altogether in the first person. There, too, the book had charted the narrator's advancement to maturity; a process in this case involving two of the usual Dickensian methods of rebirth: a violent fever and an exile in foreign lands, the latter in this instance lasting for a period of eleven years. After the fever, Pip's consciousness of goodness is decisively renewed, and he determines to marry Biddy who had been what might be called the representative in the novel of static female goodness, and who had apparently been in love with Pip in the manner of previous heroines. By the time Pip gets to her, however, she has married Joe, her male counterpart in goodness: at last Dickens has produced an angelic figure whose appointed task is not simply to reward the hero in his final full development. Pip, after his eleven years' exile, is left to marry Estella, who has also undergone a process of regeneration; a fact that, as suggested before, indicates a novel awareness in Dickens that women are not simply static morally, that they too are capable of development.

The modification of Dickens' view can perhaps be seen also in A Tale of Two Cities where, though Sidney Carton finds in Lucy Manette inspiration for and immediate cause of a tremendous act of self-sacrifice, he asserts that she would not have been enough to have kept him permanently steady -

"I have had unformed ideas of striving afresh.... A dream, all a dream, that ends in nothing, and leaves the sleeper where he lay down, but I wish you to know that you inspired it...all through it, I have known myself to be quite undeserving. (10)

There is nothing automatic in this case about feminine inspiration. Though

(10) Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities, London, 1859, Ch.13; p.451.

it does prompt an action from which there could be no retrogression, it could not arrogate to itself an unvarying hold over Sidney Carton, for it had to take account of his own independent nature. Of course, Lucy Manette is too shadowy a figure in this relation for the example to mean much. It does, however, foreshadow the much more compelling instance in Our Mutual Friend where Dickens may almost be said to have subjected the theme to temptation. Eugene Wrayburn's defects there are not those of immaturity or irresponsibility, as were those of other heroes who were redeemed, they are rather those of a highly developed cynicism, and belong to a much more aggressive nature than that of Sidney Carton. Unlike other heroes, therefore, who were easily, even willingly, gathered into the net, he offers a powerful resistance; it would have taken very little more for him to have subjected Lizzie Hexam to his own view of life. As it is, his redemption is accomplished by the most obvious symbol of baptismal regeneration that Dickens used, the fall into the river from which he is hauled back to the shore by Lizzie herself and from the effects of which he is hauled back to life by the word that stands for his rejection of everything that had characterised his earlier life.⁽¹¹⁾ There is a distinctly sacramental air about the scene in

(11) Arnold Kettle, in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, and Lucas, *op.cit.*, are emphatic in denying that Dickens saw the river as a regenerative force for Eugene, the argument being that Rogue Riderhood fell in and was not 'saved'; Calder, *op.cit.*, mentions Riderhood too but does not make it clear what she thinks Dickens meant; Carey, Dickens, believes that Dickens did intend a baptism, and finds this preposterous, making the point (p.109) accordingly - 'How, we wonder, can baptism be so important in a novel where Riah the Jew is almost the only consistently good character?' All this ignores the basic fact that the river here, like the women in the other novels discussed, is irrelevant: the man has to be ready for redemption anyway, and the plunging in simply sets a seal on the reformation, which is why it can seem to be effective here for Eugene and not for Riderhood. Calder, indeed, seems to recognize this in claiming that, if redemption has taken place - which she doubts - it is Lizzie who has accomplished it; as does U.C. Knoepfelmacher Laughter and Despair, Berkeley and London, 1971, characterizing the

which his new purpose is made clear - "Your mind will be more at peace, lying here, if you make Lizzie your wife.... You ask her to kneel at this bedside and be married to you, that your reparation may be complete." (12) Yet the inspiration, though it triumphs in the end, is by no means an absolute. Lizzie is not a symbol of unshakable virtue, she has to struggle very hard to preserve her own idea of herself. The earlier formula of a static female figure simply waiting to reward the regenerate male is no longer in evidence.

In Our Mutual Friend, indeed, there also occurs a situation unique in Dickens, of a woman being reformed by virtue of her attachment to a man. Mention of Bella Wilfer, however, properly belongs elsewhere, and I shall simply draw attention here to two points. The first, interesting in the light of the voyages undertaken by the innocent Walter Gay and Allan Woodcourt, is that Harmon falls into the water and emerges as a new person without the existence of whom Bella could not have been tested nor proved. The second, more significant, is that Harmon's effect on Bella does not receive the sort of editorial comment redeeming heroines get. This resembles the treatment received by Mark Tapley in Martin Chuzzlewit; though his example had clearly had some sort of effect on Martin who becomes a reformed character after travelling with him, Mark is by no means declared to possess angelic endowments. These are the prerogative of heroines who, in a great many of the novels at any rate, being of universal and overwhelming virtue, bestow a requisite, if vague, grace upon their redeemed menfolk.

river as Lizzie's and not her father's. It is odd that Lucas is so concerned about the river, considering his perception with regard to Little Dorrit, that her role vis-a-vis Clennam is to be seen as symbolic rather than practically efficacious. Knoepflmacher, on the other hand, seems to me to err in making a similar suggestion about Lizzie: she clearly had a very intense part to play with regard to a much more complicated subject.

(12) Dickens, Our Mutual Friend, London, 1864-5, Ek.4, Ch.10; p.615.

Thackeray too portrayed women of enormous virtue, but they are much less effective than are those of Dickens in the moral influence they are supposed to exert on the world around them. This may be due in part to the absence of a general background to lend substance to powerful claims: though Lady Castlewood, for instance, tends the local poor and Laura pays kind calls on which Pendennis fails to accompany her, these are not presented as essential to their roles;⁽¹³⁾ they are cursory, almost patently conventional, attributes, not to be compared with, say Esther Summerson's concern for Charley's family and for the Brickmakers, or with Little Dorrit's mothering of Maggy. The light Thackeray's angels shed around them is largely confined to their immediate acquaintance who are of central importance in the relevant plot; in which, instructively, they are in contrast with those amongst his women who are not so good, whose impact is generally on a larger scale.

There is, as well as the absence of wider implications in this regard, another reason for the relative ineffectuality of Thackeray's heroines, of even greater significance with reference to the role allotted to them: his heroes, on the whole, are fully developed on their first presentation. Dobbin, for instance, may come to a finer perception than before of Amelia at the end of Vanity Fair, but this makes no difference to his personality, essentially good as it was from the first. Correspondingly, the much less good George Osborne does have flashes of finer feeling when on occasion Amelia's devotion is brought home to him, but these are not signs of change, they are in effect further aspects of his weakness, his desire for comfort and the complaisance of his selfishness. Henry Esmond, again, transfers his affections from Beatrix to Lady Castlewood not because maturity brings

(13) Jack P. Rawlins, Thackeray's Novels - A Fiction that is True, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974, p.114, in noting this, suggests as an explanation that 'Thackeray's delicate moral distinctions must remain free of extremes of sensation which will overwhelm them.'

with it awareness of what each really is but because of a particularly unforgivable action of the former. His appreciation of the latter did not need to be enhanced, he was perceptive enough from the start to recognise her goodness; his explicit attachment to her, then, marks no vital change within him.

Pendennis, of course, provides an exception to the above generalization and, as such, demands discussion in the present chapter: its theme is, in essence, the advance of a young man to maturity and, in accordance with the convention noted in Dickens, it ends with recognition of the right woman for marriage. The hallmark of maturity in Pen's case is selflessness, most strikingly displayed when he shares Laura's view that, while refusing the money he might have had with Blanche, he should abide by his obligation to marry her. On that occasion he enunciates clearly Laura's inspirational responsibilities - "And you are the dearest and best of women - the dearest, the dearest and the best. Teach me my duty. Pray for me that I may do it - pure heart."⁽¹⁴⁾ In addition, having sacrificed himself to Blanche while now realising that he needs Laura, Pen registers another advance in recognising a moral obligation to give up his personal ambition, as to which Laura had previously said,

"And if you do not win fame, what then? You own it is vanity, and you can live very happily without it.... I would have you bring your wife to Fair Oaks to live there, and study, and do good round about you.... If the world is a temptation, are we not told to pray that we may not be led into it?"⁽¹⁵⁾

Pen's renunciation, then, is like Harry Maylie's, the outward sign of an inward change: the fact that he is later said to have got into Parliament underlines the conventionality of his decision, its significance lying simply in its association with the period at which he arrives at a mature appreciation

(14) Pendennis, Ch.70; p.905.

(15) *ibid.*, Ch.66; pp.864-5.

of Laura.

Pen, indeed, is exhibited as manifesting a general regard for Laura's judgment after his conversion - 'It was wonderful upon how many points Mr. Arthur, who generally followed his own opinion, now wanted another person's counsel.'⁽¹⁶⁾ This stage is reached soon after he grants that he does not deserve her concern for him, and marks a contrast with a previous occasion on which he had followed her advice, contrary to his own inclinations. Then, at the ball just before he first proposed to her, his reaction to her advice had been, '"How fond that girl is of me!'"⁽¹⁷⁾, and in proposing to her soon after he had declared that he could not love her himself. Yet, even though such overwhelming arrogance might have required modification, the way in which it is subordinated to feminine sensibility smacks of special pleading. It is not implausible that the man who argued so strongly in favour of compromise should nevertheless have been so shocked by the revelation of Blanche's parentage as to refuse to profit by it; but it is implausible that he should have thrown himself so completely upon Laura's support both before and after making that decision. It is perhaps acceptable that Pen, in being released without any reprehensible initiative on his own part after the final exposure of Blanche's duplicity, should have so recoiled from her as to submit thoroughly to Laura; but the earlier assertion of a guilty conscience with regard to his former plan when he is confronted by Laura is not entirely convincing. Though the intimacy with Laura at Baymouth and the revelation she makes that she might have transferred her affections from him to Warrington may be supposed to have begun to move him, the transition from his exultation about his canvassing success at Clavering is unprepared; and suggests a basic preconception about Laura's

(16) *ibid.*, Ch.72; p.930.

(17) *ibid.*, Ch.27; p.335.

saving graces that do not require any tangible events to be activated.

Pen's submission to Laura was, as his narration in The Newcomes and in Philip indicates, permanent. It was also, those books indicate as well, unnecessary; though he might have displayed bad judgment in his earlier days, it is clear that by the time of the later books Pen did not require to be controlled.⁽¹⁸⁾ Indeed, as may be seen from the different reactions of him and of Laura to Dr. Firmin's impositions in Philip, her judgment could be clouded by sentiment and his was infinitely preferable. Nevertheless, the impression is maintained throughout that Laura is dominant in deciding anything. The situation is the same with regard to Henry Esmond of whom, in fact, it could not even be suggested that before his acceptance of her virtue and his marriage to her he was inferior to Lady Castlewood in morals or capacity. He too is described, in The Virginians, as having been managed by his wife. In the contrasting case of Dobbin, who is certainly shown to be far superior to his wife, he is not exhibited as exercising any such control over her: far from him providing a standard for Amelia, he is still shown in the brief conclusion as caring for her interests and doing her bidding, even to his own inconvenience, just as before. In that case, there is no question at all of the inferior partner feeling an excessive obligation; confirmation, if any were required, that relative positions in marriage were not thought by Thackeray to depend on merit. Given the moral

(18) Jean Sudrann, 'The Philosopher's Property: Thackeray and the Use of Time', Victorian Studies, June 1967, thinks Pen doesn't change at all, and Calder too, *op.cit.*, refuses to believe in Laura as a moral force from the beginning. This is understandable, but it may be as well to be generous and accept her as a symbol to which Pen has to cling with his new perceptions, if not an alteration, at the end of Pendennis; and agree with McMaster, Thackeray p.103, that it is only 'the Laura who is the wife of the narrator in The Newcomes and Philip who is hard to take...in these novels she is not a complete person: she is an allegorical figure, an attitude rather than a character.' See too Ch. 6 below.

status of husband and wife, with regard to Esmond and Rachel as well as with Dobbin and Amelia, he could hardly make extravagant claims in those cases for feminine influence; in the case of Pen, however, Pen's early peccadilloes provided material enough for the formula to be applied, and Pen accordingly binds himself completely to his redeemer.

The closest approximation in Thackeray to Pen's situation is that of Philip, in the narration of whose adventures Pen's bonds are clearly exhibited. Philip's claims about his wife are even more grandiloquent than are those of Pen -

"What have I done in life that I am to be made a present of a little angel? Once there was so much wrong in me, and my heart was so black and revengeful, that I knew not what might happen to me. She came and rescued me. The love of this creature purifies me." (19)

Predictably, such sentiments are supported by Pen's narrative voice -

I am bound to say that Philip became thrifty and saving for the sake of Char and the child.... Where was our friend's former arrogance, self-confidence, and boisterous profusion? He was at the feet of his wife and child.... They taught him, he said: and as he thought of them, his heart turned in awful thanks to the gracious Heaven which had given them to him. (20)

It is apparent from all this that some deep-seated change is supposed to have occurred within Philip. Unfortunately, no evidence of such a change is presented: Philip had been warm-hearted, generous and impetuous before, and he continues so; he had been touchy and obstinate and, as his dealings with the Mugfords, his father, and his cousin Philip Ringwood indicate, continues so as well. Becoming thrifty and saving was the simplest practical necessity under the circumstances, and does not indicate anything else, in addition to which even as to that Philip's feelings are shown to have run away with him to the detriment of his family's welfare; for, though it might

(19) Thackeray, The Adventures of Philip, London, 1861-2, Ch.32; p.488.

(20) *ibid.*, Ch.33; pp.499-500.

be suggested that criticism of Laura's and Philip's indulgence to Dr. Firmin is misplaced, the effort that indulgence imposes upon Mrs. Brandon, and the subsequent disowning of the doctor, amply justify the withdrawal of that indulgence and indicate how misguided it was. Charlotte and marriage, then, by no means provide Philip with the self-control he requires in every sphere; it is not that he should have become calculating, but he should have been, as for instance Pen is sketched, sensible in his generosity. Instead, he continues boisterous and profuse. There is therefore an inconsistency here that is obvious; and it is interesting that the most extreme example in Thackeray of gratuitous claims about the benefits of marriage, that the narrative in no way upholds, occurs with reference to the least memorable of his heroines. The implication of this is that, given Thackeray's adherence to an idealizing concept of the good woman, it is in direct proportion to the personal irrelevance of his angels to the practicalities of his plot that he feels obliged to attribute to them inspirational achievements. This might have suggested, in turn, an incapacity on Thackeray's part to take the convention seriously; but the care Thackeray took in Pendennis to set up the relation that later obtained between Pen and Laura indicates otherwise. It is precisely because there would be no question about Charlotte's status that the actual part assigned to her could seem so minimal. For her intangible successes, as much as Philip's voice Pen's narrative is meant to be credited; just as, in Pen's own case, Thackeray's was.

Kingsley's novels have not figured at all in the last two chapters, and this for a reason that is significant in the present context. The motivations towards marriage examined in those chapters were intrinsically such as to have no reference at all to the husband in view; and such independence, whether attributed in an active or a passive form to the woman in

question, Kingsley had no intention whatsoever of considering. For him, as was indicated in the passage quoted in the first chapter, the fulfilment of femininity lay in attachment to a man, and it is primarily, almost exclusively, with that aspect of womankind that he deals. Indeed, his conception of the devotion of woman to man is so forceful a one that the extremes of passivity to be seen in Dickens and Thackeray do not figure in his novels. Nevertheless, though the love he depicts is of a spirited sort, the passage cited indicates that he would, primarily, be concerned with its spiritual aspects: the subject of his novels, indeed, is more often than not an aggressively masculine youth who has in some sense or another to be tamed, and whose taming is usually accomplished in a manner somehow involving the woman he loves; and, as might have been expected from the discussion in this respect of Dickens and Thackeray, this concentration on spirituality leads the relation described to suffer from artificiality, and the woman in question from relative neglect.

The most extreme example in Kingsley of the attribution of redemption occurs in Hereward the Wake. The hero there possesses all the Viking virtues, and also those vices which might be described as their natural accompaniments, the arrogance, self-confidence, and boisterous profusion that Thackeray too ascribed to his Philip. When Hereward therefore arrives in the relatively civilised Flanders and falls in love, it is natural that he should try to adjust and natural that he should do so under the guidance of his love -

taught by the woman who loved him, he could listen to humiliating truths, which he would have sneered at, had they come from the lips of a hermit or a priest...the spell was on him - a far surer, as well as purer spell than any love-potion of which foolish Torfrida had ever dreamed - the only spell which can really civilise man - that of woman's tact and woman's purity. (21)

(21) Kingsley, Hereward the Wake, London, 1866, Ch.11; MacMillan Collected Edition, London, 1902, Vol.I, p.169. All future page references with regard to Kingsley will be to the relevant volume in this edition.

Yet what has happened here is that into the purely factual account of Hereward's attempt to become civilised, Kingsley has introduced an unrelated abstraction: Hereward may very well have increased in self-consciousness while conforming, but no deep moral change was to be expected without a far higher degree of motivation being described. The sequel shows that no such change is postulated. The dogmatic generalization is simply asserted in the hope that the credible aspects of the situation may support it. The artificiality of the statement becomes, indeed, the more apparent when the circumstances that prompted it are compared with the absence of a similar statement with reference to similar circumstances in Westward Ho. The aggressive nature of the hero there is tamed by other means and he, rather, is the inspiration for the attempt of the heroine, forest foundling as she is, to become gentle and civilised herself. Yet Amyas Leigh is not made the subject of sublime generalisation by Kingsley. Ayacanora's devotion to him is presented as a perfectly ordinary phenomenon, and Kingsley is in fact far more concerned with Amyas' reaction to it as part of his obsessive hatred of the Spanish. That hatred is resolved with highly dramatic symbolism, and it is conceivable that his acceptance of the girl is to be seen as the seal upon his restored humanity; Ayacanora's own progression to becoming acceptable is a story of minimal moral interest in comparison with his.

Kingsley's actual views can be discerned too from the descriptions in Yeast and Hypatia of the quests of Lancelot and of Raphael respectively, and of their relations to the women they love. In the former book, Lancelot and Argemone are both meant to exercise a beneficial influence over the other, but whereas Argemone's danger was one that seemed intensely real to Kingsley, that of Lancelot was basically a lack of a sense of purpose; initially, therefore, all she appears to have done was to enhance his consciousness of

his deficiencies and make him 'feel more painfully his ignorance of society, of practical life, and the outward present,' (22) Shadowy as this was, however, given that Lancelot has to be able to argue her out of a nunnery, even these barely practical considerations are soon replaced by more strictly spiritual ones -

Her mind was beside his as the vase of cut flowers by the side of the rugged tree...she became a more reverent listener, and gave herself up, half against her will and conscience, to the guidance of a man whom she knew to be her inferior in morals and in orthodoxy. (23)

Given that Lancelot is said to subscribe to this view, while still pursuing his own quest, the best commentary on the situation would seem to be provided by Argemone's earlier words - "But men in general - oh, they hide their contempt for us, if not their own ignorance, under that mask of chivalrous deference!" (24) Correspondingly, in Hypatia, though Raphael may suggest, in his interpretation of the 'Song of Songs', that an initial softening of the heart was required for conversion -

"God made the one man for the one woman, and the one woman to the one man, even as it was in the garden of Eden, so all his heart and thoughts become pure, and gentle, and simple...and the man feels that he is in harmony for the first time in his life, with the universe of God" (25)

Victoria herself has a relatively small part to play in what is depicted as his ultimate salvation. It is as much the practical virtues of her family as of her that first bring home to Raphael the acceptability of Christianity, and though Victoria's prayers for him are dramatically described and their marriage follows on his conversion, it is the argumentative efforts of male

(22) Kingsley, Yeast, London, 1848, Ch.6; p.72.

(23) *ibid.*, Ch.10; p.124.

(24) *ibid.*, Ch.2; p.22.

(25) Kingsley, Hypatia, London, 1853, Ch.21; Vol.II, p.74.

ecclesiastics that are primarily responsible. Indeed, even with regard to the initial softening of the heart, it is apparent in Raphael's case as well as in Lancelot's that it was not so much romanticism as their own independent consciousness of the unsatisfactory nature of their previous ways of life and thought that made them susceptible to change. The influence of the women, then, is hardly made clear at any very important level; the men are emphatically the subjects of the stories in which the relations occur, and their characters are sketched forcefully enough from the beginning for the women involved to be unable to make any notable contribution to them.

In Hypatia, however, there occurs also the only instance in Kingsley of such a contribution being made; in the context, interestingly enough, of a woman taking her stand on what we have noted, in the first chapter, Kingsley in Fraser's referring to, with regard to Tennyson's Princess, as the specifically 'masculine ground of intellect.'⁽²⁶⁾ In the novel, it is clear, Philammon is very much in need of guidance, and Hypatia is able to, and does, provide it: she is primarily responsible for the opening up to Philammon of wider horizons and, as both his later reputation as abbot in the Laura and the contrast he presents to the bigotry of Cyril's cohorts indicate, this is obviously to be seen as a gain. Nevertheless, for this positive contribution by a woman to be possible, extremely special circumstances had to be posited, and even then there are reservations expressed about Hypatia's status: Philammon had to be extraordinarily ingenuous to begin with, while his monastic background ensured an absence of any romantic element in his initial devotion to her; once he is roused to physical awareness - with the help, in a remarkably explicit scene, of the old Jewess Miriam - his awareness of his

(26) Fraser's Magazine, 'Tennyson', September 1850, Vol.42, pp.250-1, v.Ch.1. n.(34).

obligations to Hypatia recedes. Indeed, he even contemplates redeeming her himself, and the ideal he then sketches seems intended as a fundamentally sound reaction in that Kingsley suggests he may not have been able to articulate it himself -

"She is too beautiful to be utterly evil": but the very defect in her creed which he had just discovered, drew him towards her again.... Was not he, of all men, bound to believe that all she required to make her perfect was conversion to the true faith?... "I have had my dream - yes! but it was of one who should be at once my teacher and my pupil, my debtor and my queen - who should lean on me, and yet support me - supply my defects, although with lesser light, as the old moon fills up the circle of the new." (27)

Though Philammon himself returns at the end, after Hypatia's death, to an appreciation of her in which the enunciation of such priorities is inessential, Kingsley's own portrayal of her at this particular stage, with her mounting diffidence, indicates his own adherence to the less respectful view: the one, in fact, that he had promulgated in the article mentioned in referring to woman 'when she takes her stand on the false masculine ground of intellect, working out her own moral punishment, by destroying in herself the tender heart of flesh.' It is significant that the most conspicuous instance of this in Kingsley occurs in relation to the one woman whose independent initiative and effectiveness is most strikingly portrayed. Conversely, it is in Two Years Ago, where the emotional dependence of the heroine on the hero is most forcefully presented, that there is an almost forcible introduction of her spiritual guidance. Given the strength of her passion, Grace Harvey in that book, as indeed the majority of Kingsley's heroines mentioned so far, requires to be considered in the next chapter as well. However, the extraordinary nature of the appeal Tom Thurnall makes to her at the end of the novel must be noted here - when he desires her to "cure me of my new cowardice. I said in that prison, and all the way home, - if I can but find her! - let me but see her - ask her - let her teach me; and

(27) Hypatia, Ch.26; Vol.II, pp.163-4, 169.

I shall be sure. Let her teach me, and I shall be brave again! Teach me, Grace! and forgive me!"⁽²⁸⁾

Though there is an attempt to explain Tom's newfound diffidence, it is too brief and hurried to carry conviction in comparison with the previous account of the pride-ridden relation between the two. The conventionality of the appeal for guidance, is, indeed, highlighted by comparison with the other major affair in the novel. Valentia St. Just in that begins by respecting Frank Headley after seeing him in action, and love develops from that; Kingsley even suggests that the crisis which came hard upon their engagement served it by reinforcing Valentia's regard at a time when deep affection was lacking. In Thumall's case, on the contrary, love came first, and the need for guidance seems to be something imposed, in a fashion that suggests that credibility was of little account in the building up of respect in that relation. The contrast seems to me to pinpoint Kingsley's attitude to the formula he has been seen to have propagated in his novels: he believed, in accordance with Raphael Aben Ezra's proposition, noted above, that woman was made for man, and man to woman; man, in fact, to guide and control, woman to be an instrument. The inspiration his ideal women provide, therefore, arises without any concerted effort on their part, their own active aim being primarily to revere; the man who is ready for redemption can derive it himself when he wills.⁽²⁹⁾

(28) Kingsley, Two Years Ago, London, 1857, Ch.28; Vol.II, p.328.

(29) Allan John Hartley, The Novels of Charles Kingsley: A Christian Social Interpretation, Folkestone, 1977, notes in passing the ineffectuality of most of Kingsley's women; and sums up the situation admirably in a series of phrases that are in fortuitous proximity to each other (pp.115-6) - 'the motto of deepest significance for Kingsley... translates freely as "a woman guides the operation", and nothing could more pointedly indicate the nature of Kingsley's plot nor more succinctly define his adulation of woman.... Rose Salterne is neither an historical nor an important

Trollope, in this respect, is like the dog that didn't bark in the night: there are no angels in his novels, and there is hardly any assertion of female spiritual influence. In a very early novel, The Three Clerks, such influence is, indeed, a very important part of the proceedings; but, as Sadleir suggested when he wrote of it that 'With Katie Woodward simpering sweetness made a first and last appearance in his work'⁽³⁰⁾, in the novels that succeeded, that particular phenomenon is absent. Katie, too, is herself a very special case, young, naive, and therefore impetuous, able to make the sort of definite moral demand a more mature girl could not have uttered. Even if Charley Tudor did from the beginning have visions of 'a real true heart's companion...watching his health, curing his vices'⁽³¹⁾, his awareness of Katie's particular influence goes hand in hand with her verbal expression of it. The sublime, generally incommunicable, angel magic of other writers of the time is lacking, even in this one exception to Trollope's less loaded presentation of relations in romance. The influence attributed to Katie is the more credible because it is presented as a particular instance, and not as part of a general formula, which appeared to be the motivation with the other writers considered.⁽³²⁾

character. She is kept in the background and remains undeveloped. She is more acted upon than acting...Kingsley also plotted a fictional series of circles as parallels for those around the Queen. Elizabeth's "right hand", Devon becomes a miniature England and, as the local belle, Rose Salterne, like Queen Elizabeth in the great world outside, is the centre of attraction.'

(30) Michael Sadleir, Trollope: A Commentary, London, 1927, p.383.

(31) Trollope, The Three Clerks, London, 1858, Ch.17; World's Classics, Oxford, 1952, p.192.

(32) Though I am not quite sure about Knoepfelmacher's suggestion, op.cit., p.111, that 'Trollope's persistent characterization of weak men and domineering women [can be attributed] to his formidable mother', his discussion earlier in the same book of Barchester Towers is well worth noting for its exposition of an early example in Trollope of feminine influences that prevail without being at all conventional.

CHAPTER 5

MARRIAGE AS CONSUMMATION

Taine's remark, quoted already in the first chapter, on the counsels of English taste, - 'George Sand paints impassioned women; paint you for us good women. George Sand makes us desire to be in love; do you make us desire to be married!'⁽¹⁾ - though on the whole just, requires elucidation and expansion. It is certainly true that there is a dearth of passionate women in the novels of the period with which we are dealing, even amongst female authors, though of course with a few exceptions such as the Brontes; I intend in the first section of the present chapter to examine the treatment of what passionate women there are portrayed by the writers under consideration, and to show that Trollope makes up for the deficiencies in the others. Then, however, I intend also to consider the question of those women whose love is presented as subordinate to the desires to be good and to be married. Taine's remark suggests that the one desire would imply the other; but it has been shown, in the third chapter, that the desire to be married was often attributed to women who were depicted as by no means being good. In the last chapter, certainly, the desires were shown in conjunction, but the women involved were being used to illustrate a particular formula, and the characterization therefore seemed at times forced. Trollope, it was argued, had no part in that process; and in the second section of this chapter I intend to consider the unique nature of his depiction of those women Taine associated as being painted to satisfy the canons of English taste, those women who are guided by the desires to be good and to be married, but whom Trollope

(1) Taine, History of English Literature, Bk.V, Ch.1; trans. H. van Laun, Vol.II, p.355.

nevertheless forcefully shows to be also capable of love.

There is, in the very early Dickens, an instance of passion conjoined with the desire to be good: just as there is no doubt, in Oliver Twist, about Nancy being essentially on the side of the angels, so too Dickens' presentation allows for no doubt about the strength of her devotion to Bill Sikes. It is the more notable, therefore, that following upon this early convincing portrayal, there is, with one exception, no other instance of passion in Dickens. The explanation for this seems to me to lie in Nancy's social status; she by no means belonged to that section of society with regard to which Taine's dictum could be thought to operate.⁽²⁾ Whatever was attributed to Nancy - even leaving aside the fact that her passion was shown to have led to her violent death - was largely irrelevant, in social terms, to the individuals who inhabited the world that his novels basically concerned. Correspondingly, with regard to such individuals, in all of Dickens' novels there is just the one woman whose actions and emotions are all emphatically centred upon the one other character: I refer, of course, to Rosa Dartle in David Copperfield, and to her love for Steerforth. The fact of her passion is actually asserted only late on in the book, but from her very first introduction there are indications what her ruling characteristic will be - 'Her thinness seemed to be the effect of some wasting fire within her, which found a vent in her gaunt eyes.'⁽³⁾ Her verbal assaults are directed at Steerforth from the first, and on the occasion of her second appearance the intensity of

(2) That the review in the Quarterly, June 1839, reprinted in Dickens: The Critical Heritage, ed. Philip Collins, London, 1971, found Nancy's beneficent proclivities unconvincing seems to me to accord with the prescriptive dichotomy Taine noted.

(3) David Copperfield, Ch.20; p.231.

her interest in him is put beyond doubt. On that occasion, it is also made clear that, whatever her resentment against him, he has only to exercise his charms positively to win her over again; it is only when she suspects that he is playing with her that she turns antagonistic, and then it is more directly than earlier on. All this expresses her feelings clearly, and if there is exaggeration and even a touch of perversity in her characterization, it is not obtrusive or excessive at this stage. With her next appearance, however, the passion begins to express itself directly, with hardly any restraints or extraneous considerations, and from then on Rosa Dartle is grossly melodramatic. After her violent interviews with David and, respectively, Mr. Percoty and Littimer, comes her climactic performance to Little Emily, which deserves some quotation -

"If I could order it to be done, I would have this girl whipped to death." And so she would, I have no doubt. I would not have trusted her with the rack itself, while that furious look lasted. She slowly, very slowly broke into a laugh, and pointed at Emily with her hand, as if she were a sight of shame for gods and men. "She love!" she said. "That carrion! And he ever cared for her, she'd tell me. Ha, ha! The liars that these traders are!" Her mockery was worse than her undisguised rage. (1)

It is instructive that with regard to Little Emily passion is never mentioned. It might have been supposed that this would have contributed to the attraction Steerforth held for her, but apart from some sort of desire to be a lady, Emily's internal workings are presented mainly in terms of her regrets. Those regrets and the efforts of other people are what concern Dickens: Emily's own motivation is unimportant and need not be considered too carefully; she is in the end to be redeemed, and any consideration of passion would therefore have been inappropriate for her. The point about passion, as exemplified by Rosa Dartle, is that it is permanent, pervasive, and all-consuming. When, after David tells them

(1) *ibid.*, Ch. 50; pp. 570-1.

about Steerforth's death, she articulates to his mother, in the bitterness that rises up between them, the obvious but hitherto unmentioned fact of her love, the stage is set for an endless, stultifying concentration upon it. The sketch of both of them in the conclusion, with Rosa trying to soothe Mrs. Steerforth's wandering wits and also relentlessly asserting her own love, illustrates Dickens' conception of her, and it is by no means a pleasant one. Given this example of his depiction of passion, it is hardly to be regretted that there are no others in Dickens.⁽⁵⁾ The point, however, is that he had chosen, for his sole exposition in a social context of sexual passion in women, a blighted and bitter emotion; though its object is, unlike say that of Miss Wade in Little Dorrit whose emotions are basically inwardly directed, external and it is dependent on the existence of another particular person, the relation depicted is such that passion is, as it were, deprived of a fair deal. There is no sense of sharing; the few moments in which Rosa and Steerforth are at peace with each other, and her reminiscences of the past, are not sufficient to relieve the impression that there is something perverse about her emotion. The character itself, in spite of the melodrama, is an interesting one, but its isolated position in Dickens suggests a diffidence about ascribing such strong motivation to women, and indicates an adherence to the dichotomy between passion and goodness that Taine criticised.

(5) See the reviews in Fraser's, December 1850, and Blackwood's, April 1855, both reprinted in Dickens: The Critical Heritage, for contemporary criticisms of Rosa. It is important to note, however, that it is her character of which they both disapprove; my own objection is to Dickens' narrow and unsympathetic portrayal of it. It is for this reason that I think Q.D. Leavis, in Dickens the Novelist p.83, is misguided in exulting over what she sees as Lawrentian 'insight into the relations between a man and a woman in such a case'; it is the character that is interesting, and it seems to me a pity that it is never presented independently of its obsessive bondage to a man for whom the relation is not of very great importance.

There is no woman in Thackeray's works as strongly motivated in the same way as is Rosa Dartle; but what is lacking in quality is made up for in quantity, for there are in his works, as is not the case with Dickens, several women who are very strongly attached to a particular man, and whose attachment governs, if not quite as obtrusively as with Rosa, their actions and their feelings. The most remarkable of these women is Rachel Castlewood in Henry Esmond and the evocation of her passion for Esmond, who is almost her step-son, years younger than herself and in fact a suitor for her daughter, is accomplished with a restrained forcefulness that is masterly. The early hints, as when her first outburst against Esmond is associated with jealousy by her husband, or the fainting which her husband attributes to fears for Lord Mohun's life but which her son unhesitatingly ascribed to anxiety about Esmond who is also called Henry, or even indeed her theft and possession of Esmond's sleeve-button: all these make their point, in the indirect but even so increasingly committed manner that is compatible with her own situation. It is only after his protracted absence after her husband's death, an absence in part due to her efforts to keep him at a distance from her, that her hysterical joy on his return suggests to him her passion; and she only declares it after this has prompted a proposal from him, albeit not a very spirited one, which she recognises the impropriety of accepting. After that, Esmond becomes infatuated with Beatrix; and by constantly illustrating Rachel's harshness to her daughter, without making any direct accusation, which would have been inappropriate with regard to someone with as strong a sense of duty and propriety, Thackeray suggests that Rachel regrets this infatuation and is still possessed by her love for Esmond. When he grows disillusioned with Beatrix, the way is clear for the consummation of Rachel's

passion, and the concluding mention of the sleeve-button she has cherished affirms how long drawn out and devoted that passion was. In the introduction attributed to their daughter, without giving the name of Esmond's wife or hardly hinting at her identity, Thackeray had forcefully asserted the strength of her devotion to her husband; in the conclusion it is seen how he had maintained that assertion throughout without obtrusion.

It is, however, the very fact that the story demanded that the passion not be obtrusively asserted that makes for the success of the portrait. The actions of good characters in Thackeray are necessarily modest, whereby immediacy is usually denied to their passions. With Rachel Castlewood, though, given her initial feelings of guilt about her rejection of her husband, given her diffidence about her age and her looks, given her knowledge of Esmond's devotion to her daughter, any mention of her passion was bound to be restrained; or, as in the incidents mentioned above, forced out of her by special circumstances. Apart from those, she was bound to control herself, bound to sublimate her passion and not look for any consummation of it, bound in essence to be passive. Her situation as presented by Thackeray makes this readily acceptable; far from the strength of her feelings being in doubt, the restraint exhibited contributes to the truth of the account and the development of the character. Yet such a depiction of passion is very much an exception, and a glance at the closest comparable characters in Thackeray to Rachel, the Lambert sisters in The Virginians, will make clear how dependent the success of that depiction was upon the special circumstances of Rachel's relation to Esmond.

The Lambert sisters belong to a late work which perhaps accounts for the deliberate assertion with them of love, unusual hitherto amongst Thackeray's heroines; there is no doubt that Hetty Lambert's fainting when

Harry Warrington is in danger, and Theo's desperate illness when she is parted from George, are both meant to indicate deep and passionate devotion. There is indeed hardly anything else allotted to either character in the book; yet, even so, despite the authorial intention as to them being quite apparent, the reality of their feelings is barely conveyed to the reader. Of Theo, in fact, it might even be suggested that she hardly need be considered here, that the account of her affection for George, the hanging on his words and absorption of his opinions, even the illness and the clandestine marriage, do not contribute to a possible recognition of independent feeling; that she is, like Charlotte in Philip, very much an appendage of her hero, so that while Thackeray requires that she should fall in love and marry, any deeper consideration of her and her feelings is no part of his plan. Theo's love is, as it were, simply a necessity of the plot and does not, nor was it intended to, add to our awareness of her or of the emotion. This is not, of course, true of Hetty who acts in deliberate contrariety to her passion, the reason for this being as the authorial voice of George Warrington puts it, 'the bitter blast of love unrequited... and that long loneliness of heart which, they say, follows'⁽⁶⁾; she is markedly independent, that is, from Harry, and her passion is very definitely part of her own story. Yet here again it is not she that is of importance, as opposed to her story, and the reasons for her actions are therefore unsatisfactorily given. The only cause for regret about loving him was that he did not love her; and that does not provide an obvious motive for her harsh treatment of him. It might have been that she wanted to keep him at a distance to ensure that she did nothing indiscreet herself; it might have been that she did not want him to think she was angling

(6) The Virginians, Ch.92; p.991.

for him; it might have been that, regardless of his own lack of suspicion but conscious of his susceptibility, she was determined to do nothing herself that could attract him: whatever it was, whether it was the normal reaction of a passionate but modest girl, or whether it was decidedly eccentric, it would have been helpful to have been informed. Thackeray, however, gives no hints. The reason for this, it seems to me, is that he did not think the subject worth pursuing, that the unconsidered presentation of an unsuccessful passion to contrast with the successful one of Theo was sufficient for his needs: that is, the girl herself and her feelings are not of primary interest, and his treatment is therefore inadequate.

It may be well, particularly as I believe it will help us to discern the root cause of this inadequacy, to consider briefly the women in various minor works of Thackeray, in which again there can be no doubt of the devotion experienced towards a particular man. Caroline, for instance in A Shabby Centeele Story, is swept away by George Brandon; the same might be said of the Countess of Lyndon in Barry Lyndon; and the story of Catherine revolves around what can only be described as Catherine's infatuation. That word, indeed, explains what I have described as an inadequacy with regard to these women: there is nothing else to them, as there is very little to Theo or Hetty, apart from the one particular feeling, so that what they do or say is discerned through a sort of vacuum. This excess ought perhaps to have delighted Taine; but, if a distinction may be made between passion and infatuation, the difficulties of Rachel Castlewood, who has an independent life of her own, are of much more interest in every respect save possibly the simple one of plot than the emotions or actions of these definitely one-dimensional women. It is not even as though the growth or development of these infatuations is under consideration. The set up is usually very simple, involving sharp social contrasts, with the woman in a position of

great deprivation and the man distinguished, and with very little else the affair is set well on its way. Of course the works referred to here are mainly sketches; the men are caricatures as well. Nevertheless, in each case, there is an element of internal conflict allowed to them. This may be due to greater social distinction and therefore responsibility or, in the case of Barry Lyndon, to the fact of Barry being the narrator; yet the universally simplistic treatment of the women suggests that Thackeray felt the ascription of humours to them was enough to create character, the particular humours in question precluding discrimination in the relevant or any other sphere.

With Amelia Sedley in Vanity Fair, Thackeray's other loving woman of note, we come to an obviously better developed and more interesting character; yet it seems to me that the same sort of objection can be applied to her with regard to her devotion to George, as was mentioned with regard to Rachel Castlewood, namely that she is essentially passive. In the other case circumstances made that hardly an objection; but, for Amelia, we see her in a different light too, so that the passivity requires further consideration. There can be little doubt, for instance, that Amelia is at her most interesting in the interaction with Dobbin in the last part of the book, particularly when Becky makes her reappearance; and it is the account of her exaggerated devotion to her husband's memory and to her son that had conclusively given her life as a character, following as it did upon her awareness of George's flirtation with Becky.⁽⁷⁾ This is not to say that she had not been perfectly credible before: the unquestioning devotion to George, the anxiety about whether he would appear, the despair when she believes she has to give him up, the joy of his return to her, all

(7) See, however, Neal B. Houston, 'A Brief Inquiry into the Morality of Amelia in Vanity Fair', Victorian Newsletter, Fall 1966, for an idiosyncratic account of little George's parentage; which, could it be taken seriously, would undermine this and most other views of Amelia.

these are described in a style that brings home the resigned longing which is all Amelia can have. The feeling, sympathetic if patronising, conveyed in the narrative is such that the reader is made anxious that Amelia should be made happy; but, and this is a vital point, there is a sense that her happiness does not necessarily require George. Comparison may make this clearer: passion may seem an inappropriate word for Dobbin, but there is no doubt that it is Amelia who has made him love; so, too, with Rachel and Esmond or, say, Clive Newcome and Ethel, it is the latter as an individual that inculcates love. With Amelia, on the other hand, it is as though the necessity for love came first, and then the individual to satisfy it. This does not mean that anyone else would have done; it does mean that George's qualities were largely irrelevant, that it was the idea of love that Amelia was in love with, and it was her own concept of George that contributed to her feeling. Her attitude after his death reinforces this view: the idealization of George is an automatic process that need take no account of the reality, precisely because very little account of the reality had been taken before. While they were married force of circumstances might have compelled a degree of objective attention, but Amelia is in essence remarkably solipsistic. The passivity of her maiden state is to be associated with that solipsism; therefore Amelia's feeling for George seems qualitatively different from that which has been considered so far in this chapter. (8)

This it is that seems to justify Taine's remarks, where Thackeray is

(8) Carey indeed, Thackeray p.76, suggests that Dobbin's love too is of the same sort; but, in the qualification he makes, that Dobbin's 'is as near as anything in Vanity Fair comes to being a respectable emotion', indicates how irrelevant the suggestion is. Subjectivity may be said to contribute to almost any emotion, but to be noteworthy it has to reach a degree akin to Amelia's so that a change can be registered in the quality of the emotion itself.

concerned. He may introduce passionate women but, with the exception of Rachel Castlewood, they are either caricatures or ciphers; and the case of Amelia indicates why this should be so. It is very difficult for a simple assertion of passion to be convincing; but Thackeray seems to have associated any action arising from passion with the fairly sordid or despicable or, at the very least, unthinkable amongst decent people, activities of a Catherine; and that sort of character was not really worth serious consideration. Theo and Hetty, being 'good', can't really do anything. Nor can Rachel or Amelia; but upon them a very special interest is conferred, on the one by the intense irony of her situation that demands an excess of modesty, on the other by subtle psychological disclosure of her essential emotional bankruptcy that turns the notion of a passion in her case on its head. The idiosyncrasies necessary to both these women to confer vitality upon them draw attention to the convention under which Thackeray laboured; the moral dichotomy Taine noticed is an essential element of his view of women.

A dichotomy of a sort is discernible also in Kingsley's novels, expressed in his own characteristic fashion. It may have been noted before, with regard to redeeming women and the degree of responsibility permitted them, that there was a difference to be observed between those of his novels that dealt with contemporary times, and those that were concerned with the past, and the present subject is to a certain extent affected by the same factor. For instance, it is in the novel set in the most distant past, Hypatia, that the woman is found who gives the most dynamic expression to her passion. I refer to Pelagia, whose love for the Goth Almaric permits Kingsley to expound his very decided views as to the relations between the sexes -

her new affection, or rather worship, for the huge manhood of her Gothic lover had awoke in her a new object - to keep him - to live for him - to follow him to the ends of the earth, even if he tired of her, ill-used her, despised her. (9)

Pelagia herself uses this sort of language, to her brother and to Wulf, and there is no trace that Kingsley disapproved; indeed, he had contrasted this devotion with her past when 'she had lived since her childhood only for enjoyment and vanity, and wished for nothing more'. Such open expression of passion, not only uncondemned but even associated with some sort of moral awakening, is an unusual phenomenon for the period, and must be attributed to a great extent to the totally alien character of the protagonist. The presentation of Victoria, the other woman in love in the work, seems to confirm this view: as she is a Christian and therefore less remote, the only enunciation Kingsley makes of her love for Raphael is emphatically restrained and maidenly -

Victoria, wrestling all night long for him in prayer and bitter tears, as the murmur of busy voices reached her eager ears, longing in vain to catch the sense of words, on which hung now her hopes and bliss - how utterly and entirely, she had never yet confessed to herself, though she dare confess it to that Son of Man to whom she prayed...for her maiden's blushes and her maiden's woes. (10)

That is, leaving aside the freedom allowed by the period with which he dealt, there is a marked difference in Kingsley's presentation of the two characters: both women are declared to be decidedly in love, but whereas Pelagia, who has to go a great deal further to be saved, is allowed histrionics and active confession of her feelings, the ladylike Victoria conceals her own according to the proprieties. Given the upbringing attributed to each, there is nothing unusual about this; but it is still convenient.

How convenient it was for Kingsley's own preconceptions may be seen

(9) Hypatia, Ch.16; Vol.I, p.232.

(10) ibid., Ch.21; Vol.II, pp.99-100.

from a comparison with Hereward the Wake, in which there are also two passionate women, though this time in love with the same man. One of them, Torfrida, became Hereward's wife, is clearly meant to be on the side of the angels, and indeed has already been seen as having attributed to her some sort of redemption for Hereward; the other, Alftruda, is clearly not good, as is first seen when, piqued that Hereward has married someone else, she marries a man she does not love. Her main guilty act, however, comes afterwards, when she endeavours to persuade Hereward to give up Torfrida and come to her; and not only for political reasons, as is apparent from the 'messages of passionate love and sorrow'⁽¹¹⁾ she continues to send to him even after he has been won over. Torfrida, on the contrary, had only responded to Hereward's advances; her interest in him might have been obvious, but there was no question of her actually doing anything to win him - and this in spite of the access she had to charms and suchlike. In effect, allowance being made for the loose style of conversation Kingsley evidently thought appropriate, Torfrida behaves according to the proprieties.⁽¹²⁾ However varied the setting might be, this seems to be the rule for those of Kingsley's women of whom he generally approves. In Westward Ho, indeed, may be seen the ultimate example of this, when the one woman undergoes a sudden change on her transition to England and respectability. The most obvious thing about Ayacanora from the time she comes across the adventurers is that she is smitten by Anyas Leigh. Yet when in England, she appears to have changed so much that Mrs. Leigh can say that it is 'Not comely, at least, to confess their love to men. But she has never done that, Anyas; not

(11) Hereward the Wake, Ch.39; Vol.II, p.231.

(12) As Susan Chitty, The Beast and The Monk, London, 1977, p.246, has it, 'Torfrida, like all Kingsley's heroines, is too well endowed with the virtues of Victorian womanhood to be real'.

even by a look or a tone of voice, though I have watched her for months"⁽¹³⁾; Ayas agrees that "She is as demure as any cat when I am in the way" so that he is surprised Mrs. Leigh has learnt the truth; when she declares then that women can pick up these things, it becomes a very difficult question as to who exactly is fooling whom. The whole concept of maidenly reserve begins to seem a very nonsensical thing, to be attributed at will to the approved, not really recognisable by any factual tests.

At the conclusion of the book Ayacanora declares her allegiance which prompts the union between her and Leigh; but that declaration is excusable, since it arises out of his blindness and her sympathy. Correspondingly, in Two Years Ago, the only one of Kingsley's novels that has a contemporary impassioned female, another exceptional situation excuses Grace Harvey's intense commitment to Tom Thurnhall. Once again, and even more astonishingly given the setting, Kingsley makes no bones about her feelings -

Grace found that she did love that man, as a woman loves but once in her life; perhaps in all time to come. She found that her heart throbbed, her cheek flushed, when his name was mentioned; that she watched, almost unawares to herself, for his passing; and she was not ashamed of the discovery.⁽¹⁴⁾

Yet given his snatched kisses, given her view of the disparity in their status, the maidenly thing to do would probably have been to avoid personal contact with him. The question, however, does not arise because of the lost belt she feels bound to restore to him. Therefore she has to keep in his way, and is on the spot when, as mentioned before, miraculously transformed, he returns from the Crimea looking for a redeemer. That Grace is present then, indicating her devotion, is no more to be considered improper than the declaration wrenched from Ayacanora. What might seem improper to us, contrariwise, is the necessity for special circumstances to justify

(13) Kingsley, Westward Ho, London, 1855, Ch.22; Vol.II, p.286.

(14) Two Years Ago, Ch.5; Vol.I, p.125.

any initiative on the part of the women. Going further than his contemporaries, indeed even to the point of indiscriminate, Kingsley is prepared to motivate all types of his female characters with strong passions, and also to show these passions, without condemnation, governing words and deeds under particular circumstances; what he pointedly fails to do, in common with his contemporaries, is allow for the natural unforced expression of such passions.

Trollope, as by now we ought to be ready to expect, is an exception as to such expression; and, significantly enough, this is obvious from his very first novel. The Macdermots of Ballycloran was not a great success at its publication, a situation that has not changed and scarcely deserves to for, as Trollope himself puts it, having praised the plot, 'I am aware that I broke down in the telling, not having yet studied the art.'⁽¹⁵⁾ Even so, Trollope's praise of the plot and its pathos seems to me quite justified, and notably with reference to Euphemia Macdermot who, with all her pitiful inadequacies, is undoubtedly the heroine of the work. Astonishingly, during the course of the novel she plans to go away with her lover without having married him and she is also revealed to be pregnant, all this without a controlling moral commentary. Of a later novel Trollope commented,

The Vicar of Bullhampton was written chiefly with the object of exciting not only pity but sympathy for a fallen woman, and of raising a feeling of forgiveness for such in the minds of other women. I could not venture to make this female the heroine of my story. To have made her a heroine at all would have been directly opposed to my purpose. It was necessary therefore that she should be a second-rate personage in the tale.⁽¹⁶⁾

The Macdermots may not have been written with any such purpose, but certainly pity and sympathy are roused for Feemy. If she dies by the end, it

(15) An Autobiography, Ch.4; p.64.

(16) ibid., Ch.18; p.300.

is not for the purpose of inculcating any moral lesson, but simply in accordance with the universal gloom of the plot; what is of importance here is the presentation of her emotions and actions with regard to Hyles Ussher, and as to that Trollope has sketched a very credible character, with comprehensible and easily pitiable motivations. It is true that the force of her love might have been more feelingly conveyed, but this is clearly to do with Trollope's own novitiate, and must be associated with the relative remoteness of all the characters in the book; there is really no conceptual doubt as to Feemy's love, and this is the more remarkable in that Trollope presents her as aware throughout of the moral and social considerations that militate against any expression of it. Correspondingly, Trollope does give full weight to what might be called the physical conditions that contributed to the affair in the first place; but, where Kingsley, for instance, with regard to Miss Heale in Two Years Ago, takes the opportunity in criticising such conditions to insinuate the falsity of the emotions created by them, Trollope succeeds in conveying the truth of the feeling -

She literally cared for no one but him; her life had been so dull before she knew him, and so full of interest since - he so nearly came up to her beau ideal of what a man should be, for she had seen, or at any rate had known, no better - he so greatly excelled her brother and father, and was so much better looking than young Cassidy, and so much more spirited than Frank McKeon, that to her young heart he was all perfection. (17)

This attention to background is in part what lends vitality to Trollope's presentations. In the cases of the other women considered so far, the passion was as it were a given factor usually, from which the action was to flow; Trollope, conversely, is always careful to show why

(17) Trollope, The Macdermots of Ballycloran, London, 1847, Ch.14; John Lane, The Bodley Head, London, 1906, p.242.

and wherefore the passion arose in the first place. In addition, what is of primary importance, he is also concerned to show the internal attitude to the passion, not as in the case of Hetty Lambert as an absolute, but in terms of constant conflict and readjustment. This tendency is already apparent with The Macdermots, though not with that attention to detail that the more experienced writer could apply; and even that, it might be suggested, is unnecessary with regard to the basically unsophisticated character of Feemy. As it is, her simple anxieties about her lover, combined with her dreadful fear of losing him, her obstinate devotion to him against the advice of her friends and relations that conflicted with her keen sense of the disgrace of the association, her bitterness after her lover's death, all reinforce the sense of her commitment and the pitiful isolation in which it could take rise; and this is accomplished with a detachment, due perhaps to its being in no way a central theme of the work as is the case with such pregnancies in contemporary novels generally, that prevents any sense of artificiality and points up, even so early, the concern with and grasp of character. (18)

Trollope's most carefully considered and longest sustained study of sexual passion, that of Lady Laura Standish in both Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux for Finn, also shows a high degree of objectivity that argues against any facile generalizations on the subject. The most interesting and important aspect of the portrait is that the passion is not static; and in depicting its growth Trollope places it firmly in its context so as to bring out the subtleties in its causation. In Phineas Redux, when Finn visits her in

(18) An unusually favourable view of the book is to be found in Robert Polhemus, The Changing World of Anthony Trollope, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1963; but his exceptionally long, and for that reason alone welcome, analysis is vitiated by a complete lack of interest in Feemy.

Dresden long after she has left her husband, what she says indicates a contrary view -

"It was not my engagement or my marriage that has made the world a blank for me.... It was, and has been, and still will be my strong, unalterable, unquenchable love for you. How could I behave to that other man with even seeming tenderness when my mind was always thinking of you, when my heart was always fixed upon you?"(19)

But, what Lady Laura tells Finn at any one time must be considered in the light of what she tells him or indeed herself at any other, and also what Trollope himself says about her; and, as to the particular statement quoted, these other factors both qualify and explain her story. There is no doubt that she was attracted by Finn from the first; when she fails to prevent him from proposing to her by first telling him about her engagement to Robert Kennedy, she grants as much in telling him that she might have loved him had she not "made up my mind also that I could not allow myself the same freedom of choice which would otherwise have belonged to me."(20)

The reason for this restriction is that she had paid her brother's debts with her own fortune; and the time of that and her decision, she claimed, was some months earlier. There is no reason to believe this statement, but, equally, there is no reason simply because it is made to believe her later statement at Dresden that she accepted Kennedy because she knew Finn was about to propose and knew she had not the heart to refuse him. Again, though she tells Finn at Dresden that she loved him before accepting Kennedy, there is a distinction made later on in the book that suggests another view -

When she accepted the hand of Robert Kennedy she had known that she had not loved him, but from the moment in which Phineas had spoken to her, she knew

(19) Trollope, Phineas Redux, London, 1874, Ch.12; World's Classics, Oxford, 1937, Vol.I, pp.132-4.

(20) Trollope, Phineas Finn, The Irish Member, London, 1869, Ch.15; World's Classics, Oxford, 1937, Vol.I, p.170.

well that her heart had gone one way, whereas her hand was to go another. (21)

What this excess of analysis is aiming at is that the highly subjective account of the latter book must be weighed against the contemporaneous account of Phineas Finn, which provides a less pointed interpretation of the fiasco. The first passage worth citing concerns Phineas' first meeting with her after her marriage when, though still believing himself in love with her he expresses concern about her cousin Violet Effingham -

my readers...must not suppose that Lady Laura Kennedy, the lately married bride, indulged a guilty passion for the young man who had loved her. Though she had probably thought often of Phineas Finn since her marriage, her thoughts had never been of a nature to disturb her rest.... There had come a romance which had been pleasant, and it was gone.... All this had been very pure and very pleasant. Now an idea had flitted across her brain that the man was in love with some one else, - and she did not like it! (22)

Secondly, there is the manner in which, her irritation with the ways of her husband having already been independently expressed, the two strands are put together -

But she, where she was sitting, could see him, and was aided by her sight in making comparisons in her mind between the two men who had been her lovers, - between him whom she had taken and him whom she had left. There was something in the hard, dry, unsympathising, unchanging virtues of her husband which almost revolted her.... How would it have been with her had she thrown all ideas of fortune to the winds, and linked her lot to that of the young Phoebus who was lying at her feet? If she had ever loved any one she had loved him. (23)

The clear conclusion is that Lady Laura's feeling for Finn was not always the irresistible passion she later characterised it as.

Lady Laura's original plan, then, of proving a perfectly satisfactory wife to Kennedy was not intrinsically incapable of fulfilment: that is, there was nothing about her feeling for Finn that need necessarily have

(21) Phineas Redux, Ch.70; Vol.II, p.322.

(22) Phineas Finn, Ch.17; Vol.I, pp.192-4.

(23) *ibid.*, Ch.32; Vol.I, p.370.

parted her from her husband. With regard to Finn's concern over Violet, she was at first simply mildly irritated; and if that prompted her to think more highly of him, it is apparent that the dominant concept of him as the alternative was much more directly the result of her resentment at what she considered her husband's tyranny. This, the fact that she was less tolerant than she had hoped to be, and he much more rigid, was the basic incompatibility. But, far from her relation to Finn creating this situation or at least her own reaction, what the narration of the increasing friction between husband and wife suggests is that she saw Finn and the love he had offered as a refuge - not, of course, in fact but in conception - from her troubles. Her own acknowledgement of love for him therefore advances with her recognition of the uncongeniality of life with Kennedy; and even if it fuels that recognition, it was a recognition that had an independent existence, and which could be acted upon because of her relation to Finn. Her dramatization of the situation enables her to bring things to a head, as when she charges Kennedy with insulting her -

Lady Laura was left alone to consider the nature of the accusation which her husband had brought against her; or the nature rather of the accusation which she had chosen to assert that her husband had implied. For in her heart she knew that he had made no such accusation, and had intended to make none such⁽²⁴⁾

- or when she forbids Finn to accept Kennedy's invitations to their house which rouses Kennedy's suspicious indignation, whereupon she leaves him. In both cases, confident of her actual physical innocence, she can consider herself justified; but in both cases it was her attitude to Finn that roused the naturally unsuspecting Kennedy to words that she deliberately construed in the worst possible sense.

This view, that Lady Laura's resentment of Kennedy activated her love

(24) *ibid.*, Ch. 44; Vol. II, p. 73.

for Finn rather than the converse, may seem to conflict with the presentation in Phineas Redux of a desperately infatuated woman. A few well chosen phrases, however, indicate how we are to read that picture, in a manner that fits in with the less emotional account in Phineas Finn -

That she loved this man, Phineas Finn, with a passionate devotion of which the other woman could know nothing she was quite sure.... She had striven to do her duty to a husband whom she disliked, - but even in that she had failed.... And all this she did with a consciousness of her own virtue which was almost as sublime as it was ill-founded.... Through it all she had been true in her regard to the one man she had ever loved, and, - though she admitted her own folly and knew her own shipwreck, - yet she had always drawn some woman's consolation from the conviction of her own constancy. (25)

It is not that Trollope was inconsistent, nor indeed that the passion in the earlier book was suppressed by a form of verbal restraint that the author imbibed from his characters, but that Lady Laura in Dresden has very little to think of and act upon so that her passion and her dogmatism naturally enhance each other. That is the reason for the repeated reminiscences that accompany Lady Laura's appearances in the book and from which the other recurring characters are relatively free; she must be seen not simply as the victim of an incurable passion, but as someone for whom previous interests in life have faded away, so that she is left only with selective memories and hopes.

Nevertheless, this analytical revelation does not take away from the impact of her passion. On the contrary, by emphasising the bleakness of her life otherwise, it increases the reader's sense of the desperation which makes her cling to Finn. There is no need to quote instances of the forceful evocation of her feelings, for they occur throughout the book. It is worth recalling, though, how subtly Trollope differentiates her varying usages to Finn, confidentially resigned, for instance, when she has

(25) Phineas Redux, Ch.65; Vol.II, pp.265-7.

nothing to hope for or fear in Dresden, timidly restrained when, being widowed, she invites him to Loughlinter hoping against expectation for a renewal of the offer he had once made there, hysterical when he makes it clear that he is going to marry someone else. Yet, and this is worth mentioning as well because of the suggestion above that her relation to Finn was useful to her in her struggle against her husband, there is no acting about all this: the fact that after she was widowed she wanted to marry him does not take away from the sincerity of her declaration, to justify her confidences at Dresden, that she thought such a thing impossible. The final outburst is the more moving in that she had indeed long concluded that they could not come together again. The tragedy, in fact, for her is that the sentimentality to which she had resigned herself while at Dresden could not last; that her husband's death makes it immediately relevant to her that her isolation was not to be relieved. It is Trollope's achievement that each aspect, the resignation, the hope, the bitterness and the despair, are all forcefully presented, while not detracting from either the background to or the nature of the passion as being Lady Laura's sole point of reference; while constructed around just the one idea in Phineas Redux, and consistently so, she still remains volatile.⁽²⁶⁾

As against the sustained evocation of Lady Laura's passion, the treatment of that of Madame Max Goesler, for Phineas Finn as well, might seem almost cursory. Indeed, it might be argued that Madame Max is at her most interesting in the earlier book when it is her career as an adventuress that is chiefly under review and her treatment of the old Duke of Omnium

(26) McMaster, Trollope esp. Ch.8, contains an excellent account of this relation and, indeed, of several others that are of particular relevance to my own interests.

when she is seen in that role. Yet even in that work the force of her affection for Finn is clearly depicted. The early references may be brief, as when, while considering the acceptability of the Duke who has succumbed to her charming, there

came a smile over her face, - but the saddest smile, - as she thought of one with whom it might be pleasant to look at the colour of Italian skies and feel the softness of Italian breezes; (27)

but the desire for romance is not to be doubted: she had already, blushing, offered Finn money should he require it, and when the Duke does propose her cerebrations are governed by the enthusiasm Finn shows for another woman. The account is not cursory but restrained, and the restraint even persists into the scene in which she actually offers him her hand. Even if she had an excuse in that she was trying to give him by marriage the money he could not otherwise accept, and a justification in that she was right to suppose that he was attracted by her, the act is still an extraordinary enormity in terms of propriety and literary convention: as indeed her own reaction indicates when Finn rejects her. It is remarkable, therefore, that so unusual a romantic initiative should have been presented in so simple a manner, with no great obloquy attached and the passion not supposed of irresistible proportions.

This, again, is the most remarkable feature of the account of Madame Max's relations to Finn in Phineas Redux. The simplicity of her reaction when he finally does propose to her - "I have come to tell you that I love you." "Oh Phineas; - at last, at last!" And in a moment she was in his arms' (28) - reveals a depth of passion that rivals Lady Laura's own. This, of course, is in accordance with the concern she had shown over the

(27) Phineas Finn, Ch.60; Vol.II, p.251.

(28) Phineas Redux, Ch.79; Vol.II, p.427.

charge of murder brought against him, when she had exerted herself even to the extent of travelling all the way to Prague in his defence; but it contrasts starkly with the restraint she had exhibited towards him before, right up to the moment of his declaration. In the sort of counterpoint to Lady Laura that Madame Max provides in the work, it might have been easy to suppose that there was some qualitative difference in their emotions, that the love mentioned in the earlier work had been controlled in the one case and proved irresistible in the other. By his wholly objective approach to his characters, however, Trollope shows how closely circumstances bear upon such emotions, how the individual's own recognition and manifestation of them must be subject to other considerations, both social and personal. Madame Max's original offer of herself may have been in contravention of the proprieties and prompted by her passions, but there is enough else in her world to enable her to live apart from that fact; yet her love can remain as real to her as does that of the obsessive Lady Laura.

The subjection of love to other considerations is a theme Trollope returns to with Lady Mabel Grex in The Duke's Children. There are two strands to her story: firstly, her love for Frank Tregear, despite which and despite his love for her she dismisses him on the grounds that they are too poor to marry each other; secondly, her refusal of any other suitor, until Lord Silverbridge presents himself, whom she treats with diffidence so that he takes himself off, although she feels she could accept him - the diffidence having been due to the conviction that she did not love him, so that she owed it to him not to take possession of him too hastily. Our concern here is whether and how these two strands intertwine. With regard to her incapacity to love anyone else, it would seem that they do: when she tells Silverbridge about her lack of love for him, "If there had been

no other man, why not you? Am I so hard, do you think that I can love no one?"⁽²⁹⁾, even if we are to suppose that no one else of any interest had come in her way, the connection postulated is one that the narrative bears out, with its insistence on her continuing affection for Frank and the comparisons she drew between him and the rest. But what is also clear is her resolution to marry Silverbridge, and her conviction that she would make a perfectly satisfactory wife to him; indeed, she had even made up her mind that 'though there would always be the memory of that early passion, yet she could in another fashion love this youth.'⁽³⁰⁾ If the image left of her at the end of the book, enhanced by mention of the signet ring she sent Frank on his wedding that she had earlier destined for him as her own lover, is of someone oppressed by regrets about that early passion, it is only because Silverbridge too has left her. It is perfectly true, as she tells Silverbridge when he is definitely engaged to another, that she had never loved him, and that she had always loved Frank, and for this reason the impassioned misery of her separation from him after his marriage has been settled is strikingly credible; the assertion that she would love Frank to the end of time, though, even if true, would not have been at all relevant had she married Silverbridge and least of all to herself.

In Lady Nabel's case, as in Lady Laura's, the transference of the loved man's affections to another contributes to a heightened awareness of the love; in neither case is there a suggestion that the absence of that other would have led to a restoration of the lost man's devotion. In The Claverings, it is wholly different with Julia Brabazon, who jilted Harry Clavering because neither had any money, and later, as the widowed

(29) Trollope, The Duke's Children, London, 1890, Ch.73; World's Classics, Oxford, 1938, Vol.II, p.315.

(30) *ibid.*, Ch.54; Vol.II, p.135.

and wealthy Lady Onger, sought him again. The seeking, however, receives its own external encouragement in the form of Julia's consciousness of her isolation, notably at the country seat that was the most prominent result of her mercenary marriage -

As she walked alone through the shrubberies at Onger Park she thought much of those other paths at Clavering, and of the walks in which she had not been alone.... As she complained to herself of the coldness of the world, she thought that she would not care how cold might be all the world if there might be but one whom she could love, and who would love her. And him she had loved. (31)

She may have loved him before, but the desperate need of him, the determination to withdraw from all the good things of life if he would not share them with her, developed after he had been the only person to show her any sympathy on her return to England. Had he informed her of his engagement at once, it is conceivable that she would have restrained herself from exhibiting any warmth towards him. As it is, she virtually throws herself on his sympathy whereupon he compromises himself, but when she subsequently discovers his engagement she refuses to take advantage of his weakness or indeed of his assertion that he would abandon his fiancée for her. There is no doubt after that about her anxiety for him, but she refrains from any pressures and leaves him to make up his own mind; it is only after she has lost him, her rival's associates having been more dynamic, that she ventures to reproach him with the hopes he had raised in her.

Julia's restraint parallels that of Lady Laura when she yet had hopes of marrying Finn, and indeed that of Lady Mabel and Madame Max in general in corresponding situations; all of which might seem to reinforce Taine's claim, as does the subjection too in development of these passions to circumstances that Trollope is keen to display. Yet Taine's claim supposes pointed distinctions, and these are absent in Trollope. As to the expression

(31) The Claverings, Ch.13; pp.129-30.

of passion, even if proprieties are observed, the fact is conveyed, and most keenly to the object of the passion; as to the quality of the emotion, whatever contributes to its development, its force and significance in the subject's life are directly and convincingly recorded.⁽³²⁾ Again, as to the conventional distinction Taine diagnosed between passion and goodness, a majority of the women in the examples noted may have been in error; but the error as Trollope sees it is that of having refused to marry where they loved. Far from passion in Trollope being either a source or a symptom of badness, it is often a consequence of a situation arising from the error of having denied its possibility before. As the case of Madame Max shows, it is certainly not always associated with weakness or with some sort of fault; and, what is even more remarkable, even when it is, as in the other cases noted, it is treated with such sympathy that the tragedy of the subject is dissociated from the consequential fittingness of her situation. As has been noted before, Trollope is always very clear about his moral judgments, and few things are criticized so strongly in his works as the marriage of a woman to one man while she loves another; but, again as has been seen before, in criticizing the fact, he does his best to expound and make understandable the human feelings that lie behind it. In doing so, in the present instance he renders force to his morality by basing it not upon dogma, but upon credible insights that go far to justifying his view of consequences.

(32) Mario Praz, The Hero in Eclipse in Victorian Fiction, Florence, 1952, trans. Angus Davidson, Oxford, 1956, noted with an early and therefore highly creditable enthusiasm Trollope's restrained but effective depictions of passion. Calder too, *op. cit.*, p.90, mentions that 'the duller Trollope (as opposed to Dickens) has novels full of women aware of their own sexuality'. Though, as I hope I have shown, it may be thought that Trollope would have figured prominently in a book on Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction, this is Calder's only reference to any contribution by him to the subject.

All the examples considered so far do fit within some sort of moral framework, though it is not as simple a one as Taine supposed. In The Way We Live Now, however, there is another sort of impassioned woman, less subtle and less restrained: Mrs. Hurtle has no qualms whatsoever about telling Paul Montague how much she loves him in her attempt to make him marry her. Her justification for this, of course, is that he had previously proposed to her and been accepted, and that whatever were his reasons for withdrawing, the commitment that had taken place between them could not be nullified. More noteworthy, though, than her declarations of passion, are her manoeuverings to overcome his resistance; particularly in getting him to accompany her to Lowestoffe, and to agree to spend two nights there himself. Had Roger Carbury not been opportunely at Lowestoffe himself, it is probable that Paul would have found himself enmeshed even more deeply than she had led him so far. Her campaigning is masterly; but Trollope's view of the whole business - 'They had played a game against each other; and he, with all the inferiority of his intellect to weigh him down, had won, - because he was a man'⁽³³⁾ - indicates that he did not view her conduct as intrinsically improper. This may in part be because of the uncouth background he repeatedly asserts was hers, in part because she figures in the unsettled world of The Way We Live Now; but more important is the fact that her conduct seems to fit suitably with that of Paul. Trollope writes of him that 'He knew that his position was perfectly indefensible'⁽³⁴⁾ but also suggests that his infatuation with Mrs. Hurtle, his engagement and the subsequent withdrawal were all pardonable. This is not all meant to add up to an extremely subtle criticism of conventional views; it does indicate that

(33) The Way We Live Now, Ch.97; Vol.II, p.439.

(34) *ibid.*, Ch.26; Vol.I, p.248.

any impropriety of which Mrs. Hurtle is guilty must be balanced against Paul's unwillingness, or indeed incapacity, to receive her within the world of that propriety.⁽³⁵⁾ Thus, in describing the urgency of Mrs. Hurtle's feeling for Paul, by placing it firmly in context, Trollope bestows acceptability upon her actions. Her remoteness therefore from the stereotypes Taine criticizes cannot be stressed enough: if she desires to get married, it is not in opposition to love nor as subjecting it, but in fulfilment of it and preservation; her passion is not placed in any sort of opposition to goodness but, on the contrary, is to be seen as the origin of an appreciation of a gentler life than the one she had led before. Passion in Trollope is not, as it was to his contemporaries and to Taine though from different dogmatic moral viewpoints, necessarily irresistible, necessarily free from social considerations and restraints; it was for him a perfectly ordinary phenomenon, to be considered in terms of its subject as a whole, not to be approached with preconceptions that detracted from objectivity and conviction.

We come at last, having been through all the conventions, to the simplest of reasons for getting married, ordinary love, as opposed not only to the social motivation of the seekers after marriage in its own right, but also to what might be called the loaded love both of the redeemers and the women considered in the section immediately preceding, whose love is the prime consideration both of themselves and of the author in his presentation. We shall be concerned here with the ordinary girl who is a subject of interest to the author as it were prior to and distinct from her romance,

(35) Tracy, *op.cit.*, suggests that Mrs. Hurtle's departure with Marie to America at the end of the novel confirms her congruence to a society without much order; which seems to me to indicate a failure to appreciate the portrayal of the relation between her and Paul.

however important that romance may be in terms of the plot of the novel: a distinction that I trust will become clear in what follows. This, I am afraid, will deal almost exclusively with Trollope for, just as with regard to the redeemers he was conspicuous by his absence, so the absence of the other authors we have been considering so far will confirm the extraordinary nature of his achievement with reference to the whole subject of women and marriage. Where in Thackeray and Kingsley and, though not entirely, in Dickens, the ordinary marriageable girl hardly figures, she is almost always present in Trollope's novels and, in an interesting pattern of selectivity that will be the chief subject of this section, is often the most prominent character in the work.

The marriageable girl in Thackeray fits easily, as we have seen, into the categories considered above; with the exception (and even she, after her marriage, turns into a redeemer) of Charlotte in Philip, who is the only eminently forgettable one of them all. In Kingsley, there is as has been noted an undercurrent of passion to most of them, and certainly all the memorable ones belong to the categories mentioned. With Dickens, though of course the qualifications are more important, the basic principle is similar: the women in the early novels, such as Mary Graham or Ruth Pinch or Emma Haredale or Kate Nickleby, are of minimal interest while those of more interest, both in those novels and in the later ones, are so for reasons extraneous to their marriageability; when the marriageable girl is considered she falls, as has been shown, into the categories considered, usually in the later books into that of the redeemers. It is only in the very last books that a radical change is to be perceived: Estella in Great Expectations is a conceptual advance, even if not carried through in detail, and there are indications that the women in The Mystery of Edwin Drood

are of carefully considered interest. The novel being unfinished, though, it would hardly repay analysis. I shall deal here, therefore, only with Bella Wilfer, the heroine of Our Mutual Friend, Dickens' last complete novel.

Again, as always with Dickens, the moral considerations are of the most important, and Bella's basic story is that of a girl growing, with the help of love, from insensitivity and selfishness to considerateness and a capacity for self-sacrifice. The remarkable aspect of this is that it ascribes to women the sort of moral development that had been hinted at in reference to Estella but which had hitherto been reserved for men. There are differences, however, in that the original weaknesses are not as striking as, say, those of Mr. Dombey or even of Pip; nor is the consequent perception as dominant as it is in the case of the originally basically sound, such as David Copperfield; indeed, the regenerate Bella, describing her pregnancy to her husband as a ship upon the ocean, suggests that Dickens has lost interest in her individuality by now and makes her first state possibly seem infinitely preferable to her last. Yet these are not vital objections, and the actual presentation of Bella, basically kind but allowing impatience and irritation to cloud her sensitivity to other people until a crisis compels her to a reappraisal of herself, permits one even to overcome the excesses Dickens indulges in in her finally softened state. Even if she is obviously not as much an object of interest to Dickens as his male characters of the same sort, the very fact of her treatment in this context is an advance that the novels immediately preceding and succeeding indicate was continuous. (36)

(36) Hardy, Dickens, refuses to believe in any great original moral failing on Bella's part; nevertheless, what is indubitably important is the commitment, whether it has any vital effect or not, to John Harmon - which justifies Angus Wilson's remark in Dickens and the Twentieth Century that Bella is a sensually alive woman and the most developed heroine in Dickens' fiction.

In Trollope what might almost be called these feminist tendencies are, it ought to be clear by now, far less restricted in expression; but even in his works, I hope to show now, they are not comprehensively apparent but are, rather, subject to chronological development as well. It may have been noted already that I have referred sparingly so far to Trollope's early works, and not at all to the Chronicles of Barsetshire as Trollope originally classified them, save fleetingly to Madalina Demolines in The Last Chronicle. This is because the distinction I wish to draw between Trollope and his contemporaries is not so clear in those early works. This is not, of course, to say that Trollope's early women are as forgettable as, say, the early ones of Dickens, or as insignificant to the plot as some in Thackeray; on the contrary, Mary Thorne, for instance, in Dr. Thorne, whose praises Michael Sadleir sings in profusion, or Lucy Robarts in Framley Parsonage, or even Madeline Heron in Barchester Towers, are vivid and interesting figures; the difficulties of the first two in balancing the conflicting claims of love, modesty, the interests of the loved one, obligations to relations and friends, and yet preserving their own strength of personality, are thoroughly and feelingly depicted. Moreover, there is already a trace of what stands out as Trollope's egalitarian approach to relations between the sexes in romance, exemplified best perhaps in Mary Thorne's reaction when Frank Gresham proposed to her -

Frank might be allowed, without laying himself open to much just reproach, to throw all of what he believed to be his heart into a protestation of what he believed to be love; but Mary was in duty bound to be more thoughtful.... Though she was a grown woman, he was still a boy. (37)

The point is reinforced by the depiction of the marriage of Frank's father, who is shown to have regrets about his own marriage which took place before

(37) Trollope, Dr. Thorne, London, 1958, Ch. 6 & 7; World's Classics, Oxford, 1926, pp. 83 & 84.

he was twenty one, while his wife was slightly older. The suggestion - and it is also conceivable that the chapter entitled 'De Courcy Precepts and De Courcy Practice' was inserted primarily to emphasize it - is subtle but clear that Lady Arabella ought to have allowed Mr. Greham time to know his own mind properly. Similarly, in Framley Parsonage, Lucy Robarts is shown as anxious not to take advantage of what may be a hasty proposal from Lord Lufton, and only accepts him when it is clear that his decision is a firm and deliberate one. In both cases, the 'good' woman, instead of being softly and clingingly acquiescent, is shown to be forcefully, independently, and even determiningly, motivated.

Yet all these are essentially details in terms of the novel as a whole; and comparison with The Small House at Allington, which Trollope did not include at first amongst the Chronicles of Barsetshire, will I trust make clear the distinction I have postulated. Sadleir contended that the criterion by which a novel was to be included in the series was that 'it must deal rather with local affairs than with problems common to humanity, must be written in terms of the county rather than in terms of England as a whole.'⁽³³⁾ It would be unreasonable to suppose that Lily Dale's problems are peculiarly common to humanity in a way that Mary Thorne's or Lucy Robarts' are not; but there does seem to be a difference in the treatment of these women, explaining Trollope's particular view of The Small House, that clarifies my distinction. In the indubitable Chronicles, the love interest is not the theme of the novel. This is not to say that it is merely a sub-plot; in at any rate Dr. Thorne and Barchester Towers, there would hardly be a plot without it; but it is essentially a static factor upon which other events have their effects. Even in Barchester Towers

(33) Trollope: A Commentary, p.415.

where the ages of the participants make the romance less precipitate, a particular marriage is, as it were, a given conclusion at the commencement of the story; and it is upon the basis of these particular marriages that the various heroines then proceed to cope with varying circumstances in the five essential Chronicles. It is characteristic of those Chronicles that it is those circumstances that form the theme of the novel - and the way in which a particular man deals with them. In Barchester Towers though Eleanor Bold has the largest single part to play, the stuff of the novel is ecclesiastical manipulation, and she seems peripheral in comparison with the unromantic characters; as for the other Chronicles, Trollope's chief concern is Mr. Harding, Dr. Thorne, Mark Robarts or Josiah Crawley, and the romantic concerns of their female appendages are secondary. Of course Trollope gives each character his or her full weight, and it is sometimes difficult to remember that these were in fact his principal heroes rather than the more romantic characters he would not play down. But his authorial comments in the novels themselves, as well as his discussions in the Autobiography, make clear what his basic conception of each of these novels was; as when, for example, he writes of Framley Parsonage 'The love of his sister for the young lord was an adjunct necessary, because there must be love in a novel'.⁽³⁹⁾ The fact that the love story advances from adjunct to something much more may provide a foretaste of the contribution Trollope was to make later; but it is nevertheless the case that these early women were not central to Trollope's view of the novels in which they appear, and that in these works development and conflict are to a substantial extent reserved for the men.

The Small House at Allington differs from the other Chronicles in that

(39) An Autobiography, Ch.8; p.131.

the love story there is the central theme; and this is so because Lily Dale is the central character of the book. This, indeed, is why the episodes involving her fit so oddly into what is in any case a hybrid, The Last Chronicle of Barchester. Madalina and Johnny Eames, Mrs. Dobbs Broughton and Conway Dalrymple, are all seen as providing light relief from the really heavy stuff of the novel that deals with Barchester, but Lily Dale is not susceptible of such treatment. The previous heroines in the Chronicles were there in order that they might provide a love interest in a novel about a separate subject, but Lily Dale was in a novel about herself, and Trollope's conception of her emphatically denies the possibility of treating her as peripheral. It is unnecessary, his preoccupation with her having been recognised, to consider in detail Trollope's detailed presentation of her, her love and her reaction to being jilted; her finely discriminating attitude to Crosbie when, a widower, he wants her back out, though she still feels she loves him, she refuses because she recognises that, far from appreciating her devotion he might despise her; her attitude to Johnny Eames that, lacking the devotion she had felt before with Crosbie, prevents her from accepting him.⁽⁴⁰⁾ What is important is that that attitude to and presentation of her Trollope carries over into The Last Chronicle, unfittingly because it provides a rival centre of interest that is not thematically connected to the basic story of Josiah Crawley. It is Lily Dale, not the comic diversions, that gives The Last Chronicle its peculiar character or, rather, lack of a coherent one; and this imbalance is suggestive of the

(40) Polhemus, op. cit., thinks that Lily was never in love with Crosbie, but only with her own concept of love; and, along with amongst others McMaster, Trollope, attributes Lily's persistent refusal of Johnny to perversity and self-indulgence. Though this irritation is understandable, it seems to me to take too little account of Trollope's detailed examination of Lily in the novels, which Jerome Thale does, in 'The Problem of Structure in Trollope', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, September 1960, stressing the honesty of Lily's refusal inasmuch as she does not love Johnny.

importance Trollope had begun to attach to his treatment of women.⁽⁴¹⁾

This is particularly so with regard to what he saw, as the passage already quoted from Miss Mackenzie indicates, as the all important question of marriage and a woman's attitude to it and love. In Orley Farm there had already been a strikingly important and unusual collection of women; but the romantic interest there, as the passage that introduces Lady Mason indicates - 'educated persons, however, will probably be aware that she is not intended to be the heroine. The heroine, so called, must by a certain fixed law be young and marriageable'⁽⁴²⁾ - Trollope intended to supply with Madeline Stavely, who is in comparison with the other female characters in the work a trivial figure of minimal interest. Immediately following Orley Farm, however, came a number of books in which the romance is not simply diversion and in which the central character is the woman whose prospective marriage is under consideration. In addition to The Small House, Miss Mackenzie and The Claverings, Trollope also published around the same time Rachel Ray, The Belton Estate and Can You Forgive Her? in all of which a feminine dilemma is the central theme, and The Claverings where it was of fundamental importance to the story.⁽⁴³⁾

The most remarkable of these works is Can You Forgive Her? which, in

(41) William Cadbury, 'Shape and Theme: Determinants of Trollope's Form', Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America, September 1973, notes that a concern with female motivation connects The Belton Estate and The Small House at Allington; and asserts that this is of more significance thematically than their resemblance to, respectively, Barchester Towers and Framley Parsonage - which is what had been emphasized by John E. Dustin, 'Thematic Alteration in Trollope', Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America, June 1962. Cadbur rightly points out the predominantly masculine concerns of those books.

(42) Orley Farm, Ch.2; Vol.I, p.12.

(43) Kincaid indeed, op. cit., p.76, suggests that as early as The Bertrams Trollope was 'launching into the feminist issue'.

addition to the story of Lady Glencora, mentioned already, deals also with another situation that will amply repay some consideration. Where Glencora's weakness led her into marriage with a man she did not love, it is, ironically, Alice Vavasor's own very strong will that, contrariwise, nearly makes her suffer the same fate; and the main reason for this is her fear of her own identity being submerged, were she to marry him, in that of the man she does love. Her rejection of him springs from a sense of duty that comprehends all this, as Trollope suggests in discussing her love -

It was too thoughtful...nor was there, I fear, so large a proportion of hero-worship as there always should be in a girl's heart when she gives it away. But there was in it an amount of self-devotion.... She had left John Grey because she feared that she would do him no good as his wife, - that she would not make him happy; and she had afterwards betrothed herself for a second time to her cousin, because she believed that she could serve him by marrying him. (44)

That is, she felt that she would be unwilling to make the effort necessary to adjust herself to John Grey; with George Vavasor she felt that no such effort would be necessary, and therefore she would make the better wife to the latter. As it turns out, however, George refuses to accept her on these terms: she wants him to accept as a precondition of their marriage that she does not love him, an assertion of independence that he is unable to accept. His insistence that she must love him confirms the regrets she had already begun to feel about her action whereupon she determines never to marry him, but to continue to give him her money for the political career she had hoped to share with him. George's resentment at having to receive this as a favour from her leads to a complete rupture of relations. All the unpleasantness prompts shame about her actions so that she feels she does not deserve to have John Grey when he offers himself again; but, correspondingly, it is the humility born of this shame that makes her unable to resist him,

(44) Can You Forgive Her?, Ch.69; Vol.II, p.364.

that subdues the 'remnant of that feeling of rebellion which his masterful spirit had ever produced in her' (45). This is a surrender, and Trollope shows Alice contrite about her battle; but it is significant that he should have devoted so much care to the depiction of that battle and of the personal anxieties that motivated it and governed its conduct.

Indeed, there is a sense in which Alice's surrender is not total, for by virtue of her own contacts John Grey is introduced into the world of politics and at the conclusion it appears likely that Alice would be allowed the type of life she preferred and that she feared would have to be given up on marriage to Grey. Even though his elevation to parliament is highly fortuitous, the universally happy ending gives a clue to Trollope's thinking on the role and status of women. While I would like to suggest that Can You Forgive Her? is one of the first works of fiction on a deliberately feminist theme, an essential qualification to this is that feminism is used here in a very restricted sense. (46) Of what might be called its practical aspects, as concerned say with Married Women's Property Acts, Campaigns for Enfranchisement, or Contagious Diseases Acts, Trollope took very little notice; and what his views on such agitation for reform were, the caricature of the 'Female Disabilities' in Is He Popenjoy? makes clear. What he was interested in was the personal aspect of the problem, as seen

(45) *ibid.*, Ch.74; Vol.II, p.434.

(46) George Levine, 'Can You Forgive Him? Trollope's "Can You Forgive Her?" and the Myth of Realism', Victorian Studies, September 1974, recognizes the feminist aspirations in the work but regrets what seems a conventionally happy ending that requires Alice's surrender: a regret shared by many of the recent studies I have cited in this chapter. I am delighted, therefore, that Coral Lansbury, in a hitherto unpublished work, agrees with me about the importance of John Grey's entry into politics; and though this may not seem a conclusive argument against a solicitous view of Alice's final fate, in the context of the times - and it must be remembered that McMaster, Trollope, characterizes Alice's political aspirations, in her single state, as absurd - I think Trollope's concept of Alice's future might be thought optimistic.

in terms of actual contemporary facts. Thus marriage is not for him either artificially induced and therefore necessarily bad, or good by virtue of being automatically romantic without any feminine initiative whatsoever: it is, in Trollope's world, almost a basic necessity in terms of social prestige and independence of action, and he is therefore prepared to show that his female characters, good, bad, or indifferent, are concerned about it, are anxious to balance social and personal desires and obligations, are in effect interested individuals, rather than vehicles for extraneous concerns, moral or masculine. Further, as Alice's fate suggests, though this is clearly not conclusive and should be considered further in a discussion of his treatment of marriage, Trollope had very definite ideas about the female contribution within a marriage, and in contrast with many of his contemporaries presented the wife's role as dynamic rather than static. Within the framework of obvious social and economic restrictions, Trollope's view of marriage therefore was an unusually egalitarian one; and what imbalance there is in his treatment of internal anxieties and cogitations on the subject is tilted, correctively in view of the times, in the women's favour.

There is no need, in view of the number of novels considered so far, to do more than simply mention further works such as Nina Balatka, Ayala's Angel, or Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite, that affirm the above view of Trollope's concerns, as far as they relate to the feminine approach to marriage; nor, I think, need the point be further laboured that these concerns are fundamentally different to those of the other novelists considered so far. Indeed, though it is easily recognisable that feminine interests in courtship were important to female novelists of the period, the exposition of Trollope's concerns so far indicates that it would be difficult to conceive of at any rate a greater devotion to the subject. In the second part of this study, in fact, in comparing his treatment of the actual

workings of marriage with that of George Eliot, I hope to show that his objectivity resulted in a more realistic portrayal of the female role in that relation than even the most able of his female contemporaries could supply. Before that, however, I wish to conclude the comparisons made so far with regard to the treatment of the marriageable girl by examining some criticisms of the novelists discussed; which will further clarify the conventions against which he had to battle, indicate what recognition there was of his achievement, and also suggest that there are limitations even at the present to a proper appreciation of the situation.

CHAPTER 6

A CLOSER CRITICISM

Kingsley could not be described as a subtle man, least of all in the descriptions in his novels of women, and it is in line with this that little elucidation is necessary of criticisms, ancient or modern, of his female characters. The heroines were in general idealized in a manner that emphasized their inefficacy and, as has been indicated already in the footnotes to previous chapters, recent writers find this unconvincing and irritating. In the first two novels, however, there were exceptions, and Patricia Thomson recognizes this, in The Victorian Heroine, in attempting to relate to social movements of the time the efforts of Honoria in Yeast and Lady Ellerton in Alton Locke. The latter of these is the more practically effective, and Thomson registers this, as does Hartley; but she is also meant to have a spiritually redeeming effect on the major characters in the novel, as to which Hartley very properly remarks, 'Since Eleanor plays a minor role in the novel and is unsympathetically portrayed, it comes as grotesquely contrived that she should have saved the recalcitrants.'⁽¹⁾ The drawbacks in Yeast are even more obvious: Kingsley intends that Honoria's efforts should not be very helpful and, having mentioned this, Thomson goes on to describe the deficiencies in her sister's education that Kingsley declared were filled in by Lancelot; I have mentioned the passage already in Ch. 4, and though Thomson does not make the connection, the implication with regard to Honoria's efforts seems to me plain -- women in general had not the capacity nor the intellect to initiate and carry through good works

(1) Hartley, op. cit., p.77.

independently. The limits of Kingsley's idealization are as Calder sets them - 'For Kingsley too the home and woman's traditional functions within it were of prime importance. He saw women as the moral lights of society. He lectured middle-class women on appropriate behaviour to the poor, but warned them that notions of doing good to the underprivileged must not lead them to neglect their own families...fundamentally he could see no other role for them in the state except as educators of womanhood.'⁽²⁾

This dissatisfaction is, predictably, in marked contrast to the view his contemporaries took. The Edinburgh, for instance, remarked favourably in 1877 on 'his testimony to the inspiration which we derive from woman's virtue, woman's counsel, woman's tenderness'⁽³⁾ and added that, though he had been associated with feminist movements, that had only been with regard to education; in other respects it was clear that he had approved of the ideal of womanhood of the times. Accordingly, it bestowed high critical acclaim on Victoria, 'a sketch only, but a woman, the best, the noblest, the purest woman that the author ever drew'; and similar in its principles was Fraser's, when it wrote with approval of him in 1875 that 'He himself looked upon Grace Harvey, the Cornish school-mistress whose simple, undoubted faith and self-denial converts at last the self-reliant and unbelieving Tom Thurnall, as the highest and best of all his creations'⁽⁴⁾. These judgments might indicate a high regard for unobtrusive redeeming females; but the influence of convention on such judgments must be recognized. While such women may have seemed preferable to the alternative - as described by a contemporary reviewer of Ruskin's Of Queens' Gardens who welcomed its

(2) Calder, op. cit., p.76.

(3) Edinburgh Review, 'Life and Letters of Charles Kingsley', April 1877, Vol.145, pp. 419 & 429.

(4) Fraser's Magazine, 'Charles Kingsley', March 1875, N.S. Vol.2, p.403.

teaching that young ladies were 'born to honour' and should not choose to be a 'quasi-Pelagia with countless admirers, despised and despising'⁽⁵⁾ - the status actually accorded to them was not necessarily so very high, as is revealed by Fraser's remarks on the 'Brotherhood of the Rose' in Westward Ho: the devotion to an ideal pronounced by that society it saw as a good discipline, but there was a qualification about the inspiration supposed to lie behind it - 'What matter whether any daughter of Eve ever was, or ever could be, worthy of the whole devotion of a manly heart?... The nature of woman is necessarily incapable of such exalted devotion.'⁽⁶⁾

The same article went on to make a related point, with an archness that testifies to its basic lack of concern - 'Few novelists can do justice to their female characters. If they are men, small blame to them for not understanding that which, since the days of Solomon, has been an enigma to the wisest. If they are women, catch them forgetting their freemasonry' - and the same tone continues in the criticism of Ayacanora as being savage - 'and if a woman is not loveable, we will have none of her' - which renders somewhat dubious the claim that Rose Salterne was well observed. The implication, reinforcing what has emerged from earlier discussions, is that individuality was not really required for women; whatever effects might be claimed for them, what was really necessary was that the roles ascribed to them should involve subordination, spiritual or romantic, to the needs of the man with whom they were associated. It is the women in Kingsley who most thoroughly fulfil that particular sort of relation who received the greatest degree of approbation from his contemporaries; and it is because hardly any of his women escape that relation and have a recognizable life of their own that little favour is granted them at present.

(5) Contemporary Review, 'Notices of Books', January 1866, Vol.1, p.178.

(6) Fraser's Magazine, 'Westward Ho', May 1855, Vol.51, pp.510-11 & 515.

The case of Dickens is relatively simple too, as may have emerged from the criticisms mentioned in previous chapters, and I intend here to consider only one or two other examples, that have a slightly more complicated contribution to make to my theme. With regard to the early women, indeed, there are no problems at all: they were usually, as the Edinburgh said of the young ladies in Pickwick, 'nonentities', and this seemed barely noteworthy to Dickens' contemporaries;⁽⁷⁾ at the same time, Dickens made no great claims on their behalf, so modern critics in general pass them over as well. What criticisms there are, as with Angus Wilson's in Dickens and the Twentieth Century, arise from a wider viewpoint that does not challenge the quality of the particular novel because of its deficient females.

I have mentioned above Wilson's characterization of Bella in Our Mutual Friend as a sensually alive woman and Dickens' most developed heroine; in the context of which, given my criticism of Victorian conventions, it may seem odd that the Times had a similar view in 1865, and wrote of her, 'his love-sick woman is without exception the prettiest picture of the kind he has drawn'.⁽⁸⁾ The explanation of this seems to me to lie in the suitability of Bella's final fate, in comparison for instance with that of Dora in David Copperfield about whom the Times had been caustic fourteen years before; as had the Edinburgh, comparing her with George Eliot's heroines and expressing relief at her death - 'What sort of wife in

(7) Edinburgh Review, 'Dickens' Tales', October 1838, Vol.68, P.65, quoted in Dickens: The Critical Heritage. I do not intend to quote at length from reviews that are available in the Critical Heritage volumes, but will include in the Bibliography, in addition to those I specifically mention, those I have otherwise found particularly helpful. In the present instance, of course, this would prove impossible: the whole volume would have to be gone through, especially the first 200 pages, to establish how unimportant his reviewers in general thought Dickens' women.

(8) The Times, 'Our Mutual Friend', 29 November 1865, No.25355, p.6, reprinted in Dickens: The Critical Heritage. I shall hereafter refer to the volumes in this series after the first mention of them as C.H. preceded by the name of the author with whom they are concerned.

after years would the child-wife have made? What sort of wife would anyone have made who remained so childish in spite of womanhood? To die was the only way to retain the interest excited by the story.'⁽⁹⁾ Bella, as Carey suggests (Dickens p.34), could also have been described as a child-wife; her wilfulness was not so much less than Dora's, nor her capacity for a matured sensitivity so very much the more, as to explain entirely the contemporary approval of her that contrasts markedly with the earlier comments on Dora. Rather, it would seem that Bella achieved approbation by proving herself through her marriage what has been described in Ch.1 here as 'a help meet for man'. Modern approval strikes a less contented note: Wilson suggests that the treatment of romance in Great Expectations and Our Mutual Friend shows up 'the creating of Dora, the killing of her, and the replacing of her by ministering Agnes, for the masculine self-gratification it is.'⁽¹⁰⁾

A contemporary criticism of Dickens with a less conventional basis may be seen in the Atlantic Monthly which said of Hard Times in 1877 that Dickens had been prevented by English decorum from depicting Louisa's passions properly; the reviewer was American. The real interest of the article lies in comparing it with one by the same writer in the same journal ten years previously, which catalogues complacently all the passions except love that Dickens had represented, and then suggests that the depiction of the affectionate side of love, at which it claimed Dickens was masterly, was sufficient; it seems that over ten years Taine's prescription had come to seem desirable. Indeed, the reference in the later article to the 'singular purity of the relation existing between Rachel and Stephen Blackpool'⁽¹¹⁾ might be taken as indicating that some sort of modification

(9) Edinburgh Review, 'Adam Bede', July 1859, Vol.110, p.236.

(10) Angus Wilson, The World of Charles Dickens, p.271.

(11) Atlantic Monthly, 'Dickens' Hard Times', March 1877, Vol.39, p.358, quoted in Dickens: C.H.

in purity was to be considered normal in such relations. Good women, apparently, were no longer at a premium, and passion was in demand as fulfilling the natural instincts of the sex - at any rate, over the Atlantic. In England, restraint was still required. Though it may have been recognized that Dickens was not very good at portraying love, the criticisms were not very keen: the Spectator, for instance, praised Smike's 'mixture of profound love with worship' for Kate Nickleby as being Dickens' greatest romantic success because 'in that picture a certain amount of restraint was imposed on the somewhat vulgar tenderness in which his heroes and heroines otherwise delight'⁽¹²⁾; while the Quarterly, as late as 1886, thought love could have been effectively left out altogether - 'Dickens' genius inclined to the wider range which Fielding and Smollett occupied; but his novels are marred by the necessity, fancied or real, which compelled him to hang his disjointed and detached episodes on the thread of a romantic plot.'⁽¹³⁾ Given the artificiality modern critics have detected in Dickens' women, these arguments might seem sensible; but only to those who prefer the earlier novels and regret Dickens' development. Indeed, it seems to me that the introduction of women intended, whether successfully or not, to play an active part in the life of the novel is an essential element of the mature breadth that has been detected in the later novels; and, if my criticism of the earlier of these has at times seemed harsh, I should add that the particular points made seem to me very rarely to affect to any very great extent the extraordinary nature of their achievement.

The reaction to Thackeray's women was less straightforward, and merits a more extended discussion here. I have, for instance, suggested before

(12) Spectator, 'The Genius of Dickens', 18 June 1870, Vol. 43, p. 751.

(13) Quarterly Review, 'The Growth of the English Novel', July 1886, Vol. 163, p. 42.

that his portrayal of 'bad' women is vitiated by a diffidence about ascribing mitigating factors to them: though sympathy occasionally breaks through, in essence he subscribed to the convention that they definitely belonged on the wrong side of a great moral divide. Contemporary reviews correspondingly approved of these women almost completely, refusing as they could, and did, to recognize the redeeming features that a less dogmatic outlook might have traced with regard, at least, to Becky and Beatrix; if they did, as with Dickens' friend Forster, it was with a charge of inconsistency and a refusal to be convinced.⁽¹⁴⁾ Rather, what the Victorians appreciated was the moral lesson to be derived from the indivisible nature of badness, as is apparent from the Spectator account of Beatrix that ends on an extremely satisfied note - 'It is for this proud, capricious, and heartless beauty that.... Of her end we are almost disposed to say.... Life has no pity for the pitiless, no sentiment for those who trample on love as a weakness',⁽¹⁵⁾. In line with this are the limits that can be discerned with regard to the appreciation of Becky: she was the only one of the 'villainesses' to have a relatively satisfactory end, which was thought to be socially improper and didactically unsound.⁽¹⁶⁾

Thackeray's ambiguities with regard to his 'bad' women could be ignored; with the 'good' women this was impossible. Rachel Castlewood, for instance, whom I have described as unusually, if tastefully, passionate,

(14) Examiner, 'Esmond: A Story of Queen Anne's Reign', 13 November 1852, No.2337, reprinted in Thackeray: The Critical Heritage, Ed. Geoffry Tillotson and Donald Hawes, London, 1968.

(15) Spectator, 'Thackeray's Esmond', 6 November 1852, Vol.25, p.1271, reprinted in Thackeray: C.H.

(16) See, for instance, the Spectator, 'Vanity Fair', 22 July 1848, Vol.21, reprinted in Thackeray: C.H.

gave rise to a storm of criticism with her marriage to Esmond.⁽¹⁷⁾ Predictably, all those who criticised her declared that she had been nourishing a guilty passion for Esmond from very early days, while the Spectator, which was unusual in approving of her and condoning the final marriage, dwelt rather on the depiction of 'her husband's affection waning from her... and the strength and dignity which the neglected wife gradually draws from her own hitherto untried resources, when she ceases to lean on the arm that was withdrawn, and discovers that the heart she had worshipped was no worthy idol.'⁽¹⁸⁾ Correspondingly, where other reviews had focussed on Rachel's age, the Spectator claimed that 'She is one of those women who never grow old'. The ideal of undivided goodness as well as badness that these preconceptions reveal was put bluntly by Fraser's when it declared that 'To depict Lady Castlewood as an angel, and make her act in a way that shocks the lowest ideal of womanly purity, is simply false'⁽¹⁹⁾. It may be seen, therefore, as in the case of Beatrix, that any complexities of character that Thackeray might have wanted to introduce were bound to be ignored; in the context of which it is amusing to note Fraser's suggestion some time later on that Thackeray disfigured women who were in principle to be admired by 'extravagant injustice and cruelty'⁽²⁰⁾ because he

(17) See John E. Tilford, Jr., 'The "Unsavoury Plot" of Henry Esmond', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, September 1951, for a discussion of reviews, most of them reprinted in Thackeray: C.H., that deal with the subject. It is notable that hardly any of these reviews pick up the ambiguity I have mentioned above in Rachel's relation to her daughter; presumably, critical though they are of Rachel otherwise, an ideal of an utter contrast precluded this.

(18) Spectator, 'Thackeray's Esmond', 6 November 1852, Vol.25, p.1271, reprinted in Thackeray: C.H.

(19) Fraser's Magazine, 'Mr. Thackeray's Esmond', December 1852, Vol.46, p.631.

(20) Fraser's Magazine, 'Mr. Thackeray', April 1864, Vol.69, p.411.

either wanted to prevent excessive admiration or intended to direct it specifically to the good qualities of such women. The possibility that he was simply attempting a realistic portrayal of a complicated personality seems not to have been considered.

So strong were these conventions of ideal absolutes, that it was not even immediately recognized at large that Thackeray's exposure of Amelia's imperfections might have been deliberate. As late as 1854, the Edinburgh put the point strongly, reproving Thackeray with particular reference to her - 'To represent a pretty face, an affectionate disposition, and a weak intellect as together constituting the most attractive of women, is a libel on both sexes',⁽²¹⁾. Though it recognized in her 'a creation of extraordinary skill', the later general comment - 'Over-indulgence, except indeed to the whimpering little goddess whom he deifies in every novel, is not Mr. Thackeray's weakness' - indicates that the Edinburgh thought some sort of error had to be postulated in explanation of the depiction of a heroine's weaknesses.

That last quotation, in fact, shows how notable the characterization of Amelia had been found: Helen, Laura or Rachel could none of them be described as whimpering, but realization of the fact that Thackeray had not deified any of them prompted a blanket condemnation of a sort that properly suited only the first of the breed. This trait can be distinguished again in an 1859 article on Adam Bede, in which the Edinburgh at last grants Thackeray responsibility for his delineations, asserting that George Eliot's women are 'immeasurably superior to the heroine's of Thackeray's stories, who...are uniformly represented by that great writer either as foolish and

(21) Edinburgh Review, 'Mr. Thackeray's Works', January 1854, Vol.99, pp.202-3 & 230, reprinted in Thackeray: C.H.

good, or intelligent and wicked' (22). It is presumably Amelia who provoked the reviewer to use the word foolish of Thackeray's other heroines of whom it is, at the very least, not immediately appropriate.

To Laura, certainly, the word could not sensibly be applied at all. She had, however, begun to be a source of dissatisfaction to herself by this stage, so she is not exempted from the general condemnation even though, as will be seen, her unpopularity arose from a very different cause to that which obtained in Amelia's case. At Laura's first appearance, indeed, the differences between them had been noted by the reviewers, Fraser's for instance seeing her as a corrective to the women in Vanity Fair who 'were both held to be libels on the sex. However, the author has obviously this time done his best to make amends by his picture of Laura, which is very charming and almost perfect, but kept rather too much in the background.' (23) Thirteen years later though, after she had appeared in various other books, Fraser's expressed a very different view, one that was in general shared, the basis of which is apparent in its remark that Pen's submission to Laura was contemptible and in its diagnosis of flirtations on her part, albeit 'strictly correct' which were just what a man deserved who could not be 'prophet, priest, and king in his own household' (24). Whereas Amelia, then, had been criticized for being incapable of providing counsel to her

(22) Edinburgh Review, 'Adam Bede', July 1859, Vol.110, p.241.

(23) Fraser's Magazine, 'W.M. Thackeray and Arthur Pendennis, Esquires', January 1851, Vol.43, p.76; see also the Spectator, 'Thackeray's Pendennis', 21 December 1850, the Westminster Review, 'Thackeray's Works', April 1853, and the National Review, 'W.M. Thackeray, Artist and Moralist', January 1856, all three reprinted in Thackeray: C.H., for further comparisons favouring Laura against Amelia.

(24) Fraser's Magazine, 'Mr. Thackeray', April 1864, Vol.69, p.414; see also Blackwood's Magazine, 'Mr. Thackeray and his Novels', January 1855, and the Quarterly Review, 'The Newcomes', September 1855, both reprinted in Thackeray: C.H. for further criticisms of Laura.

husband, Laura was condemned for providing too much of it; which seems to be a confirmation of what has been said already about the inspirational role ascribed to women, that it was a convention acceptable only as an abstract generalization. I have pointed out before the artificiality of the attribution of influence to Laura, since Pen was in general, and certainly in the later books when he appears as the narrator, depicted as able to look after himself, morally and otherwise; contemporary reviews, however, did not see this - more understandably, it must be granted, when only The Newcomes was in question since Laura's goodness there, unlike in Philip, is more recognizably pragmatic than sentimental - and since to them Laura appeared to dominate her husband, dissatisfaction arose. I suggest that it is for this reason that she was no longer excluded from general condemnations of Thackeray's heroines, however irrelevant to her own character the form was that those condemnations took. (25)

With The Newcomes, indeed, which began to take approbation away from Laura, Thackeray introduced another heroine to whom perfection could be attributed; and lastingly, as is apparent from the Edinburgh's remarks as late as 1873 that

Ethel Newcome...comes to us as the sweet teacher of more goodness and religion than a whole company of preachers...she is one of that rare class of beings sent into the world occasionally to tell us that Heaven has not altogether forgotten us. (26)

There had, however, been a stage, while the novel was being published in parts, at which Ethel had been doubted -

(25) Indeed, it is conceivable that what might be termed the negative condemnation that equates her with Amelia is connected with the particular resentment that she roused: Amelia's particular deficiencies presented no threat to the conventional superiority of the male, and in associating Laura with Amelia, the threat that actually was presented could be overlooked.

(26) Edinburgh Review, 'The Works of Thackeray', January 1873, Vol.137, p.101.

we would rather not have our daughters resemble this young lady, it must be confessed...besides marrying, and contriving opportunities to give in marriage, besides the nursery and its necessities, there are certain uses for womankind in this world of ours, and we are not so rich in good influences as to forfeit any of them. (27)

This was written before Ethel was revealed to have redeemed herself; and, there being no objections to the depiction of Clara's situation in the same book, the reference to good influences suggests that the objection was not so much to the marriage market being portrayed but to the active involvement in it of the heroine, to a situation in which, as Fraser's put it, if 'young women allow themselves to be sacrificed in the way of marriage, to people whom they do not like, merely for the sake of money and titles, why it is, to some extent, their own fault' (28). The objection I made in an earlier chapter was to the manner of Ethel's redemption, inasmuch as conflation with an entirely separate event which emphasized the sacrificial nature of the market reduced Ethel's own responsibility for her participation in it and allowed her to preserve her heroically good status. The adulation of Ethel noted in the first review above indicates that Thackeray succeeded in his aim; and the criticism in the second reveals how difficult that aim, of restoring Ethel to favour after her dallying in the marriage market, was - a difficulty in line with the unpopularity suffered by his other heroines for any lapses from the ideal. That the unpopularity was surmounted in Ethel's case, I suggest, is because her lapse was in the end presented as having arisen from passivity on her part; with Laura and Rachel, on the contrary, though their errors might have been thought less grave, the unpopularity did not lift, caused as it had been by what was seen as some sort of initiative exercised and persisted in by them.

(27) Blackwood's Magazine, 'Mr. Thackeray and his Novels', January 1855, Vol. 77, p. 95, reprinted in Thackeray: C.F.

(28) Fraser's Magazine, 'Mr. Thackeray', April 1864, Vol. 69, p. 415.

If, however, Thackeray's refusal in his portrayal of women to subscribe wholeheartedly to current conceptions caused confusion amongst his contemporaries, there appears to be at present an equally unfortunate tendency to overrate his ambiguities: a proper appreciation of his novels seems to me to be at times prevented by a failure to appreciate that as far as the present subject is concerned Thackeray fundamentally adhered to the actual beliefs of his times. He was what might be described as a male chauvinist; it is clear from his novels that he believed, to use Kingsley's words from Hypatia, quoted already, that the man was made to the woman and the woman for the man. It is in accordance with this that, as I mentioned earlier, in explaining why there was little scope for redeeming women in his work, his heroes are generally so thoroughly self-sufficient. What weaknesses they might have are never such as would subjugate them to women.

This is true even of Pen, who is noticeably less perfect than the rest. I mentioned before that, in addition to the assertion of Laura's control of Pen after their marriage being contrived, the attribution to her of responsibility for his conversion to maturity at the end of Pendennis was also unconvincing; and it is remarkable how Thackeray establishes his self-sufficiency even at this stage. Calder, *op. cit.*, declares that the hallmark of his newfound selflessness, the determination to go through with the marriage to Blanche, despite the justifiable loathing he feels about it, is prompted by Laura; but Thackeray makes it clear that this was Pen's own decision, and that Laura simply confirmed him in it - thus helping to establish how decent his determination was, though Warrington might try to persuade him out of it. This fairly trivial caveat emphasizes how absurd Thackeray thought the convention of the redeeming woman; not because it demeaned her, but because he thought that there was really very little that she could contribute.

The old problem of the authorial view in Vanity Fair becomes simpler when this factor is kept in mind. Hollister, for instance, Thackeray p.96, claims that in emphasizing Amelia's weaknesses, Thackeray was 'showing a sentimental Victorian public, which did indeed venerate such qualities as Amelia's, exactly what kind of idol it was worshipping'; while John W. Mathison goes further, in 'The German Sections of Vanity Fair', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, December 1963, and suggests that the purpose behind the foreign scenes, where Amelia's deficiencies are shown up the more strongly, is to condemn the English middle-class society that created a woman like her. Both these studies recognize that Amelia becomes more preposterous towards the end of the novel, as does Mark Spilka, 'A Note on Thackeray's Amelia', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, December 1955, who believes that Thackeray himself did not really appreciate until the end of the novel what a monster he had created. What has escaped the attention of these critics is that it is towards the end of the novel that Dobbin conducts his courtship of Amelia, and that when he marries her he does so clearsightedly: the point is that, while Thackeray accepted that there was a certain amount of vanity in Dobbin wanting to marry Amelia, he was determined that their relative positions should be clear to either, and to the reader and for that reason the exposure of her is more pointed. But in the end as Carey, Thackeray p.183, points out, despite all Amelia's failings, her creator intends us to find her, like a toddler or a favourite dog, the more appealing because she is not intellectually very sharp.... Besides, who would not rather marry Amelia than Becky? A little dogginess is preferable to being murdered for one's insurance policy.

Dobbin, after all, is the moral touchstone of the novel; ⁽²⁹⁾ and the fact remains that, though he was to know exactly what he was getting, he was yet content to marry Amelia; accordingly, the indignation of the Edinburgh in 1854, quoted above, even if it objected more to the ruthless presentation rather than to the concept, seems to me more realistic than the suggestion that Thackeray was launching a fundamental attack on the current tastes of society.

It seems to me, indeed, that far from indulging his heroines, as that article in the Edinburgh went on to state, what Thackeray was guilty of was indulgence to his favoured male protagonists, whether he thought them worthy or not of the title of hero: thus Pen, once matured, is wholly satisfactory, thus Rawdon Crawley can be redeemed and transformed into a charming father so that he seems totally innocent with regard to his marriage, thus Clive's insensitivity to Rosey is ignored so that, instead of his marriage being treated in itself, it is simply an appendage to the history of the sacrificial courtship. Most obviously is this the case with regard to Henry Esmond. McMaster argues persuasively that he should in fact be taken as an extreme example of Thackeray's morally ambiguous perspective in action; that the narrative conceals his knowledge of Rachel's attachment to him, and also the fact that Beatrix is attached to him, and that he should be judged adversely in his relations to the two women in the light of these facts. I grant that, given the situation, it is conceivable that the facts could be

(29) Both Carey and McMaster, in their excellent studies of the moral ambiguities of the other characters in Vanity Fair, have to grant that there is nothing - except his marriage - that can be said against Dobbin. Given his status, I think his wholly unfavourable view of Becky indicates - in addition to the points I have made already - that Thackeray's was similar. See, further, John E. Tilford, Jr., 'The Degradation of Becky Sharp', South Atlantic Quarterly, Autumn 1959, for an uncompromising account of this basically derogatory authorial view.

such; but it seems to me clear from the narrative that they are not such, and that the possibility that they were is irrelevant to the view of Esmond. Of course it could be argued that the narrative, even the reports of Beatrix's own words, is meant to come from Esmond; but, leaving aside the fact that the alternative conception is meant to arise from that narrative too, with regard to Beatrix at any rate The Virginians corroborates the view I have advanced already: that, in accordance with Thackeray's derogatory dogma about 'bad' women, Beatrix was incapable, at any rate in general and certainly where Esmond was concerned, of love. With regard to Rachel, it seems to me that the evidence McMaster advances could easily be explained by Esmond's diffidence and his desire to behave properly, both of which emerge strongly from the narrative independently of the particular issue; only what might be called a modern attitude to passion could suppose that there was something wrong in Esmond refusing to acknowledge, to himself and certainly to the outside world, the possibility that his benefactor's wife was in love with him. (30) It may be the case that Thackeray was allowing Esmond the easy way out in ignoring these possibilities; but such is the fact, and Esmond is permitted to retain an unsullied and wholly heroic status.

Thackeray, then, I would submit, was very much a man in a man's world; and subscribed in essence to the conventions that I have suggested governed the presentation of women in the novel. The reviews I have touched upon in this chapter basically bear out what I stated in the first, that the model woman had to be simple, subordinate, and stultified. Conversely, passion and indeed any sort of initiative that betrayed independence or was not

(30) See John Hagan, "Bankruptcy of the Heart": The Unfulfilled Life of Henry Esmond', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, December 1972, for a convincing account of Esmond's real weakness; which suggests why it would have been both impossible and improper for him to have behaved towards Rachel as McMaster would have had him.

directed to man's well-being was expected to lead to disaster of a morally satisfactory sort; while the reward for women who stayed within the pale was the attribution of a spiritual influence that was not, however, to be manifested in any practical way. Kingsley abided by these rules quite simply, as did Dickens for the most part; so did Thackeray, despite a combination of ambiguous sympathies and ruthlessly clear perceptions that sometimes caused dissatisfaction. To an age free of these conventions, therefore, their women must be unsatisfactory; unlike those of Trollope, whose approach to the subject and the reactions to whom provide an interesting contrast.

Ruskin, in an article cited in the first chapter, regretted the increasing tendency in the contemporary novel to concentrate on love. That article followed relatively close upon an article by Trollope called 'Novel-Reading', that might almost be considered the clarion call of this tendency, which had appeared in the same journal eighteen months previously. In that article Trollope began with the fact that novels were at this stage more generally acceptable than before, and they they were, by virtue of their ubiquity, teachers of virtue or at any rate could, and accordingly should, undertake such teaching. At the same time, they dealt mainly with the subject of love, and their popularity often made them the pattern according to which the young would behave; a factor that contributed to a concern about novels on the part of the old as well, in addition to what Trollope described as 'an ever-recurring delight in going back to the very rudiments of those lessons in love'⁽³¹⁾ which he deemed of overwhelming importance. As such, he made no bones about his fixed conception that it was the primary duty of the novelist to deal with love in an exemplary and enlightening manner.

(31) Nineteenth-Century, 'Novel Reading', January 1879, Vol. 5, pp. 29-36.

The moralizing aspect of all this is marked in Trollope's assessments of previous novelists. Defoe, as to whom, indeed, 'Roxana is intended to attract by its licentiousness, and puts off till the end the stale scrap of morality which is brought in as a salve to the conscience of the writer', Smollett, and Fielding were ineffective as satirists, and lingered 'lovingly over the vice'. Trollope did, however, recognise that in most instances there had not, in any case, been any very great intention to teach a lesson, exceptions to this being Richardson, whose warnings, though, were unnecessary and did not need to be mentioned in the present age; and Fanny Burney who was, it might be said characteristically, described and approved of as 'a Richardson in petticoats, but with a woman's closer appreciation of the little details of life'. The didacticism of these two, Trollope claimed, was carried on by Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen, whose 'young ladies indeed are very prone to look for husbands; but when this is done with proper reticence' it was thought excusable and Trollope granted that morality was upheld. With regard to Scott he saw, as Ruskin was to do, that love was not of particular interest, though he did also note that an exception to the usually passionless descriptions of love was provided by Effie Deans; important to Trollope in this, however, was the fact that the description, though passionate, was morally accomplished, and the deficiencies in respect of love elsewhere he ascribed to Scott's care not to 'be carried away into the seducing language of ill-regulated passion'. Where Ruskin, then, was glad that Scott did not deal with love, Trollope was pleased principally because the absence of love entailed the absence of it being treated improperly.

This concern with the moral message may seem at times obsessive, and could be said to have vitiated Trollope's literary judgment on occasion.

With regard to Thackeray it certainly seems to me that it did. He gives a great deal of attention to the appeal of Thackeray's heroines and the examples provided by them, without sufficiently considering how convincingly that appeal and that example are conveyed. Vanity Fair, for instance, he declares imparts a good lesson, not only because Becky's machinations are, he believes, shown to be vain, but also because Amelia 'is a true loving woman, who can love her husband even though he be selfish - loving, as a woman should love, with enduring devotion'. His praise for the heroines of Pendennis is even higher -

Pendennis is, as it were, saved at last by the enduring affection of two women...as for Laura, no female character ever drawn was better adapted than hers to teach that mixture of self-negation, modesty, and affection which is needed for the composition of the ideal woman whom we love to contemplate; while the character of Beatrix in Esmond is correspondingly praised because the depiction of the misery her ambitions are shown to entail is thought to be salutary. All this is to ignore even the ambiguity in his presentation that seems deliberate in Thackeray, and contrasts with the more demanding criticism that is used where Dickens is concerned. The moral purpose there is not allowed to bestow complete justification -

Kate Nickleby is not to us an entirely natural young woman. She lacks human life. But the girls who have read her adventures have all learnt to acknowledge the beauty and the value of modesty

and again -

It may be admitted in regard to Dickens' young ladies that they lack nature. Dora, Nelly, Little Dorrit, Florence Dombey, and a host of others crowd upon our memory, not as shadows of people we have really known...but they have affected us as personifications of tenderness and gentle feminine arts. We have felt each character to contain not a woman, but something which will help to make many women.

The main thrust of all this may seem simply an assertion of the conventions that have been noted; but a qualification, perhaps excusing the indulgence to Thackeray and his women, is furnished by the comments on

Amelia in Trollope's book on Thackeray: he remarks there that the convention of the time was that 'Heroines should not only be beautiful, but should be endowed also with a quasi celestial grace, - grace of dignity, propriety, and reticence. A heroine should hardly want to be married' but that Amelia does not at all come up to that description - 'She is proud of having a lover.... She is anxious to be married, - and as soon as possible' (32).

This is a crucial part of what Trollope sees as Thackeray's realism, and the Nineteenth Century article itself indicates how high a priority Trollope placed on the correspondence a novel had in this respect with the real world. The reason he gives there for the relative unimportance he ascribes to the lessons a novel might inculcate on topics other than those connected with love is that their compass must necessarily be smaller, whereas love was of concern to everybody: to the young, whose predominant task in life Trollope declared to be marriage, and to their parents for the very same reason. This assertion clarifies the philosophy of the novel he is mentioned above as having advanced, which can now be seen to mean not that the novel should a priori be didactic with regard to love and marriage; but that novels treated of love because it was of universal interest, that they were popular and would as such be influential, and that the novelist had an obligation to ensure that their influence would be for the good. Prior to the didacticism, therefore, is the need to treat of what would be readily recognized and of obvious appeal; with which must be associated Trollope's refusal, in the critical sections of his Autobiography, to distinguish what were termed sensation novels from realistic ones, on the grounds that any event would do if the characters involved were 'flesh and blood, creatures with whom we can sympathise.... Truth let there be, -

(32) Trollope, Thackeray, London, 1879, Ch.3; p.92.

truth of description, truth of character, human truth as to men and women' (33). The moral purpose, then, Trollope believed, had to be conjoined with realism: and if, as some of the critical remarks indicate, some incidents had to be omitted from the novel because of moral requirements, Trollope was even more anxious, as is apparent from the remarks quoted in the present paragraph, that the conventional limits of morality should be expanded in the interests of reality. Thus, while recognizing the importance of marriage to men as well, as the passage from The Vicar of Bullhampton cited in a previous chapter testifies, Trollope saw in particular its paramount significance for women; given which, the views detailed above amply explain the distinctively unconventional treatment of the topic, especially in relation to women, that has been noted in his works over the last four chapters.

Contemporary reactions to this distinctiveness were, of course, somewhat different to my own. Most common was an appreciation, generally extremely congratulatory, of Trollope's good girls and of what was considered his capacity to express their inner feelings. The Saturday, indeed, suggested in 1857 that The Three Clerks marked an advance on Trollope's previous work because of the characterization of the Woodward girls -

These girls are like real girls. They have the strong and weak points of young women in real life. They love their lovers, and hate their lovers' enemies, and stick by the lovers themselves, both before and after marriage, with a constancy which neither pique, nor poverty, nor disgrace can shake. The eldest and the youngest especially are capital - neither too good nor too bad, and with more freshness and life about them than is to be seen in the heroines of one novel out of a hundred. (34)

What is remarkable, however, about this praise is that it omits mention of what surely was central to Trollope's conception of the two elder girls,

(33) An Autobiography, Ch.12; p.208.

(34) Saturday Review, 'The Three Clerks', 5 December 1857, Vol.4, p.517, reprinted in Trollope: C.H.

the change around that took place with regard to the partners with whom they seemed to have been furnished at the beginning of the novel. Gertrude's forceful expression of feelings contrary to expectations for which she was, if only to a very slight degree, responsible, and Linda's progression to a happy marriage based on an affection that is sharply distinguished from the urgency of her first love, were both fairly unorthodox elements in the depiction of heroines, yet the Saturday does not take them into account. This is the more surprising in that it had, in the same article, shown approval of the depiction of the imperfect ladies of Barchester Towers.

Madeline Meroni was, however, a wife, and Eleanor a widow, which perhaps explains the slightly different approach: the Woodward's being conventionally marriageable heroines, what might be called the quirks Trollope introduced into their progression to loving marriage appear to have been sublimated.

The Saturday, along with other journals, could maintain a contented attitude to Trollope and his women for a few novels more; but then came the series of books that I have characterized as having distinctively feminine themes, which provoked almost universal disapproval. It still remained the case that the skill with which Trollope dealt with his subject was admired, but the fact that the subject was so often female matrimonial difficulties was considered tediously provocative. (35) The basic philosophy behind this reaction can be seen, I think, in a review that was unfavourable, unusually so, with regard to an early work -

in the inability to represent strong passion Mr. Trollope shows his want of the insight that belongs to genius. The passion of Lucy Robarts in Franley Parsonage, when she pours out her secret misery of a balked love to her sister-in-law, is an example of this...which is of course very manly, and preserves the author from all risk of being himself considered to write

(35) Compare, for instance, Trollope: C.E. Nos. 13, 38, 44, 54 & 60 that dwell on the admirable charms of Trollope's maidens, with Nos. 75, 79, 80, 83 & 91 that complain about their mental perplexities.

"spoony love passages", but it does not represent the passion of a woman even when she, as Lucy is here doing, hysterically mocks at her own grief. (36)

This is not, as it might at first sight have seemed, an appeal on the principles of Faine for more forceful emotions; rather, the anxiety for 'spoony' love passages, when considered in conjunction with the actual passage mentioned, indicates that it was a stronger expression of sentiment that was required. It was not an inadequacy of feeling to which the Examiner objected, but Trollope's depiction of that feeling as subject to other, independent, considerations. It was, in effect, the refusal of the woman to subordinate herself totally in her relation to the man that was thought a deficiency in romanticism. The same sort of attitude can be seen to have governed the Spectator's surprisingly favourable view of The Belton Estate: other reviews found its heroine Clara Amedroz simply another example of the Trollopian obsession, but the Spectator pointed out with satisfaction the distinction between her problems and what might be described as the ultra-feminist ones of Alice Wavasor -

She strikes us as a considerable improvement on the undecided young lady in Can You Forgive Her?... Mr. Trollope is much more successful in drawing the feminine complexities of feeling which arise out of circumstantial embarrassments, than those which rise like a mist from a nature too inward and brooding for perfect health. (37)

That the review should have noted such a distinction may be considered a triumph for Trollope's doggedness that had concentrated attention on the intricacies of feminine motivation; the preference expressed confirms, however, that independent initiative continued to be thought the least sympathetic of qualities in women.

(36) Examiner, 'Framley Parsonage', 20 April 1861, No.2777, p.244, reprinted in Trollope: C.H.

(37) Spectator, 'The Belton Estate', 27 January 1866, Vol.39, p.104. See the Saturday Review, 'The Belton Estate', 3 February 1866, Vol.21, p.142 and the London Review, 'New Novels', 3 March 1866, Vol.12, p.260, both also in Trollope: C.H., for less discriminating criticisms; but also the Contemporary Review, 'The Belton Estate', October 1866, Vol.3, p.301, for a surprising reiteration of the old anodyne enthusiasm.

While individual criticisms of Trollope's heroines continued, however, there also began to develop a general view of his contribution that did much to palliate his actual achievement; to be traced, for instance, in a Fortnightly article that, in contrasting with French novels that dealt frequently with adultery English ones which for years had treated of 'innocent and ante-matrimonial love', the marriage being held up due to complications, noted that parents or circumstances had been the cause of these complications before, but 'A new fashion in difficulties, mainly due to Mr. Trollope, is inconstancy in the woman or sometimes even in the man.'⁽³⁸⁾ The point is that, while there may have been a case for postulating simple inconstancy in Can You Forgive Her?⁽³⁹⁾ in the other relevant novels where the woman is concerned, that appeared before the Fortnightly article, namely The Bertrams, Rachel Ray, The Claverings, Phineas Finn and The Vicar of Bullhampton, inconstancy is certainly attributable to circumstances: Trollope's particularity was that, by his close concern with the internal reactions of his female subjects to those circumstances, and indeed to parental pressure when that was in question too as in Rachel Ray, he allowed his women to be protagonists with regard to their own problems. Where, elsewhere, blame could without

(38) Fortnightly Review, 'Some Recent English Novels', June 1871, N.S. Vol.9, p.739.

(39) The Contemporary noted the convention of constancy too, in an article on 'Contemporary Literature', June 1870, Vol.14, p.489, when it declared that it was 'refreshing to meet with departure from the established tradition that none but unworthy lovers are ever inconstant'. Lack of mention of Trollope in this context may, if not simply accidental, mean that the reviewer was using his words in a special way and that, say, the tortured indecision of Alice Vavasor made her unworthy while it lasted, or that the inconstancy was nullified by her final marriage. It is worth, however, noting a remark in the very next issue, regarding conversation in novels, 'Contemporary Literature', September 1870, Vol.15, pp.320-1, - 'Only women, and Mr. Trollope who systematically cultivates "that branch" devote so large a space to reporting empty conversation'; another example, perhaps of Trollope's teeth being drawn.

hesitation be attributed to other forces, in showing the responsibility of his characters for their own choices Trollope allowed the assertion of inconstancy on their parts when problems arose; which simple assertion being made, actual attention to those problems and to the cerebration the women applied to them could be reduced to a minimum.

Unfortunately, even in this century, the interpretation of Trollope has in general followed the guidelines I have sketched out above: attention was concentrated on the early simple women or, when the later, more complex, ones were considered, they were characterized in terms almost of humours, that withdrew attention from Trollope's close and sympathetic attention to the detailed appreciation of their difficulties. Michael Sadleir, for instance, wrote of Trollope's women,

in *Mary Thorne* is embodied the true essence of the Trollope heroine. This being in her purest form is no tremendous beauty; certainly no minx. She is of small stature and of retiring mode; her woman's strength and her great woman's tenderness come forth to meet the crises of her life, but for the rest she lives obscure and quietly dutiful. She typifies the "little brown girls" that Trollope loved...and of her kind are his most delicate delineations of maids in love; (40)

but the examples he goes on to give of the type serve to confirm how limited such an analysis is. Trollope may very well have liked these girls, but they are not very interesting, and it is apparent from the Autobiography that this was his own view. He hardly considers there the names Sadleir mentions: he thinks the success of Dr. Thorne due to its plot, and not its characters, whom he does not think impressive; Violet Effingham he does mention, but does not consider her as effective as Lady Laura in Phineas Finn; the only one of Sadleir's examples he deals with to any appreciable extent is Lucy Robarts. Of her he does write that she 'is perhaps the most natural

(40) Sadleir, op. cit., pp. 382-3. See also E.L. Skinner, 'Mr. Trollope's Young Ladies', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, December 1949, for a more recent iteration of this position.

English girl that I ever drew', but he makes two qualifications, that seem to me to underline the nature of his achievement and his own view of it - 'the most natural, at any rate, of those who have been good girls. She was not as dear to me as Kate Woodward.'⁽⁴¹⁾

I have already mentioned, in Ch.4, Sadleir's uncomplimentary view of Kate Woodward in The Three Clerks; he expressed it in the passage quoted from above, and preceded it with the judgment that 'Trollope was unashamedly masculine...being not only a man but also a man of the world, he had the attitude toward girlhood natural to the experienced male.' The attitude of which Sadleir approves may have been that of the experienced Victorian male, but it cannot be attributed to Trollope in his role of author, and the success of his characters certainly did not depend on his or anyone else's romantic concepts. It is irrelevant whether or not he preferred 'little brown girls' to 'simpering sweetness'; he did not judge the effectiveness of his characters on whether or not they appealed to his unashamed masculinity; and whether or not he morally approved of a particular character, the question of literary appreciation was an entirely separate one. Hence the first qualification quoted above, and hence the predominance in the retrospectives of the Autobiography of women who, in the Sadleirian sense, are not especially feminine: Trollope believes his most memorable female character to be Lady Glencora; he records a comparable affection for the character of Mrs. Proudie; he is concerned to explain in terms of their own personalities the fates of the women in The Claverings and Lady Anna; with regard to The Eustace Diamonds and Phineas Finn he affirms the superiority of the more reprehensible female to the one Sadleir praises; the women,

(41) An Autobiography, Ch.8; pp.138-9.

in short, whom he thinks are noteworthy characters are not the ones who are 'quietly dutiful' but those who are actively conscious about their own role in the scheme of things.

It is the more astonishing therefore to find, for instance, Bradford Booth criticizing Trollope's characterization on grounds such as,

The young people must act out the familiar prenuptial drama, with the posturings and caperings hallowed by time and custom.... It was beyond Trollope's skill to tell the oldest of stories with fresh emphasis. His ingenuous young lovers have the grace and charm of their naivete, but the experiences of life have been so edited and fragmented that their world appears unsubstantial and aerial...the conventional love story did not interest Trollope, and...he either could not or would not treat love on any other level: (42)

Booth may not have been interested in his book with the wider social implications I have explored, but that he should have ignored so thoroughly both the subject matter of a number of Trollope's novels as well as the explicit analyses in the Autobiography demands further explanation. The most generous, I would suggest, is that Booth's view of Trollope's depiction of relations between the sexes was vitiated by his conviction that Trollope was an extreme chauvinist; Booth could clearly not approach sensibly Trollope's sensitive treatment of the social position of women with regard to marriage while attributing to him 'the idea of woman's divinely appointed charge as the symbol of the domestic virtues and the inspirer of the domestic affections.' (43)

The view of Trollope as a chauvinist springs primarily from his attitude to the feminist movements of the time. (44) There can be no doubt that

(42) Bradford A. Booth, Anthony Trollope: Aspects of His Life and Art, London, 1958, pp.190-1. See too the discussion of The Eustace Diamonds for one of the more prominent examples of misjudgment in a book that can, I feel, only be excused on the grounds that its author loved, though not wisely, both well and early.

(43) *ibid.*, p.128.

(44) Booth also quotes in support of his theory about Trollope's attitude, without considering whether Trollope is talking about facts or moral imperatives, the passage from The Vicar of Bullhampton, which I cite in Ch.3. Thomson, *op. cit.*, pp.83-4 & 110-12, seems to me misguided too, though the qualifications she makes are on the right lines; as are those of Cockshut, Trollope pp.155 & 172-3, which has a relatively balanced account of Trollope's position.

Trollope did not have a high opinion of them, but that seems to me to be only the very natural consequence of his eminently realistic attitude to life. His criticisms were, in fact, only of extravagant claims arising out of impractical ideals; and these criticisms did not prevent him from asserting his belief that women ought to be allowed to develop their own potential as fully as possible, in his letters and his novels as well as in his lecture on the 'Higher Education of Women'.⁽⁴⁵⁾ This last, indeed, has been one of the more obvious sources of misunderstanding, but it seems to me that Trollope's serene conviction throughout it that there could be no question but that women deserved and required far better education than was available at the time quite outbalances his attacks on impractical egalitarian demands.

McMaster, unfortunately, fails to recognize this, and bases her discussion of Alice Vavasor on the assumption that 'Can You Forgive Her? is perhaps the most explicitly anti-feminist of Trollope's novels'.⁽⁴⁶⁾ I have mentioned the matter before, and will therefore simply note here that Kincaid, whose book on Trollope is the other particularly instructive one to be published in recent years, disagrees absolutely and argues his case

(45) Published in Four Lectures, ed. Morris L. Parrish, London, 1938, and dated to 1868. The article from the Contemporary of the same year I mention in Ch.1 provides an instructive contrast with Trollope's commitment to practical developments in the field. The common tendency to judge the lecture from a modern standpoint instead of in the context of the time when it was delivered I can only attribute to its relatively late publication.

(46) McMaster, Trollope, p.163. A more aggressive view of Trollope's supposed anti-feminism is to be found in Polhemus who claims, *op. cit.*, p.93, that Trollope, like Thackeray, regarded 'Moral virtue and critical intelligence in a woman as somehow incompatible!!'. I have noted before Polhemus' view of Lily Dale; Alice he considers squeamish, which represented the fact that Victorians disliked sex because they were parvenus and sex reminded them of their earlier origins and the 'bottom of society'; another of Trollope's notoriously independent women, Caroline Maddington in The Bertrams Polhemus claims sold herself in marriage to the highest bidder. It is Polhemus, I think, who is like one aspect of Thackeray, in his tendency to create monsters - as emerges even more clearly in his analysis of Castle Richmond, where the Countess of Desmond is claimed to have driven her son and her daughter's lover into a homosexual relationship.

persuasively. Both, I regret to say, characterize Lily Dale, the other subject of note that I mentioned in Ch.5 in connection with Trollope's period of particularly feminine interests, as obsessive; though McMaster does note that this was certainly not Trollope's view at the time he wrote The Small House, whatever his views may have been later on. Kincaid too detects a change between the presentation of her in that novel and in The Last Chronicle; he believes that Alice's marriage in Can You Forgive Her? represents a surrender, and I shall simply say here that Lily's refusal to marry, for the reasons that Trollope so carefully analyses in The Last Chronicle, represents a refusal to surrender and a determination to preserve her own independence. I do not myself believe, for the reason mentioned earlier, that Alice's surrender was total. That marriage would have been that in Lily's case I think Trollope makes clear, and attribution to her of excessive perversity springs, I would suggest, from incapacity to understand how thoroughly Trollope has explored the problem of female independence in his times. (47)

That problem was, of course, of special interest to Henry James; and it is perhaps a measure of a development in recognition of Trollope's achievement that comparisons are drawn increasingly between him and James. The latter's most noteworthy character in this respect was Isabel Archer, in The Portrait of a Lady, and similarities have been traced, by McMaster, between her and Alice Vavasor; and by Polhemus between her and Isabel

(47) John Hagan, 'The Divided Mind of Anthony Trollope', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, June 1959, and David Aitken, 'Anthony Trollope on "the Genius Girl"', *ibid.*, March 1974, both recognize Trollope's interest in this field, but relate it to what they see as morally unsatisfactory ends. The cases that Aitken notes as not fitting into what he claims to be Trollope's schemes seem to me sufficient answer to these charges.

Boncassen in The Duke's Children; (48) and though this multiplicity of possibilities may not have pleased James, it confirms my view that Trollope was continuously aware of the difficulties that women of all sorts and shades had to face. The absence of a concentrated analysis on the lines of his own regrettably blinded James to this, and his own view of Trollope's women was the traditional one that dwelt on their simple charms. His praise in that respect, however, was almost unqualified - 'Trollope settled down steadily to the English girl; he took possession of her; he turned her inside out.' (49)

Similarly unqualified, and also less restricted, was the praise of James' compatriot Howells, who was noted, along with James, as I recorded in Ch.1, for freely granting women prominence in his novels. (50) His view was that the attitude of Trollope himself is one of Asiatic submission to the established order of things, mixed with a strictly Anglo-Saxon freedom of speech concerning it.... At a time when Thackeray was caricaturing or sentimentalizing them, when Dickens was translating them into pretty or hideous monsters, when Reade was portraying them as impassioned or perfidious pussies, and when George Eliot was idealizing them in her Romolas or persecuting them in her Gwendolens, Trollope was doing his period the incalculable service of anticipating instantaneous photography in likenesses of Victorian maids, wives and widows in endless variety. His work is all so true and artistic that one cannot trace in it the presence of any favourite type of woman.... Upon the whole I should be inclined to place Trollope among the very first of those supreme novelists to whom the ever-womanly has revealed itself. (51)

I have noted before that what contemporary criticism there was of

(48) This similarity, admittedly more one of character than of situation, was also noted by Blair Gates Kenney, 'The Two Isabels: A Study in Distortion', Victorian Newsletter, Spring 1964. McMaster also traces a comparison between The Prime Minister and Washington Square, while Ruth ap Roberts, Trollope, Artist and Moralist, London, 1971, suggests that The American Senator explores themes that James was to take up later.

(49) New York Century Magazine, 'Anthony Trollope', July 1883, Vol.26, pp.286-93. A later version of this article may be found in Trollope: S.R.

(50) See Ch.1 n.(32). Howells' Heroines of Fiction exemplifies thoroughly the tendencies noted in that article.

(51) Howells, op. cit., pp.116 & 136-7.

Trollope in general concerned his choice of subject matter: the realism of his treatment was usually recognized by earlier reviewers, as well as by Howells. This was, indeed, a subject of complaint in the Fortnightly in 1869, which claimed that Trollope was too ordinary and his love stories photogenic but that 'no amount of skill can make common-place men and common-place incidents and common-place feelings fit subjects of high or true literary art'.⁽⁵²⁾ That last phrase, however, suggests too a more serious charge, in effect one of distortion, that the article went on to make: that by his concentration on love Trollope denigrated the higher aspirations and the better nature of women. This charge was repeated in a Fraser's article in 1879, the same year in which what might be called Trollope's manifesto, that I have quoted from earlier in this chapter, appeared. That manifesto highlighted Trollope's concern that novels should treat of what was of universal interest, the 'human truth as to men and women' that he prescribes in the Autobiography; but Fraser's, as Ruskin was to do the following year, deplored the contemporary concentration in the novel on love, as compared with the past and in particular Scott, and suggested that women suffered most from the assumption that '"Love is but part of a man's life, but it is all a woman's"...we think we have met with it even in the larger utterance of Mr. Trollope, who is very well aware that there are a great many things in the world besides love.'⁽⁵³⁾

Trollope was, of course, as I have shown, very well aware of this and made the fact clear in his novels; the objection in Fraser's would have been more understandable had it mentioned marriage instead of love. Even in that case, however, it would have still been misleading, as the Nineteenth Century

(52) Fortnightly Review, 'Mr. Anthony Trollope's Novels', February 1869, N.S. Vol.5, p.196.

(53) Fraser's Magazine, 'Recent Novels', October 1879, N.S. Vol.20, p.544.

noted when it wrote more than twenty years later on Trollope's treatment of marriage -

In Mr. Trollope's novels it appears as the most important event in life. Mr. Trollope always treats marriage seriously; not from any desire to moralise, but merely because it was so treated in the world he lived in and because he had to set down what he saw.... In Mr. Trollope's words marriage appears as a duty. It is treated to-day as an episode, agreeable or the reverse, profitable or the reverse; but it is only one episode in life among many, and no sense of duty performed or neglected attaches to it. (54)

This may deal with the complaint in Fraser's, but in itself it is unsatisfactory; as appears when it is compared with a passage quoted in Ch.1 that had appeared in the same periodical just a month earlier, a passage well worth quoting again -

There has always been a type of woman who has been ready to sacrifice everything she ought to hold sacred for the sake of "a good marriage". There is now a type in every class, but more particularly in the lower and middle classes, which will sacrifice all for marriage. (55)

The further declaration that marriage ought not to be the whole of woman's life, but that this was what her upbringing inculcated, may be measured against the suggestion in the article on Trollope that by 1901 there had been an advance on a previous state of affairs. Far, then, from trying to belittle women, Trollope had, it is apparent, a realistic view of their position and enunciated it effectively in his novels; his realism met with whatever disapprobation it did because the clear statement of that position made plain that it was in itself belittling.

(54) Nineteenth-Century, 'The Novels of Anthony Trollope', May 1901, Vol.49, pp.860-1.

(55) Nineteenth-Century, 'The Modesty of Englishwomen', April 1901, Vol.49, p.597.

PART 2

TWO PROSPECTS ON MARRIAGE

CHAPTER 7

THE DOGMATISM OF GEORGE ELIOT

In this second part I intend, in dealing with accounts of actual marriages, to show the special nature of Trollope's treatment of marital relations and his essentially open approach to women in the examination of those relations. For the demonstration of this, the authors with whom I compared Trollope in the first part of this study are of little use, since it is very rarely that they treat of marriage to any appreciable degree; I shall instead use for extended comparison in this part George Eliot who, alone with Trollope, while portraying a considerable number of marriages, takes into account the fact that the institution of marriage does make a difference in relationships, and that the expression of individuality in marital relationships would perforce have to be modified. This fact Dickens and Thackeray barely notice: far from one and one adding up to something more than two in their accounts of marriage, frequently it does not reach even that limit.

An extreme example of this is the marriage, which has been mentioned in the last part, of George and Amelia in Vanity Fair where, however, Amelia's solipsism is an integral part of Thackeray's conception of her character. It is understandable, therefore, that in this case there can be but slight inter-relation between the two except under very exceptional circumstances. Even so, Amelia's character accepted, given that George, despite his selfishness, is shown as taking some account of the fact of their marriage, an interesting account of whatever relationship was possible might have been

presented. The early death of George, however, prevents this - and, in practically restoring Amelia to her solitary state, draws attention to the other factor that, it seems to me, vitiates Thackeray's, and indeed Dickens' accounts of marriage: namely, that the treatment of marriage is generally directed towards reinforcing the point about the making of the marriage in question that had governed the account of the courtship. This, with one necessary exception that I shall return to later, is true of all marriages that are described at any length by Thackeray as, indeed, might have been apparent from the fact that most of his marriages have been considered in the previous part. Of course, this does not preclude interest in the marriage itself, as in the case of Amelia, or possibly, as I have suggested already, of Rosey and Clive in The Newcomes; Thackeray's cursory treatment of the marital relation in both these cases, however, indicates where his priorities lay. The sleight of hand he was prepared to exercise in other cases, with regard to the sanctification of Rawdon, for instance, or the diffidence of Pen, confirms the view that the didactic purpose in the account of the courtship was what mattered to him.

The same is generally true of Dickens, as is also indicated by the marriages that have had to be followed through in the preceding part. In addition, however, there are in Dickens a few marriages contracted before the action of their novels begins which, if less central than the ones just mentioned, have their own interest. The first of these, chronologically, that I wish to deal with, that of the Stronges in David Copperfield, is not particularly convincing in its resolution; essentially because of a basic lack of attention to the situation itself.⁽¹⁾ The melodramatically public

(1) Milton Millhauser, 'David Copperfield: Some Shifts of Plan', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, December 1972, claims however that the weaknesses are due to Dickens changing his original plan to portray an adulterous situation.

resolution of the problem being the important issue, there is hardly any account of the interaction of the couple when both were conscious of a possible source of discord. As a consequence, the mutually congratulatory nature of the denouement seems entirely arbitrary, whatever preparation there had, or rather had not, been being compatible with a conclusion of an emphatically different sort. Contrasting with this is the entirely convincing nature, in Bleak House, of the account of the crisis in the Dedlock marriage. The relationship between the couple again had been very shadowy during the course of the book, and Sir Leicester himself is very little more than a sketch all the way through; but, while Lady Dedlock's flight, if melodramatic too, conveys forcefully her anguish at the breach of the restrained conventions on which their relationship had been based, his expression of his forgiveness is unforgettable in its affirmation that he acknowledges higher responsibilities between them than to the conventions she dreads. The difference is that in this case Dickens seems to begin with a conviction of a real relationship, paradoxically vivid between two such apparently cold people, emphatically free from the demands of plot; whereas in the case of the Stronges, Dickens' primary interest lay in the public connotations of the drama, the actions and reactions of all the other characters with whom he was concerned.

This particular characteristic is marked too, as introduced deliberately, in the case of the Boffins in Our Mutual Friend. That appears to be another of the rare instances in Dickens where cause for dissension arises in the course of a marriage; but, as it turns out, everything has been put on for the sake of other characters in the novel, and the Boffins are restored at the end to the static happy relationship from which they had never in fact shifted. Our Mutual Friend, indeed, illustrates also the other side of

Dickens' essentially static view of marriage except where some sort of moral point had to be developed: there is an attempt to establish some sort of interesting relationship between the Wilfers, but all that emerges is an enormous amount of tolerance on the part of Mr. Wilfer, manifested however, if not in private, without any possibility of interaction with the other party to the marriage. Further - and this is a quality shared with the Gargery menage in Great Expectations - the faults in the woman that demand such heroism are gross in the extreme and, verging on caricature as they are, make any attempt at a close and sympathetic examination of the situation unthinkable.

A similar account, interestingly enough, is applicable in David Copperfield where the marriage of David and Dora, though it takes up the theme of the courtship, has enough of an independent contribution to make to the history of David's maturing to warrant an examination in this place. The method of that contribution, indeed, is what makes the portrait of the marriage unsatisfactory: complex and volatile as David's character is otherwise shown to be, even throughout the description of the courtship, very little of this is allowed to emerge after the contraction of the marriage. Not only does his perception of the drawbacks of the relation remain essentially private, but he also maintains an outward attitude to Dora of secure sophistication, incapable of suffering from the relation, which is very much at odds with what else has been presented of him. (2)

(2) Barbara Hardy, Dickens p.130, remarks very perceptively, 'The actual concept of the disciplined heart seems rather crude, and owes much, I believe, to the impression made on us by another and easier kind of discipline, the discipline of action. We see David's grit and professional industry emerging from the ordeal set him by Betsy Trotwood... and by a kind of sideways shift, we may well ignore the absence of much dramatic evidence for the emotional discipline'. A simpler explanation of Dickens' sketchy approach to this subject is provided

This succeeds in being acceptable for two reasons: the extreme nature of Dora's general incapacity appears to demand and excuse an overwhelming protective tenderness, while her early death prevents a serious appraisal of what precisely the effect of such an attitude on character or on feelings would have really been. The fact, though, is that the marriage is thereby made emphatically episodic in character. Far from David's individuality developing under the influence of his marriage, his role within that marriage is, arbitrarily, of a piece with what his final maturing is supposed to bring forth. Correspondingly, the allotment of extreme immaturity to Dora is relieved only by her peculiar capacity to comprehend the deep significance to David of Agnes' angelic aspects. Of any inter-relation between the inadequacies of the two, and of any consequent development, Dickens has no conception at all; the marriage itself is to be seen primarily as an instrument whereby the final solution, of David's appreciation of Agnes and his marriage to her, is promoted.

Kingsley, though he treats of actual marriages far less, even proportionately to his fewer novels, than Dickens, does nevertheless in two works devote some concentrated attention to the internal workings of marriage as a subject in itself. The first occasion was in Two Years Ago, where the married life of Elsie Wavasour and Lucia St. Just is one of the subjects of the book, and one to which he applies some detailed analysis. Kingsley's very presentation of the situation indicates a thoughtful concern about the relation in which the couple had placed themselves -

by J. Don Vann, 'The Death of Dora Spenlow in David Copperfield', Victorian Newsletter, Fall 1962, who suggests that both marriage and death were motivated by an anxiety to fill up monthly parts, while Terren M. Bell, 'The Emotional Matrix of David Copperfield', Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, Autumn 1968, in claiming that Dickens himself never grew up - (p. 647) 'Dickens was David Copperfield at heart not only as a child but from his childhood until he died' - suggests yet another reason for the deficiency I have noted.

He was a lion then, with foolish women running after him, and turning his head once and for all; and Lucia St. Just was a wild Irish girl, new to London society, all feeling and romance, and literally all; for there was little real intellect underlying her passionate sensibility. So when the sensibility burnt itself out, as it generally does; and when children, and the weak health which comes with them, and the cares of a household, and money difficulties were absorbing her little powers, Elsley Vavasour began to fancy that his wife was a very commonplace person who was fast losing even her good looks and her good temper. So, on the whole, they were not happy. (3)

The portrayal of the situation gains credence from the presentation of Elsley's character, inordinately insecure, craving from his wife sympathy and support that she was incapable of giving; his own lack of ease with her symbolised by his unwillingness to trust even her with his real name, and that lack of ease preventing him from making clear to her his needs. At the same time Kingsley makes clear her own lack of a congruent imagination, and at least in this initial account attributes to her an insensitivity that has its own part to play in their dissension -

Why will two people, who have sworn to love and cherish each other utterly, and who, on the whole, do what they have sworn, behave to each other as they dare for very shame behave to no one else?... Perhaps.... When the veil of reserve is withdrawn from between two souls, it must be withdrawn for evil, as for good, till the two natures, which ought to seek rest, each in the other's inmost depths, may at last spring apart.... Elsley and Lucia have not yet arrived at that terrible crisis; though they are on the path toward it, - the path of little carelessnesses, rudenesses, ungoverned words and tempers, and, worst of all, of that half-confidence, which is certain to avenge itself by irritation and quarrelling. (4)

Though the particularly telling denial of confidence is Elsley's, the paragraph arises from an incident exemplifying Lucia's own 'carelessness, rudeness, ungoverned words' and provocation of Elsley in a manner she could only sense without comprehending. Certainly, in a later chapter, Kingsley writes of the duties, and indeed of what he considers the natural inclinations,

(3) Two Years Ago, Ch.3; Vol.I, p.73.

(4) ibid., Ch.3; Vol.I, pp.75-6.

of a wife in a style that indicates how much submission he would have thought
suitable in Louisa -

to a true woman, the mere fact of a man's being her husband, put it on the
lowest ground that you choose, is utterly sacred, divine, all-powerful; in
the right of which she can conquer self in a way which is an everyday miracle;
and the man who does not feel about the mere fact of a woman's having given
herself utterly to him, just what she herself feels about it, ought to be
despised by all his fellows -

and even more dogmatically, after an unusual insight -

If there is one thing more provoking than another to a woman, it is to see
her husband...an angel of courtesy to every woman but herself...and to know
all the while that he is penning up all the accumulated ill-temper of the
day, to let it out on her when they get home.... Hypocrites that you are,
some of you gentlemen!... And yet, after all, you are not most to blame in
the matter: Eve herself tempts you, as at the beginning.... For there is a
secret feeling in woman's heart that she is in her wrong place; that it is
she who ought to worship the man, and not the man her; and when she becomes
properly conscious of her destiny, has he not a right to be conscious of
his?... And if young damsels, overflowing with sentiment and Ruskinism, will
crowd round him...who can blame him if he finds the little wife at home a
very uninteresting body, whose head is so full of petty cares and gossip,
that he and all his talents are quite unappreciated?⁽⁵⁾

so that, on these remarks at least, it would seem that Elsley should have
been granted a great deal of indulgence, and his faults glossed over.

Yet, as it turns out, Elsley's neuroses rise to extravagant heights,
and the marriage collapses in a very dramatic fashion: though not without a
sentimental reconciliation before the death that his own sense of inadequacy
had brought upon him. That, and the fact that his resentment at the crucial
moment was not in the least justified by her conduct, shift the balance
between them in a manner, indeed, that the whole tone of the relationship
between Elsley and Tom Thurnall, as it was depicted in the novel after the
first introduction of Elsley's marital situation, had foreshadowed: Elsley
takes on the character, scarcely relieved, of a cad, and the marriage instead
of being as it had seemed at the beginning: simply an extreme case of

(5) *ibid.*, Ch.13; Vol.I, pp.274-7.

unfortunate incompatibility, becomes a monstrous perversion. This in itself need not have been a fault; the trouble lies in the inconsistency between the extremities of the conclusion and the balanced introduction, which presented a marriage that could very easily have arisen naturally with the best will on both sides and have yet turned sour, rather than a marriage that, in Dickens or Thackeray, would, had it turned sour, have had attributed to its origins some essential moral fault. For this reason, that the situation as presented was, unusually for the novel then, a normal one, the excesses which are introduced so that Kingsley can affirm the distinction between Elsley and his straightforward hero are to be regretted in their effect upon what might otherwise have been a calculated appraisal of a marriage.

More balanced and, therefore, more effective even though he does not expend anything like as much analysis on it, is Kingsley's other large-scale account of a marriage in Hereward the Wake where his hero and his heroine are involved. Despite the primitive natures of the characters involved, there is some subtlety in the depiction of the situation of a man of assured physical and social standing married to someone morally and intellectually his superior, and unable to cope when the grounds on which he had stood assured are taken away from him. Kingsley skilfully uses the uncivilizing effects of the uncomfortable outlaw life the couple had to lead to develop the causes of dissension -

Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; and a sick heart is but too apt to be a peevish one. So there were fits of despondency, jars, mutual recriminations.... The words were wiped away the next hour, perhaps the next minute, by sacred kisses: but they had been said, and would be recollected and perhaps said again.... And because she fancied him cold at times she was cold likewise, and grew less and less caressing, when for his sake, as well as her own, she should have grown more so day by day.... But in justice to them be it said, that neither of them had complained of the other to any living soul;... And yet at last that point too was reached. One day they were wrangling about somewhat, as they too often wrangled, and Hereward in his temper let fall the words.... A gulf had opened between them. They hardly

spoke to each other for a week. Hereward complained of Torfrida? What if Torfrida should complain of Hereward? But to whom?⁽⁶⁾

Full of insight too is the account of Hereward's meditations on his way to Crowland, whither Torfrida had fled for refuge after she had discovered his secret correspondence with Alfruda who was attempting to entice him away. Hereward contemplated a reunion with Torfrida, and a joint search for a new world with the unhappiness of the past few years forgotten but

No. He did not deserve such luck; and he would not get it. She would talk it all out. She must, for she was a woman. She would blame, argue, say dreadful words - dreadful, because true and deserved. Then she would grow angry, as women do when they are most in the right, and say too much - still more dreadful words, which would be untrue and undeserved. Then he should resist, recriminate. He would not stand it. He could not stand it. No. He could never face her again...and with the strange self-contradiction of human nature, he soothed his own conscience by the thought that he loved her still, and that, therefore - somehow or other, he cared not to make out how he had done her no wrong.⁽⁷⁾

An essential part of this is Hereward's own incapacity to express himself, and the consciousness that in the only method by which some sort of consensus could be achieved, Torfrida was his master and he would be at her mercy.

Unusual as were the historical factors that created the particular tensions in this case, the general principles Kingsley observes in his account can be seen to be valid. It is a pity, therefore, given the successful treatment of this aspect of the story of Hereward that Kingsley devotes so little attention to it in terms of the size of the novel. As his later comments show - 'But the grace of God had gone away from Hereward, and it goes away from all men who are unfaithful to their wives'⁽⁸⁾ - Kingsley thought the episode of great importance; but both the account and the analysis are, in the light of this, extremely sketchy. The treatment of the Vavasours is

(6) Hereward the Wake, Ch.36; Vol.II, pp.181-3.

(7) ibid., Ch.36; Vol.II, p.201.

(8) ibid., Ch.41; Vol.II, p.242.

in comparison extended, though this may be because the marital relation is their reason for being in the novel; the less eccentric relation of Hereward and Torfrida has to take its place in the account of Hereward's other, more heroic, exploits. Nevertheless, what there is at least suggests an unbiased view of how two people interact in the particular relation of marriage.

Such an awareness is apparent too in the exception mentioned above to Thackeray's descriptions of marriage, namely Rachel's first, in Henry Esmond, to Lord Castlewood. I shall simply mention here the effective manner in which Thackeray depicts two people originally very much in love, but drawing apart due to incompatibilities that involved no great moral reprehensibility on either side; and draw attention to two points that may explain the unusual nature of this achievement. In the first place, having been contracted before the narrative commences, the marriage itself is not very much more than an incident in the plot of the novel: while it serves to establish the relation between Esmond and Rachel that is of central importance, the relatively early death of Castlewood means that the marital relation in which he is involved remains a separate issue; as a consequence, that relation can be explored without any great moral lesson being derived from it. Secondly, the character of Rachel, as I have indicated before, was one that Thackeray handled with extreme delicacy. This does not mean that he was more interested in it than in his other female characters; but it seems to me significant that the individual portrayed in Thackeray's most convincing account of a courtship figures also in his most convincing account of a marriage. The implication, if not a conclusion, is that a consistent conception of character was required for the treatment of such subjects to be successful; and while such consistency was sacrificed, even in the case of men, in order to make a particular point, the very conception in the case

of women was often imperfect since they were basically conceived in a subordinate role. Rachel's peculiar situation bestowed on her an independent interest; it is for this reason that in the depiction of her romantic relations to men, unusually, Thackeray was able to achieve a satisfactory balance.

The New York Nation, in criticizing Middlemarch in 1873, wrote

The action and reaction of Lydgate's character upon Rosamond, and Rosamond's upon Lydgate, is merely one example of that power of analyzing the effect of one nature upon another which is one of the most marked features of George Eliot's mind. Contrast her writings, for example, with the works of Thackeray. You will find in the latter a number of characters quite as striking and perhaps more consistent than those painted by the author of Middlemarch. But with rare exceptions, the characters of Thackeray each stand out distinct and separate from one another. You know Ethel, and you know Clive. You perfectly understand Becky or Sir Pitt Crawley, but you do not generally see, and Thackeray does not generally care to make you see, the exact influence say of Ethel upon Clive. You do not feel that they, acting together, are something essentially different from what either of them would have been uninfluenced by the other. But throughout Middlemarch the influence of mind upon mind is never left out of sight. (9)

The quality noted here is perhaps relevant to the fact that George Eliot's works contain a far larger number of marriages in them, treated in depth, than the novels of the authors mentioned so far, or indeed of most authors of the period. The effect of character upon character would clearly be more distinctly marked in the relation between a married couple than in any other, and for that reason the number of such couples in the novels would have made George Eliot's skill in the delineation of that effect apparent to the dedicated reader: conversely, it is also conceivable that a concern about that particular skill led George Eliot to introduce more marriages than were usual into her works. I feel, however, that George Eliot had a particularly dogmatic view about interaction of character within the marital relation, and that, whether or not her introduction of the subject was influenced by this, her presentation of it is coloured by this

(9) New York Nation, 'Middlemarch I', 23 January 1873, Vol.16, p.61, reprinted in George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, Ed. David Carroll, London, 1971.

view. At the same time her repeated exposition of her thesis did create an interesting and important amount of literature on the subject of marriage.

George Eliot's basic idea of the relation is apparent in the description of Maggie Tulliver's feelings when she receives Stephen's pleading letter after the separation that had been enforced by their escapade in the boat -

And here - close within her reach - urging itself upon her even as a claim - was another future, in which hard endurance and effort were to be exchanged for easy delicious leaning on another's loving strength! And yet that promise of joy in the place of sadness did not make the dire force of the temptation to Maggie. It was Stephen's tone of misery, it was the doubt in the justice of her own resolve, that made the balance tremble. (10)

Marriage was for George Eliot essentially a relation that involved dependence. This may not always be directly apparent, (11) but the concept of 'loving strength' is always conspicuous by its presence or its absence. The most obvious example of its presence occurs in Felix Holt, where the reliance of Esther on Felix is forcefully asserted, (12) in a manner that

(10) George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss, Edinburgh and London, 1860, Bk.7, Ch.5; Virtue & Co. Illustrated Copyright Edition, 1909-13, Vol.II, pp.389-90. All future page references with regard to George Eliot will be to the relevant volume in this collected edition.

(11) In both Adam Bede and Daniel Deronda, the establishment of the strength and reliability of the eponymous hero occurs with regard to a third person: it is with regard to, respectively, Arthur Donnithorne and Gwendolen that Adam and Daniel become the prime touchstones, even props, of penitence. However, in the latter book certainly the role of patronage in the marriage is clear too - 'Deronda's love for Mirah was strongly imbued with that blessed protectiveness...now she was glowing like a dark-tipped yet delicate ivory-tinted flower in the warm sunlight of content' (George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, Edinburgh and London, 1876, Ch.70; Vol.III, p.405); and, in the former, the mention with reference to Dinah of the 'look of yearning love it was that the mild grey eyes turned on the strong dark-eyed man' (George Eliot, Adam Bede, Edinburgh and London, 1859, Ch. 54; Vol.II, p.369) suggests that George Eliot was trying very hard in the Epilogue to fit Dinah into a role for which the earlier delineation of her capacities had not made her an obvious candidate.

(12) Robert Liddell, The Novels of George Eliot, London, 1977, thinks that Esther succumbs too easily to Felix's lectures; but his opinion is

might even be said to smack of male chauvinism; but that George Eliot did not consider this a principle is apparent from Middlemarch. Fred Vincy there is essentially irresponsible, while Mary Garth is a very settled and determined young lady, freely able and willing to dispense good advice. It is because of her that he avoids the course of least resistance, which George Eliot suggests would have been disastrous, and settles down to a disciplined life; that the marriage they make at the end of the novel is to be seen as a success is primarily due to her strength of mind.

Yet, though George Eliot could place a woman in this position of governance, her novels in general suggest that she thought the normal relation otherwise; and that for a reason supplied by the passage from The Mill on the Floss. Maggie Tulliver, in spite of her volatile emotions, conveys the impression of a more powerful personality than either of her lovers but even so - and the passage suggests that this applied even when there was a consciousness of comparative sufficiency as far as the man was concerned - the vision of another's loving strength was held to have its attractions for a woman. It is this factor that lies behind the other marriage with which Middlemarch ends, that between Will Ladislaw and Dorothea, that might otherwise have seemed an exception to the rule enunciated above. Will may not be obviously strong or reliable, but what is important in the context of the marriage is Dorothea's impression of him; and I see it as one of

based on the assumption that George Eliot idealizes Felix. I agree with John Bayley in his essay, 'The Pastoral of Intellect' in Critical Essays on George Eliot, Ed. Barbara Hardy, London, 1970, that this is not the case: the very last sentence of the novel, with its reference to Felix's lack of 'science', seems indicative to me of the distinction George Eliot makes here between motive and capacity, something that is not so clear with regard say to Adam Bede. I find, if paradoxically, Felix's influence on Esther all the more convincing for this reason. As George Eliot has no illusions about Felix, the woman he dominates is not particularly forceful, so that the process by which she imbibes his values requires no special pleading.

George Eliot's great strengths that she charts the natural growth of that not quite accurate impression and relates it to her central theme with Dorothea. It has, of course, been argued elsewhere that Will's weaknesses were an integral part of George Eliot's purpose in the tale.⁽¹³⁾ I intend nevertheless to give some reasons for this supposition that will shed light on the precise manner in which Dorothea's relation to him should be viewed.

For instance, amongst the imperfections with which George Eliot endows Will is his unjustifiable bitterness towards Casaubon because of the generosity he thinks, perhaps rightly, he should not have been in a position to require - 'Will saw that she was offended, but this only gave an additional impulse to the new irritation of his latent dislike towards Mr. Casaubon',⁽¹⁴⁾ which is followed by

In his inmost soul Will was conscious of wishing to tell Dorothea what was rather new even in his own construction of things - namely, that Mr. Casaubon had never done more than pay a debt towards him. Will was much too good a fellow to be easy under the sense of being ungrateful. And when gratitude has become a matter of reasoning there are many ways of escaping from its bonds.⁽¹⁵⁾

(13) See Sr. Jane Marie Luecke, 'Ladislaw and the Middlemarch Vision', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, June 1964, for an interesting and forceful exposition of this view. W.J. Harvey claims in his essay on 'Criticism of the Novel: Contemporary Reception', in Middlemarch: Critical Approaches to the Novel Ed. Barbara Hardy, London, 1967, that most critics think George Eliot fails in her treatment of Ladislaw; Victorian ones tracing a moral inadequacy in him, while modern ones simply find him inadequate for the role of the satisfactory solution of Dorothea's difficulties. In accordance with this is Harvey's own criticism, in The Art of George Eliot, London, 1961, that George Eliot is unconvincingly idealistic about the relations between Dorothea and Will; He cites various examples of the 'Victorian' view; but notes too that even some Victorian reviews saw the depiction of Will and the disappointment of Dorothea's marriage to him as deliberate on George Eliot's part.

(14) George Eliot, Middlemarch, a Study of Provincial Life, Edinburgh and London, 1871-2, Ch.21; Vol.I, p.313.

(15) *ibid.*, Ch.37; Vol.II, p.141.

That George Eliot connects Will's manifestation of this bitterness with his feelings for Dorothea seems to me significant. In addition, there is the pervasively melancholy tone of the settling of Dorothea in the 'Finale', which it would be perverse not to see as having reference to Will. The natural interpretation of the phrasing of

Dorothea... [felt]... that there was always something better which she might have done, if she had only been better and known better. Still, she never repented that she had given up position and fortune to marry Will Ladislaw⁽¹⁶⁾ is that it is not marriage alone, but marriage to Will, that was not 'ideally beautiful' as the 'determining acts of her life' are called. Again, when George Eliot refers to lives 'which may present a far sadder sacrifice than that of the Dorothea whose story we know', since she is talking about Dorothea's ultimate fate the reference must be to the marriage to Will; particularly as she has already mentioned the regrets of those who 'thought it a pity that so substantive and rare a creature should have been absorbed into the life of another, and be only known in a certain circle as a wife and mother'. It is true that in this 'Finale' there are no specific pejorative references to the particular husband chosen, but the general gist of the remarks is obvious.

Given, then, that Will was not, and was not presented as being, particularly worthy, the question remains as to why Dorothea married him; since from the very start it is suggested that there must be some very good reason to spark off her passionate nature and he seems too insubstantial to have roused the intense feeling he is declared to have inspired in her. Yet there need be no inconsistency if the whole process is seen in the context of her previous marriage. It is not Will who attracts Dorothea, but the concept of him she creates, and for that there is a very good reason,

(16) *ibid.*, Finale, Vol.III, p.461 foll.

some of it supplied by him. Her disappointment in Casaubon points her to his antithesis; Will's kinship to Casaubon allows him, as in the last subtle scene between them at Rome, to pay her compliments, which may be felt as a refreshing change from Casaubon's dryness; the way in which he tells her his story and his resolutions of independence allow her to feel a romantic sympathy for him, and not the less so because it is a situation in which she thinks her husband to be certainly wrong. Finally, there is Casaubon's will which, appearing to indicate unjust suspicions about her, seems to justify, if not revulsion from him, approval of what he had opposed. Also, the penalty clause in it made marriage to Will no more a clear and simple self-indulgence, thus allowing her to bridge over what David Cecil calls the contrast...between Dorothea Brooke's austere aspiration to sacrifice herself for humanity and the simple childish yearning for ordinary human satisfactions, which make her clutch so desperately at her last chance of Ladislaw's love. (17)

The marriage to Will is a natural progression for the nature that had gone through with the marriage to Casaubon; and George Eliot emphasises this in treating of both Dorothea's marriages together when she writes in the 'Finale', They were the mixed result of young and noble impulse struggling amidst the conditions of an imperfect social state, in which great feelings will often take the aspect of error, and great faith the aspect of illusion.

It is, then, as a reaction from what appears to her the betrayal of her first act of faith that Dorothea turns to Will. Casaubon is not treated unsympathetically by George Eliot, if he is harsh it is due to a jealousy that is pathetic (because based on sound principles, even if the immediate application of them is inaccurate) rather than malevolent, and when he can, he tries to treat Dorothea sympathetically; nevertheless, as the Spectator put it,

Dorothea's yearning to devote herself to a great ideal work, and her gradual discovery that in becoming Mr. Casaubon's wife she has entered into no such

(17) Early Victorian Novelists, Ch.3, p.300.

work, that she has found a dried-up formalist where she expected a loving guide and teacher, that she has devoted herself to a pedant instead of a man of original and masterly intellect, are quite as finely painted as Mr. Casaubon's troubles. (18)

What precisely it is Dorothea is looking for in marriage is apparent both from the note she writes after Casaubon's death in which she expresses her refusal to go on with his work - "I could not use it. Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours, by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in?" - Dorothea, (19) - and from the account in the 'Finale' of the style of her married life -

Dorothea could have liked nothing better, since wrongs existed, than that her husband should be in the thick of a struggle against them, and that she should give him wifely help.

If not quite as obviously as in the other cases, here too the qualities of submission and dependence may be discerned; heroic as she is amongst George Eliot's women, Dorothea Brooke too requires to be patronised, to be guided, to be governed. Will might not seem objectively the ideal person for this task, but her previous experience had created in her a diffidence that overcame this fact: 'She had now a life filled also with a beneficent activity which she had not the doubtful pains of discovering and marking out for herself', and her contentment with this allows Will too the sort of role of guidance more forcefully allotted to the other heroes in George Eliot's basic conception of marriage.

Henry James, reviewing Cross's Life in the Atlantic Monthly in 1885, wrote of George Eliot,

the "artistic mind"...existed in her with limitations remarkable in a writer whose imagination was so rich. We feel in her, always, that she proceeds from the abstract to the concrete; that her figures and situations are evolved, as the phrase is, from her moral consciousness, and are only indirectly the products of observations. They are deeply studied and elaborately

(18) Spectator, 'Middlemarch', 7 December 1872, Vol.45, p.1555, reprinted in George Eliot: C.H.

(19) Middlemarch, Ch.54; Vol.III, p.9.

justified, but they are not seen in the irresponsible plastic way. The world was, first and foremost, for George Eliot, the moral, the intellectual world; the personal spectacle came after; and lovingly, humanly, as she regarded it, we constantly feel that she cares for the things she finds in it only so far as they are types. The philosophic door is always open, on her stage, and we are aware that the somewhat cooling draught of ethical purpose draws across it. (20)

James goes on to expand on how appealing, despite this, George Eliot's work was; but as far as her treatment of actual marriages goes, his diagnosis can be seen to be applicable. It is noteworthy that, with one exception, in Silas Marner, all marriages that take place in the course of George Eliot's novels and are then followed through in detail are unhappy; Dorothea's first marriage to Casaubon is an instance of this as it is also an instance of another rule of note, again with the one exception, that all unhappy marriages, whether contracted in the course of the novel or not, are concluded within it. As Savonarola said to Romola, "'Marriage...is a sacramental vow, from which none but God can release you"' (21), and accordingly wherever such release is shown as being desirable or necessary, death is introduced to do the trick. Sin, or even error, within the marital relationship would seem, according to George Eliot, to be necessarily mortal.

The one exception to this latter rule is the case of the Transomes in Felix Holt, and in essence even this can be seen to be no real exception at all. Mr. Transome has indeed been wronged by his wife, but he does not require or desire any release from her. His intellect is so weak that the particular grievance is just one of the many things he is incapable of noticing. At the same time what might be called George Eliot's aggravated view of the consequences of sin is still worked out, even if it is without reference to him. Half-witted as he is, the responsibility for the

(20) Atlantic Monthly, 'George Eliot's Life', May 1885, Vol. 55, p. 573, reprinted in George Eliot: C.H.

(21) George Eliot, Romola, London, 1863, Ch. 40; Vol. II, p. 110.

unfortunate marriage is to be definitely attributed to her: it is made clear early on that her decision to marry someone she knew was unsuitable was a deliberate one - 'Forty years ago, when she came into this country, they said she was a pictur'; but her family was poor, and so she took up with a hatchet-faced fellow like this Transome'⁽²²⁾ - and as such she is made to suffer acute and endless anguish. It is a critical commonplace that the depiction of her is a triumph, and it is certainly very powerful; but there is very little substance to the 'woman's keen sensibility and dread'⁽²³⁾ and it is not at all clear what her misery is all about.⁽²⁴⁾ When she married Transome she appears to have been quite content with the moral status of her action, and there is no reason to suppose that the affair with Jermyn was not of a piece with the character that had entered upon the original action; her reputation may have suffered, but that either that or the deceits should have precipitated an intense consciousness of wrongdoing, in a nature presented as so different, say, from that of the gregarious Arthur Donnithorne with his hopeful awareness of other people's opinions, is somewhat surprising. Then, again, while Jermyn's lack of concern for her, when made clear in the course of their affair, might well have upset her, it is unlikely that it should have had so permanently shattering an effect on her imperious character;

(22) George Eliot, Felix Holt the Radical, Edinburgh and London, Introduction; Vol.I, p.11.

(23) *ibid.*, Ch.1; Vol.I, p.43.

(24) Fred C. Thomson, 'Felix Holt as Classic Tragedy', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, June 1861, attributes the extreme nature of Mrs. Transome's anguish to the genre in which George Eliot was assiduously dealing. Arnold Kettle, in his essay on the book in the Hardy collection of Critical Essays, while approving of the presentation of Mrs. Transome's situation, suggests that it suffers from being peripheral to the plot. I would grant that a fuller treatment of her previous life might have made her feelings more comprehensible; it is conceivable that they could have taken just the form they did, but what is significant nevertheless is the absence of a fuller treatment of how they came to be such.

so shattering that, though a bitterly proud woman might be thought not readily to allow herself to be robbed by a lover who has let her down, the main effect of Mrs. Transome's pride, in her reaction to his lack of fidelity, was to stop her preventing Jermyn from "turning my love into a good bargain"⁽²⁵⁾. Odd too is her deep disappointment with Harold: she may have been upset by his lack of affection, but his firmness should have appealed to one who had suffered from a feeble husband and an imbecile elder son; having let Jermyn run rings round her, she could not conceivably have been stricken at the realization that she could not control Harold. Yet the exigencies of nemesis, in George Eliot's view, demand that she be disappointed in her son; as they also demand, with a conclusive symmetry, that the son accuse the father of a crime committed by virtue of that parentage.

The splendid drama of that revelatory confrontation between Harold and Jermyn goes far towards excusing the inconsistencies noted: Mrs. Transome's surprising acquiescence was necessary for the speculation to have taken place and to be so self-righteously denounced by Harold; her anguish about his strength of purpose had helped to create suspense with regard to, and to prepare, the denouement, the importance of which serves to gloss over the singlemindedness in the presentation of that anguish. Nevertheless, behind the immediate impact of the story, lie inconsistencies in the presentation of Mrs. Transome, to be attributed to George Eliot's doctrine of the need for perpetual atonement for wrongs within the marital relationship. Mrs. Transome is at the end simply a bundle of remorse, seizing and multiplying opportunities for despair; and though the once proud beauty might conceivably have been brought to this, the process by which the doctrine took hold of her is neither clear nor convincing.

(25) Félix Holt, Ch.42; Vol.II, p.243.

A very similar situation to that of Mrs. Transome is to be seen in Daniel Deronda, where Gwendolen Harleth too is presented as in the grip of relentless remorse consequent upon her marriage to Grandcourt. That remorse too is not immediately and entirely credible: powerful as is the portrait of Grandcourt's unassailable self-possession, it is odd that Gwendolen's own previous self-sufficient dominance should have been quelled so thoroughly as to make her totally submissive to him emotionally as well as physically; it is odd that she is overcome with such overwhelming contrition with regard to Mrs. Glasher as to prostrate herself before Deronda and her husband, while preserving her dignity before the rest of the world with remarkable success; it is odd that her anxiety lest her husband discover she knew that particular secret of his before she married him and her shame on realising he was all the time aware of her knowledge should both have had the effect of enhancing his control over her; but these are the forms Gwendolen's remorse has to take to establish its forlorn thoroughness. (26)

In this particular instance, Gwendolen unlike Mrs. Transome is provided with a mentor who makes the exigencies of her position clear to her. As Deronda tells her, Gwendolen must maintain a conscious awareness of the

(26) The Edinburgh Review, 'Daniel Deronda', October 1876, Vol.144, p.456, in refusing any credibility to Gwendolen's repentance found even Grandcourt's cruelty unprepared authorial manipulation - 'She, with her high spirit, her imperious temper, her sense of personal importance, is crushed under his heel, once for all, never striking a blow for her freedom, never asserting herself, dropping into, of all things in the world, a miserable conscientiousness and desire for moral improvement. Never was there a more strange transformation...it is with a sense of absolute confusion and bewilderment that we find him turned into a bully and coarse tyrant in a moment, as by the waving of a magician's wands.' Without going quite as far as that, all I wish to insist on is how conveniently Gwendolen's repentance is in line with the dogma of supine despair George Eliot had suggested with regard to Mrs. Transome.

wrong she had done in marrying Grandcourt - "That is the bitterest of all - to wear the yoke of our own wrongdoing.... One who has committed irremediable errors may be scourge by that consciousness into a higher course than is common"⁽²⁷⁾; there can be no possibility of Gwendolen telling herself that, having wronged Mrs. Glasher (and even that the Edinburgh doubted), she should make what restitution she could and try not to do wrong again but that, as regards her husband, concerning whom she had no reason to feel any great guilt, the matter should either be brought into the open or forgotten. Rather, her error has to control her life: her awareness of it must poison her relationship with her husband and as a consequence of it she must be tempted to further sin. It is in this context, indeed, that Deronda's performance as her mentor is meant to be judged. It is clear that he is supposed to have done Gwendolen good; yet the simple fact is that Gwendolen allowed Grandcourt to die before her eyes. It is not only that, despite Deronda's assurances, the rope Gwendolen did not throw at once when she realised Grandcourt was drowning might have kept him afloat until the arrival of the help that was so conveniently at hand; even if Deronda were right, and Gwendolen's delay made no practical difference, the exposition of her thoughts as she stood inactive with the rope in her hands makes her intentions clear. However understandable, even forgivable, her aim may have been, she wanted Grandcourt to die.

The nature of her action becomes clearer when it is compared with the motivation examined in a similar situation in Middlemarch. Both Gwendolen and Bulstrode desire the death of a fairly despicable individual, in both cases the desire is due to an error committed earlier the unfortunate consequences of which can be escaped only by the death of that individual, both

(27) Daniel Deronda, Ch.36; Vol.II, pp.264-5.

deaths come about without the active participation of the protagonist, and in both cases there is the possibility that any attempt on their part to save the life in question would have been vain. The period of Bulstrode's reprehensible passivity is lengthy, and presented as it happened, whereas Gwendolen's was brief, and related only in retrospect by her; yet this does not seem enough in itself to make the two cases qualitatively different. Nevertheless, the impression George Eliot creates is that Bulstrode's guilt was greater than that of Gwendolen, and the reason for this is that Gwendolen's regeneration had begun to take place before her release from Grandcourt. Her sins had come home to her, she had received spiritual advice and encouragement from Deronda, she was determined to try to be good. No matter that the same might be said for Bulstrode; from George Eliot's point of view a shadowy God could be no substitute for the, at least in intention, human Deronda. And it is true that Bulstrode's God was made to measure for him, while Gwendolen had to deal with a standard she acknowledged was higher than her own: Bulstrode, until the shock caused by Raffles' death and the exposure he had still not succeeded in averting, had experienced no new influence, nothing to convert him from the ways that had prompted the original error, whereas Gwendolen had undergone both misery from her husband and a devotional commitment to someone else that together prompted a reappraisal of herself. Even so, in the moment of crisis, both behave in a similar way. The difference, therefore, that Deronda and her anguish have wrought in Gwendolen's conduct is to be sought elsewhere: in the fact, namely, that she did not do worse, that she did not in fact kill her husband, that she succeeded, as she confessed to Deronda, in resisting the obsessive desire to do so. Bulstrode's desire for Raffles' death never reached the dramatic heights of the secretion of the knife that Gwendolen described to Deronda.

Eulstrode stands condemned for going as far as lay in him, whereas Gwendolen is supposed to have been brought back from her own threshold of wrongdoing. For George Eliot, the possibility of building anew after the original error in the contraction of the marriage was not to be thought of; the only question was that of the extent and the direction to which Gwendolen's regrets would lead her, and in that the remorse was inwardly directed and prompted no further act of sin, it is presented as having had a satisfactory effect.

Remorse of the same sort had been foreshadowed too in the last of the Scenes of Clerical Life where in fact it provided the title of the tale. Janet Dempster there has relations precisely similar to those of Gwendolen with husband and mentor, the one of whom treats her brutally while on the other she relies, not only because of his advice and encouragement but also by virtue of her idealization of him, to preserve her from further error; and her consciousness of sin and determination to repent are expressed in similar language - 'she wanted to lash the demon out of her soul with the stinging memories of the bygone misery; she wanted to renew the old horror and the old anguish' (28). Given that Janet's sin was basically drunkenness, which was not essentially harmful to anyone else as Gwendolen's was presented as being, the language may seem even more extreme than that with which Gwendolen, and Deronda, enunciated their therapy; (29) but the social and chronological context of Janet's sin makes the intensity of her anguish understandable. What is of importance here, though, is simply the connection postulated between that sin and Janet's married life: quite clearly

(28) George Eliot, 'Janet's Repentance' Ch.25, in Scenes of Clerical Life, Edinburgh and London, 1858; Scenes, Vol.II, p.290.

(29) Harvey, George Eliot, suggests that Janet's sin is played down because Dempster suffers from the same thing.

drink is to be seen as Janet's reaction to the miseries of that life, and more particularly to Robert Dempster's cruelty. For the essential difference between this case and the two previously considered is that the responsibility for the misery in the marriage lies here definitely with the man, even though the theme is the repentance of the woman; though there is a suggestion that Janet might have had her part to play in the destruction of 'the sweet wedded love and hope', it comes from Dempster's mother -

"Janet...was always running about doing things for other people, and neglecting her own house. That provokes a man: what use is it for a woman to be loving, and making a fuss with her husband, if she doesn't care and keep his home just as he likes it; if she isn't at hand when he wants anything done; if she doesn't attend to all his wishes, let them be as small as they may?"⁽³⁰⁾ -

and immediately after George Eliot suggests that it is Janet's misery that requires alleviation rather than Dempster's cruelty. Nevertheless, though the basic fault is Dempster's, and though Janet obtains a happy release from her 'sacramental vow' without any act that could conceivably be thought reprehensible on her part, the consciousness of her sin seems to have to abide with her throughout. The effect of her unhappy marriage, trivial as had been her own fault in the light of what she had suffered, is that

She thirsted for no pleasure; she craved no worldly good. She saw the years to come stretch before her like an autumn afternoon, filled with resigned memory. Life to her could never more have any eagerness; it was a solemn service of gratitude and patient effort. She walked in the presence of unseen witnessess - of the Divine love that had rescued her, of the human love that waited for its eternal repose until it had seen her endure to the end.⁽³¹⁾

With Mr. Tryan as her mentor, Janet's aim like that of Gwendolen was to stop herself from succumbing to further sin, though admittedly of a far less melodramatic sort; as with Gwendolen, and Mrs. Transome too, her unhappy

(30) *ibid.*, Ch.13; Scenes, Vol.II, pp.185-6.

(31) *ibid.*, Ch.23; Scenes, Vol.II, p.316.

marriage demands from Janet endless and dedicated endurance.

If this Scene sketches out a pattern of endurance that was to be developed in accounts of marriages in subsequent novels, another Scene, The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton, also has a theme taken up later on, that of what might be called the remorseful male protagonist in the marital relation. Uniquely, in this story, the marriage that provides the author's essential subject matter has taken place before the narrative begins, and we are presented with an already established relation. The relation itself suffers no alteration in the course of the tale, Milly Barton being devoted to her husband and full of thought about him, while 'Amos was an affectionate husband, and, in his way, valued his wife as his best treasure'⁽³²⁾, that way being however a thoughtless one that led him habitually to impose on her. Milly, too, is both too affectionate and too protective towards her husband to trouble him with complaints, so that when burdened with an imposition that it was his duty to avert from her, such as arose from the continued stay in their house of the Countess Czerlaski, she suffers in silence. As such, though the relationship is essentially a happy one, an unusual phenomenon amongst those marriages to which George Eliot devotes her attention, it is not wholly satisfactory. These aspects of the marriage George Eliot presents in a restrained and convincing manner; but towards the conclusion she eliminates Milly, and having had Amos dismissed from his curacy and hence forced to leave his churchyard and Milly's grave, introduces a farewell scene at the graveyard that enhances the concept of Amos' guilt with regard to his wife. It is, of course, understandable that the bereavement should have caused him to ponder on his own relation to her, and that the banishment too from the home they had shared

(32) George Eliot, 'The Sad Fortunes of the Rev. Amos Barton', Ch.2, in the Scenes of Clerical Life; Scenes, Vol.I, p.26.

should have heightened his awareness of his own insensitivity: indeed, as George Eliot puts it perhaps in explanation of the contrast between his earlier state and the later awareness,

he re-lived all their life together, with that terrible keenness of memory and imagination which bereavement gives.... Amos was one who clung to all the material links between his mind and the past. His imagination was not vivid, and required the stimulus of actual perception; (33)

yet by virtue of its positioning, his utterance of his remorse takes on a disproportionate significance. There is an impression conveyed that his failure towards his wife is almost the point of the story, and that his regrets concerning this will dominate him through the rest of his life.

This may, however, arise from an association, that is unjustified, with George Eliot's other novels where such effects are discernible. Certainly, if Amos Barton's remorse seems exaggerated, it is only so by virtue of presentation rather than by what might be thought distortion of plot or character; the latter of which it has been suggested was the case with one or two of George Eliot's remorseful wives. In respect of the next remorseful husband, chronologically, to appear in her works, it is manipulation of plot that may be discerned: Godfrey Cass in Silas Marner, having concealed his first marriage and denied his child, finds his second marriage barren. This contributes to the remorse that, being one of George Eliot's imperfect spouses, it would seem essential for him to feel. The irony is that this is one situation where such remorse would have been quite understandable without any manipulation: someone of the susceptibilities Godfrey Cass is presented as possessing would have been upset enough, without the interposition of an unfertilising providence, by what he saw as the necessity of keeping his guilty secret from a wife who provided him with a perfectly satisfactory

(33) *ibid.*, Ch.9; Scenes, Vol.I, pp.116 & 118.

marriage. It is true that Eppie's noble renunciation of his offer to adopt her is an integral part of the novel; but the urge to adopt her need not have depended on a lack of other offspring. It could easily and plausibly have arisen simply from Godfrey's confession to his wife of his past history. As it is, it seems that the comfort he derived from that confession would have been too perfect for George Eliot without the other regret. Not only is the depiction of Godfrey's remorse easier because of his childlessness, it also provides George Eliot with a way of ensuring the permanence of his regrets for his previous actions.

Godfrey's misery at the deceit he had felt constrained to practise upon his wife is the more poignant in view of their otherwise happy relationship; Nancy, in spite of the self-possessed and even critical attitude she had been able to keep up towards Godfrey while she was single, being as devoted and thoughtful as Milly Barton after her marriage, and perhaps because of her self-possession being able to sustain her husband more satisfactorily than Milly. When he finally does confess his fault to her, her unquestioning adherence to what she sees as her husband's responsibilities is symptomatic of the 'loving strength' on which Godfrey had grown accustomed to relying; and his diffidence as to which, therefore, in the particular case of his guilty secret may be seen to have caused him the greater anguish.

The completeness of the union between Godfrey and Nancy Cass after his confession is in marked contrast with the relation that persists between the Bulstrodes even after the crisis that had brought them closer together. As with Milly and Nancy, there could be no question about Mrs. Bulstrode's devotion to her husband; her awareness of the bond created in marriage is expressed even more movingly than in the other cases in the account of her

after she had come to know of the disgrace that had been attached to her husband -

The man whose prosperity she had shared through nearly half a life, and who had unvaryingly cherished her - now that punishment had befallen him it was not possible to her in any sense to forsake him.... She knew, when she locked her door, that she should unlock it ready to go down to her unhappy husband and espouse his sorrow, and say of his guilt, I will mourn and not reproach. But she needed time to gather up her strength; she needed to sob out her farewell to all the gladness and pride of her life. (34)

Nevertheless, though her expression of sympathy and affection does reach through to her husband, the union that results is an imperfect one because he does not have the capacity to discuss the cause of his disgrace openly with her. Where Godfrey's confession had been ultimately unforced, the revelations that had prompted his wife's act of allegiance had come in spite of Bulstrode's efforts; and his incapacity to submit himself to an external judgment that threatened to pronounce him objectively guilty persisted beyond the acceptance of sympathy. His wife's previous submission to him had been part of the facade he had erected against his consciousness of wrongdoing, and while the matter was left in uncertainty between them he still had some sort of a shield -

That she should ever silently call his acts Murder was what he could not bear. He felt shrouded by her doubt: he got strength to face her from the sense that she could not yet feel warranted in pronouncing that worst condemnation on him...concealment had been the habit of his life, and the impulse to confession had no power against the dread of a deeper humiliation. (35)

The importance to Bulstrode of the figure he cut in the eyes of others had always been apparent in the evocation of his character, and his diffidence therefore before the wife before whom most of his future life would have to be passed is entirely consistent. Even if his sin, then, did not arise in connection with the marital relation, his abiding remorse, or perhaps in his

(34) Middlemarch, Ch.74; Vol.III, pp.333-4.

(35) ibid., Ch.85; Vol.III, p.444.

case misery, arises from it.

The endurance required from the erring husbands in the cases considered so far, then, takes very different forms: that of Amos Barton arises directly from his remorse concerning his treatment of his wife; that of Godfrey Cass though it relates to a deceit practised upon his wife arises from an earlier error, and is in fact prolonged because of a childlessness, the moral aspect of which is connected with the daughter he had denied rather than with his wife; and that of Bulstrode arises from an entirely separate incident, and is of relevance with regard to his marriage only because of the particular shame that attaches to his relation to his wife. In all these different cases, however, a common element is to be found, namely that of the unquestioning devotion of each one of the wives. Milly, of course, is dead before Amos' regrets commence, but in his concept of her at any rate there could be no fears of rejection; Godfrey and Bulstrode may have had their fears, but these are shown in the event to be totally unjustified - Mrs. Bulstrode's anguish about the situation is very sharply sketched, but her essential constancy, as is Nancy's, is in no danger of being shaken. It must be remembered, though, that there is a corresponding relation on the part of these men towards their wives, that makes the devotion of the latter less remarkable, and would indeed have made the absence of such devotion a cause of criticism. The errors, as recounted above, are hardly such as to amount to a betrayal, direct or otherwise even, of the marital relation; the husbands are in each case described as unswervingly faithful and devotedly attached themselves to their wives; insensitivity and deceit born of diffidence hardly amount to fundamental attacks on the marital relationship. While the wives in question then are models of affection and sympathy, the particular instances George Eliot depicts as

instigating the expression of those qualities are such, almost, as could not but have had that outcome given even a moderately stable relationship between husband and wife. In short, in these three instances where George Eliot goes in some detail into the workings of happy marriages, we are presented with a sound relationship that has been previously established and which is not itself the subject of much consideration; even the marriage of the Casses, the exception I mentioned before to the rule that all marriages contracted in the course of George Eliot's novels and then followed through are unhappy ones, does fit, because of the lengthy gap in time between the two parts of Silas Marner, into the pattern of the other two cases, in that the relations between the married Casses need not be related to the earlier ones that subsisted during their prolonged courtship. The crisis through which in each case the relationship has to pass does not in fact affect the relationship per se, and is in any case not a particularly grave one; so that in fact an actual examination of an inter-relationship under strain is largely avoided. The devotion of wife to husband and even of husband to wife, the anxiety to sympathise even if the capacity for this is not always available, are fixed points in these marriages.

As such, though the accounts of these marriages may be extremely touching, they do not in fact touch upon what might be called the inner workings of a marital relationship, mobile, unprepared, reactions to inadequacies perceived and felt that are directly connected with that relation, situations where complete commitment is not an antecedently established factor that can subsume the sort of minor irritant that is introduced in these examples. In effect, what the Nation claimed on George Eliot's behalf, quoted earlier in this chapter, concerning her capacity to analyze the effect of one nature upon another is hardly illustrated in the cases we have just been considering:

the sustenance offered by wife to husband is a fixture, to which the nature of the particular husband, and the particular sustenance required, is almost irrelevant.

Very different from these is the situation in Romola, where George Eliot endeavours to consider in detail and continuously the reactions of a wife to another erring husband, and where indeed the particular actions and motivations of the husband are conditioned in some sense by his relationship to his wife. Tito himself is unusual amongst George Eliot's characters in that he has an active conscience which he succeeds in stifling. He exemplifies to perfection her view of the corrosive influence of sin, fulfilling the principle she had enunciated with regard to Arthur Donnithorne -

There is a terrible coercion in our deeds which may first turn the honest man into a deceiver, and then reconcile him to the change; for this reason - that the second wrong presents itself to him in the guise of the only practicable right.... No man can escape this vitiating effect of an offence against his own sentiment of right. (36)

Tito's degeneration is convincingly portrayed, the advancement into more and more reprehensible crimes prompted by the one original sin: the stranger in Florence had no one in whom he could confide at the first difficulty; the effort to do right at first seemed enormous, and when it was diminished there were obligations as well as comforts to abandon; he had no roots so he could rely on no faction and so had to have a number of schemes on at the same time; fear and the constant necessity of self-defence reduced the horrors of ambush and of treason. Right through the novel Tito is seen 'experiencing that inexorable law of human souls, that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by the reiterated choice of good or evil which gradually determines character' (37), without there being any sense of manipulation about it.

(36) Adam Bede, Ch.29; Vol.II, p.37.

(37) Romola, Ch.23; Vol.I, p.340.

At the same time, unlike say Grandcourt or Robert Dempster, Tito is subject to remorse; like Arthur Donnithorne and Gwendolen Harleth he is acutely conscious of his own failings, his submission to his sins. Yet where these two recover, he succumbs; and the reason has to do with the fact that, unlike them, he has not got a mentor but a wife. Arthur and Gwendolen, even if they cannot quite confess everything, are conscious of an external standard towards which their consciences must strive, whereas Tito, having entered into a relationship with the ideal figure in which he is expected to play the dominant role cannot bear to fail to live up to the trust placed in him. He is forced to play a part and feels under stress; this prompts his association with Tessa, in which he is able to relax; this in turn further poisons his attitude to Romola, for his reliance upon her is reduced while his guilt towards her increases. Any sense of responsibility he may have had crumbles before his fears of an adverse judgment; the consciousness of guilt and the incapacity to trust contribute to this, but also the exalted heights upon which from the first had been constructed his relationship to Romola, with regard to whom the effort he must make is emphasized by the sensuality he shares with Tessa, secure from any criticism or indeed any necessity to take thought. Tito's later schemes he could excuse to himself as arising from the need for self-defence; and that need he laboured under is to be seen as arising as much from the deceit he practised towards his wife as from his other primary error -

Falsehood had prospered and waxed strong; but it had nourished the twin life, Fear. He no longer wore his armour, he was no longer afraid of Baldassarre; but from the corpse of that dead fear a spirit had risen - the undying habit of fear. (38)

The discovery of his duplicity at the end, running away from the consequences

(38) *ibid.*, Ch. 67; Vol. II, p. 389.

of which he fell into the clutches of his original adversary, may be attributed to a confrontation with Romola; and the impossibility of any such confrontation being resolved had long been established by the complete lack of confidence between them, arising inexorably from his original diffidence about the one stain on his past.

The destruction of the marital relationship is not, however, solely the responsibility of Tito. His original diffidence, for instance, is totally comprehensible in view of Romola's character: the depiction of her ideals, her enthusiasms, her violent reactions contributes towards a justification of his view that she could never have fully forgiven him his sin. Her initial idealization of Tito was an extreme one, in line with her youth and her inexperience; naturally arising from all these is the unsophisticated rigidity of her reaction that leads to the first attempt to leave him when once she realises that he has let her down. In keeping too is her attitude after she has been sent back to her husband by Savonarola, brought to an awareness of duty intellectually comprehensible to one of her high ideals,⁽³⁹⁾ but hardly sensed and not readily expressed in her weak isolation. Her incapacity to confront Tito on his own ground, combined with her knowledge of his moral inadequacies, produces a bewilderment that prevents any resolution of their differences -

"Shall I tell you what may be the result? Not simply the disgrace of your husband, to which you look forward with so much courage, but the arrest and

(39) Liddell, op. cit., claims astonishingly that Savonarola's interference on this occasion amounted to impertinence; see Carole Robinson, 'Romola: A Reading of the Novel', Victorian Studies, September 1962, for a detailed account of the contrary view. Robinson, indeed, sees Romola embarking, under Savonarola's guidance and with George Eliot's endorsement, on a grand venture similar to that of Deronda or of Fedalma in The Spanish Gypsy; and suggests that her disillusionment with Savonarola over Bernardo del Nero provided George Eliot with a method of skating over the failure of that venture.

ruin of many among the chief men in Florence.... The question now is, not whether you can have any belief in me, but whether, now you have been warned, you will dare to rush, like a blind man with a torch in his hand, amongst intricate affairs of which you know nothing." Romola felt as if her mind were held in a vice by Tito's. The possibilities he had indicated were rising before her with terrible clearness. "I am too rash," she said. "I will try not to be rash."... "The fact...must have led you to infer that I was in danger from this man. Was that the reason you chose to cultivate his acquaintance and invite him into the house?" Romola was mute. To speak was only like rushing with bare breast against a shield. (40)

Understandable though it is in view of the amount with which she has to put up and also in view of Tito's own strong sense of alienation, even if restored physically to her husband, Romola makes no effort to adjust to him or to sympathize effectually. Like so many other of George Eliot's heroines, she required a husband to depend upon; and when he failed her she sought support elsewhere without attempting to set up the relationship again on a different footing. Unlike Grandcourt or Dempster, though, Tito is shown as an active moral agent, not inextricably hardened in his vices; and Romola's rigidity and intolerance, even if he himself did nothing to invite their correction, contributed to his decline. (41)

That the rigidity required to be corrected is apparent from the presentation of Romola's relations with Savonarola. Romola left Florence after her conviction of Tito's guilt and the disillusionment with Savonarola, arising out of Bernardo del Nero's execution, that meant

The bonds of all strong affection were snapped.... With the sinking of high human trust, the dignity of life sinks too; we cease to believe in our own better self, since that also is part of the common nature which is degraded in our thought; and all the finer impulses of the soul are dulled; (42)

yet she returns, in the belief that

(40) *ibid.*, Ch.48; Vol.II, pp.186 & 190.

(41) John Bayley recognizes this in his contribution to the Hardy collection of Critical Essays, as does Lawrence Poston III in 'Setting and Theme in *Romola*', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, March 1966; but both regrettably only in passing.

(42) *ibid.*, Ch.61; Vol.II, pp.320 & 323.

What if Fra Girolano had been wrong? What if the life of Florence was a web of inconsistencies? Was she, then, something higher, that she should shake the dust from off her feet, and say, "This world is not good enough for me"? If she had been really higher, she would not so easily have lost all her trust⁽⁴³⁾

and her final remarks on Savonarola show a spirit of tolerance and benignity very different from the earlier fixed idealism. This of course comes too late to help Tito, if indeed it ever could have. Even so, Romola's moral maturing is as much a subject of the novel as is Tito's decline, and both are expressed to a considerable degree in the account of their marriage.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Each is shown as having an effect upon the other arising from the specific relation, which affects their outlook upon the rest of the world; and an attempt at least is made to examine the workings of this process as it concerns both characters.

There is, however, perhaps because of the lateness of relative isolation of Romola's rebirth to a new humanistic faith, perhaps because of the drama and dominance of Tito's decline, no attempt at a synthesis once incompatibilities had begun to be apparent in the marriage. Tito and Romola move further and further apart so that the final release is the only possible solution to the problem: and the death of Tito, convenient limit though it is, is not unexpected and does not smack of artificial manipulation, given the historical context of the story and the intrigues in which

(43) *ibid.*, Ch.69; Vol.II, p.415.

(44) George Levine, in his essay on the book in the Hardy collection of Critical Essays, argues, with the support of one of George Eliot's letters, that she failed to carry out her conception with Romola: a figure intended to be susceptible of development turned instead into an ideal. It is true that her achievements in the plague-stricken village are presented idealistically; but her remarks at the end of the book suggest, I think, a character upon whom that experience has acted as a catalyst to prompt self-awareness. If too a clear view, as sketched above, is taken of her relations with Tito, the picture that emerges is by no means that of an unacceptable paragon.

he was involved. (45)

In Middlemarch George Eliot takes what might be considered a further step in that, having depicted disappointments and inadequacies from both points of view within marriage, she also seeks to show how life might be carried on together through a considered acceptance of these. We have already considered how Dorothea's first marriage, contracted in the full flush of ideals, was soon followed by disillusionment. In this she resembles Romola, but her perception of her husband's faults is more cerebral and also more considered -

Was it her fault that she had believed in him - had believed in his worthiness? - And what, exactly, was he? - She was able enough to estimate him - she who waited on his glances with trembling, and shut her best soul in prison, paying it only hidden visits, that she might be petty enough to please him. In such a crisis as this, some women begin to hate (46) -

and since it is accompanied by a conscious awareness of her responsibilities, both to her own choice and to him, 'the resolved submission did come'. As for Casaubon himself, realizing like Tito his own shortcomings, since they are an intrinsic part of his character his anguish is the more acute and he is incapable of glossing them over; the extreme diffidence that holds him back from creativity is of a piece with the lack of confidence in his hold over his young wife, and his marriage, because it summoned up a shared consciousness, clarified his aridity beyond question. The regret he suffers for his rashness in marrying is movingly presented; as the Spectator article

(45) It is worth noting, though, that the Westminster Review, 'Romola', October 1873, N.S. Vol.24, pp.348-9, reprinted in George Eliot: C.H., thought release of another sort more likely, when it wrote, 'The conception of the marriage tie which underlies the whole story seems to us antedated.... Tito...would have cut short his trials with steel or poison in the age in which he is represented as enduring them. Instead of being content with frightening a wife he no longer loved when she threatened him with exposure and ruin, he would have relieved himself from that fear in a very different way within twenty four hours.'

(46) Middlemarch, Ch.42; Vol.II, p.233.

cited earlier in this chapter put it,

Especially the last scenes of Mr. Casaubon's life, where he shuts himself up in his own wounded sensitiveness so completely as to repel Dorothea's sympathy for his physical sufferings for fear it should be pity, and where he finally breaks through his reserve only to ask for a pledge that she will govern her life after his death by the wishes he expresses, are painted with a sombre force, and an insight into the bitterness of sore pride, which add some of the greatest of all its treasure to the stores of English literature. (47)

Yet what makes the force of Casaubon's appeal in these later stages is the fact that he too had made an attempt to live with the problem he had brought upon himself and upon his wife, that he had shown an awareness of her own separate identity. Though he submits himself less, and is less gracious than Dorothea, his attitude in the scene of reconciliation that concludes the chapter of Dorothea's cerebation establishes, with a certainty that not even the tastlessness of his will can overcome, his own sympathetic accommodation -

"Come, my dear, come. You are young, and need not to extend your life by watching." When the kind quiet melancholy of that speech fell on Dorothea's ears, she felt something like the thankfulness that might well up in us if we had narrowly escaped hurting a lamed creature. She put her hand into her husband's, and they went along the broad corridor together. (48)

Accommodation marks too the other marriage followed through in Middlemarch, that between Rosamond Vincy and Lydgate. There is a passage towards the end of the narration wherein the couple come together that conveys a similar impression to the one just quoted above -

Poor Rosamond's vagrant fancy had come back terribly scourged - meek enough to nestle under the old despised shelter. And the shelter was still there: Lydgate had accepted his narrowed lot with sad resignation. He had chosen this fragile creature, and had taken the burthen of her life upon his arms. He must walk as he could, carrying that burthen pitifully; (49)

but in fact the form the accommodation takes is very different. There is

(47) Spectator, 'Middlemarch', 7 December 1872, Vol.45, p.1555, reprinted in George Eliot, C.H.

(48) Middlemarch, Ch.42; Vol.II, p.235.

(49) ibid., Ch.81; Vol.III, p.409.

much less tenderness about the relation that arises, as is apparent from the conclusion in which he calls her his basil plant because she flourished on a murdered man's brains; what he had accepted was his marriage to her, not her as an individual. Whatever tenderness he does show towards Rosamond is prompted primarily by the self-indulgence that has been shown to be characteristic of him -

But the real wife had not only her claims, she had still a hold on his heart, and it was his intense desire that the hold should remain strong. In marriage, the certainty, "She will never love me much," is easier to bear than the fear, "I shall love her no more".⁽⁵⁰⁾

Lydgate required comfort, as George Eliot had indicated towards the beginning, when she answered the question why he did not marry Dorothea -

To a man under such circumstances, taking a wife is something more than a question of adornment, however highly he may rate this; and Lydgate was disposed to give it the first place among wifely functions. To his taste, guided by a single conversation, here was the point on which Miss Brooke would be found wanting, notwithstanding her undeniable beauty. She did not look at things from the proper feminine angle. The society of such women was about as relaxing as going from your work to teach the second form, instead of reclining in a paradise with sweet laughs for bird-notes, and blue eyes for a heaven.⁽⁵¹⁾

As such, his transformation at the end of the story into a fashionable physician, much as he resents it, is as much his own responsibility as Rosamond's: disliking to do anything disagreeable to himself, he had not enough strength of purpose, though he could appreciate the better way, to hold him to it; his refusal to discuss his principles with his wife, and to adjust them according to his new circumstances, results in his having to sacrifice them completely.

His refusal to discuss things with her may seem eminently understandable in view of her negative reaction to his anxieties when he does mention them; yet it should not readily be assumed that there are no possibilities

(50) *ibid.*, Ch.64; Vol.III, p.181.

(51) *ibid.*, Ch.11, Vol.I, p.141.

for good in her, simply because Lydgate was not able to rouse them. The way in which she contributes to the thwarting of his ideals tends to create an exclusive sympathy for him, but the concluding paragraph about them in the 'Finale' suggests an alternative view. Rosamond's undying gratitude to Dorothea may seem surprising since she is apparently incapable of selfless feeling; but this is to ignore the distinction between egoism and what should perhaps be called deliberate selfishness. Rosamond was totally unsympathetic towards Lydgate's difficulties because she could not comprehend them at all. Her egoism, the habit of looking at everything simply as it concerned her, made it hard for her to appreciate another point of view, but the last word about her, as the last scene between her and Dorothea, indicates that her heart could be touched. This Lydgate was incapable of doing because, having originally conceived of a wife as a plaything designed for his comfort, when he does realise that she could be a creature with desires and aspirations of her own, his anxiety for immediate comfort prevents him from engaging upon the conflict he had not foreseen and therefore dreaded.

As such, Lydgate becomes complaisant towards his wife; though he does not scruple to vent on her his bitterness about his failure. Given Rosamond's character, even if she is represented at the end as referring to her second marriage as a 'reward', probably for her patience with her husband's complaints, these verbal expressions of his feelings were not likely to cause much dissension. Lydgate's misery would not affect Rosamond at all except insofar as it impinged upon her comforts, material and social, and as such it would not be worth her while to notice them otherwise. Where Dorothea and Casaubon were acutely and painfully aware of the inner life of the other and allowed their relations to the other to be governed by this awareness

and a conception of sympathetic responsibility, the idea that her husband had an inner life would not have seemed of the slightest importance to Rosamond; while Lydgate too, more importantly since he is depicted as making efforts at accommodation, did so primarily in the light of his own desire for comfort. The attempt to share a life would have entailed more trouble than Lydgate was prepared to face. The marriage relation for both Rosamond and Lydgate is one that, if it does involve some responsibility, requires no more commitment or understanding than is necessary for peace and quiet. (52)

It is clear from the above discussion that the marriages George Eliot considers fall into three categories; the unifying feature of the last of which, the last three discussed, is that there is a continuous interaction represented between the parties to the marriage. We have already noted that in those cases where there is only a male moral protagonist, the satisfying sympathetic role allotted to the woman is a static one, preventing any sort of development within the relationship. In those cases, on the other hand, where the moral protagonist is simply the woman, the man is effectively moved from the scene of any moral action; Dempster and Grandcourt are sunk

(52) Jerome Beatty, in 'The Text of the Novel: A Study of the Proof', in the Hardy collection of Critical Approaches, notes that George Eliot plays down Lydgate's drawbacks in the course of revision, and suggests that this is because they were obvious enough and she did not want to overstate. I agree, of course, that the drawbacks are obvious but it must be granted that, if this was her reason, George Eliot misjudged the perceptiveness of some of her readers: Joan Bennet, for instance, in George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art, Cambridge, 1948, holds Rosamond entirely responsible for the failure of the marriage, a view shared to greater or lesser extents by the other critics whose books have been mentioned in this chapter. These take no account, however, of the points I have raised, which are mentioned also by Calder, op. cit.; more forcefully, by Patricia Beer, op. cit.; and by Kathleen Blake, 'Middlemarch and the Woman Question', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, December 1976, a convincing feminist interpretation that attributes justification for Rosamond to George Eliot's concern for the generally restricted position of women.

so deep and so fixedly in moral depravity, that the workings of the conscience of their wives must be carried on in as definite an isolation, as far as they are concerned, as in the instance of Mrs. Transome who is separated from her husband by his lack of wits. What might be called George Eliot's individual interest in these cases is emphasized by the fact that the situations of Gwendolen and of Janet are not changed very much by the deaths of their husbands; their errors, though connected with their marriages, were not committed against their husbands so that the remorse they are required to feel endures beyond those deaths. That the same, even though her sin was specifically within her marriage, would be true of Mrs. Transome, is clear from the depiction of her acute anguish that is unaccompanied by any softening towards her husband; it is the sin and the remorse that is of interest to George Eliot in these cases, not at all the particular relation that connects wife and husband.

There is a sense in which Rosamond might seem, like the husbands in these cases, beyond or beneath the field of moral interaction; yet we have noted that her solipsism was absolute only where Lydgate was concerned, and in any case the depiction of her griefs and grievances indicates that George Eliot was concerned, as she was not with those others, to show how the particularities of her marriage impinged upon her conscience. Furthermore, there is the fact that it is Lydgate who dies and releases her from their marriage. This might have seemed accidental, were it not that, with the exception noted and explained above, all George Eliot's unhappy marriages end in death; and in all the other cases it is definitely the partner whose responsibility is greater for the unhappiness who dies. Lydgate's death may of course be explained by George Eliot's desire to show the destruction wrought by such overweening egoism as is Rosamond's; but the analysis above

of Lydgate's own responsibility for the situation should suggest that this particular case too may fit into the pattern. Certainly Rosamond's lack of awareness, deplorable as it is, makes her expectations in entering upon the marriage the less culpable. Lydgate it was whose age, experience and intelligence should have led him to recognize that all Rosamond wanted in marriage was to be kept in the style to which she was accustomed, or rather aspired, and who should have weighed up beforehand the burden he was undertaking; indeed, there is a suggestion that he did so, or at least did not overestimate Rosamond, but allowed his judgment to be overcome in one of his habitual moments of indulgence. The disappointment he caused her was, therefore, the greater if the less grave than that which she caused him; the more obviously in that George Eliot had early on indicated traces in him congruent with her whole personality and the life into which she encouraged him -

Lydgate's spots of commonness lay in the complexion of his prejudices... that distinction of mind which belonged to his intellectual ardour, did not penetrate his feeling and judgment about furniture, or women, or the desirability of its being known (without his telling) that he was better born than other country surgeons. He did not mean to think of furniture at present; but whenever he did so it was to be feared that neither biology nor schemes of reform would lift him above the vulgarity of feeling that there would be an incompatibility in his furniture not being of the best. (53)

His bitterness about the marriage, therefore, though it manifested itself in sharpness to her, was the more suitably inwardly directed, since far from her having betrayed him, it was he that had let down her and, more vitally, himself.

His death, then, as a disappointed man who had lost all hope of fulfilling his ambitions, is of a piece with Casaubon's; that death, indeed, being directly related to the bitterness brought on by marriage, since it is no coincidence that Casaubon's heart condition is aggravated at particular moments of tension within the marriage, and his death follows upon an extreme

(53) Middlemarch, Ch.15; Vol.I, pp.227-8.

one. His anguish, again, though he did make more sympathetic efforts to palliate it, sprang from the mistake he had made in his marriage and his awareness of it. This is the more significant in that the cause of death, in the other marriages here considered, is always related to the errors of the particular people concerned: Grandcourt drowns when he makes his wife go boating with him against her will as part of his process of tormenting her, Dempster dies of drink and the recklessness brought on by drink, Tito succumbs to vengeance, with the fact that he lay in its path attributable to a change of plan forced on him by a confrontation with his wife. In this last case in particular there is a concrete element of marital interaction in the fatality; which may be seen as corresponding to the internal bitterness that contributed to the deaths of Casaubon and of Lydgate.

George Eliot wrote in Romola, 'Marriage must be a relation either of sympathy or of conquest' (54). We have recognized examples of the former, in all of which, oddly enough considering the predominance given in her accounts of courtship to woman's need of 'loving strength' on which to rely, it is the woman who provides protective affection to a distraught man. Of the latter relation, of conquest, though the remaining marriages present aspects of it, there are no obvious instances: except perhaps for the Transomes which the special circumstances of the case place beyond consideration here. With Gwendolen and Janet, for example, though they are in a position of submission to their husbands, they both maintain an independent inner life which is opposed to the conditions of their marriage and which cannot be overcome.

More importantly, in the other three cases: the marriage is contracted in a spirit of dependence on the part of the wife, whether with regard to ideals as in Dorothea's, concrete goods as in Rosamond's, or without

(54) Romola, Ch. 43; Vol. II, p. 199.

specifications as in Romola's case; the incapacity of the husband to live up to this trust leads to unhappiness which is only resolved by the husband's death. Casaubon and Lydgate had attempted to submit, if not to their wives, to the conditions of their marriage, but since this goes against the grain they die, the one early on, the other somewhat later; Tito, more spectacularly, unable to submit to the conditions Romola had anticipated and which he was unable to make her accept changes in, attempts to flee from his marriage and in doing so dies. In all three cases, then, the release is as much for the husband from an intolerable situation, albeit made so by his breach of trust, as for the wife - who, though she had been in some sense deceived, had too active a consciousness to accept the consequences of that deceit, and therefore benefits from the release the ensuing interaction precipitates. The necessity of 'loving strength' was one of George Eliot's fixed points in her view of marriage; the other was that, where that was lacking or where it was unacceptable, the process of conquest and submission would wear down the inadequate until release was provided. It is no accident that the survivor in all the cases followed through is a woman, corresponding to the patronising purveyor of sympathy in the happy relations. As Adam Bede and other reliable lovers with whose marriages some of her novels end indicate, George Eliot did believe that feminine needs and ideals could be satisfied; those of men, being simpler and relating to particularities, could be too, as Mary Garth in Middlemarch testifies, and could be shown to be as in the happy marriages described; but when it came to actual portrayals of marriages, George Eliot seems to have been far too conscious

of the disappointments a woman could suffer to depict satisfaction.⁽⁵⁵⁾ It is almost as though she agreed with Mrs. Transome -

A woman's love is always freezing into fear. She wants everything, she is secure of nothing.... What is the use of a woman's will? - if she tries, she doesn't get it, and she ceases to be loved. God was cruel when he made women.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The nature of marriage, the sacramental vow from which only death brought release, combined with her concern for woman's lot to produce a high rate of mortality for husbands in George Eliot's works.

(55) Barbara Hardy, The Novels of George Eliot, London, 1959, p.47, notes George Eliot's concern with 'the ex officio disability of being women'; while Beer, *op. cit.*, makes the connection between this and some of the deaths that I have discussed.

(56) Felix Holt the Radical, Ch.39; Vol.II, p.202.

CHAPTER 8

THE OBJECTIVITY OF TROLLOPE

The relation of unswerving devotion was recognized by Trollope too as being a common one, and there are in the first half of his career situations in his novels which are similar to those portrayed by George Eliot in her depiction of marriage: involving the shamed man turning to his wife for support and comfort which she supplies without question. The emphases, however, are markedly different in Trollope; where George Eliot devotes most of her attention to the predicament of the man and introduces the woman mainly as a ministering angel, Trollope gives a fair amount of attention from the beginning to the situation of the woman, and conveys equal concern for both.

The first considered account of such absolute devotion is in The Three Clerks where Gertrude, indeed, is about the most forceful personality in the whole novel. She is strong enough to recognise what Captain Cuttwater calls the congruent 'gumption' of Alaric Tudor and to marry him in preference to the man whom the rest of her family had allotted to her, and she stands by her choice with ever-increasing determination when the drawbacks attached to it become clear. This sympathy, drawn forth by Alaric's disgrace, Trollope uses to make the general point both he and George Eliot illustrate -

Love, that must bow and do reverence to superiority, can protect and foster inferiority; and what is so sweet as to be able to protect? Gertrude's love for her husband had never been so strong as when she learnt that that love must now stand in the place of all other sympathies, of all other tenderness.... It seldom happens that a woman's love is quenched by a man's crime. Women in this respect are more enduring than men; they have softer sympathies, and less acute, less selfish, appreciation of the misery of being joined to that which has been shared. (1)

Yet, as this last sentence perhaps indicates, there is no sense in this

(1) The Three Clerks, Ch. 33; p. 450.

relation of patronage, no idea that the need to 'bow and do reverence to superiority' has been obviated by the occasion for other qualities to have arisen. In a later passage, when Gertrude meets her first suitor after Alaric has been in prison, Trollope makes clear the abiding strength of her original conception of her husband -

She still felt certain in her heart of hearts that she had loved the one who was the most worthy of a woman's love.... A nobler stamp of manhood was on her husband - so at least Gertrude felt; - and manhood is the one virtue which in a woman's breast outweighs all others. (2)

In the cases explored by George Eliot there had been a certain reversal; the enduring remorse the man must feel places him in an inferior position to his wife, whose protective qualities become thereby relatively dominant. For Trollope the essential relation can abide unchanged, the particular situation simply calling into operation aspects of it that were latent, that in no way altered the basic attitudes of husband and wife to each other: the previous account of Gertrude's devotion allows its enhancement at the crisis to emphasize that the crisis itself is simply a detail in the history of the relation. Gertrude's affection had survived earlier moments of neglect with a wholehearted loyalty -

bitterly did poor Gertrude feel the misery of these evenings which her husband passed at his club; but she never reviled him or complained; she never spoke of her sorrow even to her mother or sister. She did not even blame him in her own heart. She knew that he had other business...and she taught herself to believe that his career required him to be among public men (3) -

so that Alaric's confession had as its redeeming feature her reabsorption into his life. Far from his disgrace subordinating him to her, it could be seen simply as restoring them to togetherness. There could therefore be no question of Gertrude's fundamental respect for her husband being altered, as opposed to its being expressed in a less distant manner.

(2) *ibid.*, Ch. 43; p. 508.

(3) *ibid.*, Ch. 33; p. 400.

The reason for the unchanged status of her husband within the relationship becomes clearer when we consider the other early examples of conjugal devotion in Trollope's novels. Alaric himself is unusual amongst such husbands in being not generally admirable as is, say, Mark Robarts in Framley Parsonage. Alaric's faults cannot easily be glossed over, whereas those of Robarts are hardly deserving of the name, being more weaknesses that are on the whole of an amiable nature. As such there can be no condemnation when he does make his confession to his wife, since there is no definite difference to be seen in the nature to which she was accustomed. Because of the very veniality of the fault, indeed, Fanny Robarts' reaction is even more affectionate than was that of Gertrude, almost enthusiastic in fact - she swore to him that she would think nothing of it - that she would never bear it in her mind against him - that it could have no effect in lessening her trust in him. Was he not her husband? She was so glad she knew it, that she might comfort him.... Is not that sharing of the mind's burdens one of the chief purposes for which a man wants a wife?... And this wife cheerfully, gladly, thankfully took her share. To endure with her lord all her lord's troubles was easy to her; it was the work to which she had pledged herself. But to have thought that her lord had troubles not communicated to her, - that would have been to her the one thing not to be borne. (4)

The task Fanny is performing, then, is to be seen as a perfectly natural one, and Robarts' relative innocence makes the endurance of her regard for him unquestionable. Yet what Trollope has made clear is the anguish Robarts feels, despite the relative insignificance of his actions, the diffidence he had felt as to telling the story to his wife, and the relief the confession, when finally made, and by that stage a slightly more serious one than before, brings him. It was not that he doubted her devotion: her readiness to defend him under almost any circumstances had been displayed often enough to assure him that she would stand by him; his diffidence was due to shame at his own

(4) Trollope, Framley Parsonage, London, 1861, Ch.33; World's Classics, Oxford, 1926, p.364.

weakness, not because of what she might see in him. The result of the confession was an entirely predictable one, because their attitudes to each other had been long fixed, as is shown throughout the novel, and Trollope's treatment of Robarts' previous self-indulgences had made it apparent what Fanny's reaction would be. There is nothing then at stake in the confession, but the actual depiction of Fanny's reaction, of a piece with her previous devotion, indicates the value Robarts placed upon it and also the gravity of his inner confusion that had made him postpone seeking it for so long.

In The Last Chronicle of Barset, there is not even the drama of a confession. The devotion Mrs. Crawley displays towards her husband is seen simply as a permanently enduring feature that requires no crisis to activate it. If the accusation of theft that prostrates Mr. Crawley calls for greater effort from her, it is no different in kind from that which was described in the passage in Framley Parsonage that introduced the couple -

Not that she ever fainted or gave way: she was made of the sterner metal of the two, and could last on while he was prostrate...she never yielded to despair: the struggle was never beyond her powers of endurance.⁽⁵⁾

It is not only comfort and sympathy that she has to provide, she has also got to cope with the material side of things, and at the same time do this without offending Mr. Crawley's touchy pride. Trollope is quite clear about the stratagems to which she has to resort so as to accept charity without her husband's notice; as a consequence of which Mr. Crawley can believe that he rules his household exactly as he wants - with a degree of accuracy, since he does so in fact in everything that concerns him closely.

Two points are to be noted here that hark back to the situation in Framley Parsonage, where perhaps they were not so obvious. The first is that, in spite of all his faults, Mr. Crawley is presented by Trollope as an

(5) *ibid.*, Ch.14; p.157.

admirable figure. The second is that he is in constant, almost desperate, need of his wife. His is a very forceful personality, more similar in this to that of Alaric Tudor than of Robarts, correspondingly, his wife is extremely effective, as is Alaric's, whereas Fanny, if strong minded on her husband's behalf, is seen to less practical effect. This is not to criticize her in any way; it is simply to suggest that Trollope, in his depiction of these devoted couples, was stressing the concept we have already noted about a woman being able to fulfil herself through marriage. The fact that these women have wrapped themselves up in their husbands' lives is not to be seen as having precluded them from an independent existence. This underlies the marriage of the dynamic Gertrude to the less deserving of her suitors; it was precisely because of his drawbacks that her 'gumption' had a chance to display itself. In the other two cases, if less dramatically, the role of the wife in the marital relationship is, if subordinate, seen to be an important one. It is in the case of the most notable of the husbands, Mr. Crawley, that the wife has the largest part to play and, as we have seen, unlike in the case of George Eliot's sympathetic wives, a permanent one that is central to the whole relationship. The role of service, then, in these marriages is seen to be a deliberate one, entered into because of a particular view of the marital relationship and not because of particular circumstances; as such, where in George Eliot the husband's dependence placed him in a subordinate position, in Trollope the husband's need is accepted by the wife as a natural part of an established relation. Thus, while George Eliot's 'relation of sympathy or of conquest' might almost, because of the antecedent independence of the husband, be called one of conquest when sympathy was required relations in Trollope are more equal throughout.

There is another happy marriage in the Barseshire series which is

worth considering, even though it does not form a major subject in any novel, because of the attention Trollope devotes to it throughout the series, and because of the subtlety with which it is treated; I refer, of course, to the marriage of Archdeacon Grantly, whose relations with his wife also have an egalitarian basis that is not at first apparent. His wife does his will and fights his battles, but she also has her own views and is prepared to put them forward; and even if she only asserts herself before him, he is often forced to acknowledge the force of her views. In The Warden, indeed, where Trollope is slightly coy about the whole business and perhaps not quite as fond of the archdeacon as he later became, she is almost aggressive in correcting his misapprehensions about how to handle the affair of John Bold; but in Barchester Towers the balance was adjusted without any inconsistency being admitted -

The archdeacon's wife, in her happy home at Plumstead, knows how to assume the full privileges of her rank, and express her own mind in becoming tone and place. But Mrs. Grantly's sway, if sway she has, is easy and beneficent. She never shames her husband; before the world she is a pattern of obedience; her voice is never loud, nor her looks sharp: doubtless she values power, and has not unsuccessfully striven to acquire it; but she knows what should be the limits of a woman's rule. (6)

In Franley Parsonage, it is Mrs. Grantly's territory that is under observation, in the account of the events leading up to their daughter's marriage, and the archdeacon's humble acquiescence in her views in this field is amusingly conveyed -

And then he thought, as husbands sometimes will think, of Susan Harding as she was when he had gone a-courting to her under the elms before the house in the warden's garden at Barchester, and of dear old Mr. Harding, his wife's father, who still lived in humble lodgings in that city; and as he thought, he wondered at and admired the greatness of that lady's mind. (7)

By this stage, indeed, perhaps because of advancing years, there is

(6) Trollope, Barchester Towers, London, 1857, Ch.3; World's Classics, Oxford, 1925, p.20.

(7) Franley Parsonage, Ch.25; p.272.

less aggression even in their private intercourse. Mrs. Grantly's correction of her husband in The Last Chronicle is tactful in the extreme, as when she persuades him not to communicate with his son in the full flush of his anger; she has come to realise that her husband's wrath is bound to subside if postponed, and accordingly her influence is more effective in this subdued later form. The contrast with her earlier proclivity to speak her mind to his irritation, even if only in private, emphasizes the very satisfactory nature of the union; while her effective sensitivity, contrasting with the archdeacon's continued tactlessness, makes clear that there is even less question of dominance here than in the other marriages discussed, where anxious and selfless devotion was the fixed pattern.

Though, as with that of the Grantlys, there are several very happy marriages in Trollope's novels, they are usually peripheral to the main interest of the story; and I shall therefore only consider here further the two other occasions on which the devotion of a couple is of central importance in the novel, both of which instances are in marked contrast to the earlier ones. Both books, John Caldigate and Dr. Wortle's School, are fairly late, and in both books the actual object of interest is the marriage of the couple in question: John Caldigate is accused of bigamy, while the question with the Peacockes in the other novel is whether at the time of its action they are in a position to marry; there is no doubt that their previous marriage had in fact been bigamous. The accusation against Caldigate turns out to be false, though this is only discovered after he has been condemned and jailed; and the interesting point here is the attitude of his wife before his innocence has been established. Whereas the other devoted wives considered already were endowed with distinct personalities of their own, Hester Bolton is introduced simply to be married to Caldigate and after that is seen only in terms of her love for him; her relation to her mother and to the rest of

her family, though a close and affectionate one, is always subordinated to the other relation. Yet in spite of this one-sidedness, Hester's character derives some force from the very intensity of her passion. She is determined to cling to Caldigate whatever the outcome of the accusation, even going so far as to tell her mother, "If I am not his wife, then I will be his mistress"⁽⁸⁾; she goes on to explain that whatever the verdict she would not believe that Caldigate were not her husband, but the qualification is hardly credible, for she had previously told him, "Though I were not [your wife], I would still be true to you.... Nothing should ever make me leave you; - nothing. You are all the world to me now. Whatever you may have done I will be true to you."⁽⁹⁾ That these declarations appear to have been justified by the outcome does not alter their extraordinary nature, nor the unusual portrayal of a heroine prepared to declare, and to act, as her confrontation with her mother makes clear, on such overwhelming and possibly unlawful passion.⁽¹⁰⁾

The possible illegality of Hester's choice may not have been noteworthy were it not for the similar choice exercised in Dr. Wortle's School, that followed soon after. We are not concerned here with the moral status of the Peacockes, or indeed of Dr. Wortle himself in sheltering them; rather, the

(8) Trollope, John Caldigate, London, 1879, Ch.31; World's Classics, Oxford, 1946, p.299.

(9) *ibid.*, Ch.28; p.269.

(10) Polhemus, *op.cit.* p.236, thinks Hester's loyalty 'one of the most flagrant assertions of the double standard in "respectable" Victorian fiction'. It does not seem to me, however, that Trollope actually asserts anything here; indeed, the relatively sympathetic portrayal early on in the book of Euphemia Smith, who is the source of the charge of bigamy, suggests a more complex intention than was finally carried out. I agree with Tracy, who has a very perceptive analysis of the book, that (*op.cit.* p.243) 'John Caldigate is one of Trollope's failures'; but there still seems to me to be enough there to raise interesting questions about the concept of fidelity and its relation to marriage.

important point is the devotion of the Peacockes to each other, that led him to put his career in jeopardy for his love, that led her to be prepared to remain with him or to sacrifice herself by leaving him, as he desired. This is why Hester's willingness to stick to Caldigate whatever the outcome of the trial is relevant; on these last two occasions when he is considering the way in which absolute devotion expresses itself, Trollope is prepared to grant that conjugal ties could have nothing whatsoever to do with it. In both cases the outcome is satisfactory, in that Caldigate turns out not in fact to have been married previously and Mrs. Peacocke's first husband is found out to be dead so that she can marry Mr. Peacocke again, this time literally; but in both cases the commitment depicted is such that there is little doubt both couples would have gone on living together even if the outcome had been adverse. The relation in which these couples stand, therefore, to the devoted ones Trollope dealt in earlier is an interesting one: the effort required of Hester and of both Peacockes arises direct from a question concerning the ceremony of marriage itself, and is such as to isolate them from the rest of the world, whereas in the other cases the ceremony of marriage, as it were, demanded and justified the effort expended. It would be absurd to speculate on the reactions of these earlier wives had their marriages been in doubt; but that very absurdity indicates the widely divergent types with whom Trollope was concerned. Whatever his moral views in the later cases, he does not obtrude them; though he asserts that the Peacockes should not have stayed together,⁽¹¹⁾ their main source of interest lies not in their moral status

(11) Polhemus, *op.cit.*, claims that Trollope wholeheartedly endorsed the Peacockes' action, but his account is vitiated by an incapacity to distinguish between motives and results (so, too, he asserts that Trollope places Scarborough and Grey in Mr. Scarborough's Family on the same moral plane because the actions of neither have any vital effect!) J.C. Maxwell, 'Cockshut on Dr. Wortle's School', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, September 1958, reasons more plausibly that Trollope did not mean exactly what he said, but I think Roger L. Slakey, 'Trollope's Case for Moral Imperatives', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, December 1975, adequately disposes of his arguments. Cockshut, Trollope, does not bother to argue the point at length, but has an excellent account of Trollope's real priorities in the novel.

out in their devotion to each other, just as had been the case with Hester and her own passion. The significance, then, of the fact that these are the only cases in Trollope's later career of such devotion being examined, is that Trollope was concerned to explore the boundaries of such devotion, and perhaps to correct the notion he had propagated earlier that it was necessarily of good public standing; he shows here that loyalties could be questioned and commitments challenged with no simple resolution.

The relations considered so far have been perfect in themselves, and any difficulties that may have arisen were due to external circumstances rather than to any inadequacy in the feelings of the couple concerned towards each other. Trollope does also deal with this other sort of difficulty, and most notably so in his longest and most carefully considered account of a marriage, that of the Pallisers. We have already considered, in the first part, the way in which that marriage was made up, and the fact that Glencora was in love with another man both before and after her marriage; the subject of her first personal appearance, in Can You Forgive Her?, is the temptation she undergoes to leave her husband and go away with that other man. Trollope does, however, indicate that it was not only her original love for Burgo Fitzgerald that led her on; there was also the incapacity of Mr. Palliser to give her the signs of affection she required, and there is a suggestion that this helped to keep fresh the memory of her first love. Palliser's dissatisfactions come over to her more immediately than his love, most forcefully in the matter of the heir that it seems to her she is charged with not having yet produced, and therefore she comes to believe that leaving him would be welcome to him even more than it would be to her.

In thus elucidating the causes of Glencora's wavering, Trollope shows how essential it was not only that her first love be forgotten, but also that

Falliser modify himself too for the marriage to be maintained. He is described as one who would not, his work being his primary concern, feel too keenly 'the small everyday calamity of having a wife who loved another man better than she loved him.... To lose his influence with his party would be worse to him than to lose his wife, and public disgrace would hit him harder than private dishonour.'⁽¹²⁾ Yet when the crisis comes, he does not fail his wife. There is no inconsistency in this. The sense of duty that governs him is enough to carry him through. Impervious to subtleties, 'gifted with no fineness of touch', he had been unaware of the needs of his wife; strong in his own purposes, he had no conception of human weaknesses, and her confession of her other love comes to him as a surprise. But it is his instinctive reaction that his duty is to support her. There can be no question of his own gratification. It is a heavy sacrifice to him to refuse to be Chancellor, but he does not hesitate; touched by her appeal, he recognizes his previous inadequacy and acknowledges an obligation to abide by his promise to take her away. With him 'It might have been better for him not to have married; but now that he was married, and that things had brought him untowardly to this pass, he knew that his wife's safety was his first duty'⁽¹³⁾ and as such he succeeds in winning her back.

Glencora's own submission to her marriage after this episode is also perfectly in character. Trollope declares that in any case she would never have absconded with Burgo, and she says of herself that she does not have the courage to go away with a man as his mistress; but it is her husband's conduct that leads her to affirm this. His behaviour at Lady Monk's party, in leaving her alone with Burgo even when he had come to fetch her away from

(12) Can You Forgive Her?, Ch.24; Vol.1, pp.308 & 307.

(13) *ibid.*, Ch.59; Vol.II, p.244.

him, emphasizes the delicacy of his feeling towards her. When he affirms next morning that he had never suspected her, her awareness of her own guilt acting upon her generosity obliges her to confess her lapse; and when he still extends his love to her and manifests it in his determination to sacrifice his ambitions for her sake, she recognizes at last an emotion to which she can respond. Trollope says in his Autobiography in discussing the case,

she, too, has...a basis of good principle, which enabled her to live down the conviction of the original wrong which was done her, and taught her to endeavour to do her duty in the position to which she was called; (14)

but to activate this she required from her husband a sign of affection that he was not accustomed, but had to rouse himself, to extend to her.

Yet though the marriage had been preserved, the fact remained that the two natures were not in concordance with each other, and in The Prime Minister, in which his next long investigation of the marriage occurs, Trollope displays the tensions to which such a situation must inevitably give rise. In the earlier book, he had considered the limitations of the affection for her husband that Glencora had been prompted to feel -

And now that she was married there was no thoughtfulness, or care either for herself or for her husband. She was ready to sacrifice herself for him, if any sacrifice might be required of her.... But she had never for a moment given to herself the task of thinking what conduct on her part might be the best for his welfare. (15)

As such, when Palliser, or the Duke of Omnium as he has by then become, is made Prime Minister, she determines to extend and confirm his influence by a series of great entertainments, ignoring the fact that such dealings are anathema to him; she herself enjoys such activities, and while she is sincere in her ideas as to what such activities would do for him, she is also anxious about her own influence and position -

(14) An Autobiography, Ch.10; p.166

(15) Can You Forgive Her?, Ch.69; Vol.II, p.364.

She had arranged a course of things in her own mind by which she should come to be known as the great Prime Minister's wife; and she had, perhaps unconsciously, applied the epithet more to herself than to her husband. She, too, wished to be written of in memoirs, and to make a niche for herself in history. (16)

Nevertheless, when he tells her that the whole process seems to him vulgar, she can reassure herself with the thought that it is all done for his sake, and so endeavour to go on with it; it is only when he absolutely forbids her to entertain any more that she restrains herself, and even then in an unsympathetic spirit that prompts her to invite only Rosina de Courcy in an attempt to upset her husband, feeling as she does that he is being perverse towards her.

Where her error does come home to her is with regard to her interference at Silverbridge in the election in which he had specifically declined to take a part. The Duke writhes under the lash of the criticism that is directed at him over the issue, and the Duchess, realizing that the trouble could properly be attributed to her action, makes an effort to bring herself into harmony with her husband -

But she was wont at this particular time to be somewhat tender to him because she was aware that she herself had been imprudent. Since he had discovered her interference at Silverbridge, and had made her understand its pernicious results, she had been, - not, perhaps, shamefaced, for that word describes a condition to which hardly any series of misfortunes could have reduced the Duchess of Omnium, - but inclined to quiescence by feelings of penitence. (17)

In her discussions on the subject with her friend Mrs. Finn, she attempts an appraisal of the character that is so different from hers, and though she regrets its sensitivity, she shows appreciation of its finer points; and from then on does nothing to upset him, while in all her conversations with others, her main thought is for him.

(16) Trollope, The Prime Minister, London, 1876, Ch.28; World's Classics, Oxford, 1938, Vol.I, pp.320-1.

(17) *ibid.*, Ch.51; Vol.II, p.121.

Even so, she cannot but regret it when he ceases to be Prime Minister, and while she accepts that some of the blame for his sufferings lay with her, she continues to be irritated by what she sees as his incapacity -

And the failure, she thought, had been his, or hers, - rather than that of circumstances. If he had been less scrupulous and more persistent it might have been different, - or if she had been more discreet. Sometimes she felt her own failing so violently as to acquit him almost entirely. At other times she was almost beside herself with anger because all her losses seemed to have arisen from want of stubbornness on his part; (13)

and she cannot resist nagging him about his failure, with a mockery that hurts him the more because he too feels that he has failed. For, ironically, he has begun to feel now as she did always about the office, to hanker after the glory its possession seemed to bestow, and to feel its abandonment a disgrace; and it is only the two of them who feel this, for from the point of view of his political colleagues, he has fulfilled his purpose. Thus his scarcely suppressed desire to hang on despite the paucity of his majority is encouraged by no one else, but she twits him with cowardice in not having persisted with whatever majority he did have; and his conception that it would be undignified to accept a lower office under anyone else after having been Prime Minister is shared only by her.

Yet there is a distinction between the two even here, for her regret is for the actual power lost, whereas his is for the diminution his dignity has suffered; she would have been prepared to stoop to almost anything in pursuit of what she saw as the glory of office, while for him it had been throughout a question as to how much his personal pride would have to suffer from his position. This is what Trollope emphasizes in the episode to which he draws attention in the Autobiography -

In The Prime Minister, my Prime Minister will not allow his wife to take office among, or even over, those ladies who are attached by office to the

(13) *ibid.*, Ch.76; Vol.II, p.19.

Queen's court. "I should not choose," he says to her, "that my wife should have any duties unconnected with our joint family and home." Who will remember in reading those words that, in a former story, published some years before, he tells his wife, when she has twitted him with his willingness to clean the Premier's shoes, that he would even allow her to clean them if it were for the good of the country?(19)

The task to which Palliser had devoted himself in that early story had long passed out of his hands: Without that as his first consideration, he had become unremittingly conscious of what he owed to himself: hence the refusal to adjust his personal life to what seemed to him political manipulation, hence what he soon recognized himself as the quixotic bestowal of the Garter on Lord Earlybird in an attempt to assert himself and his own view of what was right against political expediency,⁽²⁰⁾ hence too his desire to hold on to power when it seemed that others had had enough of him and he was to be cast away whether he willed it or not. As his isolation seems to him to increase, so does his refusal to unbend gain strength; and the salient point here is that it is against his wife that that refusal is most effective. Drought and Beeswax and Drummond can take their revenge, the Duke of St. Bungay and even Mr. Monk can humour the Duke in the confidence that events will sort themselves out; but Glencora is tied to her husband and to his inclinations, and it is to that bar that all her projects are brought. She cannot be Mistress of the Robes, her entertainments are given no support by him and are not therefore as effective as she had wished, her more immediate aspirations at Silverbridge are firmly put down - she is forced to recognize that she is upsetting her husband, and therefore has to give up all her hopes.

It is not, indeed, as though he were tyrannical. He is intensely anxious to be decent and just, as Trollope shows in the splendid scene in

(19) An Autobiography, Ch.20; p.329.

(20) apRoberts, op.cit., in attributing this action to Palliser's corruption by power, has ignored completely the subtle account of the anguish arising from his sense of powerlessness.

which he allows her to go ahead with the extravagant entertaining, in response to her own high-minded reticence about the money she had brought him - X

Never yet had she in talking to him alluded to her own wealth. "Of course we are spending money," she said, "If you give me a hint to hold my hand, I will hold it." He had looked at her, and read it all in her face. "God knows," he said, "You've a right to do it if it pleases you." "For your sake!" Then he stooped down and kissed her twice, and left her to arrange her parties as she pleased. After that she congratulated herself that she had not made the direct proposition, knowing that she might now do pretty much what she pleased. (21)

But the fact that he found himself as Prime Minister with far less occupation than he had anticipated from his earlier service, and the nature of the coalition he presided over, prompted doubts as to whether the prominent arrangements his wife was making were not the reason for his elevation; in effect, he began to feel himself a cipher, with the real business of the office, if not handed over to her, taken away from him. His abhorrence of such a situation is not, Trollope takes pains to point out, due to jealousy,

His nature was essentially free from jealousy. But there was shame, - and self-accusation at having accepted so great an office with so little fixed purpose as to great work. It might be his duty to subordinate even his pride to the service of his country.... But how base the position, how mean, how repugnant to that grand idea of public work which had hitherto been the motive power of all his life; (22)

yet, as his meditations after the affair at Silverbridge has broken make clear, he can feel resentment at what he sees as a breach of the normal relations that should exist between husband and wife -

it was intolerable to him that she should seek to interfere with him in matters of a public nature.... If he could in no other way put an end to such evils as these, he must put an end to his own political life. *Ruat caelum, fiat justitia.* Now "justitia" to him was not compatible with feminine interference in his own special work. (23)

Quintus Slide's jeer, therefore, that a man who was unable to rule at home was not fit to be Prime Minister has a double significance: the Duke's view

(21) The Prime Minister, Ch.11; Vol.I, p.114.

(22) *ibid.*, Ch.18; Vol.I, pp.195-6.

(23) *ibid.*, Ch.32; Vol.I, p.369.

of himself as a husband involved the same sort of attention to his personal dignity as did his attitude to statesmanship, and a challenge to either was equally upsetting to him.

As it turns out, whatever he suffers on the public front, there is no challenge at home, for Glencora has accepted the need to accommodate herself to him: she is keenly conscious of the fineness of his feelings for and about her, and though she does make her various attempts to assert herself contrary to his inclinations, when he expresses a deliberate opinion against her desires, she submits to him in her actions. At the same time, as Trollope insists in his introduction of the couple in this novel, and as is quite clear from the conclusion even when she declares that whatever he wanted would best suit her, she is quite free in expressing to him what she thinks; and if her forcefulness in this respect caused him hurt, it was nevertheless the least harmful way for her to preserve her own identity. (24)

The importance of this Trollope suggests in The Duke's Children, when analysing the Duke's feelings about her death - 'he had hardly made for himself a single intimate friend - except that one who had now passed away from him. To her he had been able to say what he thought...she, who had been essentially human, had been a link between him and the world.' (25) For so diffident, even rarefied a character as the Duke, the vitality of his wife had been essential; as indeed the account of his attempt to cope with events in that later novel shows, so that her absence itself seems a living force there.

(24) Lucy Poate Stebbins and Richard Poate Stebbins, The Trollopes: The Chronicle of a Writing Family, New York, 1945, amusingly assume that the Pallisers were based on Trollope's parents, and that Trollope's account of the marriage was a way of making up to his father for his sufferings from an incompatible wife; see Kincaid, *op.cit.*, for a more accurate analysis of the portrayal of the drawbacks in the relationship.

(25) The Duke's Children, Ch.1, Vol.I, pp.3-4.

As such, the elements of her independence that were left to her were not to be regretted. The hurt they caused could be forgotten, the personality they represented was one which, given that it had adjusted itself to his in essentials, he depended upon in part for its very separateness.

In Is He Popenjoy?, written immediately after The Prime Minister, Trollope considered again the problem of a marriage between two people without very much in common; the differences being that Palliser's was a strongly determined character whereas Lord George Germain's was not, and that Glencora married after she had been in love and learned something of her own identity while Mary Lovelace was almost a child when she married. Satisfactory though the Palliser marriage ultimately was, that had necessitated Glencora's restriction of her own personality, part of the merit of Trollope's presentation of the marriage being the sense of waste with which he depicts that acceptance of realities; with Mary Lovelace, on the contrary, he suggests that marriage can help a woman to develop her own potential, the point being emphasized by the introduction of the 'Female Disabilities' with its collection of feeble old maids, charlatans and demagogues, the most forceful of whom gets married in the end. The satire is heavy and by no means a serious examination of the question of women's rights, but the juxtaposition with Mary's own story intimates that her traditional role need not entail that a woman be oppressed. Mary does rely on the Dean, her father, on some occasions when she asserts herself, but she is shown as quite able to fight her own battles when required, despite her youth and inexperience.

She is helped, of course, by George's own diffidence, that arises from a consciousness of error on his own part similar to that which he attributes to Mary in creating the most serious of the dissensions between them. They had married without love, the Dean having pushed Mary into it when she

dithered at the suggestion since Germain did not live up to her romantic ideals and, though George claims to have loved Mary from the moment he met her, having manoeuvred him too into it when he was overcome with grief at having been rejected by Adelaide de Baron. Though George continues to be fascinated by her even after his marriage, he tries to do his duty by Mary; and the fascination itself contributes to his adherence, despite his views about his own primacy, to his sister's dictum about marriage that "Each must give way to the other if there is to be any happiness"⁽²⁶⁾, since his awareness of his guilt makes him the more disposed to yield to Mary on occasion. She, for her part, does find someone who satisfied her ideal, and he does fall in love with her; but for Mary good conduct is not simply an end in itself but a part of her primary duty to satisfy her husband, so that not only does she keep Jack de Baron at a distance, but also does her best to relieve her husband's mind from any misapprehensions. She is surprised when her father denies any possibility of danger in her intimacy with Jack for she herself feels, 'Innocent as it all was, there might be cause of offence to her husband'⁽²⁷⁾; after the bizarre affair of the Kappa-kappa, when her dancing with Jack had caused her husband as she thought to behave badly, she still determines, in accordance with his wishes, not to dance again. Devotion of such a sort in the end brings George round to complete satisfaction with her, while it does not in any real sense diminish her own identity. Her own strength is apparent from the conclusion, in which Frollope mentions the different treatment meted out to the former lovers of either: Mary refuses to receive Adelaide at all, on the grounds that she had written love letters to her husband; who for his part shows Mary 'his gratitude

(26) Is He Popenjoy?, Ch.49; Vol.II, p.162.

(27) ibid., Ch.23; Vol.I, p.277.

every now and then by suggesting that Captain and Mrs. de Baron may be asked to dinner'⁽²⁸⁾, not knowing that Jack had attempted to make love to his wife, and Mary obviously not thinking it deserving a similar punishment to Adelaide's.⁽²⁹⁾ Indeed, ironically, a side effect of Jack's declaration to her is to convince her that he ought not to marry; though it is unlikely there would have been any other effect, the possibility is removed by Jack's own marriage, which was due to Jack having been left enough money to marry on by George's brother - who had only done this as a reward to Jack for the possibility of his seducing Mary. Jack's marriage was, however, probably unnecessary for the prevention of the possibility being fulfilled, since long before then Mary and her husband are shown as very much in love with each other; the happy outcome having been achieved basically by the acceptance by both of a commitment to the other that allowed any dissension that arose to be settled, and the original distance between them to be bridged over by sympathy.

Trollope wrote one other novel the subject of which is dissension that resolves itself in a marriage, the vital difference being that in this case the original relation between the couple was one of perfect sympathy, and the dissension rose from particular circumstances rather than incompatibility of character. At the same time, unlike in the cases considered in the previous section, the sympathy was actually ruptured to a marked degree, and that by circumstances that arose directly from the marital relation: Cecilia Holt failed to tell her husband before, and for some time after,

(28) *ibid.*, Ch.64; Vol.II, p.309.

(29) John Hagan, 'The Divided Mind of Anthony Trollope', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, June 1959, believes that Mary's final settlement indicates a regrettable surrender on Trollope's part to an inane aristocracy; but Tracy, *op.cit.*, seems to me more discerning, in stressing Mary's assertion of her own values in the circle into which she has married.

her marriage of a previous engagement, and since he discovered it from a malicious letter sent to him by her previous suitor implying continued intimacy with her, her silence led him to suspect a deficiency in her commitment to him and a preference for the other man; Cecilia, resenting his suspicions, does not explain her silence, under the notion that any such explanation would seem like a confession of greater error, whereupon her husband leaves her. He goes off to Dresden and she goes back to her mother; but they are both very miserable at the separation, his sister performs highly effective explanatory embassies and, with her about to have a baby, they are brought together again. Yet slight though the story might seem to be, and the more so because of the absurd sub-plot involving Cecilia's rejected suitor and the preposterous Miss Altifiorla it raises some significant issues. Though Cecilia's original repugnance to tell Western the story of her first engagement was because he had mentioned a similar experience of his own and she felt it would seem a mockery to cap his story with her own, there is also the difference arising from sex that Trollope enunciates - 'The man delights to think that he has been the first to reach the woman's heart. The woman is rejoiced to feel that she owns permanently that which has been often reached before.'⁽³⁰⁾ Western, in his initial reaction to the news, tells Cecilia that he had looked upon her as a sort of spiritual refuge, the purity of which had been sullied by her previous contact with Francis Geraldine; a condition that makes understandable both her own diffidence as to telling him her story, and his bitterness when he hears it. Nevertheless, as he himself acknowledges at the end of the book, the treatment to which he had subjected her was unjust, and though she does make her explanation after he had come back to her, 'there was present the happy conviction that she had

(30) Trollope, Kept in the Dark, London, 1882, Ch.18; Chatto & Windus, London, 1883, pp.216-7.

been more sinned against than sinning. She had forgiven, whereas she might have exacted forgiveness.'⁽³¹⁾ His own retraction emphasizes the more balanced nature of their relationship after the storm: devoted though they would be to each other, and though perfect confidence might have been in order from the start, she is acknowledged as having been entitled to her own previous life and to her own reaction to the episode.⁽³²⁾

The most remarkable account in Trollope of an unhappy marriage, that in He Knew He Was Right, also begins with a relation of affection; but the particular characters of husband and wife ensure that once trouble starts, disaster ensues. Trollope writes in the Autobiography, with regard to the detailed attribution of responsibility for the catastrophe,

It was my purpose to create sympathy for the unfortunate man who, while endeavouring to do his duty to all around him, should be led constantly astray by his unwillingness to submit his own judgment to the opinion of others. The man is made to be unfortunate enough, and the evil which he does is apparent. So far I did not fail, but the sympathy has not been created yet.⁽³³⁾

From this it is clear that Trollope thought Trevelyan did wrong in separating himself from his wife; but, in referring to the advisability of submitting to the judgment of others, he also seems to be condemning Emily Trevelyan. She constantly goes against the advice of her friends and associates, each time provoking Trevelyan the more. Soon after his first indication of irritation, for example, about her intimacy with Colonel Osborne, she allows the latter to see her in private, and also to request that there should be a secret between them kept from her husband. She realises that this is improper,

(31) *ibid.*, Ch.24; p.290.

(32) Cockshut, Trollope, points out that Western's attitude cannot be taken as typical of his age; but Polhemus, *op.cit.*, also has a point in suggesting that the novel indicates the misery to which idealization of women could lead.

(33) An Autobiography, Ch.17; p.293.

and that the impropriety is accentuated by the words he uses (Trollope very subtly makes Hugh Stanbury say the same sort of thing to Nora in Ch.33, and they are immediately recognized as a prelude to love-making; Nora's stern reaction makes Hugh recognize that he had gone a bit too far). But the Colonel's request is granted; after which, conscious of the justification her husband had had for saying that he wished Osborne was not so often in their house, Emily 'softened her heart' towards him. Nevertheless, characteristically, before she will acknowledge this to him, she wants him to come to her with some sort of an apology. Again, when he orders her not to see Osborne, after Lady Milborough's caution about her and her own easy reference to the Colonel's wish to have a secret kept from him, she is determined to act in such a way as to make the whole position clear to Osborne. Unable to stand this, Trevelyan rescinds his order whereupon she goes back to an even closer intimacy with Osborne in the course of which she makes scarcely veiled criticisms of the husband. Of this particular stage of the proceedings, Trollope writes

Had she been earnest in her desire to please her lord and master in this matter of Colonel Osborne's visits...she might probably have so received the man as to have quelled all feeling of jealousy in her husband's bosom. But instead of doing so she had told herself that as she was innocent...she would now fall back exactly into her old manner with him.... She was more intimate with him than ever. (34)

Emily's own obsession is exposed with superb irony right through the book; she refuses all along to acknowledge the implications, clear to everyone else, of any action affecting her except for the insult to her innocence implied in her husband's aversion to her association with Osborne. Totally in character is the end of the story, when she returns to the charge as her husband lies ill, and demands from him an admission of her innocence,

(34) Trollope, He Knew He Was Right, London, 1869, Ch.9; World's Classics, Oxford, 1948, pp.61-2.

determined that 'Though it should kill him, she must tell him the truth now.'⁽³⁵⁾ Trollope says nothing explicit, but her attempt makes him very ill, and while before it the doctor had thought that he might live, his death follows soon after. **Moreover, just before he dies** she returns to the fray and, though there is some confusion to him in her question, he seems to yield to her at last; though Trollope does appear to express some doubt about her cause for satisfaction - 'To her mind the acquittal was perfect; but she never explained to human ears, - not even to those of her sister, - the manner in which it had been given.'⁽³⁶⁾ In the face of this obsession, therefore, it is hardly surprising that Trevelyan's own references to what he saw as his wrongs came, in time, to be expressed more loosely. Yet Trollope is insistent that he never really thought her a 'harlot', which is what she challenged him with at the end -

Had he really believed that his wife had betrayed him.... He would have hated her, have distrusted her altogether, and have believed her to be an evil thing. He had no such belief. But in his desire to achieve empire, and in the sorrows which had come upon him in his unsuccessful struggle, his mind had wavered so frequently, that his spoken words were no true indicators of his thoughts.... When he would say something stronger than he intended, and it would be put to him...whether he did believe that she had been untrue to him, he would recoil from the answer which his heart would dictate, lest he should seem to make an acknowledgment that might weaken the ground upon which he stood.⁽³⁷⁾

That, indeed, sums up his own contribution to the tragedy: where Western had been genuinely disturbed, almost shattered, by what he saw as his wife's lack of commitment to him, Trevelyan's anxiety is fuelled; predominantly by his own desire for dominance. His original intransigence is based on pride rather than on horror arising from any injury; his perception of the actual

(35) *ibid.*, Ch.98; p.922.

(36) *ibid.*, Ch.99; p.928.

(37) *ibid.*, Ch.79; p.743.

See Cockshut, Trollope, for a discriminating analysis of the novel that draws attention, amongst other things, to possible social reasons for Emily's touchiness, as well as to the necessity for circumlocution in talking about infidelity that contributed to the tragedy.

situation was not at fault, it was personal flexibility that was needed for reconciliation, and that was beyond him.

Yet, dogmatic as he is, he does at least make some sort of an effort - It had been incumbent upon him...to exact obedience.... She had refused to obey or even to comply, and the consequences were very grievous. But, though he pitied himself...he acknowledged to himself that her conduct had been the result of his own moody temperament.... Though he was quite assured that he had been right in his first cause of offence, he knew that he had fallen from bad to worse in every step that he had taken since.... He hated himself for what he had done; - and yet it was impossible that he should yield...but it was yet open to him to sacrifice himself. (38)

As a result of these reflections he sends his son back to his wife. Trollope is again very restrained in his account of her reaction, but there is once more a suggestion of her greater intractability, of the spirit that had required a token of submission from her husband before she would soften towards him -

She felt at once that the boy was being given up because of the father's weakness.... There had been moments in which she had almost cursed his name because of the aspersion which it had seemed that he had thrown upon her. But this was now forgotten, and she remembered only his weakness. (39)

Certainly, Trevelyan's own obsession, the separation, and the odious Bozzle whom he employs to spy upon her, all reduce Emily's own responsibility; but it is apparent that her own pride had a large share in the destruction of the marriage. Trollope insists throughout that she loved her husband, at any rate during the early part of the trouble, just as he loved her, yet she made no attempt to adjust herself to him or to his wishes, and took no heed of any advice that conflicted with her unbending consciousness of her own rectitude. It is for this reason, since she is convinced that they cannot affect her, that Osborne is permitted what he himself would classify as liberties. Trevelyan's original uneasiness, therefore, can be seen to have

(38) He Knew He Was Right, Ch.84; pp. 787-8.

(39) *ibid.*, Ch.85; p.797.

had some sort of justification; and, though his obstinacy increases, given the death scene and what Emily sees as her final vindication, it seems to me that Trollope did succeed in his purpose of creating sympathy for the man. His mind gave way, after all, under the strain of the dissension, whereas Emily stuck to her purpose and found some sort of satisfaction in it.

The bitterness of insulted innocence figures also in the account of the marriage of Robert Kennedy and Lady Laura Standish in Phineas Finn, but, as I have argued in an earlier chapter, it was not really crucial there to the breakdown of the marriage. I suggested before that Laura's love for Phineas Finn was not originally so irresistible as to necessitate her separation from her husband; and it remains here to consider the basic incompatibility between them that prompted the catastrophic developments. While her memory of the romantic passages between her and Finn prior to her marriage may have affected her attitude to Kennedy, she only openly admitted Finn's attraction for herself, whereby the association was bound to develop further, after she had come to feel that 'There was something in the hard, dry, unsympathising, unchanging virtues of her husband which almost revolted her...and now that she was this rich man's wife she found that she could do nothing' (40); and this was the more galling in that the principal attraction Kennedy had had for her was his wealth which, combined with her connections, she had hoped would make her an influential society hostess. Yet Kennedy himself had what might be described as a primitively puritanical view of marriage, whereby his wife was to be kept in quiescent subordination. Far from entertainments and amusements, she is to be oppressed by sermons and sabbath day observances, what strikes her as an endless routine of prayers and petty duties. Her efforts to escape from his prescriptions are of no

(40) Phineas Finn, Ch.32; Vol.I, p.370.

avail; perhaps due to his rigid religious concepts, he is mean to her in his relentless coupling of punishment with pleasure, allowing no rest in sickness except under treatment, overwhelming her with odious tasks when she gets the better of him in anything. As such, her relation to Finn is a relief to her and even the fact that it provokes Kennedy's derogatory suspicions is a satisfaction in that they provide her with a justification for leaving him; and the wretchedness life with him had been may be gauged from her preference to it for exile in Dresden, away from everything that had interested her, with little hope of seeing any of her acquaintances.

The depiction of her passion for Finn in Phineas Redux, and indeed at times in the earlier work, obscures the simple account of the marriage in itself, and may convey the impression that the cause of the breakdown was Laura's lack of restraint; but, as I have pointed out before, while that may have been Laura's view in her appeals to Finn and also Kennedy's in his madness, the basic incompatibility required no third party to activate it. Laura may have been at fault in marrying without love, but the reason for the failure of her determination to overcome that deficiency was that she did not even get that for which she had hoped: Kennedy's total lack of sympathy for her aspirations, combined with his inflexible demand for submission, mitigates the pitiful anxiety for some sort of refuge that overcomes her. The account she sends Finn of Kennedy's correspondence to her at Dresden underlines the distance between them -

"He says no word of happiness. He offers no comfort. He does not attempt to persuade with promises of future care. He makes his claim simply on Holy Writ, and on the feeling of duty which thence ought to weigh upon me. He has never even told me that he loves me; but he is persistent in declaring that those whom God has joined together nothing human should separate."⁽⁴¹⁾

The madness to which Kennedy succumbs is of a piece with the obsessiveness he

(41) Phineas Redux, Ch.6; Vol.I, p.70.

had displayed from the beginning of his marriage; even if Laura's departure acerbated the madness, the nullity to which he had sought to reduce her and to which she ultimately comes even when released from him, make her condition by far the sadder.

In The Bertrams also Trollope had depicted an unhappy marriage where an accusation of infidelity had provoked a separation; the accusation again providing a wife with justification for leaving a husband she does not love. In this case, however, Caroline Waddington had loved George Bertram and been engaged to him, and had made it clear to Henry Harcourt when she married him that she did not love him, while as for Harcourt himself - 'That his own wife was cold to him, cold as ice - that he well knew. That Bertram had flung her from him because she had been cold to him - that he believed. That he himself could live without any passionate love - that he acknowledged.'⁽⁴²⁾ His main reason for marrying Caroline was that he hoped to obtain money thereby; but, though the money did not come, the miscalculation that caused the dissension was that concerning Caroline's coldness. When Bertram came to their house, in response to Harcourt's insistence that the old friendship be restored, the old love was renewed on either side, and the comparisons Caroline was then moved to draw between the two men were so much to Harcourt's disfavour that she seized the opportunity to leave him that his crude remonstrances on the subject offered. Harcourt is, of course, basically disreputable. Yet that this is obviously so with regard to his financial and political machinations should not obscure the fact that he was more deceived in his marriage than she was. Though he had not loved her, though he was unwise in bringing Bertram to her, she had given him the impression that that episode in her life was over and done with, and that she had passed beyond the

(42) Trollope, The Bertrams, London 1859, Ch.33; John Lane, The Bodley Head, London, 1905, p.600.

possibility of love. Besides, while the fact that the marriage would be loveless seemed to have been decided before, where he had been prepared to make an effort to construct some sort of a relationship, she remained rigid in her determination not to do so. The point is that the story is really about the folly of Caroline's refusal to marry Bertram earlier on coldly prudent grounds; unable to rely on herself then in the controversy that arose, she had turned to Harcourt, thus provoking Bertram to break off the engagement because she had not kept absolute faith with him. Correspondingly, when she marries Harcourt, again on the coldly prudent ground that love is over for her and she requires an establishment, she fails to abide by her decision, treats Harcourt with a complete lack of sympathy, succumbs to Bertram the very first time she is left alone with him, and leaves Harcourt as soon as she has a reason to do so. Soon after her marriage, she realises the harm she has done Bertram; but it takes Harcourt's suicide for her to realise the harm she has done him -

She could remember now that she had sinned against her husband, as well as he against her; that she had sinned the first, and perhaps the deepest. He would have loved her, if she would have permitted it; have loved her with a cold, callous, wordly love; but still with such love as he had to give. But she had married him resolving to give no love at all, knowing that she could give none; almost boasting to herself that she had told him that she had none to give. (43)

After all, Bertram and Caroline do marry in the end, even if Trollope does invest their future with a greyness that accords with the rest of the novel; they have each other, whereas the last seen of Harcourt is him sitting alone in the house he had bought for his marriage, oppressed by all his troubles. Their marriage for Caroline had been simply a commercial transaction from which she had released herself at the first sign of trouble, for Harcourt it had meant an accession of responsibilities, without any corresponding relation that could relieve the burden in any way.

(43) *ibid.*, Ch.47; p.327.

Caroline's complete denial of responsibility stands out more clearly when it is compared with the attitude of Emily Wharton in a similar story in The Prime Minister: Ferdinand Lopez there commits suicide too, his marriage to her having broken down and him having been disappointed as to his financial expectations from that marriage. He indeed did love Emily, but since it is apparent that his primary devotion is to his mercenary schemes and since Harcourt at least is supposed to have made an effort to establish a relationship with Caroline, there is not so very great a difference between them. With regard to the women, however, the difference is profound in that Caroline had no feeling for Harcourt and deserted him as soon as she could, whereas Emily was very much in love with her husband from the beginning, and did her very best to suit herself to him. Where the other story, then, is simple and straightforward and allows for no development of character, the marriage in The Prime Minister is a study in gradual but inevitable alienation between two natures that had taken the decisive step of marriage before they were properly acquainted with each other. It is not only that love alone is not enough: that Trollope had already indicated in He Knew He Was Right where inflexibility on both sides had, despite the presence of mutual love, led to disaster; in The Prime Minister, along with the love, there is a willingness on Emily's part to submit herself to her husband, but their basic attitudes are so fundamentally opposed to those of each other that, with the best will in the world, it is impossible for her to follow her purpose through, and dissociation must inevitably result.

Lopez himself is a bizarre character, whose complete lack of good taste occasionally approaches the limits of credulity; yet, alien as he must have been to Trollope, there is an attempt if not to excuse him to explain

with sympathy his actions and his attitudes.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Given the struggle he had had to achieve the position where 'It was admitted on all sides that Ferdinand Lopez was a "gentleman".... But nobody...ever really knew the state of his affairs'⁽⁴⁵⁾, it is understandable that he looked on everyone and everything as fair game, and his tragedy was that, having married and having looked on his marriage in a romantic light, he hoped that his wife would share his general point of view. Unfortunately for him, perhaps, in that her devotion might in time have lessened her resistance to the strange ways he wanted to teach her, their first joint victim was to be her father; and though at first she is totally amenable to his wishes, the intensity he applies to the process begins to cause her worry -

Even within her own bosom she found no fault with her husband. But she began to understand that the life before her was not to be a life of roses. The first word spoken to her in the train, before it reached Dover, had explained something of this to her. She had felt at once that there would be trouble about money.... There was not a spark of anger against him in her bosom; - but she was unhappy.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Matters degenerate rapidly after that, particularly with the election at Silverbridge in which both Lopez and Emily's former suitor, Arthur Fletcher, are involved;⁽⁴⁷⁾ and Emily comes to recognize clearly the error she has made

(44) Polhemus, op.cit., points out how badly Lopez is treated by Emily's connections, particularly by her father; McMaster, Trollope, adds Emily herself to the list, but grants that Trollope's attitude was ambiguous. There does not, in fact, seem to me to be any doubt that, given the choice Lopez thrust upon her, Emily made the morally acceptable decision; nor, though he is clear-sighted about the prejudices that contribute to the pressures upon Lopez, does Trollope ever suggest that they furnish any justification for his behaviour.

(45) The Prime Minister, Ch.1; Vol.I, pp.3-4.

(46) *ibid.*, Ch.25; Vol.I, pp.287-8.

(47) In addition to Polhemus and McMaster, Kincaid, op.cit., and Tracy, op.cit., also have extended discussions of The Prime Minister and, in tracing the connections between its two different stories, assert the effectiveness of its structure. None of these, however, instructive

in marrying someone so very different from herself. Yet, even so she feels it her duty to obey him in matters that would not affect others adversely, even to the extent of accompanying him to Guatemala should he command it. His own anxieties, as his projects fail and Mr. Wharton refuses to give him anything more and Emily refuses to assist him in his aims, drive him to treat her harshly, but she nevertheless acknowledges that, having married the man in opposition to the wishes of those she had known best before, she has an obligation to see the thing through and to live with him if he so desires it. Ironically, even at the end in spite of all his disappointments, there is some romance in Lopez's desire to take her away with him -

He assured himself that he had loved her, and that he could love her still; but why had she not been true to him? Why had she clung to her father instead of clinging to her husband? Why had she not learned his ways, - as a wife is bound to learn the ways of the man she marries? Why had she not helped him in his devices, fallen into his plans, been regardful of his fortunes, and made herself one with him? There had been present to him at times an idea that if he could take her away with him to that distant country to which he thought to go, and thus remove her from the upas influence of her father's roof-tree, she would then fall into his views and become his wife indeed. Then he would again be tender to her, again love her, again endeavour to make the world soft to her. (43)

Yet even this project comes to nothing because, though Emily was prepared to go out with him, Mr. Wharton was only willing to pay the money required if Emily were specifically allowed to remain. There could be no possibility therefore of a restoration of sympathetic relations between husband and wife. Lopez had miscalculated totally how far, even where tenderness was strongest,

(47) though they are, note the central significance of the Silverbridge episode: Glencora's greatest indiscretion arises in that connection, and it is the crisis which that causes that prompts her to accommodate herself to her husband; Lopez on the other hand is, in comparison with his role otherwise, an innocent victim of the Palliser perplexities; and it is the bitterness of his disappointment, combined with the fact that Fletcher was his rival and successful, that conclusively separates him from his wife. The further irony is that both Glencora's willingness to compromise and Lopez' refusal lead, as Kincaid puts it, to nullity.

(43) The Prime Minister, Ch. 50; Vol. II, pp. 206-7.

another being could be influenced; and in striving too hard in that aim he had failed so thoroughly in all his circumstances that there is nothing more for him to live for. Emily, released by his death, does marry Fletcher in the end, having learned by contrast the unshakable hold the values of her early associations had on her. Yet it takes her a long time to feel free to embrace those associations again, for though she had simply made a mistake in her view of the possibility of marriage to a man so different in background to herself, she saw her choice as a fundamental error that had torn her away completely from her roots.

In The Small House at Allington too there is a marriage in which husband and wife find out that they have nothing in common, and in this case without even waiting for an actual quarrel the wife leaves her husband, much to his relief. In a previous chapter mention has been made of the manner in which Lady Alexandrina de Courcy sought to entice Adolphus Crosbie away from his previous engagement, and of her success; and also of the reasons for her desperation to get married. As it turns out, the tedium of her married life turns out worse than what she had endured before, and though Crosbie himself bears a share of the blame Trollope emphasizes that it was her own attitude that was the chief cause -

When once she had conceived it in her heart to feel anger against her husband, - and she had done so before they had been a week together, - there was no love to bring her back to him again. She did not know that it behoved her to look pleased when he entered the room, and to make him think that his presence gave her happiness. She became gloomy before she reached her new house, and never laid her gloom aside. He would have made a struggle for some domestic comfort, had any seemed to be within his reach. As it was, he struggled for domestic propriety, believing that he might so best bolster up his present lot in life. But the task became harder and harder to him, and the gloom became denser and more dense. He did not think of her unhappiness but of his own; as she did not think of his tedium, but of hers. (49)

Crosbie could not but compare Alexandrina's complete lack of concern

(49) The Small House at Allington, Ch. 56; Vol. II, pp. 363-4.

for him and his affairs, once she had secured him, with Lily Dale's complete devotion to him; and his regrets for the latter's enthusiasm which would have consoled him for the change in his way of life that marriage entailed were probably well founded. At the same time, it is clear that the circumstances of his marriage made him less sympathetic to Alexandrina and her own aspirations than she had reason to expect. As the comparisons with her sister's marriage indicate, the snobbery that had led Crosbie to prefer her might have been thought to induce a willingness to fit in with her scheme of life; on the contrary, feeling that he had been entrapped and resenting the expenditure that the rest of the family succeeded in forcing upon him, Crosbie asserts himself with regard to the only one over whom he has any power, his wife, and subjects her to a restricted way of life totally at odds with the freedom of action she had thought marriage would confer. The depiction of the hours they are forced to spend alone together therefore in the situation their jointly misguided ambitions have created, with no concern for or interest in each other, conveys an acute impression of the resentment that builds up on either side; so that the opportunity for her to leave is an unmitigated relief to them both.

That opportunity is provided by Alexandrina being able to join her mother at Baden-Baden, whither the Countess de Courcy herself is going in order to separate herself from her own husband. That particular marriage is only dealt with incidentally in the course of the novel, but Trollope conveys succinctly its full horror; most notably in the brief conversation between Lord Porlock, the Earl's son and heir, and Plantagenet Palliser -

"How any man should propose to my father to marry a daughter out of his house, is more than I can understand. How was my mother looking?" "I didn't see anything amiss about her." "I expect that he'll murder her some day." (50)

(50) *ibid.*, Ch.43; Vol.II, p.176.

Apart from that, the portrayal of the Earl's treatment of everyone, along with the fact that his wife is compelled to put up with it above anyone else and indeed has to see him every day, makes clear the urgency that drives her to seek a separation in the end. At the same time, the actual suffering she has endured contrasting with the relatively easy condition of her daughter indicates the bitterness of Alexandrina's disappointment that prompted her too to be adamant about leaving her husband.

The disagreements in the marriages that have just been discussed were so grave as to necessitate separation; which occurred in every case except that in The Prime Minister where, though it was desired on one side and acceptable on the other, the particular characters of husband and wife preserved a facade of togetherness, if only one that was to be disrupted in a highly dramatic fashion. In addition to such extreme cases, however, Trollope does also consider marriages which are unhappy, but in which the couple concerned could not conceive of separation but struggle on with each other. The most remarkable example of this is the marriage of the Proudies which is dealt with in several of the Bassetshire Chronicles. Mrs. Proudie's campaign to control the see of which her husband is the bishop provides rich comedy in Barchester Towers, as do the all too slight examples of her rule in Franley Parsonage - "'The Bishop knows nothing about it," said Mrs. Proudie again. "Nothing at all," said the bishop'⁽⁵¹⁾; but the struggle turned out to be a struggle to the death, and Trollope's analyses show that he was concerned that this development should be comprehensible. In the Autobiography he remarked of Mrs. Proudie, 'as her tyranny increased so did the bitterness of the moments of her repentance increase, in that she knew herself to be a tyrant, - till that bitterness killed her.'⁽⁵²⁾ The chapter in The Last

(51) Franley Parsonage, Ch.45; p.492.

(52) An Autobiography, Ch.17; pp.252-3.

Chronicle of Barset in which Mrs. Proudie dies begins with a similar suggestion; and, after the scene with Dr. Tempest that led to the bishop's misery which is shown to have accentuated Mrs. Proudie's remorse, Trollope mentions her uncertainty about the course of action she had adopted.

There is certainly a question as to whether or not these stabs at self-criticism are consistent with what was presented of her before, and Trollope was aware of this himself for he wrote in this last passage, 'I fear that it may now be too late for me to excite much sympathy in the mind of any reader on behalf of Mrs. Proudie!' (53); but, though the fear is understandable, a careful consideration of Mrs. Proudie's character clears it from the charge of inconsistency. Her conscience had not hitherto appeared because she had not been seen in private before, and the accounts of her both after the interview with Dr. Tempest and before her last skirmish with her husband indicate that she would never have let her doubts about her own conduct be suspected by anyone else. In any case, previous battles in which she had engaged were not so serious as to cause prolonged internal cogitation, which is precisely the reason that she had not appeared quite so harsh before as in The Last Chronicle. The bishop had felt her yoke keenly, but in the struggle in Barchester Towers he could not be entirely confident that she was wrong. It is in keeping with the necessity Trollope observes in writing in the Autobiography about Phineas Finn 'of progression in character, - of marking the changes in men and women which would naturally be produced by the lapse of years' (54), that as Mrs. Proudie's confidence in her dominion increased so should the extent of her interference. Her manner of conducting herself certainly did change. In the encounter with Mr. Slope, when asked to

(53) The Last Chronicle of Barset, Ch.47; Vol.II, p.43.

(54) An Autobiography, Ch.17; p.290.

leave the bishop's study, she goes, thus allowing him briefly to imagine that he has succeeded in emancipating himself, although in fact as soon as they are in private together she reasserts her dominance; it is her refusal, on the contrary, in front of Dr. Tempest, to leave when he asks her to do so that leads to the crisis and in the end, ironically, brings him his freedom. He could submit to her control in private and was even willing, knowing the control she exercised over his domestic bliss or its alternative, to act in accordance with her wishes, though expressed obviously, in public; but he was unable to bear her openly overriding him in the exercise of his own particular duties - 'What was there to be done with a woman who would not obey her husband, - who would not even leave him to the performance of his own work?' (55)

The fact that he had been governed by her before, and that this was well known to everybody, did not affect the issue; on this particular occasion she had belittled the bishop in front of a clergyman who was subject to him, with regard to a matter as to which it had clearly been intimated to her that she had nothing to do. The disgrace is too much for the bishop who is so overcome by resentful despair that he refuses to show her any kindness at all, and is also totally lethargic about his duties. Mrs. Proudie attempts to entice him out of this mood by kindness, and then to shake him out of it by firmness, finally deliberately disobeying one of his commands: at which the bishop declares his intention of abandoning the diocese, and makes clear that he cannot be brought round by any means. In the Autobiography Trollope claims that a chance conversation he overheard prompted him to kill Mrs. Proudie off, but in fact her reaction to the bishop's decisive bitterness is of a piece with the remorse Trollope had shown some time before

(55) The Last Chronicle of Barset, Ch.47; Vol.II, p.46.

after the scene with Dr. Tempest.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The final scene serves to bring without any doubt before her own mind her failure as a wife -

She had loved him dearly, and she loved him still; but she knew now, - at this moment felt absolutely sure, - that by him she was hated!... She had always meant to serve him. She was conscious of that; conscious also in a way that, although she had been industrious, although she had been faithful, although she was clever, yet she had failed. At the bottom of her heart she knew that she had been a bad wife. And yet she had meant to be a pattern wife;⁽⁵⁷⁾

and so she goes up to her room, and locks her door, and dies. For the bishop her death bring release, not only from her tyranny, but also from the strain of the recent quarrel, and Trollope even suggests that he had to pray not to be glad at it; but, as he remembers at the time, and as is apparent from the last scene in which he appears, discussing the living at St. Ewolds with the archdeacon, she had taken care of him and done a great many things for him that he was incapable of doing himself. It was not her ordinary domination that he really resented, though he might have preferred to be without it; it was the excesses of tyranny, and to these he had succeeded, by a determined stand on his own position, in putting a stop. That that had been at the cost of crushing her completely suggests how unbalanced by that stage their marital relation had become.

There is in the Bassetshire chronicles another marriage where, though it is ostensibly less disjointed, the incompatibility is possibly even greater. The fullest account of the marriage of Mr. Gresham and the former Lady Arabella de Courcy is in Dr. Thorne, but Trollope returns to the subject in detailing the doctor's thoughts later on in Framley Parsonage -

(56) See Anthony Arthur, 'The Death of Mrs. Proudie: "Frivolous Slaughter" or Calculated Despatch', Nineteenth-Century Fiction, March 1972, for a convincing argument to this effect.

(57) The Last Chronicle of Barset, Ch.66; Vol.II, p.231.

Mr. Gresham and his wife were supposed by the world to live on the best of terms.... In some respects - with regard, for instance, to the continued duration of their joint domesticity at the family mansion of Greshamsbury - they might have been taken for a pattern couple. But yet, as far as the doctor could see, they did not seem to add much to the happiness of each other. They loved each other, doubtless, and had either of them been in real danger, that danger would have made the other miserable; but yet it might well be a question whether either would not be more comfortable without the other. (58)

If Mrs. Proudie's methods were at times monstrous, she was at least in her own conception devoted to her husband, his interests and his pursuits; Lady Arabella, on the contrary, is primarily interested in her own aspirations and is sublimely indifferent to her husband's own separate desires. I have pointed out in a previous chapter the contrast between Mary Thorne's refusal to treat seriously Frank Gresham's first proposal on the grounds that he was too young to know his own mind properly and Lady Arabella's own marriage to Frank's father when he was even younger. The situation therefore, if less dramatic, has similarities to that of The Prime Minister in that a marriage is contracted based simply on love without there being any awareness of the characters involved that do in fact turn out to be incompatible: soon after the marriage Mr. Gresham reverts from the ambitious political enthusiasms and Liberal social associations he had had in common with Lady Arabella to the sedentary squiredom his family had long maintained, a withdrawal that his wife, as the daughter of a great Whig family, could not abide. Their individual desires irritate the other, but are so characteristic of each that neither could conceive of moderating them, and hers also deplete their finances, so that the squire is desperately upset in a manner she cannot appreciate about the fact that he would have to hand on an embarrassed estate to his son. Certainly the responsibility for an association that caused both so many regrets was a joint one; but both Lady Arabella's greater

(58) Framley Parsonage, Ch. 39; pp. 422-3.

insensitivity, and the contrast between Mary's diffidence and her own marriage to the squire when she was the older and so ought perhaps to have been the more thoughtful, indicate that hers was the greater.

In The Claverings, written just before The Last Chronicle, Trollope describes a marriage where the blame for the misery rests entirely with the husband; as the Autobiography has it, 'there is a wife whose husband is a brute to her, who loses an only child - his heir - and who is rebuked by her lord because the boy dies. Her sorrow is, I think, pathetic.'⁽⁵⁹⁾

Though the story is incidental to the main plot of the novel, there is great force in the depiction of the emptiness of an existence in which a wife is treated simply as a chattel by her husband, who takes no interest in her whatsoever except marginally in terms of the production of an heir. Even so, Sir Hugh Clavering is an unqualified villain with regard to his wife and the position is an extreme one. More characteristic of Trollope, therefore, and evocative of a more sustained appreciation is the portrayal of a neglected wife in Orley Farm in the case of the Furnivals. In the days of their poverty Mrs. Furnival had been a faithful and loving companion to her husband, but as he prospered he developed desires that she could no longer satisfy. . It was not only that 'he, at the age of fifty-five, was now running after strange goddesses'⁽⁶⁰⁾; she was also no longer his social equal.

Trollope puts the problem directly

Men who had risen in the world as Mr. Furnival had done do find it sometimes difficult to dispose of their wives. It is not that the ladies are in themselves more unfit for rising than their lords.... But they do not rise, and occasion does not demand it. A man elevates his wife to his own rank, and when Mr. Brown, on becoming solicitor-general, becomes Sir Jacob, Mrs. Brown also becomes my lady. But the whole set among whom Brown must be more or less thrown do not want her ladyship. On Brown's promotion she did not

(59) An Autobiography, Ch.11; p.180.

(60) Orley Farm, Ch.10; Vol.I, p.99.

become part of the bargain. Brown must henceforth have two existences - a public and a private existence; and it will be well for Lady Brown, and well also for Sir Jacob, if the latter be not allowed to dwindle down to a minimum. (61)

This is what troubles Mrs. Furnival most of all: she regrets the days when she was her husband's constant companion, when he would dine at home and tell her all his doings, when he had not been ashamed of her. Yet she herself, unable to understand why he should not be satisfied with what he had before, had made no effort to adjust to his new needs. It is inevitable, therefore, that she be made miserable; and in her misery at being so frequently deserted by her husband she turns for consolation to the grotesque Martha Biggs, which aggravates the problem; for Martha Biggs appears to Mr. Furnival as a figure from their unsophisticated past, beyond which he at least had proceeded far, and therefore as a symbol of the incompatibility he now found between him and his wife, that provoked him to leave her behind in his more and more frequent excursions into the new world into which he had found entry.

Trollope is severe upon Mr. Furnival, though giving quite plainly the reasons for the 'disseveration and dislocation' that had so upset his wife: in leaving his wife so much to herself and not endowing her with 'a cherishing, comforting, enduring love' (62) he is judged by Trollope to have been false to his marriage vows. It is quite obvious that he is romantic about his dedication to Lady Mason's cause, and his jealousy of her other supporter who proposes marriage to her is clearly indicated. Thus there is a sharp irony in Mrs. Furnival, after she had left him in pique about his association with Lady Mason, going back to him, on the grounds that her suspicions were unfounded when she learns that he does in fact have legal business with her. Yet Trollope is also quite clear that this is the best possible solution for

(61) *ibid.*, Ch.11; Vol.I, p.104.

(62) *ibid.*, Ch.13; Vol.I, p.129.

Mrs. Furnival. Though he is severe upon Mr. Furnival, she desires to be lenient. She feels that the quarrel only came about because of his unwillingness to be reconciled -

Forgive him! Yes...if he would only take forgiveness. Should she...throw herself at Tom's feet, imploring him to have mercy upon her. All that she could do within her heart, and make her words as passionate, as soft, and as poetical as might be those of a young wife of twenty. But she felt that such words...could never get themselves spoken. She had tried it, and it had been of no avail. Not only should she be prepared for softness, but he also must be so prepared and at the same moment.⁽⁶³⁾

She realises, as does the butler, after she has left the house that Mr. Furnival would not be much worse off without her and might even welcome her absence.

But, for herself, her life is too involved in his for her to be at all happy without him, and the excuse to return comes to her as a great relief. Trollope remarks that 'sweet peace' resulted from her return; nevertheless, Mrs. Furnival was still married, and for that reason continued to be devoted, to a man who, for understandable reasons, could on occasion find her to be beneath him. There is nothing she can do about it herself, except attempt not to irritate her husband and trust in his good nature: and good natured though he might do his best to be the fundamental incompatibility that had developed between them could not be removed.

Though some of the marriages mentioned above may be considered peripheral to the novels in which they appear, the vast majority were of central importance in Trollope's conception of his work; and that alone marks him out from most of his contemporaries in whose works marriage plays a proportionately smaller part. Further, whereas with regard to courtship and the single girl Trollope's fullness and fertility of treatment is rivalled by the convincing energy with which some of the women novelists of the time present their heroines, the understanding and objectivity with which Trollope deals with marriage seems to me unique. I have dealt in the last chapter

(63) *ibid.*, Ch.49; Vol.II, pp.88-9.

with the deficiencies in this field of the greater of his contemporaries; and at length with George Eliot who, though his only rival in the number of marriages which she investigates, was too concerned with particular principles that she applied to these marriages for them all to carry conviction. Amongst the novelists I have not mentioned, Mrs. Gaskell, for her depiction of the subject in Sylvia's Lovers and Wives and Daughters, might be thought to have offered competition; but, though her examples are interesting, Mrs. Gibson in the latter book is presented as an absurd figure, almost caricature, so that, while the tolerant scorn of her husband is well done, there is some imbalance in the portrayal; while the couple in the former book are so passionate that their relationship, if delicately resolved, is like those depicted in the marriages in Wuthering Heights and indeed elsewhere in the novels of the Brontes, a rarefied and highly individualistic one.⁽⁶⁴⁾ The impression with Mrs. Gaskell even in these novels is that she is concerned with individual characters, and though they interact, marriage is not of particular importance to their relationships.

Trollope, on the contrary, deals generally with ordinary people who are not usually extravagant in behaviour or in feeling, and he brings no preconceptions to his task. It is for this reason that it is not very easy to discern patterns in his treatment of marriage. For instance, while on a number of occasions we have noted wives leaving their husbands because of an accusation bearing on infidelity being made against them, there have always been variations as to whether the accusation was provoked or not, and if so whether deliberately, as to whether the accusation was believed or not when it was made, as to whether it was resented as an insult to innocence or as an

(64) Beer, op.cit., hardly refers to these two marriages; and though Calder, op.cit., has some interesting remarks to make about that of Sylvia, her treatment too is perfunctory.

assertion of superiority; again, though unhappy marriages often end in death, there are exceptions, and even if death when it comes may be connected with the cause of unhappiness it is hardly ever to be seen as a punishment; which is perhaps connected with the fact that there are rarely absolutes of guilt and innocence with regard to the failure of a marriage. At the same time, Trollope does suggest certain general principles, concerning commitment and responsibility, flexibility and tolerance, sensitivity and endurance, that contribute to the exposition of why some marriages work and others do not; while also depicting with sympathy the sufferings of those whose marriages suffer from some deficiency in these qualities either in themselves or in their partners. All in all he presents a comprehensive and perceptive account of marriage and the marital relation as it affected several varying characters.

The reason for this unique achievement is I believe connected with the capacity illustrated in the first part of this study. Marriage after all involves a relation between two people of opposite sexes, and I hope I have shown that the other major male novelists of the day adopted a formulaic approach to women that prevented them from being presented as free participants in a full relation; again, while women novelists were in general more concerned with the depiction of individual emotion and situation, the one amongst them who was best equipped and most willing to deal with wider issues was, I have endeavoured to prove, too concerned with general points to present a balanced and convincing view of particular relationships. Given his essentially open approach, then, it is doubly appropriate to apply to Trollope with regard to his presentation of women Coleridge's remark about a great mind being androgynous; as it was reformulated by Virginia Woolf when she was trying to define the sort of mind that produced writing of which one can say that it has the secret of perpetual life: He meant, perhaps, that the androgynous mind is resonant and porous; that it

transmits emotion without impediment; that it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided. (65)

(65) A Room of One's Own, Ch.6; pp.153 & 148.

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Section I - Nineteenth Century Books

The first part of this section consists of works of the authors I have discussed in detail; the second records the other books published during the nineteenth century that have been noted in the text. I have included only works that have been specifically mentioned; except in the case of Trollope where I include all the works I have read, since they have almost all contributed actively to the positive view of his work that I advance.

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Section II - Articles in Victorian Periodicals.

The first part of this section consists of such articles, whether cited in the text or not, as I have found useful amongst those that appeared in the Contemporary Review, the Edinburgh Review, the Fortnightly Review, Fraser's Magazine, the Nineteenth Century and the Quarterly Review, in the half century after Queen Victoria's accession. Titles of these articles, except with regard to capitalization, are given as they appear in The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900, Toronto, Vol.I 1966, Vol.II 1972. I supplemented my examination of these periodicals with the Routledge and Kegan Paul Critical Heritage volumes for Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray and Trollope, and have included these volumes in the last section of this bibliography. The second part of this section consists of those articles mentioned in the text, and also some others that I have found particularly helpful, for which my first source was these volumes; not all passages quoted in the text, however, are reprinted in them in full. In neither part have I included authorship which may be found, when known, in the Wellesley Index or in the Critical Heritage volumes.

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Contemporary Review (began publication in 1866)

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- 'The Education of Women'. March 1866. Vol.1.
- 'Felix Holt'. September 1866. Vol.3.
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- 'The Condition of Women in France'. May 1867. Vol.5.
- 'The Morality of Literary Art'. June 1867. Vol.5.
- 'On the Education of Women'. February 1868. Vol.7.
- 'Some account of a Proposed New College for Women'. December 1868. Vol.9.
- 'Charles Dickens'. February 1869, Vol.10.
- 'The Cry of the Women'. June 1869. Vol.11.
- 'Notices of Books'. September 1869, Vol.12.
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- 'The English Girl's Education'. April 1870. Vol.14.
- 'The Subjection of Women'. May 1870. Vol.14.
- 'Our Very Cheap Literature'. June 1870. Vol.14.

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'College Education for Women'. August 1870. Vol.15.
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'The Religious Education of Women'. June 1872. Vol.20.
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'The Little Health of Ladies'. January 1878. Vol.31.
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'Thackeray's Writings'. January 1848. Vol.87.
'Mary Barton'. April 1849. Vol.89.
'Thackeray's Works'. January 1854. Vol.99.
'Adam Bede'. July 1859. Vol.110.
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'Felix Holt, the Radical'. October 1866. Vol.124.
'The Spanish Gypsy'. October 1868. Vol.128.
'Mill's The Subjection of Women'. October 1869. Vol.130.
'The Works of Thackeray'. January 1873. Vol.137.

- 'Middlenarch'. January 1873. Vol.137.
'Daniel Deronda'. October 1876. Vol.144.
'Life and Letters of Charles Kingsley'. April 1877. Vol.147.
'Mr. Anthony Trollope's Novels'. October 1877. Vol.143.
'Endymion, by Lord Beaconsfield'. January 1881. Vol.153.
'The Literary Life of Anthony Trollope'. January 1884. Vol.159.
'The Life and Letters of George Eliot'. April 1885. Vol.161.
'The Education of Women'. July 1887. Vol.166.

Fortnightly Review (began publication in 1865)

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'Mr. Anthony Trollope's Novels'. February 1869. N.S. Vol.5.
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'New Novels'. December 1849. Vol.40.
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'Westward Ho!' May 1855. Vol.51.
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'Thoughts on Modern English Literature'. July 1859. Vol.60.

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'Charles Reade'. October 1884. Vol.16.
'Women's Suffrage'. April 1886. Vol.19.
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'Madame D'arblay's Diary and Letters'. June 1842. Vol.70.
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'Milnes on the Harem - the Rights of Women'. December 1844. Vol.75.
'Lady Travellers'. June 1845. Vol.76.
'Tennyson's Princess: A Medley'. March 1848. Vol.82.

- 'Vanity Fair and Jane Eyre'. December 1843. Vol.84.
'Queen's College, London'. March 1850. Vol.86.
'The Newcomes'. September 1855. Vol.97.
'The Bill to Divorce'. July 1857. Vol.102.
'Eliot's Novels'. October 1860. Vol.108.
'Sensation Novels'. April 1863. Vol.113.
'Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton's Later Novels and Collected Poems'. April 1865.
Vol.117.
'Female Education'. April 1866. Vol.119.
'Female Education'. April 1869. Vol.126.
'Miss Austen and Miss Mitford'. January 1870. Vol.128.
'Mr. Disraeli's Lothair'. July 1870. Vol.129.
'Middlemarch, a study of Provincial Life'. April 1873. Vol.134.
'Lord Lytton'. April 1873. Vol.134.
'Mary Somerville'. January 1874. Vol.136.
'George Sand'. April 1877. Vol.143.
'The Englishwoman at School'. July 1878. Vol.146.
'Lord Beaconsfield's Endymion'. January 1881. Vol.151.
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'The Belton Estate'. 3 February 1866. Vol.21.
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'Phineas Finn'. 27 March 1869. Vol.27.
'Sir Harry Hotspur of Humblethwaite!'. 10 December 1870. Vol.30
'The Austace Diamonds'. 16 November 1872. Vol.34.
'Middlemarch'. 7 December 1872. Vol.34.
'Phineas Redux'. 7 February 1874. Vol.37.
'The Way We Live Now'. 17 July 1875. Vol.40.
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'Ayala's Angel'. 11 June 1881. Vol.51.
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'Thackeray's Pendennis'. 21 December 1850. Vol.23.
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Section III - Twentieth Century Material

This section contains, in addition to all the modern works that have been mentioned in the text, a few others of particular relevance to my subject, and also some basic biographical material. In the case of essays I have cited that appear in collections, I have included individual entries under the names of authors as well as the collections under the names of their editors.

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