

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This material was produced from a microfilm copy of the original document. While the most advanced technological means to photograph and reproduce this document have been used, the quality is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help you understand markings or patterns which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting thru an image and duplicating adjacent pages to insure you complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a large round black mark, it is an indication that the photographer suspected that the copy may have moved during exposure and thus cause a blurred image. You will find a good image of the page in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., was part of the material being photographed the photographer followed a definite method in "sectioning" the material. It is customary to begin photoing at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue photoing from left to right in equal sections with a small overlap. If necessary, sectioning is continued again — beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. The majority of users indicate that the textual content is of greatest value, however, a somewhat higher quality reproduction could be made from "photographs" if essential to the understanding of the dissertation. Silver prints of "photographs" may be ordered at additional charge by writing the Order Department, giving the catalog number, title, author and specific pages you wish reproduced.
5. PLEASE NOTE: Some pages may have indistinct print. Filmed as received.

**Xerox University Microfilms**

300 North Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

75-18,575

ELIASBERG, Ann Pringle, 1923-  
THE VICTORIAN ANTI-HEROINE: HER ROLE IN  
SELECTED NOVELS OF THE 1860'S AND 1870'S.

The City University of New York, Ph.D., 1975  
Language and Literature, modern

**Xerox University Microfilms**, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

© Copyright by  
Ann Pringle Eliasberg  
1975

THE VICTORIAN ANTI-HEROINE: HER ROLE IN  
SELECTED NOVELS OF THE 1860'S AND 1870'S

by

Ann Pringle Eliasberg

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
in English in partial fulfillment of the require-  
ments for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The  
City University of New York.

1975

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

3/30/75  
date

Imray Howe  
Chairman of Examining Committee

3/30/75  
date

Imray Howe  
Executive Officer

Charles Walter  
Wendell Stacy Johnson  
Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

## PREFACE

The subject of this study is the anti-heroine as she appears in a group of English novels of the 1860's and 1870's: Mrs. Gaskell's Wives and Daughters; Anthony Trollope's Phineas Finn, Phineas Redux, and The Eustace Diamonds; and George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda. My concept of the anti-heroine will become clear in succeeding chapters, but in simplest terms she is the anti-thesis of a fictional female whom we all recognize, and whom we have more or less assumed was drawn from life: the "official" Victorian heroine, who in her official capacity displays the simple charm, selfless affection, and virtuous faith that will win for her a husband, and, presumably, a life of contentment--the supposition being that this is what she wants. In succeeding chapters I hope to show that for many Victorian women this assumption was contrary to fact, and that authors who were sensitive to the enormous changes taking place in the sexual and domestic spheres in the third quarter of the nineteenth century deal fictionally with these changes through the device of the anti-heroine. I will discuss the function and significance of anti-heroine not only in the Victorian novel but in the development of the modern novel as well.

A basic assumption throughout the study is that the novel has traditionally been concerned with human beings

caught up in the social milieu, responding in their personal lives to social and political ideas which they may or may not be aware of, but which nonetheless determine to some degree the nature of their experience. I have also assumed, I think rightly, that some of the dominant political, social, and philosophical ideas shaping the lives of human beings in the nineteenth century concerned the position of women and changing relationships between the sexes. The novels I discuss recognize the significance of these social advances and recognize also the degree of personal dislocation they caused. It is in large measure this recognition which sets them apart from other novels of the period. But though they may be therefore classed together, they may on other grounds be divided, and for the sake of convenient analysis I have chosen to divide them according to which aspect of the thrust toward female equality seems most central to the basic conception of the work. Thus, I discuss Wives and Daughters and The Eustace Diamonds in the chapter on money and property rights; The Mill on the Floss and Middlemarch in the chapter on personal and intellectual power; and Phineas Finn, Phineas Redux and Daniel Deronda in the chapter on sexual and moral choices.

In all seven novels, conflicts that develop around questions of money or intellectual power are felt in the deep, obscurely understood tensions of the sexual attachment; in novels about men and women it could scarcely be otherwise. Recognizing this inevitable overlap of subject matter, I have

deliberately taken a flexible attitude toward my chapter divisions, believing that they ought to guide rather than control my approach to an author's work.

In order to see how the social world of the novels I am considering might reflect the actual social world of England in the 1860's and 1870's, I have consulted, in addition to the usual historical references, a large number of periodicals published in these two decades, especially those published for women. There, in numerous articles by or about women, I found raw material that a fiction writer might shape: anger at the status of the female in nineteenth-century law; fear--an anxious, guarded, frequently disguised fear--about owning nothing, having no money; frustration at being untaught; shame at being trained to no discipline. Sometimes the feelings surfaced. Often they seemed buried beneath complacency or froth--women have the best of all worlds, how ridiculous to complain. Yet many did complain, and the strident rebuffs that often greeted the complaints told another story; women's grievances were only specific symptoms, the fever of a general infection. Approaching an era that has customarily been called smug, I found instead one rather like our own 60's and 70's: on the one hand, urgent demands for change and an awareness that change is desperately needed; and on the other hand, a gnawing fear that change is already coming in a downhill rush, crushing the past beyond recognition. "Woman's place" was a charm, an incantation to ward off the

evils of social anarchy.

Going back to my novels was like being on a street at dusk at the moment the lights go on; what you could make out before, you now see. People, situations, events stood out against a background newly defined, richly detailed. The realistic novelist works from life; to experience in some fashion the particular life from which a novelist worked is to find truth in the truism. My experience of English life in the 1860's and 1870's, drawn from magazines and journals of those years, was an invaluable aid to my study of the novels of that period: a corrective, a guide, a key, as I hope the following pages will show.

Perhaps much of what women felt in the nineteenth century was felt in other ways by men. Bewilderment in the face of society's demands, and a sense of losing one's individuality in a frantic attempt to internalize and meet society's expectations were not exclusively female experiences. But since this study is about the fictional female of the 60's and 70's in relation to social records of that time, I have not attempted to analyze male attitudes and experiences except as they relate to my primary concern. I point out in advance my specific focus, so that the reader will not interpret it as a denial of the economic and social burdens afflicting the Victorian soul.

To clarify the purpose of a study of this kind, and to prevent misunderstanding, one often needs to state what is not

being attempted as well as what is. I am not writing social history on the basis of selective reading in the women's journals. What I say about women's changing position in Victorian England is amply documented in the standard texts. What the women's journals provide that the texts generally do not is voices of the women themselves, telling about what concerns them. I consulted those journals because I thought that by listening to those voices I might gain a new perspective, and fresh insights into the novels with which I was concerned. The best measure of how far that expectation was justified should be my analyses of the novels themselves.

It should hardly be necessary to say that I do not equate the novelist's act of creation with the recording of social history. But because readers sometimes think that showing relationships is the same as positing causation, I emphasize the fact that I am doing the former and not the latter. Novelists who analyze their own creative processes frequently account inadequately for the final product. A critic who attempts such analysis seems to me to engage in a dangerous and very likely fruitless task.

A word about genre and tradition. I am concerned with the genre of social and domestic realism, and with seven novels of that genre published in England between 1860 and 1880, each of which presents a particular type of female character --an anti-heroine--whose goals conflict with the social norms of the society the novel describes. Although extensive and

detailed cross-genre comparisons between the Victorian anti-heroine and such romantic, rebellious female figures as, for example, Scott's Flora MacIver, might be interesting, to make them would require another, and quite different, study from the one I have made. Similarly, to compare the internal and external conflicts of Jane Austen's female characters with those of the anti-heroines of the 1860's and 1870's, and to examine the novels of both periods in the social context of women's expectations and limitations, would constitute a wide-ranging developmental study of a kind I have not attempted. No doubt an analysis of some of Jane Austen's works in the light of the subject matter in the women's journals of her period would provide fresh insights, especially into the social and moral choices of her independent heroines; but again, that is a separate effort from the one I have made.

I have nevertheless tried to define and place the anti-heroine within the novelistic tradition, mainly the tradition of social realism traceable through Jane Austen and the Victorians to the modernists. If in the process I have maximized the differences and minimized the resemblances between the anti-heroine of the 60's and 70's and the female characters of earlier or contemporary works, I have done so out of concern that her authentically new qualities, and her special relationship to the modern novel, be recognized. And a propos of the modern novel, I am fully aware that the role of women and the depiction of heterosexual relationships are only two

elements among many others affecting the development of what we call modernism in fiction. But they are important elements, they are the elements I have studied, and they are elements whose contribution I feel justified in stressing.

I am grateful for the fellowship award from the American Association of University Women that made my research into Victorian periodicals possible and that allowed me to devote a generous amount of time exclusively to the writing of the study. I am grateful also to the staff of the British Museum and of the Fawcett Library, who helped me to complete an extended research project in a limited time.

I am greatly indebted to Professor Irving Howe for his advice, criticism, and help. I owe thanks, too, to Professor Wendell Stacy Johnson and Professor Charles Child Walcutt, from whose willingness to read and comment on the manuscript I have profited. I wish also to thank my husband, Jay, for his valuable comments and assistance, and my children, Jan, Kristin, and Peter, for their encouragement and belief, for their patient good humor, and for being the real troupers they are.

## CONTENTS

PREFACE . . . . .		iv
Chapter		
I. THE ANTI-HEROINE DEFINED IN RELATION TO VICTORIAN SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND THE LITERARY TRADITION . . . . .		1
II. THE WOMAN QUESTION: 1860-1880 . . . . .		22
Women, Money, and Work . . . . .		
Women, Education, and Power . . . . .		
Women, Sex, and Morality . . . . .		
III. THE ANTI-HEROINE AND MONEY AND PROPERTY RIGHTS . . . . .		67
<u>Wives and Daughters</u> . . . . .		
<u>The Eustace Diamonds</u> . . . . .		
IV. THE ANTI-HEROINE AND PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL POWER . . . . .		114
<u>The Mill On The Floss</u> . . . . .		
<u>Middlemarch</u> . . . . .		
V. THE ANTI-HEROINE AND SEXUAL AND MORAL CHOICES . . . . .		166
<u>Phineas Finn, Phineas Redux</u> . . . . .		
<u>Daniel Deronda</u> . . . . .		
VI. CONCLUSION: AFTER THE ANTI-HEROINE . . . . .		283
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .		311

## CHAPTER I

### THE ANTI-HEROINE DEFINED IN RELATION TO VICTORIAN SOCIAL ATTITUDES AND THE LITERARY TRADITION

Relationships between the sexes have been the proper business of the English novelist from the eighteenth century to the present day, whether he has viewed them through a microscope, in the manner of Richardson, or simply noted them during a romp through the English countryside, in the manner of Fielding. In Richardson's novels, the sexual relationship is shown as fundamentally a struggle for power, either tacit or open, a struggle that reflects not only the personal passions of the hero and heroine but also the larger social and economic conflicts characteristic of the period in which the novelist writes. Thus, as Dorothy Van Ghent has shown, the struggle between Clarissa and Lovelace encompasses "several different sets of mythological ideas," one of the most potent being "the myth of social caste or class."<sup>1</sup> In part, Clarissa represents the Puritan virtues of a rising middle class at was with the traditional license assumed by a powerful and privileged aristocracy. Resisting Lovelace's attempts at unlawful sexual possession, she defends the integrity of a burgeoning mercantile class--which in real life was beginning to associate on terms close to equality with the hereditary

aristocracy. Her resistance also exemplifies the middle-class Protestant doctrine that denials of earthly pleasure will bring heavenly reward. And palpably present in the struggle is another, related set of social ideas--the sanctity of pure English womanhood and lawful wedded love. The power struggle between Lovelace and Clarissa embraces all these, and other, ideological systems.

The modern reader may note a further element in the struggle and another aspect to Clarissa's character--one which is at least as crucial to action and plot as her bourgeois respectability and her Puritan chastity. We might call it her sense of self-worth. Improbable as it may seem to put Clarissa into the feminist tradition, there is a sense in which she surely belongs there.<sup>2</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, writing of St. Bridget, St. Joan and other great female figures of the church, has viewed them from a feminist perspective, noting their firmness, obstinacy, and insistence on standing alone: "they arrogantly claim to lord it over the world," she writes, and "recognize no masculine authority whatever."<sup>3</sup> The description applies in a surprising degree to Clarissa, whose religious piety seems to give her a self-sufficient strength. Her conviction of her own worth (of Lovelace she declares, "I have the vanity to think my soul his soul's superior"<sup>4</sup>) approaches arrogance and spiritual pride, qualities for which she at times berates herself. Her readiness to disobey her overbearing father, defy her odious brother, and spurn the loathesome

Solmes, though justified, is nonetheless self-willed and rash. These qualities Clarissa also recognizes in herself, and occasionally (but without much conviction) deplores. Indeed, in Clarissa's total behavior we can see her sense of her own worth struggling to validate itself through acknowledgement by others, especially by males. It is this desperate personal drive that gives special resonance and depth to the tone of her religious ardor. It is as though she would stake her life on her belief that religion teaches self-abnegation before God, but not before man.

The Clarissa-Lovelace conflict is the novelistic archetype of the sexual battle, scarcely articulated with such force and psychological intensity until D. H. Lawrence's The Rainbow more than a century and a half later. But by then, the faith that sustains Clarissa and which she sustains, and through which she moves Lovelace to his final repentance, has eroded. Ursula Brangwen searches within herself for the core of certainty and affirmation that is available to Clarissa through religious faith, and, failing, tries to find it in her union with Anton Skrebensky. But in that relationship, each projects onto the other the desire for a sense of meaning and purpose in life, which eventuates in the apprehension of a final meaninglessness, a nullity. Ursula cannot answer her own question: "'Love--love-love--what does it mean''what does it amount to? So much personal gratification. It doesn't lead anywhere.'" As for Anton, "he had no soul, no background. He

never thought of Ursula, not once, he gave her no sign. She was the darkness, the challenge, the horror."<sup>5</sup>

The element of savage contest so prominent in Lawrence's sexual pairing, and in quite a different way in Richardson's, is barely visible in Jane Austen's balanced social vision of sex. In Jane Austen, sexual conflicts are for the most part resolved as male and female come to understand and accept the social norms of their world, and learn that they can best fulfill each other through a personal union expressive of those norms. A few characters--Jane Fairfax in Emma, Mary Crawford in Manfield Park--raise questions about this comfortable equation of personal and social goods, questions I will deal with when I consider the anti-heroine's literary antecedents. The pertinent fact here, however, is that all Jane Austen's strong and independent heroines finally acknowledge the realities of life. They learn their social lesson, and they frequently learn it from males who are more experienced and socially adept than they--from a Frank Tilney or a Mr. Knightley, whose superior judgment and mature views on life they come to accept.

Since the Romantic novel is by definition a challenge to social norms, we would naturally expect to find in Scott, and in Emily and Charlotte Brontë, the defense of the passionate, rebellious spirit, in female as well as male, that we do not find in Jane Austen. I am concerned, however, with the realistic rather than the Romantic tradition, and in the genre of

social realism the savage tensions of Richardson's sexual struggle hardly surface directly until the late nineteenth century, in Meredith, Gissing, and Hardy. In the works of these novelists, as in Richardson, distorted sexual relationships mirror, and embody, a distorted social order.

In Meredith's The Egoist (1879), Richardson's power struggle is retold in terms of high comedy. Where Clarissa was imprisoned in a brothel, threatened with bodily violation, Clara Middleton is netted on an English lawn, threatened with intellectual and emotional suffocation. She fights to possess her own soul, and the fact that she cannot put her soul in God's hands makes her struggle a darker one than Clarissa's, despite Meredith's comic mode--just as her marriage to Vernon Whitford is a darker and less satisfying resolution than Clarissa's radiant martyrdom. In Gissing's The Odd Women (1893), Rhoda Nunn, already in possession of her own soul, sees that in marriage she would lose it; and so she refuses the proposal that she has provoked Everard Barfoot into making. Barfoot finds a woman whose life he can absorb into his own, leaving Rhoda in lonely control of her own life. Hardy's Eustacia Vye (The Return of the Native, 1878), though worlds apart from Clara Middleton or Rhoda Nunn, also figures in a sexual drama that individualizes the problems of a disintegrating, dehumanizing culture. She is a pagan goddess destroying herself in a world that has no place for goddesses, and only a very narrow place for flesh-and-blood women. Even

the least of what she asks--to see Paris and decide for herself whether, as Clym Yeobright tells her, home is best--is simply not available to women of her class and circumstance. Unlike Jane Austen's heroines, she cannot, or will not, learn her social lesson.

The tension between men and women in these novels suggests a struggle toward a new relationship that may be attainable only through a breaking down of existing social patterns. And the potential breaking down in turn suggests breakdown in other areas of nineteenth-century life--the crisis in traditional religious belief, and the growing disillusionment with the human-centered perfectivist vision that had seemed an acceptable substitute. The male-female struggle relates indirectly to these concerns, and directly to developing crises in family and domestic life. Gissing, Hardy, and Meredith assess realistically the position of women in a society in which human desires are becoming subservient to the needs of particular groups, or in which the clashes of particular groups have reached such proportions as to crush individual members. They show the insecurity of males in such a world, and above all, the heightened tension between males--who had at least some possibility of acquiring social, economic, or political power--and females, who had not.

In major novels of early-to-middle Victorian era, however the real-life struggle of women for personal and financial independence and for political and social equality,

and the sexual conflict that such struggles entailed, were seldom met head-on, or directly acknowledged. In place of Richardson's proud Clarissa, who realizes that in resigning her fortune she forfeits her independence, or Austen's self-willed Emma, who thinks she is clever enough to manipulate everyone around her, we have Thackeray's weepy Amelia Sedley, whose need to submit is exceeded only by her readiness to be deceived. Nor is Amelia, though perhaps an extreme example of the debilitated "official" Victorian heroine, by any means an isolated one. Few if any of Dickens's heroines experience the hopes, the rage, the fears, or the ambitions that many Victorian women, judging from what recent social investigators of the period have discovered, felt. Notoriously demure and self-effacing, Dickens's women are markedly less vital than the heroines of a century, or half-century, earlier. Indeed, they mark the high point in a process by which the nineteenth-century novelistic heroine succumbs, slowly but surely, to her own worst virtue--humility. Clarissa's sense of self--"You know, my dear," she writes to Anna Howe, "I never could bear to be dealt meanly with"<sup>6</sup>--gradually gives way in the nineteenth-century heroine to a martyred self-denial. Personal pride turns to self-effacement, self-respect yields to self-deprecation.

The passive self-effacement of many Dickens heroines is less interesting in itself, however, than are the patterns of plot and structure in which such a concept of the female

character eventuates. In Hard Times, for example, relationships between men and women tend to follow a pattern in which the active partner is the victimizer and the passive partner the victimized. Louisa Gradgrind is the victim first of her father and his dehumanizing educational scheme, then of her insensitive and egoistic husband, and concurrently of her irresponsible and dissolute brother (who though also victimized by the Gradgrind system can at least strike out against it in destructive action). Inwardly resistant to both father and husband, Louisa is outwardly compliant. But since both the plot and the thematic development of the novel require her to overthrow her father's tyranny of fact, and since Louisa has no worldly experience that might alter her perspective and impel her revolt, another male must be introduced into her life. The role falls to James Harthouse, who awakens Louisa's dormant emotions and triggers her active rebellion. Harthouse, however, seems unconvincing, little more than the plot agent he obviously is. The passion Louisa feels for him is likewise unconvincing, despite the fact that Dickens wisely associates it with her genuine love for her brother. We can accept Louisa's potential for revolt, but we cannot accept the bland, insubstantial Harthouse as the occasion for it. Thus, the polemical outburst in which Louisa renounces --and denounces--her father's system must do the work that character development and conflict have not done; it must render rhetorically what has not been realized through dramatic action.

Like Louisa, Mrs. Gradgrind is the passive creature of the dominant male; feeble in her own right, her strength literally seeps away as her husband establishes mental and physical ascendancy in his household. In Stephen Blackpool's life the pattern is reversed, Stephen being victimized by his alcoholic wife. But since Mrs. Blackpool's experience of life is never rendered or described, we can no more understand her debauchery than we can understand Louisa's passion. These relationships fit a pattern, and the pattern fits the plot.

Characters who do not victimize or dominate others--such figures as Stephen Blackpool, Stephen's saintly Rachael, and Sissy Jupe's father--are usually themselves the victims of a driving, compassionless social order. Signor Jupe belongs in this group, since despite the fact that he works in the pleasure-giving circus--the alternative world to the dreary utility of Coketown--he as much as Stephen is crushed under the wheels of commerce; once he loses his power to make patrons laugh he loses his utility as a breadwinner and his self-respect as a man. In this novel, as in much of Dickens's fiction, power relationships between men and women, between individuals of whatever sex, and between the individual and society are so appallingly unequal that readers constantly think in terms of victimizer and victimized, oppressor and oppressed.

Relationships between characters, whether sexual or non-sexual, and interaction between characters and their environment in a Trollope or a George Eliot novel are totally

different from such relationships and interaction in a Dickens novel, and in later chapters, will analyze these differences as they relate to the anti-heroine. The point to be stressed here, however, is the connection between an author's concept of the female and of male-female relationships and his fiction as a whole. Dickens's concept firmly committed him to specific patterns of novelistic structure and plot.

Females in the works of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, though they have richer interior lives and more varied exterior experience than Dickens's women, nevertheless can hardly be said to exist on the level of social reality. So intense and heightened are the passions and conflicts of the Brontë heroine that they create their own order of reality akin to that of the fairy or folk tale. Neither in Dickens nor in Charlotte and Emily Brontë do we find real-life females working to establish satisfactory relationships with real-life males, or to live independently of males, in a real Victorian world. Dickens posits a romanticized heterosexual ideal, departures from which are deplored but not rationally examined or explored. Emily and Charlotte Brontë, too, posit their ideals, which differ from Dickens's ideal in allowing full and passionate female participation, but which are just as mysteriously detached from either the ideological or the bread-and-butter issues that actually divided Victorian male and female. Dickens's feminine ideal is the ministering angel, Charlotte Brontë's the ugly duckling, and Emily Brontë's the demonic

spirit. All function efficiently in their own worlds, but these worlds are lit by stage spots, or by the mysterious inward glow of fantasy, rather than by the light of common day.

Yet in those years the real world was changing as radically in the sexual and domestic spheres as in the political and economic, the changes being of course interrelated. As England developed from a basically agrarian to a basically commercial and industrial nation, the English home was changing from a social and economic center to an association of persons joined by intimate or blood ties but not necessarily by community of occupation or interest. The realistic novel traces the progression; the everyday lives of male and female in a Jane Austen novel reflect a body of shared friends, activities, interests, and purpose that all but vanishes in twentieth-century fiction. "'Marriage and home is a little side-show,'" says Tom Brangwen in The Rainbow. "'The pit owns every man. The women have what is left.'"<sup>7</sup> The comment is about the lower class, but it is just as true of the middle and upper in Lawrence.

That change, the division of male and female worlds which is accomplished fact in Lawrence's England, was taking place through the Victorian years, at the same time that women were struggling to achieve an identity separate from that of the male; to acquire power in a power-oriented world; to win financial independence and social and political

equality. The novelists I am concerned with in this study found in this changing social and sexual balance subject matter for their greatest novels. Heterosexual conflict is substantive, indeed constitutive, in the novels written by Trollope and George Eliot in the 60's and 70's, and to a lesser degree in Wives and Daughters, Mrs. Gaskell's novel of the 60's. In the aspirations and defeats of the anti-heroines of these novels we can recognize the efforts of women to survive in a world they never made, and perhaps to remake it. The feminist is seen in Eliot and Trollope as signifying dissatisfaction with a flawed society, and desire for the kind of personal and sexual relationships that will both express and help to build a truly humane social order. The position of women, which had acquired a variety of meanings in Victorian literature generally, thus signified various social values in the Victorian novel. To Dickens, the removal of the female from the male world of wealth and power was in itself a good; isolated, domesticated, the woman became a living sanctuary for values daily ignored or discarded in the marketplace. In the novels of Trollope and George Eliot, however, this ideal of separate male and female spheres is largely shown as an unrealistic blinking at facts, while a more equally balanced sexual partnership is seen as promising gains that may offset the loss of a social stability founded on inequality.

These polarized views were thoroughly aired, attacked,

and defended in the popular press, in articles that plainly show the basic connections between a writer's concept of male and female and his, or her, concept of society. In Chapter Two I will analyze some of these connections through an examination of articles on the "woman question" in Victorian periodicals. I will further show how the social-sexual struggle became artistic capital for the novelist, not only as matter to be drawn on directly for plot and characterization, but also as a revitalized metaphor for the traditional dichotomies of reason and passion (especially in Lawrence) and innocence and experience (especially in James). Sex as a metaphor for social dissolution or social reconstruction was a part of the novelistic heritage, but as the female character and the heterosexual union took on a more or less static and stereotypic value, the metaphor became impoverished.

Looking at Victorian male and female in a spirit of fresh inquiry, relatively free of rigid social preconceptions and prescriptive bias, the writers I am concerned with here brought back to the novel some of the sexual vitality of the eighteenth century. In the process, they extended the range of the novel in content, form, plot, characterization, structure, and style. Pioneers in their candid exploration of the actualities of Victorian sex and Victorian love, pioneers too in their perception of the ways in which sexuality could become a means of personal and social exploitation as well as a life-enhancing force, these authors were all attacked in their own time for

their shocking choice of subjects and their daring treatment of "delicate" matters.<sup>8</sup> It is a measure of how well and how thoroughly they did their work that students today sometimes fail to realize how far in advance of their time they were, and fail to note the links between them, assigning each to his or her own spot in the vastness of nineteenth-century fiction. Yet in fact they not only chose to mine the same vein, they worked out a similar method. All three nod in the direction of the official Victorian heroine. But they present alongside her an anti-heroine who, far from being simple, virtuous, and loving, is typically portrayed as flawed in character, alienated in personal affections, and confused in moral judgment. The anti-heroine is everything the heroine is not, and, one suspects, many things the Victorian woman either was or would have liked to be. She might in fact be defined as the sum of elements in the Victorian woman that conservative forces in Victorian society were at pains to denounce or deny.

Despite, or perhaps because of, her marked contrast to the "good" heroine, the anti-heroine rapidly gained the major interest of both reader and writer, so that by the close of the Victorian period--and in fact in the later works of both Trollope and George Eliot--the two figures begin to blend into one fictional character, a recognizable modern heroine. In the 60's and early 60's, although that has not quite happened, the "good" lady has begun to fade gently into the background while the "bad" woman evolves as a reflection of contemporary

insights into females and the female role.

The device of the paired female figures enabled authors to deal fictively with new social norms and the breakdown of the older tradition. Moreover, it provided opportunities for a fuller, more adult exploration of the erotic and aggressive impulses of human beings, especially women, than the conventional novel with its official heroine allowed. Victorian literature had already delved into the darker regions of the female psyche, but this had been done chiefly in poetry--in Tennyson's Maud, in Browning's dramatic monologues, in Arnold's Tristram and Iseult, which in fact uses the motif of the dual female figures. It was easier, perhaps for poetry to encompass the rich complexity of feelings and needs that Victorian men and women were coming to recognize in themselves than it was for the novel to deal with them in realistic terms, to explore imaginatively the new kinds of sexual relationships that a changing society might produce and the possible consequences of altered sexual expectations and demands. Yet the material was there, a promise for the novel and a challenge to the novelist whose modes of perception could transform it into art. As one of those modes, the anti-heroine provided a major stimulus for some of the major developments in fiction of the late and post-Victorian periods.

The anti-heroine was an authentically "new" fictional type, but like everything else new in literature, she had traceable antecedents. They would include the traditional

"dark" figures of myth and allegory--Iseult of Ireland, Spenser's false Duessa. But to trace the influence of these dark ladies on such nineteenth-century fictional women as Lizzie Eustace, Mme. Max Goesler, and Gwendolen Harleth seems a tenuous, possibly fruitless, practicably impossible, task. As the Rev. Dr. Casaubon discovered too late, the key to all mythologies seems to unlock nothing. More germane are some of the anti-heroine's immediate literary forebears: Austen's Jane Fairfax, Scott's Effie Deans, and that archetype of the species, Thackeray's Becky Sharp. Jane Fairfax, for instance, occupies a position in Austen's tight little social order similar to the positions occupied by the anti-heroines in the mobile, radically changing social systems of Trollope and George Eliot. Although a gentlewoman, Jane is orphaned and poor, adrift in a world where a supportive circle of relatives and friends is required in order to secure one's place. Emma Woodhouse, "handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition,"<sup>9</sup> can afford, with these advantages, to ridicule poor old Miss Bates, Jane's aunt; and Jane herself, sharing Miss Bates's precarious perch in Highbury society, must put up with both Emma's patronage and with the questionable manner in which Frank Churchill courts her. The fact that she does put up with both distinguishes her, however, from a later generation of female characters making their way in the world. Lizzie Eustace puts up with nothing unless it suits her to do so, while Gwendolen Harleth's cool attempts to win financial

independence at the gaming table would shock the Austen world to its eighteenth-century foundations.

In Scott's *Effie Deans*, as in Austen's *Jane Fairfax*, we can detect a shadow of the fictional type that we find fully fleshed out in Trollope and Eliot. Lacking her sister Jeanie's stability, Effie seeks love (and, incidentally, escape from a joyless, confining, fanatically religious household) in an illicit alliance with the renegade heir of an aristocratic Scottish family. The early events of Effie's life might fit equally into a romance (she moves in a setting of highland brigands and midnight abductions) or a morality tale (she is put on trial for her life as the alleged murderer of her illegitimate child). Interestingly, however, Effie's story does not follow the predictable pattern. Instead of dying for her sins, or living a life of penance, she is saved from death through Jeanie's heroic perseverance, after which she acquires education and social polish, marries her lover, and for a time enjoys a fashionable whirl in London and on the continent.

The modern reader can see in *Jane Fairfax* and *Effie Deans* the Romantic prototypes of the woman in late-Victorian fiction whose desires and ambitions transcend the roles assigned to females in nineteenth-century society, whose thrusts toward a wider experience open to the novelist new territory in the areas of psychological realism and social investigation. It is from the retrospective view, in other words, that we can see most clearly the artistic potentialities in such figures as Jane and

Effie. Jane's plight--that of a capable, accomplished young woman who lacks the requisite credentials for success in a milieu that equates female success with social position and a good marriage--pre-figures the plight of a score of twentieth-century heroines, the difference being that the modern heroine has options open to her that Jane had not. Jane must, and does, remain relatively still, throughout Emma, on her seat near but not quite in the inner circle of Highbury life. Yet Austen's presentation of Jane is so sensitive that the reader feels some of her potential for autonomous action, for breaking the accepted social mold. In short, the unpredictable and unfinished Jane threatens at times to charm the reader away from the fascinating but fully understood Emma.

In a similar way, the perceptive reader of The Heart of Midlothian is secretly beguiled by the reckless Effie. Effie is bright, and although morally inferior to her sister, superior to her in her imaginative nature and in her openness to experience. As Scott portrays Effie, she has both physical and intellectual curiosity. She is a woman who loves to climb mountains and gaze out over ravines, who will lean over a dangerous precipice to see what lies below, and who can learn enough in a few months spent surreptitiously in a French convent to pass muster in England as a well-born, foreign-educated young lady. The modern reader can see in Effie the sexually dangerous dark lady of the Romantic novel attempting to cast aside her robes of mystery for the everyday garments of

Victorian life.

By the time Thackeray creates the authentic prototype of the Victorian anti-heroine, Becky Sharp, those robes of mystery have been shed. Becky is not a woman of mystery but a transparent little adventuress who schemes and connives in the open, keeping only those secrets that Thackeray feels it necessary for her to keep in order to avoid offending the moral sensibilities of his readers. And while Jane Fairfax and Effie Deans merely steal part of the spotlight that falls on Emma and Jeanie, Becky pushes Amelia Sedley almost totally into the shade. Becky's schemes are too rash and daring, her little plots too engrossing, for the reader to shift attention willingly from her to the colorless Amelia.

Nor is the contrast between Becky and Amelia simply the old story of its being easier to fashion an interesting villain than an interesting hero, for Becky is not really villainous, and her attraction does not stem from evil-doing on any heroic scale. In fact, her faults are far from heroic and far from appealing; they rather repel than fascinate. Her neglect of her child, for example, is quite in character--and quite distasteful. What compels attention and applause are Becky's thoroughly modern virtues: her independence, her nerve, her determination, and her contempt for conventional society, which does little enough for the likes of her. These are the qualities that the modern reader responds to in Becky Sharp, and that make her seem, beside Amelia Sedley, like a living person next to a life-sized doll.

Nevertheless Becky, for all her modern vitality and spunk, remains where Thackeray placed her, in Regency England. The cannon of the Napoleonic wars and the sound of revelry by night provide background music for her campaign. It is not simply that Vanity Fair is set in a period earlier than its actual writing, for so were Middlemarch, Wives and Daughters, and a large proportion of realistic novels of the nineteenth century. It is rather that Vanity Fair is truly a historical novel. Its superbly drawn characters live out their lives in beautifully vivid and authentic settings, but these settings are not those of Victorian England. The problems arising as a result of industrialism, of social change, of a crisis in both the forms and substance of religious observance, of a sharp break in the traditional English code linking aristocratic privilege with public service--these problems are not Thackeray's concern, as they were the concern later of Mrs. Gaskell, Trollope, and Eliot. And therefore, although Thackeray is in some respect an artistic pioneer in his recognition of the existence of a woman like Becky Sharp, and in his fictional exploitation of her, he does not stand in a direct line between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the same way that the later novelists do. The world of Vanity Fair is an artistic whole, theatrical and self-contained. It does not threaten to break its boundaries and impinge upon our own world, as the fictional worlds of Eliot and Trollope constantly do. These later authors are social realists in a sense that Thackeray

was not, and they are therefore the proper concern of this study.

## CHAPTER I, FOOTNOTES

1. Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1953), pp. 53,55.
2. See Carolyn Heilbrun, Towards a Recognition of Androgyny (New York: Knopf, 1973), pp. 57-62, for a discussion from a different perspective of feminism in Clarissa.
3. Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, ed. and trans. H. M. Parshley, (New York: Knopf, 1964), p. 622.
4. Samuel Richardson, Clarissa (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 280.
5. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (New York: Viking, 1961), pp. 475.
6. Richardson, p. 149.
7. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 348.
8. For such criticism see George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), pp. 11, 13-16, 21-22, 36, 117-19, 240-42; David Skilton, Anthony Trollope and his Contemporaries (London: Longman, 1972), pp. 58-73; Anthony Trollope: The Critical Heritage, ed. Donald Smalley (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961), pp. 328, 333, 372-73, 397-400; A. B. Hopkins, Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Works (New York: Octagon Press, 1971), pp. 123-27.
9. Jane Austen, Emma (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 1.

## CHAPTER II

## THE WOMAN QUESTION: 1860-1880

There is nothing to be gained by supposing this world to be Utopia and then making arrangements accordingly. It is a world of rough work, hard knocks, accusations, retorts, reproaches, imputations, jealousy, hatred, and all uncharitableness, and there is not the smallest reason to suppose that it will ever be anything else. . . . It is said that the introduction of women into public life would soften its asperities, mitigate its rudeness, and fill it with agreeable amenities. These are silly dreams. . . . All life, all public life, is a fight, and . . . those who take part in it must have the qualities and endure the penalties attached to combatants.

--"Woman's Proper Place in Society", Temple Bar<sup>1</sup>

Were women wisely educated . . . and were they to mingle with men in non-domestic affairs of life as well as in their own homes (where, by the way, men are seldom seen), their moral and spiritual nature might produce results that at present are unhappily not recognizable.

--"Tuition or Trade?" English Woman's Journal<sup>2</sup>

Walter Houghton writes in The Victorian Frame of Mind that "the Victorians not only turned to their prophets [the periodical writers] for authority in a period of doubt, they depended upon them in a period of rapidly changing and developing knowledge." And again: "The intimate connection between literature and life is a significant feature of the Victorian age and one of its chief glories."<sup>3</sup> These connections between literature and life, and between life as it was lived and life as it was reflected in the magazines to which Victorians looked for interpretation and guidance, form the basis of my examination of the novels of the 1860's and 1870's in relation to the

woman question, and for my study of the woman question in the light of what was written about it in Victorian magazines.

Certainly the condition of women was one of the most vexing and persistently debated issues of the day. Taking 1869 as a sample year, and citing a mere sampling of titles, we find essays in Blackwood's on women's emotional nature and on Mill's "Subjection of Women"; in the Contemporary Review on women's complaints and on the education of girls; in Macmillan's on girls of the period, the leisure time of upper-class women, the growing movement for Anglican sisterhoods, and women in politics (the last by Charles Kingsley); in Tinsley's on the male as domestic tyrant; in Fraser's and the Quarterly Review on female education; in Temple Bar on women's attitudes towards men;<sup>4</sup> and so on through the succeeding decade. Even the briefest study of articles in the general press and in such female publications as the Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine (which had a circulation of 60,000 in 1862, as compared with Household Words' average of 40,000 and Temple Bar's average of 15,000 in the 60's,<sup>5</sup> and Victoria (which had a small but selective and influential readership) confirms the fact that the woman question was a fundamental part of most of the major social, economic, and political concerns of the day. It figured importantly in questions of extension of the suffrage, wealth and the control of wealth, work and unemployment, liberal education and vocational training, and public and private morality in all walks of life. The woman question in

England during the 60's and 70's was in fact a controversy that centered not merely on opposed views of women and the female nature but on opposed views of society itself: how it was constructed; what it did or might do for its members and its members for it; what the relationship of one social group to another could or should be. In the novels written by Trollope, George Eliot, and Mrs. Gaskell in these decades, and particularly in the sexual and social conflicts of the anti-heroines of those novels, we find a distinct set of social concepts either articulated or implied. I would characterize them as sexually egalitarian relative to established attitudes: socially concerned but doctrinally uncommitted, or at least not irrevocably committed; expressive of non-authoritarian, person-centered values rather than of group values and social control.

The classic expression of this individualistic, libertarian view, as well as the classic expression of the rights of women, is of course found in Mill.<sup>6</sup> In Ruskin, on the other hand, we find the classic expression of a view of society that emphasizes group cooperation and common purpose, and advocates the restriction of male and female to separate, complementary spheres of activity.<sup>7</sup> The functioning of the first social model might be compared to plant growth, a more or less continuous process limited only by the amount and kind of nourishment available and the nature of the species itself--which is not fully known. The second social model, by contrast, seems to

be of predetermined dimension and to require for proper functioning symmetry, balance, and control, enlargement in one sector being presumed to cause diminishment in another. In this second society, goods are regarded as definable and finite, and some absolute division is deemed necessary in order to protect the assets of the group as a whole and to prevent one group from encroaching on or contaminating the goods of another. When Ruskin writes that women must be protected from the harsh world of commerce, he assumes that the commercial world will act upon them rather than they on it, and that the action will be detrimental. Not only will it be detrimental to women but also to society as a whole, since society depends on women to embody and protect values that cannot be transferred to males and that are essential to optimal social functioning.<sup>8</sup>

The view associated with Mill is fundamentally optimistic in assuming that while man is certainly capable of evil, he is also capable of more good than existing circumstances have allowed him to show. A new, improved society--and in "The Subjection of Women" the liberated female in some measure represents an undeveloped potential good in human society--may stimulate men and women to heights as yet undreamed of.<sup>9</sup> Underlying the Ruskinian view, however, is a fundamental pessimism about man and his ways. And although women are presumed to be on a higher moral plane than men, they seem to perch there only precariously, exposed on all sides to dangers from which

they are incapable of protecting themselves and must be protected by males. Since beneficent change in the male sphere is not likely, society must conserve its limited store of female virtue. The element of social Darwinism<sup>10</sup> implied in Ruskin's view is primitive competition and the struggle for survival, while the element most strongly implied in Mill's view is progressive evolution of the species in a beneficent upward direction. Of male and female, the one view says that things must be kept as they are lest they get worse, while the other says that things are changing and in the long run may get better.

Before they grow better, of course, they may grow worse, and it is the conflicts and ambivalencies of this transitional period that are most poignantly present in the anti-heroines of the 60's and 70's: in Laura Kennedy as she gives up passion for power and wins neither; in Cynthia Kirkpatrick as she discovers that she not only does not measure up to the standards set for women but that she does not even want to; in Dorothea Brooke, as she slowly abandons her grandiose social schemes for life-sized personal ones that she can actually carry out. In their extravagant mistakes as much as in their extravagant hopes, the anti-heroines of the 60's and 70's testify to the enormous conflict between men and women, and within women themselves, during this transitional period. We need not be surprised, then, to find direct reference to the transitional period, and to the variety of female response to it, in an

article in Trollope's own Saint Paul's magazine:

It is idle to imagine that this transition period, during which women are emerging, as a class, from the kitchen and store-room into the study and library, will not be attended with a great amount of extravagance and absurdity. And this phase will undoubtedly afford good scope for small social satire. . . .<sup>11</sup>

There is a full measure of extravagance and absurdity in the Victorian anti-heroine, who did indeed afford ample scope for social satire both in the fiction and periodical prose of the day. But there is also pathos and hope, deriving in the main from the fact that these inexperienced, frequently misguided women confront, in literature and life, the major social, psychological, and philosophical problems of their time. In their struggles we can sense the breaking up of rigid Victorian social patterns in anticipation of more humane and satisfying designs for group life.

That atmosphere of expectation--it might be more accurate to call it an atmosphere of hope--is strikingly apparent in the women's press of the period. It is sometimes present in the general press as well; some prominent male editorialists supported the women's cause, and saw it as promising social betterment. The Westminster Review, which had published Harriet Taylor's essay on female enfranchisement in 1851, printed other essays favorable to women's rights in the next decades.<sup>12</sup> The Fortnightly opened its pages to feminist and anti-feminist alike; to Henry Maudsley's semi-hysterical essay on women's physical unfitness for higher mental training and to Elizabeth Garrett-Anderson's cool rebuttal.<sup>13</sup> And just as the general

magazines, which were almost entirely edited and controlled by males, offered some support to the women's movement, so the women's magazines, many of which were also edited by males, offered some opposition to it. It would be a mistake to argue that the women's press was solidly behind female emancipation. Yet it is equally mistaken to suggest, as does Cynthia White in her study of three centuries of women's magazines, that throughout the Victorian period "sympathizing with the women's movement was sufficient to drive otherwise orthodox magazines out of print."<sup>14</sup> The fact is that the women's magazines--those like Victoria and the English Woman's Journal which were edited for the advanced thinker as well as those like Beeton's Englishwoman's which was aimed at the middle-class wife and mother--were as a group far more supportive of feminist issues than the general press, which was basically either hostile or facetious or both. During the 60's and 70's the women's publications gave increasing attention and support to such issues as married women's property rights, jobs for women, equality in decision making between husband and wife, and provision for higher female education. The need to improve women's position generally was increasingly recognized in women's publications through these years, while at the same time support for specific reforms steadily grew. Thus, S. O. Beeton's hugely successful Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, which in the 60's advocated a broader, more disciplined female education and legal property settlements for married

women, by the 70's was approving the training of female M.D.s, votes for women, and the desirability of financial independence for both married and single females.<sup>15</sup> Other publications--the Ladies' Treasury, whose substantial middle-class readers supported it for almost forty years, would be a good example--if they sometimes dodged outright commitment nevertheless published thoughtful discussions of women's rights issues.<sup>16</sup>

The women's magazines tended to range these issues into three categories, which frequently link and overlap but which correspond roughly to the three divisions within which I consider the novelistic anti-heroine's experience: money and property, personal and intellectual power, and sex and morality. Questions of money and property included the troublesome issue of jobs for women and female control of earnings. Controversy in the second area was focused on higher education, the taking of professional degrees, and women's fitness for the power that advanced intellectual training might give them. Questions relating to the third area, sex and morality, were both wide-ranging and basic; they struck at the very foundation of the Victorian social system, which was built around the pure, monogamous, house-bound woman. The women's press tackled all these issues, usually publishing both pro and con views, just as did the general magazines. But the women's magazines also printed in their reader correspondence columns specific personal experiences that supplemented the more

general and abstract ruminations of editor and writer. A reader correspondent would perhaps describe in detail the problems of running a household without any knowledge of the family income, or a working class woman might show through shockingly graphic examples the need to prevent husbands from spending on liquor what was needed for food and clothing. In their own time these letters columns provided an opportunity for the expression of female grievances; today they provide evidence that even among uneducated, naïve, or seemingly docile Victorian women there was a dim sense that the social arrangements they lived under were imperfect, restrictive, and often cruelly unjust.

Although no one magazine spoke to or for all women, a variety of magazines met the needs and reflected the views of all kinds and degrees of women. Perhaps the most earnest and prestigious were Victoria and the English Woman's Journal, two avowedly feminist publications that addressed themselves directly to the major social and political questions of the day. Each attracted an intelligent, concerned group of readers and writers. EWJ, published from 1858-64 under the leadership of Bessie Raynor Parkes and Matilda M. Hays, was the elder of the two. Among its frequent contributors were Maria Rye, tireless advocate of female emigration, and Barbara Leigh-Smith Bodichon, active feminist leader and close friend of George Eliot. Victoria, which lasted from 1863 to 1880, was edited by Emily Faithfull, director of an all-female printing press that

published books and pamphlets as well as the magazine that bore its name. The Victoria Press was endorsed by the Queen, and served as a model for female initiative and accomplishment. F. D. Maurice wrote for Victoria,<sup>17</sup> and an anniversary issue contained pieces by the leading literary figures of the day, including Anthony Trollope.<sup>18</sup> Though neither of these magazines enjoyed a wide popular readership--their price alone would have ruled that out--both, by virtue of their distinguished staffs and pioneering efforts, exerted an influence that cannot be measured in terms of copies printed and sold. A third publication, Lydia Becker's Women's Suffrage Journal, would also fit into this group of serious journals of advanced views and political purpose; it focused on votes, while EWJ focused on jobs and Victoria took a broad view of social questions as they related generally to women's rights.

Another class of women's magazines would correspond to what advertisers today call women's service books. They concentrated on fashion, household arts, child care, and domestic economy, one or another or all four. The Ladies' Treasury, The Young Englishwoman, the Ladies' Companion, Myra's Journal, and at least a half-dozen others make up this group, of which Beeton's Englishwoman's was by far the most successful. Then there were Woman's World, later Kettledrum, and Woman's Gazette, later Work and Leisure, which resembled the service publications in appealing to the middle-class, middle-brow reader, but differed from them in their specialized editorial

focus. The former supported women's rights, and did so with a great deal of editorial grace and humor, while the latter stressed female employment and offered practical guidance to jobhunters. Woman's World lasted only a year; its narrow appeal was perhaps as much the result of its brittle, sophisticated editorial tone as of its liberal policy. The Woman's Gazette, on the other hand, which began publication in 1875 and changed its title in 1879, survived until 1895.

Different from all these were the Mother's Friend and the British Workwoman Out and at Home. The former was piously evangelical, conservative in all its social views, narrowly focused on child rearing and the home. It regarded religious teaching and observance as the foundation of all English households, and the British wife as the prime builder of this firm foundation. The Workwoman differed from the Mother's Friend in that it addressed the lower-class mother who often worked outside the home as well as in it. It was, in Richard Altick's phrase, a temperance sheet, as was its brother publication, the British Workman. The Workman had a circulation of 250,000 in 1862,<sup>19</sup> a figure that probably also represents the approximate circulation of the Workwoman, since, as Altick points out, temperance papers received widespread free distribution.

Finally, there were the women's newspapers, usually weeklies, and the monthly miscellanies. The Lady's Own Paper was one of the more successful weeklies. It published court news, travel letters, reviews of fiction and non-fiction, short

informative articles on topics of general interest and of special interest to women, and occasional short fiction, from 1866 to 1872. In contrast to the weeklies were the miscellanies, which made scant or no efforts toward timely news coverage, tending rather to exploit a particular trend or vogue of the day. The Girl of the Period miscellany, for example, capitalized for a short time on the immense interest aroused by Eliza Lynn Linton's "Girl of the Period" pieces for Macmillan's and the Saturday Review.

#### Women, Money, and Work

It is painful to think how much of religion, of disinterested patriotism, of virtue despising utilitarian theories, of love of truth . . . might die away out of the memory of men, should women ever abdicate the position which gives them power; and society . . . be leveled to one promiscuous horde of workers.

--"Female Labour," Fraser's<sup>20</sup>

Male chivalry will always sit down and let a maid-servant black his boots for him.

--"The Colliery Woman," Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine<sup>21</sup>

A close study of women's journals edited for all classes and degrees of female readers suggests that personal and ideological differences among Victorian women of different ranks have been exaggerated, while important feelings, ideas, grievances, and hopes common to all women have been minimized or overlooked. Attitudes toward work provide an important instance of this distortion. It is commonly assumed that work outside the home as a source of stimulation and personal fulfillment was an exclusively middle-class and upper-middle-class notion, and that lower and lower-middle-class women worked from

sheer necessity, taking ill paid, health-destroying jobs to stave off starvation or something close to it.<sup>22</sup> The truth seems to be that personal and economic concerns mingled in the work attitudes of all classes of Victorian women. Although not so hard-pressed as their poorer sisters, gentlewomen were often poor, and resented depending on males for pocket money, so that the prospect of a job not only promised escape from household ennui but also a measure of financial independence, along with the increased self-esteem that such independence might bring. An article in EWJ neatly sums up this blend of attitudes: it describes the current system as resulting in overworked men and idle women; it counters the sentimentalized view of women as protected guardians of the hearth with statistics attesting to the reality of an unprotected female population totally untrained for self-support; it cites the wasted lives of women who stay at home year after year "until their blood stagnates in their veins"; and it concludes that "were women fitted by education to share in some of the labors of their fathers, brothers, or husbands, an immense amount of life would be saved, and domestic happiness would be a reality once more."<sup>23</sup>

Women who read the EWJ were on the whole knowledgeable about social issues and supportive of the feminist cause. About readers of Beeton's EDM we can make no such assumption, yet in its own way this magazine, too, seemed to acknowledge a mission to educate and inform women of their economic rights.

An 1872 essay, for example, points out that women get only the meanest, least remunerative jobs because society does not train them for better employment; that men, as the stronger sex, have "sent the weaker to the wall";<sup>24</sup> and that although the women's movement may cause social agitation and destruction in the short run, in the long run it will create a better world, in part by permitting women to support themselves and thus avoid total dependency in marriage.

The British Workwoman provides evidence of another sort to show that the work attitudes of women in the lower economic ranks, as of those in the upper, contained a mixture of personal and practical elements; that a proportion of lower-class women may actually have worked at least in part from choice, or that having taken jobs from necessity they kept them from choice; that the psychic rewards they derived from their jobs were important as well as the cash. The evidence, a kind of negative refutation of the commonly held view, consists of cautionary tales and editorials in the Workwoman that repeatedly urge women to consider carefully whether their on-the-job earnings are actually needed, or whether in working they are not catering selfishly to their own whim. In almost any issue of this journal one can find a story like "John and Mary Scott: or Ill Effects of a Mother Leaving Home,"<sup>25</sup> which warns of the temptations of the outside job--not just money, but new interests and companions, so that a woman who takes a job will soon begin to socialize with her fellows at the day's end, gradually

scanting home and family beyond what mere working hours might justify. (The fact that men do this is offered as a reason why women must not.) These little morality sketches cite the horrible consequences of mothers' working--sickly infants, ragged and truant school children, drunken husbands, ill-kept homes--at the same time pointing out that by staying at home and being a careful housewife a mother can save as much by thrift as she could earn by paid work.<sup>26</sup> Besides reflecting the working class male's very real fear of female competition --the Workman and Workwoman were, after all, companion journals--such editorial counsel suggests that what sent at least some lower-middle-class women into the labor market was not financial need alone, but also needs that were less easy to define (and perhaps more politic to hide).

Working class women, despite their punishing hours and poor wages, found fellowship and a taste of the world in factory and mill.<sup>27</sup> Gentlewomen, barred by social stigma from such jobs, sought other ways to transcend the narrow limits of a home-centered, self-referring existence. They started Anglican sisterhoods of voluntary workers (here we should note that the church has traditionally offered women a way into, as well as an escape from, the world);<sup>28</sup> they worked to provide vocational and professional training for women;<sup>29</sup> they organized their own clubs for discussion and study.<sup>30</sup> But although their attempts to counter an oppressive social isolation differed from those of their lower-class sisters, their differing

circumstances and differing methods of coping with them should not blind us to the likelihood that both groups were responding to a similar stimulus. The evidence points increasingly in that direction the more we learn of what women in all ranks were reading and writing in the 60's and 70's.

Despite a widespread interest in work, there was rather a dearth of practical ideas. Typical of the advice given to hopeful but untrained women is a sprightly little essay in St. James's<sup>31</sup> which urges impoverished gentlewomen to solve their financial problems by hiring themselves out as high-level housekeepers--as if a system that did not give due recognition to a wife's household labor would somehow give it when the same work was performed by someone else. Then too, employment articles in the women's work journals often suggested occupations that would be almost impossible for the average woman, in view of her lack of education and training, to take on. Wood engraving, piano tuning, photography, and heraldry are proposed, along with translating, lecturing on sanitation, teaching navigation or astronomy.<sup>32</sup> Whether such lists represent the last-minute thoughts of a disingenuous editor, or whether they are seriously proposed, is hard to tell. Occasional mention of the need for a female apprenticeship system suggests that the writers had at least some awareness of female economic unpreparedness. But then, the idea that a female apprenticeship system would be acceptable to groups that had consistently and brutally put down female

labor is evidence of a childlike disregard for reality, a tendency to believe what you wish were true. In the category of fantasy, too, must go the many articles urging women to sell for profit their efforts at embroidery and sketching.<sup>33</sup> These doubtful schemes are so frequently advanced, the profits to be derived so glowingly exaggerated, that one suspects, in reading George Eliot's description in Daniel Deronda of the remunerative sewing and sketching of the young Meyricks, that the author is pricking this topical bubble with her own mild irony.

In their own publications women reveal their ignorance of the world of work, their fear of the consequences of encroaching on the male work preserve, and their anxiety therefore to propitiate in advance the male establishment. Barbara Leigh-Smith, arguing in favor of jobs for women, feels called upon to assure employers that women will expect "only half the wages of men."<sup>34</sup> And Josephine Butler declares that work will not masculinize women; when women have economic power they will put it to charitable use, seeing that the poor and neglected are cared for.<sup>35</sup> Yet there is resentment beneath this propitiatory mask; one feels it in the tart reply of a Woman's World correspondent to the assertion that family life is the best and most normal occupation for women: "All men," she writes, "talk that sort of nonsense about women,"<sup>36</sup> and adds that men have little right to preach women into a condition they themselves avoid as long as they can and devote as little

time to as possible. There is resentment, too, along with a shrewd sense of social injustice, in some of the analyses of economic exploitation of the female published in the women's press during the 60's and 70's. Who knows whether or not women want jobs and equal rights, asks an article in Victoria, since like "good niggers"<sup>37</sup> they must pretend to want what their masters want? Another Victoria contributor compares the economic exploitation of women to slavery. In factories, she writes, women are "almost invariably in the lowest and dreariest drudgery," while in the sick room they are allowed to sit up night after night nursing, though to learn medicine is considered beyond them. Clearly, says this writer, "women's physical strength may be drawn on ad libitum," so long as they are given no encouragement to "exert their minds."<sup>38</sup>

In the face of such economic oppression and social conditioning, the widespread female interest in paid employment to which the women's journals give testimony is in itself noteworthy--as is the evidence that women realized how their disabilities were perpetuated by a family system in which boys but not girls received money and training; by a legal system that did not recognize the married female as a person; and by a socio-economic system that detached female education, such as it was, from professional and economic goals. In fact, the realistic attitudes women took toward themselves and their economic situation as we see them reflected in the women's magazines of the 60's and 70's are often in striking contrast to

some of the sentimentalized, almost deliberately self-deceptive attitudes expressed in the general press. Neither the earnest Victoria nor the forthright Englishwoman's would have told its readers, as did Fraser's, that women, unlike men, require a "moral motive to urge them to much exertion"; that "money-making and the distant hope of advancement will not stimulate them"; that nature has so framed them that "hours in the nursery or sickroom, days of watching and sleepless nights, are not too much for the strength that shrank from walking over a hill."<sup>39</sup> On the contrary, what comes through most clearly in the women's press of the 60's and 70's is women's general feeling that they have enough strength for sick-room duty and the walk over the hill.

Those who advocated restricting woman's work sphere and maintaining her economic dependence on the male typically justified their views by decrying the social imbalance that would result from any change in the existing system. Were women to work for money and control their money, the world would be turned upside down--this general alarm sounds repeatedly in the periodical press of the 60's and 70's. An essayist in Fraser's, for example, points out that a married woman who controls her own wealth might be able to leave a husband she found incompatible, and take her children with her; she might even be able to buy her freedom from an impecunious husband.<sup>40</sup> To this writer the social dangers attendant on releasing the female from legal and economic dependency are obviously so great that they far

outweigh any considerations of individual rights. Women who think they are held in subjection are "prejudiced" writes another Fraser's contributor; "we can see no injustice in their seclusion within the peaceful precincts of home."<sup>41</sup> Whether those who are secluded wish to be so hardly seems to such writers a valid concern. Their optimum society requires each sex to play its complementary role in the social order. By contrast, periodical writers who espouse Mill's general views tend to see female economic independence as potentially beneficial to both individual and group. Viscountess Amberley typifies the attitudes of male and female feminists when she writes in the Fortnightly that women who acquire wealth and power may be less willing than men to accept the current social evils as inevitable. Sexual equality, she says, will benefit all; it will not "turn the world upside down";<sup>42</sup> it will make the world better.

Novels of the time often embody these contrasting attitudes toward women and money, women and work, and women's place in a commercial society. Dickens's Our Mutual Friend (1864), though it scarcely treats of jobs for women, says more clearly than almost any of Dickens's novels that wealth can taint everyone it touches, but especially women. Money so corrupts Bella Wilfer's better instincts that only a cruelly perverse trick can shock her into love and redemption. The mode of work that Dickens prefers for women is voluntary personal service performed within the home, and the heroine who most

thoroughly embodies this ideal is Esther Summerson in Bleak House (1852). Asked to assist Mrs. Pardiggle in her charitable rounds, Esther offers her own philosophy of charity and her view of woman's work:

At first I tried to excuse myself . . . on the ground of having occupations to attend to which I must not neglect. But as this was an ineffectual protest, I then said, more particularly, that I was not sure of my qualifications. That I was inexperienced in the art of adapting my mind to minds very differently situated, and addressing them from suitable points of view. . . . That I had much to learn, myself, before I could teach others. . . . For these reasons, I thought it best to be as useful as I could, and to render what kind services I could to those immediately about me, and to try to let that circle of duty gradually and naturally expand itself.<sup>43</sup>

Esther's concept of her proper work is individual service neatly contained within the circle of her private life; she sees herself as unfit for, and undesirous of, a broader worldly experience than might normally fall to her lot.

George Eliot's and Anthony Trollope's anti-heroines have very different concepts from Esther's about work, money, and the place of the female in the outside world. Dorothea Brooke hopes that money will enable her to play an active social role, to better herself and those less privileged than she. In the Phineas Finn novels, Trollope's Violet Effingham chafes at the restraints placed on the upper-class female, and wistfully eyes the self-sufficient working girl. Laura Kennedy for her part thinks that she could bear her matrimonial troubles better if she were allowed to work, even just to milk the cows on her husband's farm. And Madame Goesler, the third member of this trio, is a superb example of the worldly woman whose wealth

and commercial enterprise neither harden nor corrupt her but rather enable her to support her lover through his personal and political ordeals. The attitudes and experience of these anti-heroines are basically in harmony with Mill's assumptions about the potential social gains that would accrue from female economic liberation. Those of Dickens's women, on the other hand, seem to affirm Ruskin's view that competitive worldly experience must always harden those who engage in it, and that women must be protected from such "danger and temptation."<sup>44</sup> The Dickens heroine usually is so protected, while the Dickens working woman is frequently a housemotherly figure like Miss Potterson of Our Mutual Friend, whose customers are in essence her children. Each view of women and work contains its own implicit view of the social order and the individual's place within it. The Ruskinian view implies a certain manipulation of the person, especially of the female person, for the good of the state. It focuses on the goods and needs of society as a whole, and views society as a structure within which various groups must be assigned their proper spheres. The opposing view focuses on the goods and needs of the individual, and sees society as a structure created by its members and responsive to their changing needs.

#### Women, Education, and Power

Woman invades the market place, she storms the forum, she directs the stage, she controls art, and arranges morals, she prates metaphysics, she rules philosophy, she directs politics, she is everywhere, in season and out of season. She is rampant in the house, she is turbulent out of it;

she is supreme on the hearth, but that does not prevent her from bustling into the stables, usurping the billiard room, and making herself thoroughly at home among hunting prints, tobacco pouches, and spittoons.

--"The Excessive Influence of Women," Temple Bar<sup>45</sup>

. . . Few love it [knowledge] only for its own pure sake . . . an aim to an end is necessary. . . . this is the spirit of a man's work, that whether he be rich or poor, of the rulers or of the people, he works to an end--either to distinguish himself, to acquire power and influence and place, or wealth--or all. But with a woman it is different.

--"The Woman's Cry and the Man's Answer," Kettledrum-Woman's World<sup>46</sup>

Traditionalists extolled the tremendous power wielded by the Victorian woman in her sanctified household, a power to uplift men's hearts and ennoble their minds, and deplored her encroachment on what they deemed the male preserve. Feminists replied that in fact the average Victorian woman was a mere household drudge, powerless either to inspire others or improve her own lot; that only through equal education and equal professional opportunity would she ever acquire the power to elevate her environment. Again we have polarized views of men, women, and society. And again, when we examine these views we find on the part of those who resist change a fear that when women are educated, competent, capable of winning and exercising power, they will behave like men and plunge the world into chaos. The crux of the situation was not really better education for women--by the 60's and 70's that had become quite a respectable cause--but rather the ends to which such an education might lead. The efforts of women to attend classes in medicine and law were resisted more bitterly than the establishment of female colleges,<sup>47</sup> for the one implied female

acquisition of power and influence in hitherto male spheres, while the other could be assumed to lead merely to more highly cultivated wives and mothers. The latter goal was generally acceptable, but the former was not.

The education of women, writes Thomas Markby in the Contemporary Review, must be geared to their future tasks in the home. He adds that although female education is an important subject, men, since they have so much to do, "cannot go deeply into the question." Then from the depths of his admittedly shallow knowledge he condemns co-education as injurious to both sexes: "only men can make men--only women can make women."<sup>48</sup> An education that might diminish the difference between the two was clearly undesirable. A writer for Fraser's takes a similar point of view. Justifying his opposition to female matriculation at the universities, he warns that "in our anxiety to give to women the advantages enjoyed by men, we may . . . offer them the evil along with the good of our system. . . . It would be a great misfortune if women should be encouraged to devote themselves to a narrow study of some special subject, when that which they require . . . is to have their mind expanded and elevated."<sup>49</sup> Although this writer fails to explain why a thorough study of a special subject would not elevate a woman's mind as much as a superficial study of several, the initiated reader who has read many such arguments in the periodical press can recognize one reason why the general education is preferred. Special study leads to special

competence, and thus to potential social and economic power, an upsetting prospect to Victorians who saw the existing arrangements as best fulfilling the laws of God and the nature of man.

One can detect in numerous periodical essays this fear that a shift in the balance of power between male and female may bring on social disaster. Usually the fear is concealed beneath the mask of rational social concern. Sir Henry Taylor, writing in Fraser's on "The Subjection of Women," does not say that men are afraid of what might happen if women had power--he says that power is not, "either in man or woman, a legitimate object of desire." But he adds that the happiest people are generally those who are content with inequality, who have no power and want none. Through that sequence of reasoning he is able to adjudge women the happiest of creatures, even if they don't think so themselves. And if they are not contented, then society must for its own sake protect them from their perverse ambitions. He cites the vote as an example of a privilege that must be denied to women for everyone's good; giving women the franchise, he says, would be beneficial to society only if they were better than men, but as things are, a "constituency identical in competency will do no better for being doubled in number."<sup>50</sup>

Upholding a contrary view were articles like that by Charles Kingsley in Macmillan's,<sup>51</sup> which not only claims woman's right to all opportunities open to men but asserts that as a

rule women of all classes are the moral and intellectual superiors of men of the same class. Such inflated views were seldom indulged in by the women's press, which largely confined itself to protesting sexual discrimination on the grounds of equity, and asking for a chance to show how wisely they could wield whatever power they might win. Women asked for justice. As the Lady's Own Paper put it: "it is not English, nor manly, nor just, to bar the entrance [of women into the professions] by obstacles arising, for the most part, from puerile fear, or selfishness, or worse."<sup>52</sup> But what the Lady's Own Paper saw as fear or selfishness, the Edinburgh Review saw as a protective concern for women individually and society collectively. An 1869 article on Mill's "Subjection" points out that a professional education is unsuited to young women, who need something "better" than what men get. Further, a woman who overtaxes her brain will bear enfeebled, sickly infants; so that celibacy would be the only practical answer for the ambitious woman. This writer turns to the Bible in final justification and defense of the status quo: as with Adam and Eve, man comes first, and "service is his due."<sup>53</sup>

The women's press generally interpreted opposition to the granting of higher degrees to females and the exclusion of women from university qualifying examinations as the desire of the male establishment to keep women from graduating out of intellectual diletantism into professional competency. Beeton's ultra-bourgeois Englishwoman's said in an 1865 essay on

teachers and teaching: "If with this training [goal-less and aimless] women are not all, and altogether, inconsequent, incapable, frivolous, trifling, prejudiced, and deceitful, it is only because the good is difficult to be crushed out of a woman's nature, and not that of the education of the present day is calculated to facilitate its development."<sup>54</sup> And in 1872 it pointed out again that women who do not marry--the only occupation for which society fits them--have a right to say to the world: "'See what you have made us! You have given us no other means of living!'" The essay then adds that the one field in which women are allowed to become competent--teaching--generally pays them a wretched salary: "Given their intellect, their occupation is an ill-paid drudgery."<sup>55</sup>

In a society that preached self-improvement and paid at least lip service to intellectual achievement, opposition to the education and training of women had to be justified on other, and higher, grounds. And so it was. The English home and the English way of life were seen by the anti-feminists as endangered by the cultivation of the female mind. Or rather, by the use of that mind in the doing of the world's intellectual work. Those who both sympathized with female claims and enjoyed the comfort of things as they were found themselves in a logical box. Thus Trollope, lecturing on higher education for women, attempts to detach it from a professionally trained female work force, putting himself in the peculiar position of urging upon women a disinterested, disciplined, dedicated

puruit of knowledge for its own sake such as he admits few men ever aspire to, let alone achieve.<sup>56</sup>

### Women, Sex, and Morality

It can hardly be doubted that if the nursing of babies were given over to men for a generation or two, they would abandon the task in despair and disgust, and conclude it to be not worth while that mankind should continue on earth. . . . Can woman rise high in spiritual development of any kind unless she take a holy care of the temple of her body?

--"Sex in Mind and Education," Fortnightly<sup>57</sup>

Nature in the long run protects herself from our mistakes; and when we are in doubt, we may be guided by the general principles of equity and common sense. . . .

--"Sex in Mind and Education: A Reply," Fortnightly<sup>58</sup>

A propos of female demands for legal and medical training, a writer in Blackwood's declares that women can never become lawyers--they would be "closeted" with too many "rascally" men. A "vinegar-visaged spinster" would never persuade the jury, while a young and pretty woman would be pursued by males. Thus, females in the legal profession are on all grounds an impossibility. As for females in medicine, this writer points out that not only would women doctors expose themselves to danger if they made night calls, but such calls would represent an "infringement" of the "connubial contract."<sup>59</sup> Such a comment indicates the degree to which the emergence of women from the home into the office or library was seen as a threat not only to male social and economic power but to male sexual power. Indeed, when one tries to separate the various areas of Victorian feminist controversy--money, jobs, property, votes, education, divorce, child custody--one finds that the subtle

thread which weaves them all together is sexual dominance and sexual control.

Those who oppose sexual emancipation advance arguments that frequently lead them through tortured logic toward dubious ethical stands. A writer in Fraser's, for example, claims that women who learn to desire worldly achievement will never be willing to go back to the home, and in the next breath declares that so long as a "woman's vocation for home duties is sufficiently strong to make her return to them without suffering, then there is surely little injustice in leaving her altogether in so congenial a sphere."<sup>60</sup> The dialectical sequence seems to be that once out of the home a woman would never willingly go back to it, but that if she would willingly go back, then she might as well be left there altogether--so why give her a choice? The Fortnightly writer quoted at the beginning of this section places on an ascending scale of catastrophe the social consequences of female sexual emancipation, leaving no doubt that his final vision is of total chaos. Release from the home, he says, will "unsex"<sup>61</sup> woman. In her wrong-headed pursuit of unnatural activities, she will turn over her proper functions of nurse and mother to men, who will be both unable and unwilling to perform them. The course of events he outlines is instructive: first, women will become like men, turning over to men their duties and functions; then men, in despair at their incapacity to perform these duties, will abandon them as not worth performing; with the result that civilization will vanish from the

earth. In short, the survival of mankind depends on woman's being kept in a condition of sexual and domestic servitude.

The scope of the vast teleological structure erected over the modest base of woman's claims to equality in the 1860's and 1870's seems curious today, especially when we set doom-filled predictions of disaster alongside mild requests for a reasonable access to sexual information and a modicum of sexual independence. The reaction seems out of all proportion to the cause. But the answer may be that the modern reader can see what the Victorian perhaps did not--that women's pleas, whether couched in the rhetoric of indignation or persuasion, whether written by professional or housewife, by feminist or not, smack of conciliation and smell of fear. They reveal that women themselves were ambivalent about the kind and degree of change they were advocating. When women write that they are reluctant to express their actual views on suffrage, that they cannot bring themselves to ask for the money they need, that even though they take degrees and enter professions they will still be the same gentle, devoted creatures they always have been, it is clear that they are also saying something about the issue that lay at the heart of the Victorian woman question. They are saying that they will not force female emancipation to its full, final, sexual issue; that they are as fearful of losing their possessors as they are resentful of being possessed. The marital relationship was then, as it still is, the sexual matrix for social arrangements,

and Victorian women were frightened, just as were men, of what might happen if these arrangements were disarranged. Their fear represented not only the conscious awareness of being unable to cope economically, but also the subconscious awareness that alone they would experience a total loss of personal and social identity, and that they might be open to sexual exploitation on a scale far worse than the marital one, and that therefore they were somehow bound, soul and body, to the male.

This unspoken fear doubtless accounts in large measure for the subtle ambivalence, the self-protective caution that one senses in what women write about sexual equality during the 60's and 70's. Perhaps it is fear, too, that tends to keep their aspirations and demands down to the level of what might be achieved without major upheaval. The notion that "pure" women were sexless probably allayed the anxieties and justified the actions of many a Victorian male. In a similar way, women's view of themselves as desiring only modest changes in the sexual and moral spheres probably helped them to avoid facing questions they were not ready to deal with. In any case, there is little revolutionary defiance in what women write about themselves and their sexuality in the periodical press. They ask only very discreetly for more freedom, and tend to emphasize the need for knowledge above the need for experience. The campaign for female medical training, for example, is closely linked to women's demands for more knowledge

about the workings of their bodies. Women must consult female doctors about female complaints, says a writer for Victoria, explaining that these complaints now go unrecognized and untreated, either because women do not feel free to discuss them with males or because male doctors deny that they exist.<sup>62</sup>

Within the bounds of discretion and decorum, however, Victorian women writers are often extremely forthright about sexual matters, taking a more matter-of-fact attitude toward organic functions than men. Henry Maudsley, in the Fortnightly, writes about menstruation as if it were an almost totally disabling physical ordeal, one that leaves women sick and unfit for fully one quarter of each month. In a later issue of Fortnightly Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Britain's first woman physician, replies that if menstruation has any significant effect on a woman's capacity for mental and physical labor it is as likely to be beneficial--productive of increased energy--as detrimental.<sup>63</sup> Maudsley, however, insists on linking female sexuality and physiology to female education and female jobs, ultimately equating what he calls the "assimilation" of the female mind to the male mind with the assimilation of the female body to the male body.<sup>64</sup>

There is clear evidence in women's magazines of all types, from the bourgeois fashion book to the advanced journal of social opinion, that a substantial proportion of literate women wished to abolish the mystique about the female body and indeed the mystique that surrounded all questions of sex in

middle-class Victorian England. Certainly many wished to separate the question of sexual function and conduct from questions of social participation. Expressive of the first aim is the English Woman's Journal's call for courses on marriage and the family in the school curriculum: marriage and sex, the writer asserts, are as legitimate subjects of study for young people of both sexes as are Latin and Greek.<sup>65</sup> And perhaps the Englishwoman's comment on Elizabeth Garrett's marriage typifies the middle-class majority view on the second aim. Congratulating Dr. Garrett Anderson on her election to the school board, the magazine notes that the marriage and career of this capable woman should "set at rest"<sup>66</sup> the mistaken idea that professional training makes a woman unfit for domestic duties.

Abolishing the feminine mystique and detaching questions of female mental competency from questions of female physiology might be subsumed under a single feminist aim: to win for women the right to be considered as individuals apart from their sexual and reproductive functions. Many Victorian women apparently chafed in private at the constraints placed upon them always to be cheerful, sensible, uplifting, self-sacrificing helpmates. Only in the privacy of her boudoir, writes an EWJ contributor, can a woman "look as she likes, speak as she likes, and storm as she likes."<sup>67</sup> It is a point similar to the one Lady Laura Kennedy makes when she says to her husband: "There are moments, Robert, when even a married woman must be herself rather than her husband's wife. . . . You cannot make

a woman subject to you as a dog is so. You may have all the outside and as much of the inside as you can master. With a dog you may be sure of both."<sup>68</sup> To win this freedom to be herself, Lady Laura finally leaves her husband, and loses her social identity in the process. Gwendolen Harleth, lacking the courage, or perhaps the desperation, of Lady Laura, looks ahead to an endless entrapment with Grandcourt in a destiny that is irreversibly mutual, no matter how hateful the mutuality may become. She sees herself, if she should run away from Grandcourt, as losing all social caste, exposing herself to the humiliation of pity, to personal degradation and self-contempt. The fear is one motive behind her wish to please Grandcourt even as she despises him and despises herself for her wish. And the same feeling of a linked fate, in its masculine form, is what makes Grandcourt, despite his jealousy of Gwendolen and his compulsion to control her, almost resent the fact that Deronda, as he puts it, "hangs back"<sup>69</sup> from her. In some perverse way, his wife's value is lowered when she turns to another man who does not turn to her; and what lowers his wife's value lowers his.

#### The Woman Question and the Girl of the Period

The Girl of the Period . . . is a natural outgrowth of the circumstances. She is an involuntary protest. . . . The loud, coarse guffaw which arises out of the social wildness at the idea of masculinizing woman. . . . [she is a] giggle, natural in a social crisis.<sup>70</sup>

--The Girl of the Period Miscellany

Female ambivalence about sexual emancipation, and the fears of both sexes about the consequences of the changes already taking place, are strikingly expressed and embodied in one of the popular journalistic successes of the day--Eliza Lynn Linton's girl of the period. In creating her clever, impudent, but apparently appealing caricature, Mrs. Linton managed to capture and exploit the feelings of many segments of English society on the subject of women's rights. Those who favored it as well as those who opposed it could find something to admire or detest--but in either case to enjoy--in this journalistic equivalent of the Victorian anti-heroine. The girl of the period became as widely known and generally used a tag term for young English womanhood as did the term "flapper" in the American twenties. Appearing first in the Saturday Review, she was soon written about in all the general magazines as well as in the women's journals, and became the subject of a monthly miscellany. Mrs. Linton describes this young creature in terms that might equally well describe a Lizzie Eustace or--in her unregenerate, pleasure-loving days--a Gwendolen Harleth. The girl of the period, she writes, is "a creature whose sole idea of life is plenty of fun and luxury"; who desires "money before either love or happiness"; who is dissatisfied with the "monotony of ordinary life." Such young women, Mrs. Linton tells her readers, in repetitive if caustic and lively prose, are "ready to assert their equality with men, and express their envy of his life." But though

they wish equality, they "show themselves incapable of learning the first lesson set to men, that of doing what they do not like to do."<sup>71</sup>

Mrs. Linton cunningly succeeds in catering to readers on both sides of the woman question, frequently taking away with one hand what she gives with the other. In her light-hearted portraits of the girl of the period as willful and extravagant, for example, she seems to scoff at feminist aims and principles and to curry favor with the male establishment. Yet a visit to a school of art in London evokes admiration for the female students there, and the comment that "the utter vacuity of the lives of a great number of women and girls . . . affords no serious object for the employment of all those various capacities with which . . . most female minds are endowed." At one point she will cry in doggerel:

Oh, was it not stunning when John Stuart Mill  
Invented--the sweet, darling pet--woman's will?

and suggest that Mill's essay should have been called "The Subjection of Men," while in the next breath she will predict with seeming gravity the evolutionary process by which a woman "through long disuse of the feminine functions . . . may alter into a nondescript":<sup>72</sup> a nondescript with short, straight hair, flat breasts, and broad shoulders, or in other words, a man.

The peculiar mixture of casual off-handedness and grotesque exaggeration, of impertinence and acerbity that characterizes the girl of the period essays makes the author's own attitudes difficult to define. But the same mixture makes the

success of the series easy to explain. Mrs. Linton both ridiculed and took seriously, criticized and prized, accepted as inevitable and condemned as impossible, a complex of changing attitudes and conditions that frightened a good many Victorians half out of their wits. Her attitude was a dash of cold water on the fevered brow, a brisk slap on the face of an hysterical child. We're in a state of upheaval, she seemed to say, but things will right themselves eventually, and even if they don't--perhaps especially if they don't--we need not take it all too seriously.

From the social point of view, the girl of the period is at once a mischievous caricature and an object lesson on the failure of Victorian society to deal with its woman question. Viewed in relation to the novel of the period, she is like the fictional anti-heroine--a seeming lightweight who on closer look turns out to be an embryonic feminist, a woman who has begun to recognize her position but has not yet learned how to change it. The Gwendolen Harleth who declares pertly at the start of Daniel Deronda that what she wants in life is to have fun and do exactly as she likes is the Gwendolen Harleth who in the end discovers that she is in no position to do as she likes, even if she knew exactly what it was that she liked to do. And Trollope's Lizzie Eustace is another girl of the period, one who learns from the laws that govern the society in which she lives, and from the conduct of those she lives among, that a woman can gain financial independence only by lying,

scheming, and selling herself while she can command a good price.

Aspects of the woman question dealt with in novels of the 60's and 70's were more likely to be noticed in the women's magazines than in the general press. When the Eustace Diamonds was published, for example, the fact that it dealt with the fundamental question of female property rights was immediately picked up by the Englishwoman's Review. The Saturday Review commented that many women would have "utilized their ignorance of law" and hung onto the diamonds exactly as Lizzie does, but failed to see that in portraying Lizzie's ignorance Trollope might be saying something important about women, property, and the law. Even the Spectator, known generally for its sympathetic, perceptive reviews of Trollope, complained that the Eustace Diamonds was a "depressing story, in which all that is coarse and base is painted with lavish power, but where evil itself is not on a grand scale."<sup>73</sup> But it was exactly that point--that Trollope was portraying evil on the domestic rather than the grand scale--that the Englishwoman's reviewer was clever enough to see. In a brief but favorable notice, the writer calls attention to a passage from the novel in which the narrator asks: "And is it not the case that false pretexts against public demands are always held to be justifiable by the female mind? What lady will ever scruple to avoid her taxes? What woman ever understood her duty to the state?" Instead of resenting such questions, as a woman's

journal might have been expected to do, the Review recognized that the novel showed women as they might naturally be in a society that denied them legal and political rights. What taxes, it asked, have ever been imposed with the consent of lady taxpayers? And it followed the question with a prophecy: "When women are once admitted to the privileges of citizenship, they will awake to its responsibilities."<sup>74</sup>

Meanwhile the anti-heroines, the Lizzie Eustaces and Gwendolen Harleths, with their opposite numbers, the official Victorian heroines, set what the Lady's Own Paper called "the prevailing fashion of almost all the novels of the present day," the fashion of presenting "a bad and a good heroine."<sup>75</sup> What was behind this fashion, and what came of it--these two considerations may be taken as defining the dimensions of this study.

## CHAPTER II, FOOTNOTES

1. "Woman's Proper Place," Temple Bar, 33 (1871), 175, 178.
2. "Tuition or Trade," English Woman's Journal, 27 (1860), 183.
3. Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957), pp. 105, xvii.
4. "Vapors, Fears, and Tremors," Blackwood's, 105 (1869), 228-37; "Mr. Mill On the Subjection of Women," [sic] Blackwood's, 106 (1869), 309-21; J. B. Mayor, "The Cry of the Women," Contemporary Review, 11 (1869), 333-54; "Two Girls of the Period," Macmillan's, 19 (1868-69), 323-39; "The Ladies' Cry, Nothing to Do!" Macmillan's, 19 (1868-69), 451-54; "Two Views of the Convent Question," Macmillan's, 19 (1868-69), 534-43; "Women in Politics," Macmillan's, 20 (1869), 552-61; "Domestic Tyranny," Tinsley's, 5 (1869), 30-34; "Women's Education," Fraser's, 79 (1869), 537-52; Montagu Burrows, "Female Education," Quarterly Review, 126 (1869), 448-79; "What Women Think About Men," Temple Bar, 28 (1869-70), 216-22.
5. Statistics from Richard Altick, The English Common Reader (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 394-95, 359.
6. On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women: Three Essays by John Stuart Mill, ed. with intro. by Millicent Garrett Fawcett (London: Oxford University Press, 1912).
7. "Sesame and Lilies," The Works of John Ruskin, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1905), XVIII, 53-144.
8. Ruskin, op. cit., pp. 121-23.
9. Mill, op. cit., pp. 477-79.
10. See Gertrude Himmelfarb, Victorian Minds (New York: Knopf, 1968), pp. 314-32, for a discussion of social Darwinism.
11. "The Women of the Day," Saint Paul's, 2 (1868), 312-13.
12. It published fewer, however, than one might expect from a magazine so concerned with social and political issues. Among them: "Capabilities and Disabilities of Women," WR, NS 11 (1857), 49-72; "Capacities of Women," WR, 83 (1865), 466-83; "The Ladies' Petition," WR, 87 (1868), 29-36.

13. Henry Maudsley, "Sex in Mind and Education," Fortnightly, NS 15 (1874), 466-83; Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, "Sex in Mind and Education: A Reply," Fortnightly, NS 15 (1874), 582-94.

14. Cynthia White, Women's Magazines: 1693-1968 (New York: Humanities Press, 1971), p. 49.

15. See for example "Teachers and Teaching," English-woman's Domestic Magazine, NS 1 (1865), 18-20; "Ladies and their Money," EDM, 8 (1863), 112-17; on female MD's, see EDM NS 10 (1871), 183-84; on votes and financial independence, see "Woman's Rights," EDM, NS 12 (1872), 221-22.

16. See "The Employment of Women," Ladies' Treasury, 4 (1860), 6-8; "The Power of the Husband Over the Wife," LT, 6 (1862), 201-02; "Who Will Set an Example?" LT, NS 7 (1869), 64-67, 84-86.

17. "On Sisterhoods," Victoria, 1 (1863), 289-301.

18. This volume, called Victoria Regis, contained verse and prose by Tennyson, Thackeray, Trollope, and others.

19. Altick, p. 395.

20. "Female Labour," Fraser's, 61 (1860), 370.

21. "The Colliery Woman," EDM, 15 (1873), 21.

22. Irving Howe, "The Middle-Class Mind of Kate Millet," Harper's (March, 1970), pp. 110-29, argues that work has generally had a different meaning and value in the lives of women of different classes and ranks, in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

23. "Facts Versus Ideas," EWJ, 7 (1861), 73-84.

24. "Woman's Rights," EDM, NS 12 (1872), 222.

25. British Workwoman Out and at Home (March, 1864), pp. 38-39.

26. The Workwoman informs its readers that the woman should not be "the breadwinner but the bread maker" (September, 1869), p. 182; and that in leaving her home the working mother has "lost far more than she ever earned" (March, 1866), p. 230. If women worked solely from need, such counsel would scarcely have been needed.

39. "Female Labour," Fraser's, 61 (1860), 363-64.
40. Henry Taylor, "Mr. Mill on the Subjection of Women," Fraser's, 81 (1870), 153-54.
41. "Female Labour," 359-71.
42. "The Claims of Women," Fortnightly, NS 9 (1871), 101.
43. Charles Dickens, Bleak House (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 119.
44. Ruskin, Works, XVIII, 122.
45. "The Excessive Influence of Women," Temple Bar, 49 (1872), 214.
46. "The Woman's Cry and the Man's Answer," Kettledrum-Woman's World, (April 1, 1869), p. 249.
47. Queen's College was established in 1848, Bedford College in 1849, Girton College, Cambridge, in 1869; London University did not grant women medical degrees until 1877.
48. "On the Education of Women," Contemporary, 7 (1868), 245, 261.
49. "Women's Education," Fraser's 79 (1869), 559.
50. Taylor, "Mr. Mill . . . .," p. 148.
51. Charles Kingsley, "Women and Politics," Macmillan's, 20 (1869), 552-60.
52. Lady's Own Paper (Nov. 24, 1866), p. 1.
53. "On Mill's 'Subjection of Women,'" Edinburgh Review, 130 (1869), 584.
54. EDM, NS 1 (1865), 19.
55. "Woman's Rights," EDM, 3, 3rd ser. (1862), 221.
56. Anthony Trollope, "Higher Education of Women," Four Lectures, ed. Morris L. Parrish (London: Constable, 1938), 67-88.
57. Maudsley, p. 472.
58. Anderson, p. 594.

59. "The Rights of Woman," Blackwood's, 92 (1862), 192, 195, 197.
60. "Female Labour," p. 367.
61. Maudsley, p. 477.
62. "Lady Doctors," Victoria, 3 (1864), 126-37.
63. Anderson, pp. 583-85.
64. Maudsley, pp. 468-80.
65. "Antioch College," EWJ, 12 (1863), 223.
66. EDM, 9 (1871), 184.
67. "Modern Inconsistency," EWJ, 8 (1862), 308.
68. Anthony Trollope, Phineas Finn (London: Oxford University Press, 1951), II, 25.
69. George Eliot, Daniel Deronda (Middlesex: Penguin, 1967), p. 744.
70. Girl of the Period Miscellany, 1 (1869), 11, 34.
71. Eliza Lynn Linton, Modern Women and What is Said Of Them, 2 vols. (New York: J. S. Redfield, 1868), II, 25, 26, 258.
72. These citations are from GOPM, 1 (1869), 31, 163, 6.
73. For these criticisms see Anthony Trollope: The Critical Heritage, ed. Donald Smalley (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 376, 373.
74. Englishwoman's Review, NS 13 (1872), 91.
75. Lady's Own Paper (March 16, 1867), p. 262.

27. "Modern Domestic Service," Edinburgh Review, 115 (1862), 409-31, points out that the prospect of companionship, excitement, and after-hours freedom draws women into factory work in preference to the dreary isolation of domestic service.

28. In "Medicine as a Profession for Women," EWJ, 5 (1860), 151, Elizabeth Blackwell says that sisterhoods "provide an excellent opening . . . for all classes of women to a useful and respected social life"; see also "Our Ten Thousand," EWJ, 4 (1860), 311-16.

29. See Bessie Rayner Parkes, "What Can Educated Women Do?" EWJ, 4 (1860), 289-98, on training women for work in hospitals, prisons, workhouses, factories, schools; "The Education of Women in London," Victoria, 3 (1864), 481, on female vocational training; "On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women," EWJ, 4 (1860), 361-75, on the need for endowed schools, female apprenticeships, and female professional training; Helen Blackburn, "The Pursuits of Women," Englishwoman's Review, NS 20 (1874), 237-46, on the need for more employment opportunities for women.

30. These clubs were frequently satirized, as in "Men's Rights," Ladies' Edinburgh Magazine, 4 (1878), 559-62, which show male and female as having exchanged places, he staying at home with the baby while she goes to her all-female club.

31. "The Domestic Grievance," St. James, 2 (1861), 228-34.

32. See the Woman's Gazette or News About Work, 1-4 (1875-79); also "Something to Do," Young Englishwoman, NS 6 (1875), 218, 271, 627-29.

33. See for example YE, NS 6 (1875), 686, and "The London Needlewomen," Victoria, 3 (1864), 59-68 on the wretched pay given for such work.

34. "Open Council," EWJ, 5 (1860), 353-54.

35. Josephine Butler, "The Employment of Women," Woman's World, July 1868, pp. 150-53.

36. WW, August, 1868, p. 220.

37. "Women Electors," Victoria, 5 (1865), 277.

38. Emily Faithfull, "The Unfit Employments in Which Women are Engaged," Victoria, 2 (1863), 70.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE ANTI-HEROINE AND MONEY AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Lionel Trilling has equated the birth of the novel with "the appearance of money as a social element--money, the great solvent of the solid fabric of the old society, the great generator of illusion."<sup>1</sup> If so, then perhaps the realistic novel of modern society is born with the appearance of money as a significant element in the lives of women, as something to be earned or otherwise acquired for the independence, self-esteem, freedom of action, and social mobility that its possession confers. In the eighteenth-century novel we meet the young man who sets out to seek wealth and fortune; in the nineteenth-century novel we meet for the first time the young woman who sets for herself the same goal.

Important changes in the novel were made possible, perhaps inevitable, by changes in the economic position and expectations of women. Until the late nineteenth century the facts of life for the middle and upper class woman were inheritances, entailments, jointures, and marriage settlements. As her father's property before marriage and her husband's after, she lived in a situation of dependence that effectively limited her range of action in art as well as in life. If we consider Jane Austen's novels, for example, we see that although her

female characters take a forthright attitude toward money, their efforts to acquire it are not the generating force in her plots. As a rule, the line of development in a Jane Austen novel emphasizes not the thrust toward independence but rather the growth in self-understanding of her heroines, and their gradual acquiescence in the rules and limits of an existing social order which is presumed to be good.

All the female characters in Jane Austen's novels must either come to terms with this essentially beneficent social order, or suffer the personal and public pains of ostracism. Thus Jane Fairfax must marry Frank Churchill, although her character and abilities are far beyond his. But when we imagine for the moment a Jane Fairfax liberated from such a system, we can see how the plot of Emma might take a radically new direction. Emma's charming intrigues, her humiliating moments of self-discovery, might serve as a counterpoint to another struggle in which Jane attempts to fashion a life that will be consonant with her own values and her own worth. Such an alteration would of course destroy the artistic unity of Emma as we have it; but that was exactly the kind of change that was taking place in the novel of the 1860's and 1870's, in part as a result of the radical changes that had already taken place in the English social system.

In Dickens, we no longer have Jane Austen's beneficent social order. Dickens's principal male figures, especially in the later novels, are frustrated and bewildered by a

society that often denies them the very means of existence, so that they must fight in order to arrive at a point from which they can even envision the possibility of earthly good. Female figures in Dickens suffer equal hardships, but they seldom fight directly, as males do, and certainly they do not engage in the struggle for money. In fact, the female characters in Dickens often express a disregard for wealth, as though money in itself carried some moral or spiritual taint. Esther Summerson may enjoy the wealth of her guardian Mr. Jarndyce, or live contentedly on whatever modest income Allen Woodcourt may provide; she may not seek wealth for herself. Similarly, Little Dorrit rejoices at the loss of her fortune, because she is thereby enabled to marry Arthur Clennam. "Good" females in Dickens care little for riches, while rich females tend not to be good--as for example Miss Havisham or the unfortunate Lady Dedlock.

This pattern in Dickens accords, as we have seen, with the Victorian wish to dissociate women from commerce and greed. But the weight of evidence shows us that in the 60's and 70's this effort was breaking down. New ideas about the rights of women to own and control money and real property were winning acceptance. The Married Women's Property Bill, though not finally passed until 1882, was being read, sent to committee, reread, and again sent back, during the 60's and 70's; meanwhile popular magazines were publishing and commenting on the bill's provisions. In 1869 Mill published The Subjection of

Women, which was to some extent a reformulation of ideas already expressed in the 1851 essay on the enfranchisement of women,<sup>2</sup> and it is fascinating to note that what might seem one of the most extreme of these ideas--that in regard to personal liberty, economic power, and social autonomy, women were like slaves--does not, in fact, seem to have run counter to what women were saying publicly about themselves. A reader of Beeton's Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, perhaps the Victorian equivalent of our Ladies' Home Journal, comments in a letter to the editor that she sees the justice of the complaint that women are like slaves, adding that "everywhere abroad there seems to be a desire to change the 'Subjection of Women' into something more like fairness to our sex."<sup>3</sup> A few years later, in 1872, a writer for the same magazine says, "We utterly deny that women should depend on men for livelihood. . . . They must meet upon equal terms, or the consequences will be tyranny on the one hand and subservience on the other. Many women . . . in order to manage to get their own share of control, prevaricate, if they do not altogether deceive their husbands. Let the woman feel that she, too, has a share in the common fortune, the necessity of such dealings is altogether obviated."<sup>4</sup>

The cry was not only to be allowed to spend money, but to be considered capable of managing it. A woman who calls herself "A wife of the period" describes what seems to her the intolerable financial regime of her own household. She would like to

live within her husband's income, she writes, but he will not tell her what his income is; he complains if the house looks shabby, if she skimps on meals or fails to dress well, yet he constantly rails against extravagance, to the point where she is afraid to buy anything. The burden of her plea is simply to be treated as an adult: "If men told their wives what their income is, and showed them what rent, food, taxes, gas, garden, wine, and clothing cost each year . . . women would know better what to spend."<sup>5</sup>

Such views, as I have already shown, echo what was being said much earlier in the more advanced journals, especially those that openly supported the women's movement. As early as 1860 the English Woman's Journal was pointing out that women must have the right to earn and control money, so that in marriage they might be "equal partners" rather than "useless burdens,"<sup>6</sup> and declaring, "Man has decided that woman shall have no value in herself. She is the mere cipher on which her husband bestows existence with his name. She is socially in a state of perpetual childhood and pupilage until she marries."<sup>7</sup>

From these and similar comments we can see that the proposed new laws concerning women and property were in part a response to changes in attitude among women themselves, and among some men. Nor is it surprising that attitudes would change. In a culture which Carlyle had described as ruled by the Gospel of Mammonism,<sup>8</sup> and which Ruskin had said was

dedicated to the Goddess of Getting On,<sup>9</sup> women were bound to begin thinking about their economic contribution and their lack of economic power. By the 60's and 70's it seems that they had thought about it a good deal, and that money as the "social element," the "generator of illusion," had begun to affect them as profoundly as it had affected men. Money was the key to freedom and power, and the right to possess it outright--not just to have it on loan or as a lifetime allowance--was beginning to assume a place in the Victorian woman's ideas and feelings about herself. It was becoming a part of her self-image, as perhaps honor had become a part of the male self-image in the days of chivalry. And this was true not only among women of advanced ideas and purposes, but also among women of the fashionable world. Trollope gives us a clue to this kind of change in Phineas Finn, when Phineas says to Violet Effingham, "'A man should try to be something,'" and she retorts, "'And a woman must be content to be nothing--unless Mr. Mill can pull us through;'"<sup>10</sup>

It is chiefly through the anti-heroine, as I have suggested, that the novels of the 60's and 70's deal with this vast new complex of social attitudes and problems centering on women and money. She is the character who confronts the new facts of Victorian life; who not only admits that women are valued as property but takes active steps to increase her market value; who, in short, faces the world on its own terms. We can see quite clearly how the anti-heroine fits into--and

begins to change--the traditional novel of love and marriage if we look at the character of Cynthia Kirkpatrick in Mrs. Gaskell's novel Wives and Daughters, published in installments in Cornhill Magazine during 1864 and 1865, and issued post-humously as a book in 1866.

The heroine of Wives and Daughters is Molly Gibson, motherless young daughter of a country doctor who decides, when Molly is in her teens, to remarry. He chooses as his second wife a youngish widow, Mrs. Kirkpatrick, who was at one time the favored governess at the local manor house, and who will presumably be capable of supervising Molly properly as she grows up and makes her excursions into the polite society of Hollingford. As it turns out, however, Mrs. Kirkpatrick is a vulgar, snobbish woman, not always scrupulously truthful, and ambitious well beyond her means. When she brings her own daughter, Cynthia, to live in the Gibson household, the two girls form a lasting friendship, although their characters and manners are totally dissimilar--Molly being straightforward, innocent, and confiding, while Cynthia is brilliant, gay, and secretive. Molly soon realizes that Cynthia is the one who cuts the more dashing social figure, but the facts scarcely disturb her until she learns that the young man she loves, Roger Hamley, has fallen in love with Cynthia and proposed marriage.

Thus far, the novel is reminiscent of a Jane Austen novel--perhaps intentionally so, since it is set in the early

nineteenth century. The village of Hollingford is rather like the village of Highbury, with its stratified society, its fixed standards, its little idiosyncrasies of social usage that matter so much--an essentially closed world. Molly Gibson is likewise reminiscent of a Jane Austen heroine. She is like Fanny Price, for example, in her clear perception of right and wrong and her total lack of meanness or deceit, although unlike Fanny in her energetic personality and robust health.

Into this almost-eighteenth-century world, with its feudal earl and countess who set the social pace, with its kindly Misses Browning who know everyone's business and consider it their right to know, steps Cynthia Kirkpatrick, the anti-heroine, who does not fit the pattern. Schooled in France, neglected by her foolish mother, somewhat spoiled by an awareness of her own beauty and charm, Cynthia in some respects resembles Mary Crawford, foil for Fanny Price in Mansfield Park. But the difference between Cynthia Kirkpatrick and Mary Crawford is a striking indication of what has happened in English society and in the English novel in fifty years. Mary, whose frivolity and lack of standards contrast so strongly with Fanny's high principle, is rightfully banished from the world of Mansfield Park;<sup>11</sup> as an interloper who fails to meet the test of personal merit, she cannot enjoy public acceptance. But on Cynthia in Wives and Daughters, no such judgment is made. True, Cynthia leaves the society of Hollingford, but she does so by her own choice, in order to enter another kind of world

in which she expects to feel at home.

The root of Cynthia's difficulties, and the motive for her escape from Hollingford, is money. From childhood on, Cynthia had realized that she was an encumbrance to her mother, who supported herself in her widowhood by holding classes for young ladies. Forced to pay for her schooling abroad by helping the younger pupils, lonely and bored on holidays, Cynthia had come to hate poverty, and to hate even worse the need to cover it up. As she tells Molly,

The worry about money made me sick of my life. We might not say we were poor, it would have injured the school; but I would have stinted and starved if mamma and I had got on as happily together as we might have done--as you and Mr. Gibson do. It was not the poverty; it was that she never seemed to care to have me with her. As soon as the holidays came round, she was off to some great house or another. . . . I was very much in mamma's way, and I felt it.<sup>12</sup>

From this forlorn situation the estate agent at the house where Mrs. Kirkpatrick had been governess, a man older than Cynthia but still young and attractive, offers her an escape. He lends her money to buy clothes and pay the expenses incidental to her acceptance of an invitation to visit some rich acquaintances. In her new clothes, enjoying her new sense of wealth and independence, Cynthia discovers that her charms are valuable assets: "I began to think I did look pretty in my fine new clothes, and I saw that other people thought so too. . . . It was very pleasant to feel my power"<sup>13</sup>(452).

Unfortunately, in her ignorance Cynthia surrenders her newfound power to Mr. Preston, the man who has lent her the

money. Using the matter of the debt as a kind of blackmail, though still professing love, Mr. Preston extorts from Cynthia a promise of marriage when she reaches the age of twenty. Of course, by that time Cynthia is under the protection of her stepfather, Mr. Gibson, has learned to detest the man she took money from, and has before her the prospect of marriage to Roger Hamley, a young man distinguished in rank, intellectual accomplishments, and personal quality. Without detailing all of what happens to Cynthia, Molly, and the rest of Hollingford, I wish to point out the highly significant events that do not happen: Cynthia does not suffer lasting remorse for her early mistakes; when the truth of her youthful escapade comes out, she does not regret the fact that she will thereby lose a man who in character and attainment is all that a young woman could want; she does not show herself to be indelibly scarred by the want of proper discipline and moral training in her early life.

What Cynthia does do is to give up Roger Hamley, her exemplary Hollingford beau, go to London, and eventually marry Mr. Henderson, a rising young barrister with, report has it, an independent income. Now, while none of this is revolutionary behavior to modern eyes, in the Victorian novel it has its revolutionary aspects. Cynthia, after all, has jilted two suitors and entertained the suit of a third before the second knows he's been cast off--yet the author passes no harsh judgment on her giddy behavior. Nor does she banish Cynthia from

Hollingford. Indeed, in the last chapter the newlyweds are to return to pay the Gibsons a long visit. Instead of closing the world of Hollingford, and the world of the novel, to those who do not abide by its values, Mrs. Gaskell suggests in her treatment of Cynthia that just as Cynthia's standards do not suit Hollingford, so Hollingford's do not suit her. Even more important, she implies that the world is large enough to accommodate many different sets of value systems and ways of life.

Cynthia, for example, says to Molly:

I don't like people of deep feelings. . . . they don't suit me. . . . I won't have you classing Roger Hamley and Mr. Preston together in the same sentence. One was as much too bad for me as the other is too good. Now I hope that man in the garden is the juste milieu--I'm that myself; for I don't think I'm vicious, and I know I'm not virtuous.<sup>14</sup> (574.)

Earlier, Cynthia has tried to explain her feeling of unease in the Gibson household, and indeed in Hollingford generally: "You see, Molly . . . I've never lived with people with such a high standard of conduct before, and I don't quite know how to behave"<sup>15</sup>(396). But Cynthia, quick and adaptable, actually knows quite well how to behave in Hollingford; she simply does not consider the effort worth the trouble. When she rejects Roger Hamley she cries, "'It is such a comfort to feel free again. It wearied me so to think of straining up to his goodness'"<sup>16</sup>(523). Cynthia, it is clear, is as well suited to the fast pace and free manners of London as Molly is to the unhurried conservatism of Hollingford, and the difference between the two places--like the difference between Venice and Belmont

--has a great deal to do with money. In Hollingford, money is the necessary foundation for keeping up landed estates, for maintaining a modest level of domestic comfort, for sustaining oneself decently in the place one is born to. In London, money is the means by which one meets new people, has new experiences, and (if one is lucky) moves out of one's place. Cynthia, recognizing the ways in which money might change her life, frankly acknowledges her wish to have it. When she has a chance to leave Hollingford, she tells Molly

I can make ten pounds go ever so far. . . . You know I don't mean that it will be a comfort to leave you; that will be anything but a comfort. But, after all, a country town is a country town, and London is London.<sup>17</sup> (411).

Cynthia is one of the most successfully drawn characters in the book, and our concern for her owes much to her position on the fringes of Hollingford society, unbound by its rules, unfettered by its habitual modes of thought. When she goes to London to visit her aunt, a good deal of our interest goes with her, so that Hollingford seems a less lively place. We are drawn to her because, like Becky Sharp before her, she is the character who must make it on her own. But while at the end of Vanity Fair Becky is semi-interred in the booths of the charity bazaar, at the end of Wives and Daughters Cynthia's life seems only about to begin. If we assume that at the end of the novel Molly Gibson would have married Roger Hamley--and that seems to have been Mrs. Gaskell's intention--one is prompted to ask very few questions about her future life; it could

be summed up in a few paragraphs, much as Dickens summed up the married life of Esther Summerson and Allen Woodcourt. About Cynthia, however, one is not so sure, for she has launched herself into an urban, materialistic world, exposing her own rather tentative code of behavior to unfamiliar stresses and demands. She had indicated that Mr. Henderson suits her because his feelings are like hers--not mean or false, but shallow. And yet as Mrs. Gaskell portrays Cynthia, the point seems to be not that she is shallow but that her depths have not been sounded. She flies to London because she needs a less confined and exacting world than Hollingford, a world in which one can learn and grow, and make one's own mistakes. And those mistakes interest us more than Molly's assured future. Will a role as the beautiful wife of a successful barrister satisfy Cynthia, or will the taste of her own power prove even more intoxicating in London than it did at the first provincial ball of her youth? She yearned to be free of the restraints that Roger Hamley put on her--will not Mr. Henderson impose his own restraints?

These questions are not soap-opera teasers. On the contrary, they are the questions that provided major impetus for the development of the modern novel, but that during the early years of the Victorian period were for the most part not asked (at least not in fiction; poetry was in advance of prose in its consideration of mature love and marriage).<sup>13</sup> In the conventional early-Victorian novel the young married couple is

followed to the altar, the old folks are shown in their settled pattern of comfort or discomfort, what fills the years between is left largely a mystery. Wives and Daughters does not really clear away the mystery. Although Mrs. Gaskell paints a harsh, de-romanticized picture of Dr. Gibson's marriage, her view of the two partners does not go deeper than surface level; she does not relate Mrs. Kirkpatrick's foolish vanity to Dr. Gibson's patronizing emotional detachment, as George Eliot later relates Rosamund Vincy's faults to the faults in Tertius Lydgate which somehow call them forth. But through its anti-heroine, Wives and Daughters does take a fresh look at sex, money, and marriage in the lives of Victorian women, reopening the social-sexual struggle that Richardson had depicted on entirely new grounds. For the conflict between Cynthia and Mr. Preston involves sex, money, and the connections between the two. Cynthia was young and ignorant when she took his twenty pounds, but not so ignorant as not to sense the impropriety of doing so, and not so young as not to respond to his sexual attraction. Once under bondage, however, she finds him revolting. The situation becomes unendurable when as a result of her mother's remarriage new and better prospects open to her. Preston, somewhat more civilized in his tactics with Cynthia than was Lovelace with Clarissa, nevertheless seeks to retain his prize in the same way--by exercising the power a male holds, in a society based on the double standard, over a female who has no money and has

compromised herself.

In Cynthia's response to this attempt at sexual coercion, however, we glimpse a totally new set of feminine attitudes. In the first place, what Cynthia feels for Preston is not the all-consuming love-hate that Clarissa felt for Lovelace, but merely an early attraction turned to distaste. Further, she turns to Preston not out of desperation, but in order to further her venture into the high life of Worcestershire. Love, Cynthia's experience seems to suggest, is not everything in a woman's life, it is merely one thing, and some women may take it as lightly as do some men. Moreover, the fact that Cynthia is never physically overpowered, as was Clarissa, seems to point toward an even more significant fact--her emotional autonomy. This quality--we might almost call it an emotional disengagement--helps to place Wives and Daughters as a novel of the 60's, a work in the transitional stage between early Victorian and late Victorian, which might be called early modern. Cynthia's relative nonchalance about Mr. Preston, about Roger Hamley, even about Mr. Henderson, is unacceptable in an early Victorian heroine, whose life and happiness are bound up in the man she loves. But as we shall see, the disengagement, combined with a moral uncertainty that would also be unacceptable in a conventional heroine, is typical of the anti-heroine of the 60's and 70's. As an anti-heroine Cynthia can toy with the notion that she might marry Preston "out of pure revenge, and have him in my power" (455).

As an anti-heroine she can accept Roger Hamley's passionately sincere proposal, returning neither passion nor sincerity, and then, jilting Roger, engage herself almost immediately to Mr. Henderson. And since she is not a heroine but an anti-heroine, it can be suggested that the desire for money motivates some of these acts. For the element of sexual barter is made fairly explicit. When Cynthia seeks to rid herself of Preston by returning his money, he tells her, "'You seem to imply you sold yourself for twenty pounds!'" (446) and although she denies it, in a sense that is exactly what she has done, not having had anything else to sell.

Mrs. Gaskell's candid assessment of Cynthia's position breaks new ground. Without making Cynthia either a hussy or a helpless victim, she shows quite clearly that lack of money and position not only expose a woman to bad treatment at the hands of others, they may also prompt her to behave badly herself. Asking Molly's help in recovering the letters that Preston holds as a threat against her, Cynthia tries to explain how she got mixed up with such a man. Molly, who can barely excuse the first indiscretion, finds it impossible to excuse a second on top of the first:

"But, oh, Cynthia, how could you go and engage yourself to Roger?" asked Molly.

"Why not?" said Cynthia, sharply round upon her. "I was free--I am free; it seemed a way of assuring myself that I was quite free; and I did like Roger--it was such a comfort to be brought into contact with people who could be relied upon. . ." (454).

One thinks suddenly of Jordan Baker, and her hatred of careless people; indeed, Cynthia is rather like a Jordan Baker, true in her fashion but playing the game to win. She engages herself to Roger Hamley for a variety of reasons, but one of them is that he can offer her the worldly advantages that poverty has so far deprived her of. "'I should like to have gone as far as Paris with him,'" she tells Molly, as Roger leaves for his scientific expedition; "'at Boulogne . . . I used to envy the English who were going to Paris . . . nobody stopped at Boulogne but dull, stupid schoolgirls'" (366).

Cynthia's attitude toward her lovers, and the kind of marriage she eventually makes, indicate that Mrs. Gaskell had looked rather sharply, and critically, at the pattern for love and marriage that was conventionally endorsed by middle-class Victorians but that was not necessarily adhered to even by those who professed to honor it most. Cynthia more or less knowingly honors it in the breach. Though not a bad character, she is a vulnerable one; when money is concerned she can be corrupted, and when sex is concerned she can be false. And since she lives in a world that gives her few options but to trade on her sex, she is not likely to steer clear of either falsity or corruption. In acknowledging this fact, Wives and Daughters turns somewhat tentatively toward a subject that becomes central in the later novels of Trollope and George Eliot --the effect of money on the moral and sexual choices of women and men.

Stylistically, however, Wives and Daughters seems to split apart as it looks back toward the beginning of the century and forward toward the end. Let us consider the opening passage:

To begin with the old rigmarole of childhood. In a country there was a shire, and in that shire there was a town, and in that town there was a house, and in that house there was a room, and in that room there was a bed, and in that bed there lay a little girl; wide awake and longing to get up, but not daring to do so for fear of the unseen power in the next room . . . (1).

Mrs. Gaskell evokes this old-fashioned, folk-tale mood repeatedly as she develops the story of Molly, and Molly herself re-enacts some of the traditional rites of the folk-tale heroine. Leaving her sheltered home--it might almost be a simple woodman's hut, so removed is it from the strains and vanities of worldly life--to attend a party at the estate of the Earl and Countess of Cumnor, Molly wanders away from the buzz and bustle of grown-up festivities:

Molly turned back and passed out of the heated atmosphere. She felt better in the fresh air; and, unobserved and at liberty, went from one lovely spot to another, now in the open park, now in some shut-in flower garden, where the song of the birds and the drip of the central fountain were the only sounds, and the tree-tops made an enclosing circle in the blue June sky; she went along without more thought as to her whereabouts than a butterfly has, as it skims from flower to flower, till at length she grew very weary . . . . The hot sun told upon her head, and it began to ache. She saw a great wide-spreading cedar-tree upon a burst of lawn towards which she was advancing, and the black repose beneath its branches lured her thither. There was a rustic seat in the shadow; and weary Molly sate down there, and presently fell asleep. (13)

The vein is prose pastoral, for a fairy tale of the rural midlands, complete with the appropriate cast--unfeeling

stepmother, dilatory prince, fairy godmother who sets all to rights. Initially, the pattern is a twosome, Molly and her beloved father; when Mrs. Kirkpatrick destroys this symmetry, life becomes disordered and formless. Only when the true prince recognizes the true princess do the fragments of Mrs. Gaskell's design reassemble in a new harmony. Before this happens, however, Molly must undergo further trials. Roger Hamley's brother Osborne, elder son and heir to the estate, has been secretly married to a Frenchwoman. After Osborne's sudden death, the distraught young wife presents herself and her small son (the new heir, hidden away until the moment of revelation) at old Squire Hamley's house, where she promptly falls ill. It is Molly who nurses her, in consequence of this stint of self-sacrificing devotion falling ill herself. The sense of unreality that hangs over this improbable series of events is intensified by the nature of Molly's illness. It has no definite physical cause, being akin to those mysterious languors or trances that commonly afflict the heroines of the folk tale or romance, and from which they commonly awake as if new made. Molly too is marvelously transformed, so much so that when Lady Harriet, fulfilling her fairy-godmother role, brings Molly and Roger Hamley together once more, the scales fall from his eyes, and he sees that it is Molly he has loved all along. Thus, Molly will remain in the closed world of Hollingford, while Cynthia braves the dangerous delights of London.

The shifts in style that we find in Wives and Daughters bespeak a curious double vision on the part of its author. Perhaps we can get at the nature of this double vision if we place beside the self-conscious, storytelling mode of the passages quoted above the following exchange between Molly and Cynthia on the occasion of Cynthia's rejection of Roger:

"Molly, Roger will marry you! See if it isn't so! You two good--"

But Molly pushed her away, with a sudden violence of repulsion. "Don't!" she said. She was crimson with shame and indignation. "Your husband this morning! Mine tonight! What do you take him for?"

"A man!" smiled Cynthia. "And therefore, if you won't let me call him changeable, I'll coin a word and call him consolable!" But Molly gave her back no answering smile. (525-26).

The great contrast revealed here between Molly's and Cynthia's standards, modes of thought, and ways of perceiving the world lies at the root, I think, of the stylistic contrasts found in Wives and Daughters. While Hollingford has fixed rules about life and conduct to which Molly basically subscribes, London life is less fixed, less predictable, more open to change. And the means by which change may be accomplished is money, a lesson which the poor but ambitious young man learns in the eighteenth-century novel, and the poor but ambitious young woman in the nineteenth. Molly's Hollingford looks back to the world of Jane Austen, while Cynthia's London looks ahead to the world of Henry James. When Cynthia opts for London, we begin to sense the possibility of a future Isabel Archer, who will use her money to carry her as far and as deeply into life as she can go.

This divergence of material seems to pull the novel in two directions, for Molly's story and Cynthia's are never unified by the kind of central, governing, judging consciousness that we find, for example, in Jane Austen. When Fanny Price, shocked at Edmund Bertram's decision to take part in the theatrical venture at Mansfield Park, says to him, "'I am sorry for Miss Crawford; but I am more sorry to see you drawn in to do what you had resolved against, and what you are known to think will be disagreeable to my uncle,'" <sup>14</sup> we sense in Fanny's words the cool, precise judgment of Jane Austen herself. Turning Mansfield Park into a setting for amateur theatricals goes against everything that the house, with its spacious grounds and its tranquil domestic tradition, has stood for. On his return from Antigua Sir Thomas will find discord, jealousy, and moral laxity threatening the inner structure of his household, as the physical disarray of theatrical construction has threatened its outer form. Further, we know that in the world Jane Austen has created there is no room for these opposed systems of conduct and belief. But because Wives and Daughters lacks this central, judging consciousness, we are never quite sure how to respond to Cynthia--or rather, we are sure that although we ought to care more for Molly, Cynthia's plight seems more immediate and real. In the Molly-Hollingford portion of the novel, we see a shepherdess-princess against a pastoral landscape, timeless and remote. In the Cynthia-London portion, we see a contemporary young woman in a local

habitation. The two parts exist side by side unreconciled, as though at some point Mrs. Gaskell herself had come to feel that her heroine might be a myth. But this insight is not followed up, and Wives and Daughters remains an unfocused work, unfinished in the literal and figurative sense of the word.

In 1873, almost ten years after the appearance of Wives and Daughters, Anthony Trollope published The Eustace Diamonds. It is a dazzlingly finished product, a novel of neat, indeed elegant dimension that captures in sharp focus a total vision of Victorian society. Three plots, a large, flamboyant cast of characters, a headlong spin of events, are woven together by means of a central theme and a deceptively casual but firmly controlled style into a texture of remarkable variety, density, and strength. As we follow the characters from London to Richmond to Scotland, from town house to seaside castle, we never feel, as we feel with Cynthia Kirkpatrick and Molly Gibson, that we are being jarred from one world into another. One explanation for Trollope's unified vision might be that an aspect of Victorian life not painfully obvious in 1864 had become so in the succeeding decade; the web of commercial interest, Carlyle's cash nexus, had both expanded and tightened, so that Molly Gibson's Hollingford was truly past history. Then too, in writing of a moneyed class and the effect of attitudes fostered in that

class on society at all levels, Trollope was writing of what he knew as only someone who has grown up in but not part of that society can know it. He had an insider's knowledge and an outsider's detachment, an accident of background that in some measure explains his impulse toward pity for the fragile individual conscience subject to outside pressure, and his ability to predict and control the reader's response to ambiguous moral situations. In The Eustace Diamonds the problem of how we are to judge Lizzie Eustace simply does not come up, because the author in effect preëmpts our power of judgment. In a variety of subtle ways he persuades us to withhold our exercise of moral censure--or to put it another way, to submerge ourselves in the world of the novel. Before I show how Trollope achieves this feat, I will sketch briefly the story of Lizzie Eustace, which in its bare outlines explains the need for the kind of relativistic moral universe Trollope creates.

Lizzie is an anti-heroine par excellence, a woman of alarming strength of will and equally alarming weakness of moral fibre. She is propelled in her odyssey through the perilous seas of London society by two ambitions: to win financial independence and make a good marriage. For assets she has beauty, intelligence, style, and a truly formidable obstinacy and determination. Her chief liability--but in the world of the novel it is not necessarily a liability--is a large capacity for deceiving herself and those around her.

When the book opens, Lizzie is an orphan of nineteen, well born but penniless. She accepts a proposal from Sir Florian Eustace, fully aware that he will probably die of consumption before the year is out, and rushes the marriage not only in order to inherit his estate, but also so that Sir Florian will become liable for debts she has incurred before her marriage, but about which she has never told him. At the end of a wedding trip spent abroad, Sir Florian, aware of Lizzie's subterfuge about the debts and presumably of her motives for marrying, dies. Here is Trollope's comment on these events:

She had so far played her game well, and had won her stakes. What regrets, what remorse she suffered when she knew that he was going from her,--and then knew that he was gone, who can say? As man is never strong enough to take unmixed delight in good, so may we presume also that he cannot be quite so weak as to find perfect satisfaction in evil. There must have been qualms as she looked at his dying face, soured with the disappointment she had brought upon him, and listened to the harsh querulous voice that was no longer eager in the expressions of love. There must have been some pang when she reflected that the cruel wrong which she had inflicted on him had probably hurried him to his grave. As a widow, in the first solemnity of her widowhood, she was wretched and would see no one. . . . Twelve months since she had hardly known the man who was to be her husband. Now she was a widow,--a widow very richly endowed,--and she bore beneath her bosom the fruit of her husband's love.<sup>15</sup>

The quality of our judgment, and of our mercy, is here quite literally strained through the author's sieve. A moment of moral revulsion is allowed for, slightly tinged with sympathy (note Sir Florian's "harsh querulous voice"--the sick are never as grateful for our care as we feel they ought to be), and then we are hurried on to more pertinent matters, such as Lizzie's pregnancy and her future plans. Whatever our own

feelings about Lizzie may be, the author has in effect assured us that he is aware of them and takes them into account, but that now we must sit back and let the story develop.

As it develops, that story is of a kind certain to outrage the sensibilities of a society that liked to put its women on a pedestal and enclose them within the protective walls of sanctified domesticity. Not only is Lizzie a challenge flung in the face of a world that professes to believe in these female domestic angels, she is also live evidence that the belief itself is a mere sham, for in the end, although Lizzie loses some major skirmishes, she wins the main battle. She makes the world take note and give her, if not sanction then at least admiration, if not a place of honor then at least a place.

The plot of The Eustace Diamonds centers on a fabulously valuable necklace that is in Lizzie's possession at the time of her young husband's death. She contends, quite untruthfully, that when Sir Florian had clasped it around her neck he had told her that it was to be hers forever. But the Eustace family claims that the necklace is far too valuable a bit of property for a man to have been able to give it to his wife as a gift, and that in fact it is an heirloom which should, upon Sir Florian's death, revert to the family estate. Lizzie's attempts to keep the necklace eventually fail, because it is taken from her by jewel thieves. But in her defiance of Mr. Camperdown, the lawyer who initiates action

against her for possession of the jewels, she is so far successful as to force him to concede that the necklace cannot in law be an heirloom and might in fact be legally hers. Before following up the clues to the diamond mystery, let us look again at the methods by which Trollope insures that the reader will learn the facts of the story in proper sequence and respond to them in an appropriate way. The novel opens with this passage:

It was admitted by all her friends, and also by her enemies--who were in truth the more numerous and active body of the two--that Lizzie Greystock had done very well with herself. We will tell the story of Lizzie Greystock from the beginning, but we will not dwell over it at great length, as we might do if we loved her. She was the only child of old Admiral Greystock, who in the latter years of his life was much perplexed by the possession of a daughter. The admiral was a man who liked whist, wine, --and wickedness in general we may perhaps say, and whose ambition it was to live every day of his life up to the end of it. People say that he succeeded, and that the whist, wine, and wickedness were there, at the side even of his dying bed. He had no particular fortune, and yet his daughter, when she was little more than a child, went about everywhere with jewels on her fingers, and red gems hanging round her neck, and yellow gems pendent from her ears, and white gems shining in her black hair. She was hardly nineteen when her father died and she was taken home by that dreadful old termagent, her aunt Lady Linlithgow. Lizzie would have sooner gone to any friend or relative, had there been any friend or relative to take her possessed of a house in town.

(1).

The amount of information that Trollope gives us in that passage is astonishing, but even more astonishing is how swiftly and solidly he builds up the value system by which we are to sort, select, and weigh this information. From the first sentence we know that in Lizzie's world what "everybody" says matters, and that everybody admires what Lizzie has done

with herself. We don't quite know what Lizzie has done, but from the author's admission to a feeling for her that falls somewhat short of love--he does not call it hate, or indeed qualify it in any way--we can surmise that what she has done does not seem wholly admirable to him, and might not to us. But the narrator's values are carefully separated from those of Lizzie's friends (and enemies, for presumably enemies and friends have the same set of values), while the reader is, as I have suggested, neatly maneuvered into the narrator's pocket.

Besides characterizing the social milieu which Lizzie inhabits, the passage presents Lizzie herself in such a way that moral considerations tend to fade away as irrelevant to the situation. Lizzie appears as an exotic, a gypsy changeling, with her topaz earrings and her black hair ablaze with brilliants. On a more prosaic level, we see that Lizzie can have had little more training and discipline than a gypsy child, since she was allowed to run about in such inappropriate finery. The admiral's wickedness--a sophisticated, raffish wickedness--hardly shocks us, and it drains Lizzie's bereavement of the vaporous sentiment that often envelops orphan girls in Victorian novels. Moreover, we are prepared by the admiral's character for a certain raffish element in Lizzie herself--and more importantly, for the kind of tough practicality implied in that comment about the house in town.

Trollope thus makes us countenance Lizzie--or at any rate forestalls our rejection of her--in part by allowing the

narrator to judge her directly in purposefully neutral tones, and in part by characterizing the society that has produced her as one in which worldly interests--that is, money interests--out-weigh all others, where acts are always judged according to their practical consequences.

Still, despite Trollope's success in making the saga of Lizzie fascinate rather than repel, Lizzie herself remains a hard pill to swallow. What are we to think of a young woman who lies when it would be easier--and less disastrous--to tell the truth; who marries for money, then uses her dead husband's property as a means for securing another titled husband; who refuses to let this second victim out of her clutches when he, perceiving that there will be court action in the matter of the necklace, withdraws his proposal on the ground that she has become notorious; who for months lets all London society and every detective in Scotland Yard think the necklace has been stolen when in fact it has been safe in her desk the entire time? One part of the answer, of course, emerges in the very recital of these events. They succeed one another in such rapid and lively fashion, they give rise to such bizarre situations and such delicious complications, that we scarcely give them serious moral consideration, any more than we worry when a character in an animated cartoon is crushed under the doughnut-shaped wheels of an oncoming vehicle--we know that as the vehicle moves on he will pop up and resume his old shape. Similarly, we know that though Lord Fawn finally wriggles out

of his engagement to Lizzie Eustace, some other man will come along who is more susceptible to her wiles and less scrupulous about her ethics; and we await his arrival with a kind of relish. There is, indeed, a quality of caricature, a Restoration-comedy glitter, to the entire story, from its brittle young anti-heroine to its chorus of worldly onlookers, to its fatuous young men who consider that a recital of monetary assets constitutes an acceptable proposal of marriage. Lord Fawn woos Lizzie in this fashion:

"My father's property was all Irish, you know."

"Was it indeed?"

"And he was an Irish peer, till Lord Melbourne gave him an English peerage."

"An Irish peer, was he?" Lizzie understood nothing of this, but presumed that an Irish peer was a peer who had not sufficient money to live upon. Lord Fawn, however, was endeavouring to describe his own history in as few words as possible.

"He was then made Lord Fawn of Richmond, in the peerage of the United Kingdom. Fawn Court, you know, belonged to my mother's father before my mother's marriage. The property in Ireland is still mine, but there's no place on it."

"Indeed!"

"There was a house, but my father allowed it to tumble down. It's in Tipperary;--not at all a desirable country to live in."

"Oh, dear, no! Don't they murder the people?"

"It's about five thousand a year, and out of that my mother has half for her life."

"What an excellent family arrangement," said Lizzie. There was so long a pause between each statement that she was forced to make some reply.

"You see, for a peer, the fortune is very small indeed."

"But then, you have a salary;--don't you?"

"At present I have;--but no one can tell how long that may last."

"I'm sure it's for everybody's good that it should go on for ever so many years," said Lizzie.

"Now," said he, "I have told you everything about myself which I was bound, as a man of honour, to tell before---I---I---I. In short you know what I mean."

"Oh, Lord Fawn!"

(71-72).

Since we really cannot sympathize with an oaf like Lord Fawn, we cannot chastise Lady Eustace for making a fool of him. Together, they completely deflate the Victorian romantic ideal. Lizzie, allowing a decent interval to pass before she accepts Lord Fawn's proposal--about five minutes--declares:

"You have paid me the highest compliment that a man can pay a woman. Coming from you it is doubly precious; first, because of your character; and secondly--"

"Why secondly?"

"Secondly, because I can love you." This was said in her lowest whisper, and then she moved toward him gently, and almost laid her head upon his breast. Of course he put his arm around her waist--but it was first necessary that he should once more disembarass himself of his hat, --and then her head was upon his breast. "Dearest Lizzie!" he said.

Then he kissed her again . . . and took his leave, promising to be with her at any rate on Wednesday.

"Lady Fawn!" she said to herself. The name did not sound so well as that of Lady Eustace. But it is much to be a wife; and more to be a peeress. (73).

This little scene illustrates perfectly the nature of the "love" between Lizzie and Lord Fawn, and is evidence, if evidence were needed, that The Eustace Diamonds succeeds as an amiable spoof of the materialism underlying conventional, sentimentalized Victorian views of love and marriage. The authorial voice never falters; the pace is rapid or leisurely, according to the dictates of the plot; those characters who must appear in the round do so, while those who are flat, mere caricatures, fill neatly the background space they are meant to fill. Appraised in those terms, the novel is a considerable achievement for its time, a sophisticated comment on a society that in general distrusted sophistication, preferring an

earnest high-mindedness in both its entertainments and its sermons. But The Eustace Diamonds is much, much more; it is a compassionate but deeply disillusioned study of a flawed society, an exposure of attitudes and beliefs so firmly rooted that almost no one questioned them, yet so corrupt that they poisoned at the source the generous, loving, trusting impulses between human beings. To analyze the novel according to criteria appropriate to works of that stature and intention is difficult, because it requires pulling apart threads that the author has unobtrusively and beautifully knit together. But only by taking them apart can we appreciate the full magnitude of Trollope's original concept, and the admirable scope and proportions of the design through which he realizes it.

To begin with Lizzie's hoodwinking of Lord Fawn, and her outrageous defiance of custom, law, the protestations of all right-thinking people: as a spoof, this is all delightfully amusing, and to insure that the reader may be amused, the author takes the reins of moral judgment lightly but firmly into his own hands, in the manner I have already shown. But The Eustace Diamonds is also a searching inquiry into one of the most urgent social concerns of the day--the question of female property rights. Beneath its surface of comic realism, the novel lays bare the social inequities and moral evils that can arise from ambiguities of law, in this instance property law, with its corrupting effect on love and marriage. A

framework of symbolic meaning, for which the diamond necklace is the basic motif, sustains the novel on this level. As cornerstone of the main plot and supporting member of two subplots, as touchstone that tests the true nature of each character, as concrete embodiment of what all classes of society consider most valuable and most worth protecting, the necklace functions in both literal and figurative senses throughout the novel.

At the outset, as we have seen, jewels are used to give Lizzie a gypsy exoticism that prepares us for the childlike cunning with which she clutches at her bauble through the social catastrophes and legal skirmishes in which it embroils her. But though a mere bit of glitter in one sense, the necklace is in another sense a symbol of what Lizzie means to have despite all the efforts of society and the law to deprive her of them--money and power. Furthermore, the necklace has come into her possession in exactly the way that wealth, according to social custom and legal stricture, was supposed to come into the possession of women--by gift, in this case a husband's gift. "With all my worldly goods I thee endow"; the English church prescribed the pledge, and English law purported to uphold it. But as Mill had pointed out, although in marriage husband and wife "are called 'one person in law,' for the purpose of inferring that whatever is hers is his . . . the parallel inference is never drawn that whatever is his is hers."<sup>16</sup> The entire plot of The Eustace Diamonds exposes the contradictions inherent in such a system, and the hypocrisies it gives

rise to--not through overt moralizing or ponderous philosophizing, but through swift jabs of the needle, as in this exchange between Lizzie and her evil-tempered aunt:

"I have come for the credit of the family, if any good can be done towards saving it. You've got your husband's diamonds locked up somewhere, and you must give them back."

"My husband's diamonds were my diamonds," said Lizzie stoutly.

"They are family diamonds, Eustace diamonds, heirlooms --old property belonging to the Eustaces, just like their estates. Sir Florian didn't give 'em away, and couldn't, and wouldn't if he could. Such things ain't given away in that fashion. It's all nonsense, and you must give them up." (152).

Of course, Lizzie does not give them up. Instead she locks them in an iron strongbox that she lugs with her, at great inconvenience, to the castle in Scotland which by the terms of Sir Florian's will is hers--for her lifetime. But Lizzie doesn't understand the difference between lifetime and permanent holdings. Though a clever woman, she understands nothing of abstract possession, legal terminology, lawyers' hair-splitting, or the on-paper manipulation of riches; and this ignorance exemplifies the childlike status accorded to the female in Victorian law. Like a child who wants his toy in his fist and his cake between his teeth, Lizzie wants her jewels in a box and the key around her neck. Moreover, her stubborn refusal to part with them wins her the kind of attention that a child gets--and which, incidentally, no docile, ladylike behavior could ever have won for her. Lady Glencora Palliser, social leader in the world of wealth and political power that Trollope creates in his parliamentary series,

calls on Lizzie for the first time after thieves, failing in their first attempt to steal the necklace, have succeeded in their second. The stolen necklace has become the chief object of interest not only to the police who are trying to trace it, and the Eustace family lawyer who wishes to hold Lizzie responsible for its restitution, but also to the top rank of London aristocracy:

She [Lady Glencora] had come, she said, especially to give the Duke of Omnium's compliments to Lady Eustace, and to express a wish that the lost diamonds might be recovered. "I doubt," said Lady Glencora, "whether there is any one in England except professed jewelers who knows so much about diamonds as his grace."

"Or who has so many," said Mrs. Carbuncle, smiling graciously. (549).

As everyone in the novel is to one degree or another drawn into the controversy over Lizzie and her diamonds, the reader gradually absorbs the knowledge that money and possessions are the primary concern of this society. While one may fail in despite of money (at the end of the story Lizzie recklessly overplays her hand), one certainly cannot succeed without it, since all social arrangements, on a domestic or larger scale, are based on property considerations. The necklace is both the concrete symbol of this near-sanctification of wealth, and the concrete means by which male-female relationships in the novel are either distorted or destroyed. Lizzie, discovering soon after her widowhood that she is dangerously ignorant about money, property, law, and finally life itself, longs for a second husband, a dashing "Corsair" who will support and protect her. This longing for a

protective corsair is a neat example of Trollope's subtle use of irony, for in fact all the men who court Lizzie have designs on her money. Lord George de Bruce Carruthers admires her spirit but is much more attracted by her income. That alliance cools, however, when Lizzie, panicking on the occasion of the first attempted theft of the necklace, is unable to admit that the thieves have merely stolen an empty box and allows suspicion to fall on Lord George. He for his part thinks she has engineered a fake theft in order to elude the claims of the Eustace lawyers. Then when the necklace is actually stolen, Lizzie herself suspects Lord George. What this little web of intrigue and misconception illustrates is that in a society that puts the preserving of property before personal tenderness and all spontaneous feelings, mutual trust between the sexes is virtually impossible. Lord George makes the point explicit when he remarks on the hypocrisy of a marital system that yokes people together for material convenience, then asks them to swear undying love:

"I assert that if men and women were really true, no vows would be needed;--and if no vows, then no marriage vows. Do you believe such vows are kept?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Carbuncle enthusiastically.

"I don't," said Lucinda.

"Nor I," said the Corsair. "Who can believe that a woman will always love her husband because she swears she will? The oath is false on the face of it."

"But women must marry," said Lizzie. The Corsair declared freely that he did not see any such necessity. (395).

Failing to convince Lizzie that women need not marry, Lord George does succeed in making her understand that he

need not marry her. When he takes his leave, she reproaches him for not forgiving her her faults. Assuring her that he does forgive them all, "he took her hand in one of his; patted her on the head with the other, as though she had been a child, and then he left her" (681). Obviously that is the point. Lizzie is a child, a child who wants what she hasn't been taught how to use or take care of; a child with an incompletely developed sense of right and wrong; a child who lies out of fear that the grown-ups will discover what she has done and punish her for it; a child who hangs onto what she has managed to get because everyone else seems to want it. In all these characteristics, Lizzie resembles Mrs. Linton's girl of the period, the extravagant, reckless, willful young person who was scolded, analyzed, deplored and defended through the late 60's and early 70's. She is also like the woman Mill describes who, because the law has never determined what her rights are and theoretically allows her none at all, operates on the assumption that "the measure of what she has a right to, is what she can contrive to get."<sup>17</sup>

Contriving to get what she can, Lizzie encounters many men, and provokes a variety of male response. Lord George prudently withdraws when he sees that he cannot control her. Mr. Camperdown, lawyer for the Eustace family and for Lord Fawn, bullies her; but in the end he, too, backs down, since the law, while not exactly upholding Lizzie's claim, certainly puts down his. Lord Fawn, Lizzie's reluctant suitor, eventually reveals himself as a coward and buffoon; although he

will prostitute himself to live on Lizzie's money, he won't take her on at the risk of offending the stuffer element of London society. In each one of Lizzie's relationships with men, money interests are paramount, although in some instances there is personal concern as well. Her cousin Frank Greystock, for example, sticks with her throughout her trials, supporting her handsomely when she declares that Lord Fawn has no right to renege on his marriage offer and no right to tell her what property she may or may not possess. But then, Frank Greystock might want to marry Lizzie himself. Not because he loves her, but because her income could do much for a rising young barrister.

Frank finally resists this ignoble impulse. But his love, and that of Lucy Morris, the second of Trollope's three young women in this novel, is also nearly destroyed as a result of the complications surrounding the diamond necklace. Lucy, like Lizzie an orphan, comes as near to being a conventional Victorian heroine as The Eustace Diamonds offers; certainly she presents a sharp contrast to its anti-heroine. Lucy is honest, true, self-effacing but not self-deprecating, frank, courageous, all that a young woman should be--and in the course of the novel she is subjected to one degrading experience after another, each one stemming from the fact that she is poor. Although she loves Frank and Frank loves her, the marriage must be postponed until Frank earns more money. Meanwhile, drawn into Lizzie's affairs through both kinship and

his fascination with the prospect of marriage to a rich widow, he neglects Lucy, who is shunted about from shelter to shelter like an animal or a slave. For a time she works as a governess to the kind-hearted Lady Fawn, mother of Lizzie's suitor; but when she has the misfortune to offend Lord Fawn (as she does in the course of defending Frank Greystock), she is sent from Fawn Court to the gloomy house and gloomier temper of Lady Linlithgow. Even Lucy's final triumph, which comes when, after six months of neglect, Frank Greystock makes good his promise to take her to live at his parents' house until they can be married, is a very muted one. Here is Trollope's description of Frank as he returns to claim Lucy:

Everybody knew that he had behaved badly to Lucy,--everybody, except Lucy herself, who, from this time forward, altogether forgot that she had for some time looked upon him as a traitor, and had made up her mind that she had been deceived and ill used. . . . All his sins were forgiven him. No single question was asked as to his gross misconduct during the last six months. No pledge or guarantee was demanded for the future. There he was, in the guise of a declared lover, and the fatted calf was killed. (700-01).

It is in the light of Lucy's fate--and the fate of Lucinda Roanoke, third in the trio of young women in the novel--that we are expected to view that of Lizzie Eustace. Lucy, after suffering for months the slights, insinuations, and mistreatment that insensitive people accord to those they consider their inferiors, finally becomes engaged to a man who believes, as does everyone else, that he is sacrificing himself to marry her. After fifteen months in the household of her future

mother-in-law, whose "quarrel had never been with Lucy personally--but with the untoward fact that her son would not marry money," (702) she and Frank will marry. Certainly it will be no pastoral celebration of nature's riches. Trollope even sets for us the scene--"somewhere north of Oxford Street"--where Frank, giving up his pleasant familiarity with the nobles and politicians who, though "delighted to welcome him, would not care for his wife," will retire into "dim domestic security" (118).

This marriage that does take place and another that does not, that of Lucinda Roanoke to Sir Griffin Tewett, together provide the perspective from which we may observe and evaluate the story of Lizzie Eustace. Lucinda has a modest fortune and an aunt, Mrs. Carbuncle, who is determined to buy her niece the best title she can with it. Lucinda sullenly submits to the scheme, the lies, and the petty meannesses of the whole sordid procedure, but only up to a point. She has declared so often and so vehemently that she detests Sir Griffin that at length she convinces everyone, including Lizzie, that she will not go through with the marriage. Everyone, that is, except Mrs. Carbuncle, who is determined to make her go through with it, and Sir Griffin, whose need to capture and tame her becomes more obsessive the more savagely she treats him. In the end, she escapes only by locking herself in her room on the day of her wedding. But in locking herself into her room she seems to lock herself off from life. After the abortive

marriage ceremony, Frank Greystock is asked if the dreadful story about Lucinda Roanoke's wedding is true; has she really gone out of her mind? Frank concedes that the event is dreadful, but suggests that the marriage, if it had taken place, would have been worse. As for the young lady, "she had been taken somewhere out of the way" (691). Trollope might have exploited this episode as comedy; significantly, he does not. Instead, he stresses the tragic implications of Lucinda's position and the lengths to which she is driven to extricate herself from it.

It is in Lucinda's story that Trollope's theme of sexual barter, the inhuman traffic in human souls and bodies, sounds in its full resonance. Lucinda, paraded through drawing rooms like a prize horse at a fair, "would almost have preferred a shoemaker--if she could have become acquainted with a shoemaker in a manner that should be unforced and genuine"(361). Meanwhile she is sold to Sir Griffin, and the wedding gifts pile up, never to be used, symbols of an evil human waste.

A comparison of these two love affairs with Lizzie's adventures forces us to draw some sharp conclusions. In The Eustace Diamonds no fairy-tale mist such as surrounded Molly Gibson in Wives and Daughters surrounds Lucy Morris. Lucy is subject to all the crass, mercenary pressures that breed the Lizzie Eustaces of society, and although they do not corrupt her they bruise her badly. She must marry knowing that the world, and probably her husband, thinks her a financial

liability. Nor is Lucinda Roanoke's choice--not to marry at all--presented as a viable alternative. Lucinda vanishes from the pages of the novel in the way that penniless spinsters who refused loveless marriages may have vanished from the fashionable drawing rooms of Victorian society; tongues wagged, heads shook, the rest was silence. And thus we are brought around to the conclusion that Lizzie's life, unsatisfactory though it is, may be just one of many unsatisfactory alternatives, and perhaps not the worst. At the end of the book Lizzie accepts the proposal of Joseph Emilius, a charlatan preacher, a Jew turned Christian, an outsider--as Lizzie herself has become an outsider--who will try to fleece her of all she has managed to hang onto. But perhaps Lizzie will learn. Meanwhile she has her Scottish castle to pose in, a son whose status as heir gives her a weapon against the Eustace clan (for elder sons were the most valuable of property), and enough nerve to brazen out the consequences of her appalling ignorance and her strangely forgivable sins.

At the end of the novel Lizzie also has the somewhat surprising eulogy of John Eustace, brother of the late Sir Florian, a man who has all along opposed legal action against her, and one of the few characters in the book who put the claims of property below those of tolerance, fair-mindedness, and sound judgment. When Lizzie has finally won her fight with Camperdown, the lawyer who has tried to recover the diamonds by going to law, that gentleman, sore in his defeat, says of

Lizzie: "There's nothing a pretty woman can't do when she has got rid of all sense of shame." To which John Eustace replies:

"She is a very great woman . . . a very great woman; and, if the sex could have its rights, would make an excellent lawyer." (656).

In context, this remark may be as much against the law as it is for Lizzie, for the novel has shown the law--at least as it concerns women and property--to be an ass. By the same token, it has shown Lizzie to be great in only one respect--her determination to fight the law and win. But with the diamonds gone, what has she won? Here Trollope's irony is masterful, for as the novel ends we see clearly that the necklace stolen has exactly the same monetary value to Lizzie as the necklace in the safe--which is to say, none. Since the law had never given her the right to possess it, she could have no right to dispossess herself of it. The law that could not take it from her could require her to keep it, could prevent her from realizing its cash value, could--at least in Mr. Camperdown's view--compel her to pay for it if it were stolen or lost. Thus, the many structural and thematic functions of the necklace include the function of exposing the contradictions and inequities of the law itself, and the ways in which it may be perverted to serve venal ends.

That Trollope should organize a novel around a legal ambiguity is hardly surprising. He was knowledgeable about law, and had dealt sympathetically with women who defied or

broke the law in previous novels, among them Orley Farm. What is surprising is that it has generally escaped notice that the central concern of The Eustace Diamonds is property, and specifically the property rights of women. All events in the novel, all character conflicts, all crucial situations, are referable to this shaping idea. Without arguing for or against giving women these rights, Trollope shows how existing laws and attitudes made tender, spontaneous male-female relationships virtually impossible. For although the book focuses on the career of its grasping anti-heroine, money--to have or have not--is fully as decisive in the lives of the other two young women in the novel. And all three move with equal vividness and force through one realistic, materialistic universe.

The philosophical base from which Trollope views this universe is traceable in its main outlines to Ruskin's premise in "Ad Valorem" that the only true wealth is life. What does not avail toward life, avails toward death:

Whence it appears that many of the persons commonly considered wealthy, are in reality no more wealthy than the locks of their own strong boxes are, they being inherently and eternally incapable of wealth . . . acting not as wealth, but (for we ought to have a correspondent term) as "illth," wausing various devastation and trouble around them in all directions. . . .<sup>18</sup>

Lizzie and her necklace are "illth" throughout The Eustace Diamonds. For evidence of Trollope's intention in this regard we need only compare Ruskin's theories as expressed in "Ad Valorem" with this passage at the end of the novel:

And this was the end of the Eustace diamonds as far as anything was ever known of them in England. Mr. Camperdown altogether failed, even in his attempt to buy them back at something less than their value, and was ashamed himself to look at the figures when he found how much money he had wasted for his clients in their pursuit. In discussing the matter afterwards with Mr. Dove, he excused himself by asserting his inability to see so gross a robbery perpetrated by a little minx under his very eyes without interfering with the plunder. "I knew what she was," he said, "from the moment of Sir Florian's unfortunate marriage. He had brought a little harpy into the family, and I was obliged to declare war against her." Mr. Dove seemed to be of opinion that the ultimate loss of the diamonds was upon the whole desirable, as regarded the whole community. "I should like to have had the case settled as to right of possession," he said, "because there were in it one or two points of interest. We none of us knew, for instance, what a man can, or what a man cannot, give away by a mere word."

"No such word was ever spoken," said Mr. Camperdown in wrath.

"Such evidence as there is would have gone to show that it had been spoken. But the very existence of such property so to be disposed of, is an evil. Then, we have had to fight for six months about a lot of stones hardly so useful as the flags in the street, and then they vanish from us, leaving us nothing to repay us for our labour." All which Mr. Camperdown did not quite understand. Mr. Dove would be paid for his labour--as to which, however, Mr. Camperdown knew well that no human being was more indifferent than Mr. Dove. (656).

What Mr. Camperdown does not understand, of course, is Mr. Dove's notion of the usefulness of things, and what constitutes reward or payment for labor. Dove, referring to "use" and "value" in the Ruskinian sense of availing toward life, implies that the necklace has done just the opposite. In Ruskin's sense the necklace is an absolute evil; "in proportion as it leads away from life, it is unvaluable or malignant,"<sup>19</sup> But Mr. Camperdown's concept of value is the materialistic one shared by almost every character in the book, the figurative thread that draws society together.

Lizzie Eustace has sometimes been unfavorably compared with Becky Sharp, the suggestion being that if Lizzie were more forceful in her wickedness, less afraid of the world, less shaped by convention, The Eustace Diamonds would be a greater book.<sup>20</sup> Such comments indicate a misreading of Trollope's purpose. It is important that Lizzie is shaped by, and to some degree mastered by society; so is almost everyone in the novel, especially the women. Trollope saw life as dealing from the same deck to all women, and so he placed his "good" and his "bad" heroines in the same world, uniting the threads of narrative that had remained separate in Wives and Daughters. But although he saw his world fully and clearly, he did not subject it to a rigid moral scrutiny; as one of the least judgmental, most compassionate, most genuinely comic of English novelists, he was not well suited to such a task. It was a task perfectly suited to the genius of George Eliot, whose anti-heroines I shall consider next.

## CHAPTER III, FOOTNOTES

1. Lionel Trilling, "Manners, Morals, and the Novel," The Liberal Imagination (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953), p. 203.
2. "Enfranchisement of Women," Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, 55 (1851), 289-311. Mill later attributed this essay to Harriet Taylor.
3. Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, 7 (1869), 167.
4. "Woman's Rights," EDM, (1872), 349.
5. EDM, 7 (1869), 221.
6. "On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women," English Woman's Journal, 4 (1860), 367.
7. EWJ, 4 (1860), 66.
8. Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present, ed. Richard D. Altick (Boston: Riverside, 1965), pp. 147-51.
9. John Ruskin, "Traffic," The Genius of John Ruskin, ed. John D. Rosenberg (Boston: Riverside, 1963), p. 286.
10. Anthony Trollope, Phineas Finn (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), II, 243.
11. See Marvin Mudrick, Irony as Defense and Discovery (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 165 ff. for a different view of Jane Austen's use of Mary Crawford in Mansfield Park.
12. Mrs. Gaskell, Wives and Daughters (London: Everyman's Library, 1966), p. 451. Further references are to this edition.
13. Sexual conflict and dominance/subjugation in sexual and marital relationships are dealt with in Browning's Pippa Passes and "The Flight of the Duchess," in Tennyson's "Locksley Hall" and Maud, and in Arnold's "Tristram and Iseult" and the poems to Marguerite, to cite only a few obvious examples.
14. Jane Austen, Mansfield Park (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 123.
15. Anthony Trollope, The Eustace Diamonds (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 9. Further references are to this edition.

16. John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women, intro. Millicent Garrett Fawcett (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 463.
17. Mill, *op. cit.*, p. 477.
18. Ruskin, *op. cit.*, p. 262.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
20. See Anthony Trollope: The Critical Heritage, ed. Donald Smalley (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961), pp. 372-73 for such comments by contemporary reviewers.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ANTI-HEROINE AND PERSONAL AND INTELLECTUAL POWER

At the beginning of The Mill on the Floss, Tom Tulliver is away at school. Maggie, left at home, forgets to tend Tom's rabbits, which all die. In one of those overwhelming moments of childhood grief that George Eliot makes us feel so keenly, Maggie flees to the attic--her refuge, where she beats her doll in fury at her own mistakes--to await Tom's forgiveness. The moment of reconciliation is both particularized--"they ate together and rubbed each other's cheeks and brows and noses together, while they ate, with a humiliating resemblance to two friendly ponies"<sup>1</sup>--and generalized:

We learn to restrain ourselves as we get older. We keep apart when we have quarreled, express ourselves in well-bred phrases, and in this way preserve a dignified alienation, showing much firmness on one side, and swallowing much grief on the other. We no longer approximate in our behavior to the mere impulsiveness of the lower animals, but conduct ourselves in every respect like members of a highly-civilized society. Maggie and Tom were still very much like young animals, and so she could rub her cheek against his, and kiss his ear in a random, sobbing way; and there were tender fibres in the lad that had been used to answer Maggie's fondling; so that he behaved with a weakness quite inconsistent with his resolution to punish her as much as she deserved . . . (I, 37).

Leaving the animal warmth, the undifferentiated community of childhood for the firm self-containment of maturity is the hazardous challenge of the human condition. In George

Eliot's work, it seems comparable to the birth trauma, and in fact is often signified by a passage through water. But while the birth experience is universal, the later, more difficult passage is attempted by only a chosen few, and of these, few succeed. Maggie Tulliver succeeds, despite obstacles placed in her way by the culture she is born into, despite her own nature, despite the fact that she is a woman who desperately needs love. The structural base of The Mill on the Floss, the sequence of action that gives the novel its dimension and form, is the rough, often painful process of individuation that Maggie forces herself to undergo. At its end, she has achieved a personal power that can only come through the development of both the mind and heart; she has acquired the authority conferred by an intellectual understanding made supple enough to encompass the sensual, the irrational, the wholly human, yet tough enough to impose its own moral discipline.

Maggie's struggle to achieve this intellectual and personal power dramatizes George Eliot's views of the peculiar capacities and obligations of women, and provides a paradigm for her treatment of the principal female figures, the anti-heroines, of her later novels. More significantly for the future of the novel, it introduces into her fiction two contrasting systems of values and beliefs which can be traced in thematic continuity through The Mill on the Floss, Middlemarch, and Daniel Deronda. The dynamic force generated by

these opposed systems drives these works through the chronological barrier of the Victorian era into our own.

The nineteenth-century male and female, in classes above the laboring level, met as a rule in the nursery, the garden, possibly the early schoolroom, and then much later in the parlor, the ballroom, the marriage bed. George Eliot herself followed a part of the pattern, separating from Isaac, her older brother and constant childhood playmate, to attend boarding school at age five--a definitive separation in the emotional sense, despite continued holiday companionship in later years. But she never completed the prescribed sequence. Parlor and ballroom figured only lightly in her young womanhood, study, library, and publisher's office filling the foreground. These were the places where she made male friends, and one can almost imagine, from the excited pleasure evident in her letters about these associations, that she had found a coeducational intellectual garden that recreated some of the joys of her first years.

The experience shines through her fiction. It must be the source of those questions that seem to work themselves almost subliminally into the reader's consciousness: what can explain, and justify, a nearly lifelong sex division, and what kinds of people does it create? What happens when male and female, so molded, meet--in love, anger, fear, worship, or something of all these? What potentialities exist for a fruitful exchange of experience from which might come at least a

model of what men and women could make of their lives together? The last concern seems most pressing in the three novels I discuss in this study, for each in its way suggests that the unique experience of women goes almost for nought in a world dominated by male values and modes of life.

The Mill on the Floss offers the first thorough exploration of these questions in George Eliot's work, and it results in the articulation, through Tom and Maggie, of two distinct value systems. One, which puts a premium on the practical purpose and the pragmatic act, is associated with Tom Tulliver. The other, which proclaims the mind's dominion over time and circumstance and insists on the absolute reality of the interior life, is associated with Maggie. At the end of the novel, Maggie validates her own system. Acting in accordance with her deepest feelings, and with the lessons she has, at great cost, learned, she not only betters the lives of those around her, she also brings into at least a partial harmony her outward circumstances and her inner aspirations--an achievement which effectively defines George Eliot's concept of personal power.

The pattern of Maggie's struggle to achieve this power resembles in minor ways the Romantic quest for the highest self, but with the major difference that the quester is a woman, facing obstacles different in both kind and degree from those faced by men, and winning very different victories. George Eliot depicts the quest as being long, arduous, and

scarcely amenable to alleviation by outside forces, since one can only achieve self-understanding by experiencing to the fullest all the suffering and sorrow that inevitably accompany growth. Such a view of woman's mission is quite new to the English novel. Charlotte Brontë gropes toward something of the kind, but her efforts are obscured by the clouds of Gothic romance that hang over her work, as well as by the implicit assumption--present even in Villette, though there in a somewhat ambiguous fashion--that the end toward which a woman develops herself is an abiding attachment to a male, whether or not it culminates in marriage. George Eliot makes no such assumption, and for this reason, as well as for others which I shall discuss later, her principal female figures are most aptly described as anti-heroines. For the conventional Victorian heroine, marriage with love represents self-fulfillment and the highest attainable worldly good. For George Eliot's anti-heroines, the abiding sexual attachment, despite--perhaps even because of--its desirability, may seriously threaten or abort the course of moral and intellectual discipline to which they commit themselves.

For George Eliot, mental and moral faculties are always linked, a growth in moral sensibility being accompanied by a corresponding growth in intellectual comprehension. In a letter to Sara Hennell she writes of "the clearness of moral vision which aids the intellectual clearness,"<sup>2</sup> and she insists on the kinship of mind and spirit throughout her work. But

while the special nature of George Eliot's moral vision as developed in the novels has received much critical attention,<sup>3</sup> little notice has been taken of the provocative fact that in developing these concepts chiefly through her female characters, she placed an explicit, absolute value on the female soul and female intellect such as no English novelist had yet done. To become autonomous, independent, morally and intellectually powerful; to become capable, through enlarging and deepening one's experience and understanding, of placing oneself in a direct relationship with the world and everyone in it, was scarcely held out as a woman's duty--or indeed her privilege--by earlier novelists. Even Mrs. Gaskell's studies of female sensibility and moral courage in Mary Barton, Ruth, and North and South, fail to define the female in terms not basically referable to the male. In George Eliot this view is strikingly reversed. Her major female figures, from Maggie Tulliver to Gwendolen Harleth, thread their way through a moral and intellectual obstacles course from which the sexual dependency often seems to provide an easy escape. For Maggie Tulliver, marriage to Stephen Guest represents a self-defeating surrender; for Dorothea Brooke and for Gwendolen Harleth, a disastrous marriage leads to increased self-knowledge. Far from being an ultimate desideratum, marriage is a possible step in the lonely quest for personal vision and power. Not power in the sense of self-aggrandizement or the imposing of one's will on others--though in their modest

fashion George Eliot's anti-heroines frequently do impose their will on others--but power as the realization of one's highest capacities of heart and mind. In thus fleshing out her vision of what a woman should achieve, George Eliot placed the female in a direct relationship to the world, establishing her claim to the realm of ideas and the life of the mind. In her novels, no male figure mediates between the female and the universe, and this powerful validation of woman per se is perhaps the most significant nineteenth-century contribution to feminism in English fiction.

Not the least interesting aspect of the contribution is the fact that the author herself was never an outspoken supporter of the feminist cause. Her attitude was characterized by a general sympathy with its basic aims and a general reluctance to endorse any specific program. She outlines her position quite clearly in a letter of May, 1867 to Mrs. Peter Taylor:

I do sympathize with you most emphatically in the desire to see women socially elevated--educated equally with men, and secured as far as possible, along with every other breathing creature, from suffering the exercise of any unrighteous power. That is a broader ground of sympathy than agreement as to the amount and kind of result that may be hoped for from a particular measure.<sup>4</sup>

When considering, as here, the social disabilities of women as a class, she tends to rephrase the issues so that they refer to the problems or needs of people generally--"every other breathing creature." Discussing in a letter to Barbara Bodichon the desirability of higher education for

women, she writes:

What I should like to be sure of, as a result of higher education for women--a result that will come to pass over my grave--is their recognition of the great amount of social unproductive labor which needs to be done by women, and which is now either not done at all or done wretchedly. No good can come to women, more than to any class of male mortals, while each aims at doing the highest kind of work, which ought rather to be held in sanctity as what only the few can do well. I believe, and I want it to be well shown, that a more thorough education will tend to do away with the odious vulgarity of our notions about functions and employment, and to propagate the true gospel, that the deepest disgrace is to insist on doing work for which we are unfit--to do any sort of work badly.<sup>5</sup>

This attitude must occasionally have exasperated those attempting to take the first practical steps toward eliminating social and legal injustices toward women. To say to women seeking the right to higher education that a great deal of lowly work needs to be done by women and that they ought to do it willingly; that the linear classification of jobs is odious and vulgar; that only a rarified few can do the highest kind of work; and that in any case the whole question of education and work is as relevant to the male as to the female, is in effect to generalize the problem into non-existence. At the very least, such an attitude makes practical measures seem to limit and reduce a question that demands to be considered in all its universal significance.

Nevertheless, George Eliot approved most feminist aims. Writing to Sara Hennell of a proposed law to give women legal right to their own earnings, she says that such a law "would help to raise the position and character of women," and describes it as "one round of a long ladder stretching far beyond

our lives."<sup>6</sup> In 1867 she declares in favor of a proposed university to be established between London and Cambridge--and to share with Cambridge University faculty, examinations, and degrees. As she tells Mme. Bodichon, "I am much occupied just now, but the better education of women is one of the objects about which I have no doubt, and shall rejoice if this idea of a college can be carried out."<sup>7</sup> Always qualifying this support, however, and implicit in all George Eliot's statements on feminist questions, is her firm belief in the efficacy of individual effort. As she wrote to Sara Hennell, à propos of Rosa Bonheur's painting, "What power! That is the way women should assert their rights."<sup>8</sup>

The judgment brings us back to Maggie Tulliver's struggle, perhaps the most powerful assertion of female power that we find in all George Eliot's work. As an essential step in this struggle, Maggie must separate herself from the compelling attachments of her childhood, notably that toward Tom, while at the same time conserving the rich store of feeling that this early life has given her. Denying the richness, breaking the habits of dependency and love acquired in childhood, she impoverishes her future life; submitting to them, she loses the power to shape her own destiny. She must somehow live out a paradox.

The fitting expression of a paradox is an image, and we find the one we seek at the opening of The Mill on the Floss, as we gaze with the narrator at the landscape around Dorlcote

Mill: "A wide plain, where the broadening Floss hurries on between its green banks to the sea, and the loving tide, rushing to meet it, checks its passage with an impetuous embrace" (I, 1). Significant here are the personification of river and sea, the erotic terms in which they are rendered, and the tidal embrace that prefigures the final embrace of Tom and Maggie in the flood. But even more striking is the extraordinary sense of power in this image of river and sea rushing together, combining the forces of love and destruction. Throughout the novel the force of love is shown as both creative and destructive, a source of temptation as well as a means of grace. In Maggie's life particularly, the dual nature of love creates a crucial tension. Her need to give and receive love is as strong as the force of the tides, and as capable of annihilating the bounds of her selfhood as the ocean is capable of swallowing up the river. And just as the river seeks the sea, Maggie is drawn toward love and submission; all the passion of her nature can tempt her, as she learns, to her destruction.

That destruction does not consist in her flouting of conventional morality to elope with Stephen Guest, nor even in her rending of the ties of faith and affection that bind her to Lucy and Tom. Rather, it lies in her abandoning the harsh, unpromising journey toward individuation and self-awareness, rejecting the tedious lessons of growth in order to subside in the animal warmth and comfort that our physical

selves instinctively seek, that is in truth the first imperative of life. For Maggie, as for George Eliot, the achievement of the highest life is a task involving both the outgrowing, or moving beyond, this primitive, necessary good, and the subsequent regaining of a greater though in some ways analogous good through a punishing struggle that cannot be circumvented, and that is the means--the only means--by which our spirits find an earned beauty and repose.

For Maggie, this struggle encompasses several steps, the first being her separation from Tom, who has been a kind of twin, and whose affection and approval have been the very substance of her life from the young, Edenic days at Dorlcote Mill. The second step is the eventual turning away from the temptation toward self-sacrifice represented by Philip Wakem, who though totally unlike Tom would stand in a similarly brotherly relationship to Maggie, and for whom she would have to perform a rite of self-amputation, cutting off all the passionate impulse of her nature. The difficult third trial is resisting Stephen Guest. He is the object of the mature passion into which her tempestuous childish affections have slowly ripened. The sexual longing that is her legacy from a loved childhood yearns toward Stephen as strongly as it recoils from Philip, luring her toward the luxury of loving and being loved. But to gratify the yearning in those circumstances and in that way represents for Maggie a yielding to the destructive force of love, an abandonment of the struggle for

selfhood. That this is the basic issue becomes clear in George Eliot's description of Maggie's journey down the river with Stephen. "All yielding," she writes, "is attended with a less vivid consciousness than resistance; it is the partial sleep of thought; it is the submergence of one personality by another." Maggie's longing for the peace of this submer-  
sion is made equally clear:

Every influence tended to lull her into acquiescence; that dreamy gliding in the boat, which had lasted for four hours, and had brought some weariness and exhaustion--the recoil of her fatigued sensations from the impracticable difficulty of getting out of the boat at this unknown distance from home, and walking for long miles--all helped to bring her into more complete sub-  
jection to that strong mysterious charm which made the thought of wounding him like the first touch of the tor-  
turing iron before which resolution shrank. And then there was the present happiness of being with him, which was enough to absorb all her languid energy.  
(VI, 499, 500).

The drift of the boat matches the lassitude in Maggie's spirit; mental fatigue parallels physical. To sustain herself in this crisis of will, to summon up the energy necessary to keep herself from drowning in Stephen's love--submerging her personality, as George Eliot puts it--is the major crisis in Maggie's life.

Before focusing directly on Maggie, however, we should consider further the implications of the fact that in The Mill on the Floss and other novels George Eliot depicts the struggle of life as it is experienced by women. Maggie, Dorothea, Gwendolen, all undertake a journey toward a similar goal, though passing through very different territory. Carolyn

Heilbrun has called these female characters George Eliot's heroes,<sup>9</sup> but that seems to me to define them more in terms of the male norm than is warranted. Maggie and her fellows are anti-heroines in that their acts, aims, and values are antithetic to those of the conventional heroine. In working out their destinies, they must learn to assert rather than submit, to master rather than withdraw from the world, to escape the abiding attachment as passionately as the conventional heroine seeks it. Although these may be in some sense masculine modes of conduct, their adoption does not turn the anti-heroine into a hero. In England during the 60's and 70's, as in the English society depicted in George Eliot's novels of those years, the woman who wished a life that led outward instead of inward had to do much more than follow the lead of the male. Since male goals were largely closed to her, she had to create her own goals and find her own ways of reaching them, a task more complex and problematic in outcome than that which faced the male. George Eliot had of course found her own way, and we know from her letters and journals how important she believed it was for other women to find theirs, breaking out of their enclosures, releasing and utilizing their energies for the general good. But singularity, self-betterment--these are her essential articles of faith, which find appropriate human form in her anti-heroines of the 60's and 70's. As Maggie, Dorothea, and Gwendolen make and study their errors (study them excessively, it sometimes

seems), dredging for the substances of a new, self-sustaining faith, they seem to work out fictively the Eliot meliorist formula. And yet their new faith is such a challenge to a dominant, pragmatic, masculine creed, their new idea of life so unsuited to the existential world, that an inevitable sexual tension builds up.

That George Eliot was fully aware of the enormous sexual tension, the potentially explosive male-female clash in these novels, I would doubt. She does not allow the sparks she sets off to flame freely; she quenches them, as it were, in endings that to some critics seem to be idealized compromises, to others ambiguous catastrophes. Yet in simply recognizing and dealing with these conflicts, she makes available to the novel new and vital sources of energy, tapping veins that D. H. Lawrence and others will mine methodically later on. For George Eliot, personal strivings seemed still to have social efficacy, while polarizations of social classes and of the sexes were still some way off; so that while we of the twentieth century find the struggles of her Victorian anti-heroines believable, we find the context of philosophical optimism in which they take place much less so.

I have said that in George Eliot's philosophy and scheme of life the achievement of the highest good requires that one leave the primitive world of emotional, affective experience--represented in The Mill on the Floss by Tom's and Maggie's shared childhood--while at the same time

retaining something precious from this world to enrich the achieved life of maturity. Taking the first step is for the male natural and easy; for him, the way out of Eden leads directly into the outside world, whether that world be the Guest & Co. warehouse or a Zionist mission in the East. Yet the very ease of this step makes it treacherous, since the task of self-realization may be so fully, and seemingly so rightly, submerged in the task of worldly accomplishment that it can be abandoned and forgotten without the world's or the man's being much the wiser. The interior task--the mind's work and the heart's--may be sacrificed to the exterior. Some such abortive process is, I think what Eliot intends to show in the career of Tertius Lydgate in Middlemarch. It is all too easy for Lydgate to yield himself up to the temptation of scientific accomplishment, to be seduced away by the attractions of professional service from the painful inward probings that alone can lead to the highest understanding and mastery of the self. For Tom Tulliver too, personal ties are constantly eroding under the harsh chafing of worldly ambition.

George Eliot presents the lot of women as totally different. For the woman, the first step out of the undifferentiated world of childhood must be taken against heavy odds, because she is driven back to that world, and into herself, both by the restrictions of society and by the limitations in her own nature which society either brings about or fails to help her overcome. The temptation, which may come in the

guise of marriage or simply a prolonged daughterhood, is to fashion a life that is in essence an extension, an unnatural prolongation of the feeling, animal experience with which we all begin. If she resists this comfortable involution, forcing herself outward, she must do so in opposition to all the restraints that nature and society place upon her. And--again unlike the male--she is struggling toward an unknown; disciplining her will, straining her powers, developing her mind toward an end that she cannot satisfactorily define. Not for her the job as head of the new hospital, leader of a Zionist movement, or manager of the Dorlcote Mill. Her journey is essentially uncharted, a matter of surviving one crisis in order to arrive at the next. In the very nature of things she is less an active shaping force than an active resisting force, and so the term anti-heroine seems to me more truly descriptive than the term hero.

Certainly it is more descriptive of Maggie Tulliver, whose stance through most of the novel is one of opposition and resistance rather than positive action. The elements of what she must resist emerge in the early chapters of the book. First, there is the inertia, the pull toward stasis, which she can only oppose by a deliberate enlargement of mind and experience. We see the fate of those who do not, or cannot, enlarge themselves in the first conversation between Maggie's parents. In answer to Mrs. Tulliver's objection to a school for Tom that will be out of reach of the carrier's

cart, her husband tells her that she must not let a big decision like the proper school for Tom hang on such a little question as whether his fresh laundry can be easily transported:

"That's the fault I have to find wi' you, Bessie; if you see a stick i' the road, you're allays thinkin' you can't step over it. You'd want me not to hire a good waggoner, 'cause he'd got a mole on his face."

"Dear heart!" said Mrs. Tulliver, in mild surprise, "when did I ever make objections to a man because he'd got a mole on his face? I'm sure I'm rather fond o' the moles; for my brother, as is dead an' gone, had a mole on his brow. But I can't remember your iver offering to hire a waggoner with a mole, Mr. Tulliver." (I, 5).

Giving up the attempt to explain that he meant the mole to "stand for summat else," Mr. Tulliver goes on to say that he thinks of asking advice about schools of Mr. Riley, who will be coming to Dorlcote for an arbitration proceeding. To which Mrs. Tulliver replies:

"Well, Mr. Tulliver, I've put the sheets out for the best bed, and Kezia's got 'em hanging at the fire. They aren't the best sheets, but they're good enough for anyone to sleep in, be he who he will; for as for them best Holland sheets, I should repent buying 'em, only they'll do to lay us out in." (I, 6).

Then as Mr. Tulliver speculates on Tom's prospects, considering whether he has "'the right sort of brains for a smart fellow,'" or whether he isn't "'a bit slowish,'" taking after Mrs. Tulliver's family, she promptly agrees that he does, "'He's wonderful for liking a deal o' salt in his broth,'" she muses. "'That was my brother's way, and my father's before him.'" And to the suggestion that Maggie's cleverness, though "'no mischief'" while she's small, may do her harm later on,

Mrs. Tulliver is quick to point out that in fact it is a mischief while she's small, "'for it all runs to naughtiness. How to keep her in a clean pinafore two hours together passes my cunning!'" (I, 7).

This humorous exchange presents the Tullivers in their colorful domestic simplicity, characterizes the manners and attitudes of St. Ogg's, and furthers the plot by preparing for Tom's and Maggie's imminent separation. But it has a more important long-range effect: as Mrs. Tulliver relentlessly particularizes or literalizes every comment, every question, every idea or subject that Mr. Tulliver introduces, we sense the way in which her life is bounded by the small, the concrete, the seeable, the touchable. Throughout the book this pattern of particularization--just opposite, I suspect intentionally so, to the tendency of the authorial voice to widen the application of a specific reference--defines the whole of Mrs. Tulliver's experience. Death is prepared for by storing up fresh sheets; her husband's loss of livelihood and self-respect reduces itself to the loss of initialed tablecloths and flowered china; her daughter's special gifts define themselves in terms of soiled pinafores and unmanageable hair. And yet we are not meant to see Mrs. Tulliver as a shallow woman--the depth of her compassion for Maggie in her trouble belies any such conclusion--but merely as an irrecoverably limited and confined one. She represents the known, the fixed point against which Maggie

must chart her course.

As in the opening scene between the Tullivers, George Eliot frequently reveals a character's stage of mental and spiritual development through his habitual acts and mode of reference. Thus, Mr. Tulliver's repeated efforts to place cause and effect in some sort of logical relationship represent a stage somewhat in advance of Mrs. Tulliver, who truly believes in signs: since Tom entered the Jacobs academy at Ladyday and failed to prosper there, he must not enter the new school before midsummer. But Mr. Tulliver, so scornful of his wife's superstitions and so confident in his logic and reason, does not understand or take into account the forces that lie beyond his control. He regards the members of his family, for example, as counters whom he can move about at will. If he puts Tom in a school "'where they'll make a scholar of him'" (I, 11), Tom will become a businessman, and therefore will not wish to push his father out of the mill and run it himself. He persists in this course against the evidence of his own senses, which tells him that Tom, unlike Maggie, has no aptitude for book learning. Again relying on his ability to produce a desired result by a specific act, he has married an amiable but dull-witted woman. And yet, as he sees, the result has been contrary to his hope, since she has borne a clever girl and a less clever son. Mr. Tulliver finds the world a puzzle, and has neither the capacity to try to further his understanding of it nor

the self-command to resist those enraged moments when his whole soul demands the right to strike out and at least attack what he cannot control.

It is through an extended pattern of comparisons between Tom and Maggie, however, that George Eliot reveals most directly her theory of human development and the achievement of true personal power. Knowledge, a broad understanding, compassion, discipline, and faith--these are requisites--but when we consider carefully the histories of Tom and Maggie, we see that what is even more necessary is the willing capacity to educate, purify, and trust one's deepest feelings. Tom conspicuously lacks this capacity; rather than acknowledge and trust his feelings, he stifles them. Thwarted in his love for Lucy, he buries his disappointment, failing to recognize how much this festering disappointment contributes to his growing bitterness toward Maggie. The protective, if somewhat bossy, love that Tom felt for Maggie in childhood undergoes an ugly transformation in maturity, becoming a compulsive need to punish and control.

The climactic demonstration of Tom's arrested, or twisted, emotional growth comes when he repudiates Maggie in the crisis that follows her journey down the river with Stephen Guest. It has been prepared for by his earlier reaction to Maggie's meetings with Philip Wakem in the Red Deeps. On that occasion Maggie admitted that concealing the meeting was wrong, and acceded to Tom's command not to see Philip again,

defending herself only to the extent of saying to Tom, "'When I have done wrong, it has been because I have feelings that you would be the better for, if you had them'" (V, 369). But on the later occasion, when Maggie comes back to Tom after rejecting Stephen, events turn out quite differently. Stunned at first by Tom's savage judgment, Maggie weeps out an anguished apology, only to be met with his pronouncement that she can never come under his roof again. At this moment Mrs. Tulliver, prompted to true charity, tells Maggie that she will go away with her. But she suggests that on her intervention, Tom might relent and let Maggie stay. "More helpful than all wisdom is one draught of simple human pity that will not forsake us," is George Eliot's comment on Mrs. Tulliver's act, and we feel the full force of her help in Maggie's answer: "'No, mother. . . . I will never go in'" (VII, 517).

Nor does she. From that moment, Maggie acts independently, strengthened by the sudden realization that in future she must rely on herself. Her emotional separation from Tom has lagged behind physical separation, but once it has been achieved Maggie is free in a way that she has not previously been. When she returns to Tom at the end of the book, released from the robes of sisterhood and clothed in her own identity, she is a revelation to him, a sudden, overpowering glimpse "of the depths in life, that had lain beyond his vision which he had fancied so keen and clear" (VII, 556).

Maggie and Tom are seen, at this moment, in reversed roles; she acts, he looks on in wonder and disbelief. The moment recalls an earlier one in which each has had to face Mr. Tulliver's failed fortunes and their consequently altered expectations in life. Here is George Eliot's description of their responses:

While Maggie's life struggles had lain almost entirely within her own soul, one shadowy army fighting another, and the slain shadows for ever rising again, Tom was engaged in a dustier, noisier warfare, grappling with more substantial obstacles, and gaining more definite conquests. So it has been since the days of Hecuba, and of Hector, Tamer of horses; inside the gates, the women with streaming hair and uplifted hands offering prayers, watching the world's combat from afar, filling their long, empty days with memories and fears: outside, the men, in fierce struggle with things divine and human, quenching memory in the stronger light of purpose, losing the sense of dread and even of wounds in the hurrying ardour of action. (V, 327).

We see the ironic, and somewhat unpredictable, consequences of the inward and the outward approaches to life at the end of the book. Tom's active purpose and pragmatic values have sent him back to the physical surroundings of his childhood, to a recovery of material loss, a balancing of the worldly ledger at an incalculable cost to the spirit. Maggie, forced to grapple with the shadowy armies in her own soul, has somehow won the strength to engage more visible armies. Moving away from Tom's physical and emotional protection, relinquishing that offered by Stephen, she succeeds finally in drawing mental, spiritual, and physical forces together for the supreme attempt to rescue Tom and her mother, whom she believes

to be together, from the flood.

The rescue scene gives concrete form to symbolic intent. Having slowly, gradually revealed through the histories of Tom and Maggie two contrasting modes of conduct and belief, George Eliot envisions a final clash and a final reconciliation of these two value systems in terms of Maggie's rescue of Tom and their fateful reunion in the flood. The act of rescue signifies the superiority of the power Maggie has created out of her life experience, while Tom's recognition of the miraculous act and subsequent acknowledgement of the love he has buried demonstrate the capacity of an earned good to pass from one human being to another, eventually reaching a wider circle of humanity--signified here by Philip, Stephen, and Lucy.

We know that this idea was one of George Eliot's supreme articles of faith, but I think that we have not yet recognized all the ways in which the idea is embodied in her novels, particularly in the lives of her female characters and in their relationships to males. In The Mill, Maggie's power, which Tom finally recognizes, and which is seen as passing from Maggie to Philip to Stephen to Lucy, springs from feelings that have been transformed and enriched by experience, tempered and controlled by the developed mind. Intellect and heart are alike essential, for as George Eliot once noted, "we women are always in danger of living too exclusively in the affections, and though our affections are, perhaps, the

best gifts we have, we ought also to have our share of the more independent life. . . . an independent delight in ideas."<sup>10</sup> Maggie delights in ideas but lacks her share of the independent life, while Tom's situation is approximately the reverse. Thus his peril, because he is a man, has "power," and "can do something in the world" (V, 370), is to live for outward deeds at the expense of inward growth, while hers is to lose herself in her inner life.

The first indication that Maggie will eventually break through her enclosure comes when she runs away from her Aunt Deane's to join the gypsies. Books have given her visions of another world, her imagination has taught her that she can shape a world of her own choosing, and now, in an episode that prefigures her eventual passage into independent adulthood, she tries by means of the intellect and imagination to recreate her outward circumstance. As an episode, this attempt seems to end in futility. Having found the gypsy camp, Maggie is thoroughly frightened of the gypsies, realizes how impossible it is that "she should ever be the queen of these people, or even communicate to them amusing and useful knowledge" (I, 118), and is almost hysterically relieved to be again in her father's arms and on her way home.

But although the gypsy adventure apparently comes to nought, it serves important purposes in the novel, and is a key event in Maggie's history. It articulates, for example, George Eliot's theme of the discrepancy between actual

circumstance and ideal conceptions, and the necessity of trying, however unsuccessful our efforts, to bring the two into greater harmony. Having been told that with her brown skin and her wild ways she is like a gypsy, Maggie dreams that a life among the gypsies would put her "entirely in harmony with circumstances" (I, 110). Among people like her in appearance, yet inferior in knowledge, she will receive "respect" (I, 110); intelligence will be her key to power. Of course, no such thing happens. Instead, Maggie learns--a point George Eliot frequently makes in her fiction--that superior knowledge is wasted among those who do not appreciate its value, and furthermore, that the exchange of information is not true teaching. One teaches what one has felt and lived. The event thus instructs Maggie's growing intelligence, providing as well a concrete demonstration of the abstract lesson that to achieve the highest wisdom and power one must not only develop one's capacities, but also try to create the kind of environment in which they can work for the general good.

The gypsy episode functions, I think, in another way, by suggesting how few and unsatisfactory are the outlets for female intellectual powers. Maggie's dreams are like fairy tales--knowledge will make her a "queen" to whom the gypsies will pay homage. The absurdity of the whole adventure casts a kind of radiance over Maggie's soaring, inventive, unschooled mind, at the same time exposing the dull bleakness

of her prospects, and the unlikelihood of her finding any feasible means of improving them.

Nor does she ever find any satisfactory outlet for her powers in a material, practical sense--no approach to life that truly answers, no completely efficacious method of harmonizing outward circumstances with inward ideals. Yet Maggie survives the rite of passage, the trial of rebirth which all George Eliot's anti-heroines undergo. Her victory is a matter of means not ends, process not goal. The key element in the process is memory, conceived of as both involuntary, working in and on the mind at a subsurface level, and controllable, subject to the imposition of the conscious will. The Mill on the Floss opens with the personal reminiscence of the narrator and ends with an account of the enduring homage paid to the memory of Tom and Maggie by Stephen Guest, Philip Wakem, and Lucy Deane. The narrative is cradled, so to speak, in memory.

In George Eliot's view it is memory that can transform "perception into love" (I, 40), and memory through which we apply the powers of thought and imagination to the experience of everyday life. Memory is as necessary to the highest functions of the intellect as to the fullest promptings of the heart; hence the connection between Tom's deficient memory for Latin verbs and a deeper flaw--his forgetful reneging on his promise to his father to take care of Maggie. Describing Tom's return from Mr. Stelling's school, George Eliot comments

that the furniture of our childhood would seem commonplace were we to see it in later life, for, she asks ironically, are not "improved taste" and "the striving after something better and better in our surroundings" what distinguishes man from the brute? Then she answers her own question: "Heaven knows where that striving might lead us, if our affections had not a trick of twining round those old inferior things--if the loves and sanctities of our life had no deep immovable roots in memory" (II, 161). Striving to recover the furniture of his early life, Tom has nearly lost the love that sanctifies it, until Maggie teaches him to remember. Through her partly instinctive, partly deliberate efforts to conserve and comprehend all that happens to her, Maggie has cultivated the ability to instruct herself and others. Significantly, it is through remembrance that Philip, Stephen, and Lucy acknowledge this instruction. Philip in particular has written before Maggie's death to tell her that "this gift of transferred life which has come to me in loving you, may be a new power to me" (VII, 537).

The framework of memory that contains the novel is reinforced by parallel events that establish connections between Maggie's early and later life. The gypsy episode, which I have suggested we view as an intellectual flight of innocence, ending in melted wings, is paralleled later by Maggie's actual teaching of children and her figurative teaching of those she loves. Similarly, her premature

discovery of the philosophy of Thomas à Kempis is stored in her memory for future use. Philip has told her that it teaches a "'self-delusive fanaticism'" (V, 348), but the strength it gives her to reject Stephen Guest's last appeal, to repudiate his definition of good and live by her own, is not delusion. The little book itself symbolizes the linked mind and heart, and memory as the key to both; George Eliot calls it a voice from the past, "written down by a hand that had waited for the heart's prompting," and marked by "some hand, now for ever quiet" (IV, 307, 309). It is the wisdom of the book which counsels Maggie against an act that would be a "contradiction with her past self in her moments of strength and clearness . . . conscious degradation" (VII, 549). Thus counseled, she burns Stephen's letter, and prepares to learn what she thinks will be her next lesson--patience. But the demand is for action, not patience, and Maggie is able to act decisively, almost automatically, in the panic of the flood. Bob Jakin senses her resolution, and leaves her alone in the boat to fend for herself.

The fact that Maggie had been up, had waked him, and had taken the lead in activity, gave Bob a vague impression of her as one who would help to protect, not need to be protected. (VII, 551).

Bob Jakin's impression confirms the reader's. Just before the flood waters rise, Maggie has tried to counter her sense of despair with the thought that from "the experience of great need" she must be "learning a secret of human tenderness and long-suffering, that the less erring could

hardly know" (VII, 550). Her direct, unhesitating acts in the final crisis of the book illustrate the nature of the secret she has learned. The power of life is in living and learning. Working through her dependencies, transcending her limitations, learning from her mistakes--in striking contrast to Tom, who admits to no mistakes: "he wouldn't have minded being punished. . . . if he deserved it; but then, he never did deserve it" (I, 37)--she has become her whole self. Personal power is wholeness. Not intellect alone, nor body alone, nor spirit alone, but all these parts of the self working in harmony. In the crisis of the flood, this unity, or wholeness, is revealed as the source of effective and appropriate action. Early in the book, Tom Tulliver has said to Bob Jakin, "'When I'm a man, I shall make a boat with a wooden house on the top of it, like Noah's ark, and keep plenty to eat in it. . . . And then if the flood came . . . I shouldn't mind. . . . And I'd take you in, if I saw you swimming'" (I, 50). Tom's vision, like Maggie's vision of being a gypsy queen, is touching testimony to the confident incapacity of innocence. In the event, the vision is tragically altered. Tom, having ignored the legend that the river becomes angry when the mill changes hands, is himself trapped in the flood, with no prudently provisioned ark for refuge. But Maggie's response to the flood waters is prompt and decisive. She rouses Bob Jakin to action, and seizes a boat for herself. Separated from Bob, however, and

borne out upon the flood, she is seized by a dreamlike inability to think or act, aware only that "she had suddenly passed away from that life which she had been dreading; it was the transition of death, without its agony--and she was alone in the darkness with God" (VII, 552). From this solipsistic trance, reminiscent of her earlier will-less journey down the river with Stephen Guest, she is roused first by physical light--the dawn--and then by the mental light of memory. She remembers her father's talk of the flood, and has a vision of Tom, her mother, and herself sitting in the old home listening. Impelled by this inner vision, she "strained her eyes against the curtain of gloom that she might seize the first sight of her whereabouts" (VII, 553). Inner vision leads to outward perception.<sup>11</sup> Or the reverse may happen, as Maggie's sense of outward danger and her heroic physical efforts, which in a bodily sense she is scarcely conscious of, seem to find expression in "an undefined sense of reconciliation with her brother: what quarrel, what harshness, what unbelief in each other can subsist in the presence of a great calamity, when all the artificial vesture of our life is gone, and we are all one with each other in primitive moral needs?" (VII, 553).

The rescue unites physical, mental, and spiritual power. When its execution is threatened by a moral lassitude, and later by emotional panic, the mind--acting almost as if it had a life of its own--provides a remedy. It prods Maggie's

memory, and guides her through the sequence of deliberate acts with which she counters panic and moves successfully toward her goal. And the goal itself encompasses the whole of Maggie's life:

More and more strongly the energies seemed to come and put themselves forth, as if her life were a stored-up force that was being spent in this hour, unneeded for any future. (VII, 552).

Similarly, the goal encompasses the book, providing aesthetic closure for conflicts initiated, life engendered. The story has begun in division between Tom and Maggie, which in turn forecasts the division between childhood and maturity. Maggie, pursuing her separate path, fighting her shadowy armies largely in the darkness, has found in maturity her own vision of life, and the power to communicate that vision to others. Rescuing Tom, and communicating the vision to Tom, is the appropriate demonstration of Maggie's acquisition of power, for it was in their childhood relationship that Maggie so conspicuously lacked power, offered submission, needed protection. If this ending is melodramatic, it is of a piece with the rest of the melodrama of the story: Mr. Tulliver's murderous rages; lawyer Wakem's purchase of the mill; Tom's oath of revenge; Stephen and Maggie's passion, spontaneously combustible in the fashion of Romeo and Juliet. The melodrama corresponds, I think, to the heightened colors in which we paint our childhood years, and to the sudden and often rather melodramatic way in which we drown--figuratively--our childhood selves. Not drown but submerge, since, in our brief maturity,

childhood takes on a kind of timelessness.

The Mill on the Floss is a novel about growing up. Its ending seems to unite, metaphorically, male and female, brother and sister, in a union that corrects an existing imbalance, and firmly establishes the nature and extent of female power.

Moving from The Mill on the Floss to Middlemarch, discussing power in terms of Dorothea Brooke rather than Maggie Tulliver, is like throwing away the last of one's schoolday scrapbooks, or clearing the shelves of childhood books to make room for the fresh expression of adult tastes. A novel for grown-ups, as Virginia Woolf once noted, Middlemarch is also, in contrast to the earlier novel and despite its youthful main characters, a novel of middle life: of finding, accepting, and occasionally transcending limits. The title itself conveys the sense of both stasis and motion, stagnation and growth, a march being a boundary as well as a type of locomotion. And as always in George Eliot's novels, motion and growth refer to progress of mind as well as body; to spatial, temporal, and spiritual change.

The construction of the novel, the intricate design created by criss-crossing threads of plot, has frequently been analyzed in terms of recurrent images: web images that suggest a dense multi-leveled texture, a gradual accretion; images of flowing water that seem to reflect the eddy and flow

of all life as well as the coming together and parting of specific lives; images of windows and doors, of translucencies and opacities that help us to see what blocks and blinds the characters, and what frees their bodies or extends their vision. I propose now to take for granted all that we have learned from these excellent studies of imagistic systems and their linking functions, and concentrate, as far as possible, on one strand in the design. I wish to trace the motion (motion being understood to mean what is measurable in the spatial or temporal sense and what is more or less unmeasurable, the motion of mind and spirit) of the heroine--anti-heroine--for she is both--of Middlemarch, Dorothea Brooke.

To begin with the large and obvious patterns of spatial movement: in the course of the novel Dorothea moves from her uncle's home at Tipton Grange to Rome, scene of her honeymoon; from Rome to Lowick Manor, Casaubon's estate; briefly, after Casaubon's death, to Freshitt, home of Celia and Sir James Chettam; back to Lowick Manor; and finally to London, where she settles after her marriage to Will Ladislaw. Each move corresponds to a stage in Dorothea's personal odyssey, and the odyssey itself is related to classic patterns of the lifelong journey, as well as to a classic pattern for female journeys, the fairy tale. The "Miss Brooke" strand in Middlemarch, stripped to bare event and exposed to the hot lights that drain away nuances of color

and texture, is a fairy tale in reverse. Beauty marries her Prince Charming, finds that he is the beast, escapes from the castle after his death, and settles down with the faithful shepherd boy.

Viewed in terms of classical legend, the Miss Brooke story also takes liberties with the traditional pattern. The hero--in this instance a woman--embarks on a voyage fraught with unexpected hardships and dangers, survives these hazards at some cost to personal comfort and safety, and eventually returns to the point of embarkation a sadder and wiser woman. The relationship between Dorothea's journey and Biblical tradition is even closer; in both, carnal knowledge is the beginning of wisdom, and a new life commences with the expulsion from Paradise. We can translate this time-and-motion pattern into sociological terms as well. Dorothea is born into a stratified, self-contained, provincial milieu, and through a sequence of acts superficially reconcilable with established codes (marrying, setting up one's own household, remarrying after an early widowhood) gradually places herself beyond the constraints of that society, moving into a wider, freer social milieu that is, if not classless, at least flexible in its hierarchical structure. Thus, Dorothea leaves the provincial enclosure for a broader field of action, as did Mrs. Gaskell's Cynthia Kirkpatrick before her. But what is merely a light breeze blowing through the landscape of Wives and Daughters becomes in Middlemarch an elemental force that shapes the novel.

In these stripped-down descriptions of patterns of movement in Middlemarch I have purposely simplified--but not, I think, reduced--the essential narrative structure into which Dorothea's life fits, in order to put into focus the contrast between what George Eliot makes of the female experience in this novel and what other novelists of the period make of it. Most Victorian heroines made their little journeys--literal and metaphoric--before marriage. We seldom saw what happened to them later, and even more seldom why. If a marriage was unhappy it was so because the woman had married without love (see Edith Dombey and Louisa Gradgrind), for without love marriage must fail, though with love it should succeed. Few English novelists cared to analyze the subtle power struggles that punctuate even the most placid love affair--Trollope, and of course George Eliot, were notable exceptions. And few that I have discovered looked objectively at the relationship between sexual and intellectual needs, powers, and expressions (certainly not as concerns the female), nor at the links between carnal knowledge, worldly knowledge, and self knowledge.

These relationships and links are precisely what George Eliot brings to our attention in Middlemarch. That the mind, heart, and senses dwell together, that one must educate and develop all three faculties, that the effective act, the true cognition, embodies each mode of knowing--Dorothea's history is a kind of demonstration-proof of these propositions. Less

abstractly, it is affirmative evidence of the link between novelistic life and physical, human reality. In showing the intellectual, sexual, and social awakening of Dorothea Brooke, George Eliot created a fictional construct of a woman's history that not only exposed the superficiality of other contemporary constructs but also demonstrated the existence of real-life women whose experience touched at significant points that of the fictional model. George Eliot was herself such a woman, but I do not wish to stress here autobiographical questions. I merely wish to point out again that the novelists I consider in this study deepened and widened the channels linking literature and life, helping to insure a strong, free flow in both directions.

I have said that George Eliot's anti-heroines typically suffer a more or less traumatic passage from innocence to experience, undergoing a process of rebirth from which they emerge with a strengthened, and strengthening, awareness of self, a personal identity independent of the sexual attachment. Dorothea follows this pattern, but her journey, in comparison with Maggie Tulliver's, is less dramatic and direct, arriving at a somewhat enigmatic destination. Such shifts from the dramatic to the epic, the direct to the equivocal, become our middle years--which is not to say that in Dorothea George Eliot presents a young woman of large aspirations who settles for small achievements. Rather, I am restating my premise that in George Eliot's scheme of values

achievement, or personal power, is not necessarily, even primarily, a matter of exterior deeds. In The Mill on the Floss, Maggie's dramatic rescue of Tom demonstrates outwardly the power which springs from a fully developed mind and heart. If Middlemarch offers no such outward demonstration of Dorothea's personal growth, ending rather with her comfortable marriage and motherhood, we need not conclude therefore that Dorothea fails to develop female power, for there remains the possibility that female power is not by definition incompatible with marriage and motherhood.

Middlemarch is about finding, accepting, and transcending limits; Dorothea's story tells us much about the limits that constrict women, and about the peculiar strengths they develop in their attempts either to break through or come to terms with these limits. Dorothea's second marriage is a new beginning, and an act of strength, in the sense that it is a mature, undeluded, independent choice. She can choose to share her life with Will Ladislaw because she has learned to look intelligently and unblinkingly at what life gives and what it withholds, and has discovered that the hardest as well as the most rewarding task, the task demanding the most strength and endurance, is to find something you are fitted to do that is worth doing, try to create the circumstances in which it may be done, and do it as well as you can. In her marriage to Casaubon Dorothea had thought to drink at the fountain of all wisdom, to submerge herself in

him as Maggie had been tempted to submerge herself in Stephen Guest. Instead she discovers the vast reservoir of her own strength, for although she is virtually imprisoned in the sepulchre of his ego, her intelligence and imagination keep her free as he has never been. His vision is narrow and his needs almost boundless, but so, she discovers, is her capacity to give. And she gives, not because his tyranny compels submission but because, as she later tells Celia, to give was part of her feeling for him. Such a marriage is hardly what Dorothea had envisioned, or one that the conventional Victorian heroine would make. In depicting it, George Eliot restores to the novel the edgy tension, the vigorous awareness of sexual power politics that Richardson had handed down but that had largely disappeared from nineteenth-century fiction.

The predominant mid-nineteenth-century code held that proper young ladies did not have sexual needs or expectations. In suggesting that Dorothea might have had some, and that they were not met, George Eliot ventures delicately into regions the conventional novelist avoided. On the honeymoon trip to Rome, which represents the longest lap of her physical journey and the major step in her voyage of self-discovery, Dorothea enters a strange and terrifying new world as well as a strange and terrifying new condition of life. Uprooted and depressed, she sees that nothing in her quiet English background has prepared her for the dizzying

richness of pagan and Christian art, for the bewildering profusion of the beautiful and the ugly, the splendid and the decadent, for the voluptuous abundance of mere visible history that she finds in Rome. Nothing in her young life has prepared her, either, for the conspicuous absence of richness and splendor in her new married life, for the dim oppressive obscurity that she finds where she had confidently expected spacious views and bright horizons. The attack of mental and emotional vertigo that she suffers is not entirely culture shock. It is attributable also to her crushing sense of Casaubon's intellectual barrenness, and, more significantly, to her discovery of a worse inadequacy:-- his lack of capacity for spontaneous response to ideas, to art, to nature, to anything, in fact, but especially to her. That Casaubon's intellectual impotence is yoked to emotional and physical impotence--or at least so such an extreme of unresponsiveness as to constitute functional impotence--George Eliot makes quite clear. She writes of

Dorothea:

With all her yearning to know what was afar from her and to be widely benignant, she had ardour enough for what was near, to have kissed Mr. Casaubon's coat-sleeve, or to have caressed his shoe-latchet, if he would have made any other sign of acceptance than pronouncing her, with his unflinching propriety, to be of a most affectionate and truly feminine nature, indicating at the same time by politely reaching for a chair for her that he regarded these manifestations as rather crude and startling. Having made his clerical toilette with due care in the morning, he was well prepared only for those amenities of life which were suited to the well-adjusted stiff cravat of the period, and to a mind weighted with unpublished matter. (II, 147).

Delicate as this passage is, it nevertheless conveys unmistakably Mr. Casaubon's distaste for any unnecessary disrobing of mind or body.<sup>12</sup> As for Dorothea, she finds that her "ideas and resolves" about marriage, all her high-souled expectations, have become

like melting ice floating and lost in the warm flood of which they had been but another form. She was humiliated to find herself a mere victim of feeling, as if she could know nothing except through that medium; all her strength was scattered in fits of agitation, of struggle, of despondency, and then again in visions of more complete renunciation, transforming all hard conditions into duty. (II, 147).

Dorothea's fits of despondency and agitation are thus linked to her bruised rebuffed affections as well as to her intellectual disillusionment. Similarly, the intellectual void associated with Casaubon, and conveyed through images of dim tapers in winding corridors, matches the descriptions of his pinched, grudging trickle of feeling. He accedes to Dorothea's caresses with "conscientious acceptance," chills her with perfunctory terms of endearment, subjects her to the subtle psychological bullying that so frequently masks fears of physical or emotional inadequacy. In these chapters on Dorothea's honeymoon in Rome, George Eliot insists even more forcibly than in The Mill on the Floss on the oneness of intellect and feeling, the union of body, heart, and mind. Dorothea's abrupt recognition of this trinity, this three-fold path to wisdom, is devastating. Her dreamlike quest for pure knowledge and devotion has ended in a lesson on the

humiliations of the flesh.

The Roman trip, then, marks Dorothea's passage from innocence to experience, from daughterly (in this instance niecely) status to wifhood, and what follows necessarily takes direction from this initial step. In marriage Dorothea has seen, as did Maggie Tulliver, a submersion of the self, but unlike Maggie she chooses to be submerged. As she tells herself, "The really delightful marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it" (I, 18). Countering this desire to submit to someone all-wise and all-powerful, however, is Dorothea's equally ardent desire to have her own way and do things for herself. The contradiction here is not clear to her, and so she enters into a marriage that would doubtless have failed even had she been less strong-willed. But in consequence of this failure, she begins to develop within herself the power she had thought to draw from her husband. Instead of filling her vessel from his, she plumbs the depths of her own. As in The Mill on the Floss, the sexual attachment is means not end, a way of coming to know the world and oneself.

In Rome Dorothea had come face to face with aspects of life of which in her narrow inexperience she was ignorant. The confrontation brings both pleasure and pain. Will Ladislaw's bright spontaneity, his evident response to her, inspire joy as well as a vague uneasiness. The reasons for the

joy and the uneasiness are never quite clear to her until Casaubon's will, which seeks to prohibit a marriage to Ladislaw, abruptly reveals to her her own feelings, forcing another recognition that changes her life. Here is George Eliot's description of Dorothea after Celia has told her of the codicil to Casaubon's will:

She might have compared her experience at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. . . . Her world was in a state of convulsive change. . . . Then again she was conscious of another change which also made her tremulous; it was a sudden strange yearning of heart toward Will Ladislaw. It had never before entered her mind that he could . . . be her lover . . . (V, 359-60).

A common view of Dorothea's progress from this point to the end of the novel is that she quietly adapts to the conventions of Victorian fiction, gracefully submits to the yoke of a happy marriage, relinquishes what Celia calls her "notions," ceases to strive for the grand and noble, and contents herself with the modest and creditable. There is some substance to this view, but less, I think, than is often supposed. Critics who advance it tend to see George Eliot herself as upholding the established order of male dominance, female submission--giving it unconscious emotional assent if not conscious intellectual sanction. But the book refutes this assumption, since Dorothea's history is in many respects a fictional working out of George Eliot's vision of the struggle for women's rights as a long ladder stretching far beyond her own lifetime. In my earlier account of patterns of movement in Middlemarch I noted

that after Casaubon's death Dorothea moves to Freshitt to be with Celia and Sir James. There she sinks into the protective warmth that represents Celia's ideal of the good life. But protection and inactivity soon become oppressive, and Dorothea goes back alone to Lowick Manor, much against the advice of those who would keep her safe and enclosed. A conversation with Mrs. Cadwallader at Freshitt establishes the psychological significance of this move. Mrs. Cadwallader says to Dorothea:

"You will certainly go mad in that house alone, my dear. You will see visions. We have all got to exert ourselves a little to keep sane, and call things by the same names as other people call them by."

"I never called anything by the same name that all the people about me did," said Dorothea stoutly.

"But I suppose you have found out your mistake, my dear," said Mrs. Cadwallader, "and that is a proof of sanity."

Dorothea was aware of the sting, but it did not hurt her. "No," she said. "I still think the greater part of the world is mistaken about many things. Surely one may be sane and yet think so, since the greater part of the world has often had to come round from its opinion." (VI, 391-92).

Dorothea, realizing that she does not call things by the same name as other people do, sees that she must separate herself from Freshitt and its mode of nomenclature, since she is unlikely to persuade Freshitt to adopt hers. Yet she does not despair of some ultimate change by which ideas that she thinks right may win a large adherence, and this resignation that can eschew despair and consort with hope shows how far she has come from the grand schemes of her youth. She has learned that the world is not to be won by high purpose alone,

and great goals not to be reached in a single lifetime. Born a cygnet, Dorothea at the end of Middlemarch is still living uneasily among the ducklings, as the Prelude had predicted she would. But we are reminded in the Finale that female power still asserts itself; little Letty Garth chafes at the idea of superior male strength, "her feeling of superiority being stronger than her muscles" (VIII, 609). It is true that the Finale offers a rather somber, muted version of Dorothea's life; compared to Maggie Tulliver's heroic outburst, Dorothea's small rebellion is a modest ripple. But as I have said, Middlemarch is much more a novel of realities than The Mill on the Floss, and in real life Dorothea's was, and is, the common lot of many unusually capable, even truly gifted, women.

Perhaps the real objection, however, to seeing Dorothea as a semi-failure and the ending of the novel as an avoidance of the issues it raises is that such a view imposes on the book a set of values that the book itself nowhere propounds. Throughout Middlemarch, deeds are seen as secondary to motives, exterior achievement as incidental to interior growth. A comparison here between Lydgate and Dorothea is revealing. He had the talent and opportunity to accomplish much, but because he was careless and obtuse in his personal relationships, too arrogant to look closely at his own or other people's motives, too impatient for ends to see the crucial ways in which means may alter ends, he could not accomplish what he set out to do.

But Lydgates's real failure is not to be reckoned in deeds. That he gave up his research is pitiable, but that he gave up himself--as in his final conversation with Dorothea he confesses that he has done--is tragic.

Dorothea, by contrast, gains in strength and self-trust as her outside props give way. Realizing that she loves Will Ladislaw, and believing that he loves her, she comes upon Will and Rosamund in a situation that seems to dash her hopes. This loss of a love that she had never really enjoyed but had finally allowed herself the luxury of anticipating is a crushing blow, and at first she is crushed. Then she initiates an unexpected, and rather interesting, course of action. After a restless, tortured night, she wakes and looks out the window at the road beyond her fields, and at two solitary figures walking in the pale light. She feels herself a part of that life in the outside world:<sup>13</sup>

Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life, and could neither look out on it from her luxurious shelter as a mere spectator, nor hide her eyes in selfish complaining.

What she would resolve to do that day did not yet seem quite clear, but something that she could achieve stirred her as with an approaching murmur which would soon gather distinctness. (VIII, 578).

On this day Dorothea decides to discard her accustomed mourning crepe for a new dress and bonnet, which she asks her maid to bring. Dorothea's pallor, coupled with this sudden request for the lighter mourning clothes that she had always before refused, presents a mystery that the maid cannot fathom:

Tantripp would never have found the clue to this mystery. Dorothea wished to acknowledge that she had not the less an active life before her because she had buried a private joy; and the tradition that fresh garments belonged to all initiation, haunting her mind, made her grasp after that slight outward help towards calm resolve. For the resolve was not easy. (VIII, 579).

The fresh garments, the reference to initiation, indicate that Dorothea has successfully come through her passage, weathered inside and outside storms. Her inner fortitude, which steadies Rosamond in the later interview between the two women, is achieved quite independently of Will Ladislaw; at this point in the novel, there is certainly no question that Dorothea has blended idealistic faith and empirical wisdom into a rich brew of personal effectiveness. Her later decision to marry is a mature choice, urged by passion and sanctioned by reason. It expresses what Dorothea has learned about herself and about life, and thus is a further exemplum of George Eliot's belief in the unity of feeling and cognition. Mind, body, and heart working in harmony issue in the appropriate act.

In Dorothea's case this act is also the most positive step she can take toward freedom, since it liberates her from Middlemarch customs and values. In the early part of the novel she had rejected Sir James Chettam's gift of a Maltese puppy, explaining:

"It is painful for me to see these creatures that are bred merely as pets. . . . I believe all the petting that is given them does not make them happy. They are too helpless; their lives are too frail. A weasel or a mouse that gets its own living is more interesting. . . . These creatures are parasitic." (I, 122).

Dorothea's rejection of the little dog is symbolic of her rejection of Sir James and the ready-made life. Blundering through her difficulties, some thrust upon her and some self-created, she never settles for the kind of patent prescriptions for life that Celia and others are always quick to offer. Casaubon's death seems to Celia to provide a second chance to fit her sister to the proper mold, an ideal opportunity for Dorothea to step into the role of doting childless aunt, prevented by her brother-in-law from carrying out foolish notions, but allowed to express her eccentricities in ways that can do no harm. Horrified at the thought of a marriage to Ladislaw, urging her alternative suggestion, Celia tells Dorothea:

"You never can go and live in that way. And then there are all your plans! You never can have thought of that. James would have taken any trouble for you, and you might have gone on all your life doing what you liked."

But Dorothea sees much more clearly than she did in the days of her utopian villages, and so she gives Celia a straight answer:

"On the contrary, dear. . . . I never could do anything that I liked. . . . I have never carried out any plan yet." (VIII, 600).

Thus Dorothea refuses the role of rich maiden aunt, provincial Lady Bountiful, as she had earlier refused the role of aristocratic young county matron. George Eliot gives us a glimpse of the future that Middlemarch had prepared for Dorothea quite deliberately, I think, as she had given a picture

of the future that Maggie Tulliver might have had in St. Ogg's as the wife of Stephen Guest: after a bit of tongue wagging, everyone would have called to admire her trousseau. Such a life would not do for Maggie any more than Celia's idea of life would do for Dorothea. London is freedom by comparison with Middlemarch. Just as the city had traditionally offered the young hero his chance at the world, so in the novels of the 1860's and 70's it offers something comparable to the anti-heroine. Comparable but not the same. In the nineteenth century no amount of strength and intelligence--and Dorothea has a great deal of both--could put a woman into positions of power customarily occupied by men. Dorothea's public activities are carried on through her husband, and George Eliot, anticipating criticism from readers on this score, writes:

Many who knew her, 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. But no one stated exactly what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done--not even Sir James Chettam, who went no further than the negative prescription that she ought not to have married Will Ladislaw, (VIII, 611).

Negative prescriptions. Dorothea has so persistently run against them that at one point she cries out in desperation, "I only want not to have my feelings checked at every turn" (VIII, 539). Looked at from this vantage point, her marriage--her move to surroundings in which her feelings will not always be checked, and to life with a man who cares for both her feelings and her ideas--is an act of strength and

wisdom. Celia, resigning herself to the fact that Dorothea will take this action with or without her approval, wishes to hear the whole story. "I cannot think how it all came about," she says, and Dorothea replies:

"I daresay not. . . . If you knew how it came about it would not seem wonderful to you."  
 "Can't you tell me?" said Celia, settling her arms cozily.  
 "No, dear, you would have to feel with me, else you would never know." (VIII, 602).

Perhaps in that passage George Eliot was imagining the reader who could feel with Dorothea and see the wonder of how it all came about. Twentieth-century readers must work their way through decades of women's emancipation and women's achievements to do so, to feel for Dorothea's accomplishment in simply choosing her own kind of life. And yet generations of novelists after George Eliot found material in the outwardly restricted, inwardly unfettered, lives of their female characters. Novelists of the 1960's and 70's--who may or may not recognize their debt to George Eliot--find fresh matter still in the histories of women who adapt to limiting outside circumstances by developing potent, sustaining interior lives. By imposing our own prescriptions for life on Dorothea, I think we range ourselves with the Celias of this world, and with those who think that everyone who arrives at the same destination has taken the same path and seen the same visions.

Important continuities link Middlemarch and The Mill on the Floss. We find in both novels the concept of personal

power as a wholeness of self, a harmony of body, mind, and spirit. The principal female characters in both novels achieve this wholeness by yielding fully to others and to experience, at the same time cultivating those mental and moral faculties through which we gain self-mastery. Both novels reject the conventional view of marriage as the ultimate fulfillment of female destiny. For Maggie Tulliver marriage represents a spiritual letting go. For Dorothea Brooke it represents, first, a traumatic awakening from the fantasies of innocence, and second, a mature life choice; in both instances the sexual attachment is significantly a learning experience.

Despite great differences in tone, structure, and almost every element one considers in comparing novels, Middlemarch and The Mill on the Floss show a striking similarity of treatment of the chief female figure. Maggie and Dorothea are both mental and moral travelers, and their progress in both novels is signified by exterior moves. When Maggie Tulliver leaves her brother's house forever, she leaves behind her submissive childlike self. When Dorothea leaves Freshitt, she leaves behind her childlike dream of accomplishing great things in small surroundings. More continuities might be traced between these two great novels, one written in George Eliot's early period, the other toward the end of her career. For the purpose of this study, however, the central fact is the presentation in each of a character who fits my definition of the

anti-heroine--a young woman whose conduct and character cut directly across the grain of Victorian social and novelistic convention.

## CHAPTER IV--FOOTNOTES

1. George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 37. All further references are to this edition.
2. The George Eliot Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), III, 144.
3. See Bernard J. Paris, Experiments in Life (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965), for an extended study of George Eliot's moral philosophy.
4. J. W. Cross, George Eliot's Life as Related in her Letters and Journals (New York: AMS Press, 1965), p. 414.
5. Cross, p. 422.
6. Cross, p. 198.
7. Cross, p. 418 . The institution later became Girton College.
8. Cross, p. 227.
9. Carolyn Heilbrun, Toward a Recognition of Androgyny (New York: Knopf, 197 ), pp. 49-112.
10. Cross, p. 461.
11. See Reva Stump, Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959), pp. 67-185 for analysis of visual imagery in The Mill on the Floss.
12. See A. L. French, "A Note for Middlemarch," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 26 (1971), 339-47, for another view of Dorothea's marital experience in Rome.
13. Barbara Hardy, "The Moment of Disenchantment in George Eliot's Novels," Review of English Studies, NS 5 (1954), 256-64, compares the view from the window to the outside world and Dorothea's boudoir to her closed-in life.

## CHAPTER V

### THE ANTI-HEROINE AND SEXUAL AND MORAL CHOICES

"I should say that the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind. What men are habitually, women are only exceptionally."<sup>1</sup> Thus Dr. William Acton on women in Victorian England. We find the antithesis to Dr. Acton's thesis described in The Other Victorians, Steven Marcus's study of pornographic writing produced in England in the latter part of the nineteenth century: "The essential imagination of nature on pornotopia, then, is this immense, supine, female form . . . all women fecundate with lust and flow inexhaustibly with sap or juice or both."<sup>2</sup>

Victorian novels--certainly those by Anthony Trollope and George Eliot whose anti-heroines I discuss in this Chapter --refute both these views. In order to see how, we need to think of sex not just in a denotative sense, as that which appertains to the genital and reproductive organs, but rather in the dimension suggested by the definition in Webster's Third International: "the sum of the morphological, physiological, and behavioral peculiarities of living beings that subserves biparental reproduction with its concomitant genetic segregation and recombination which underlie most evolutionary change. . . ." Although this definition scarcely

conveys the expansive richness of sexuality as it is conceived of in Judaeo-Christian culture, it at least has the merit of straining toward inclusion rather than exclusion. It links physiology and behavior, and joins both to the idea of human becoming, or change. Measured against this definition, pornography is a fragmentation of sexuality, a literature grounded in the separation and isolation of bodily parts, in which impulse and instinct are reduced to the level of reflex. The pornographic approach to sex is, as Marcus says, mechanical and childish: pornography "undertakes to control sexuality by mentally splitting off the sexual apparatus from the sexual emotions." And yet, Marcus adds, "what else in 1884 could a writer have done, what alternatives were open to him?"<sup>3</sup>

The answer is that a writer who cared to--and had the ability--could do a great deal else, in 1860 as well as in 1884, but he had to be extremely subtle in doing it. If sexuality in pornographic fiction is reduced, isolated, cut off, sexuality in major Victorian fiction is diffused, spread out, all-pervasive. Those writers who deal sensitively and honestly with sexuality, especially in the female, depict it as a force of enormous depth and range, capable of affecting every aspect of a character's being, leaving no belief, no thought, no idea or conception quite the same as it had been before the passion was felt. Forced by convention (doubtless by personal and artistic discrimination as well) to eliminate such explicit physical details as we find in The Secret Life,<sup>4</sup>

the Victorian writer who wished to treat sex seriously could do so--indeed had to do so--by conveying the richness and variety of human emotional and intellectual response to the sexual experience. In order to suggest physical response as expressively as possible while observing contemporary standards of convention and taste, the serious novelist had in general to depict with a heightened sensitivity responses not specifically physical. That the result of such discipline was at times a delicately potent eroticism, as in George Eliot, should not surprise us. In recent novels we have seen the reverse phenomenon; as graphic descriptions of the sexual parts, of sexual union, of sexual tension and release, have increased, the sensitive evoking of erotic emotions has tended to decrease. Nabokov's Lolita,<sup>5</sup> for example, has a powerfully diffused eroticism compared with certain novels of the late 1960's and the 1970's in which a profusion of physical detail serves to drain away erotic tension.<sup>6</sup> I do not suggest that on the whole the respectable Victorian novel was a highly-charged erotic work, though sometimes it was; rather, I am attempting to show what form the erotic elements in such novels would necessarily take.

We have certainly, I think, underestimated, or failed to recognize, the erotic elements present in much Victorian literature, both poetry and prose. In Sexual Repression and Victorian Literature, Russell M. Goldfarb gives readings of works by Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, Meredith, and Charlotte Brontë that seem to him to deal with normal and abnormal sexuality in

a disguised or symbolic fashion.<sup>7</sup> Although I am not concerned here with the works that Goldfarb analyzes, his broad contention accords with an assumption basic to my discussion in this Chapter of Phineas Finn, Phineas Redux, and Daniel Deronda--namely that the anti-heroines in these works have a passionate sexual experience (I use the word here to denote total experience, not a single act), so depicted that the sensitive reader responds to the erotic content even though explicit physical details may be absent, sparse, or delicately glossed. Goldfarb suggests that in Villette Lucy Snowe experiences the psychological equivalent of sexual intercourse as she fondles and locks up a cherished letter from Dr. John Bretton.<sup>8</sup> I agree that Lucy experiences sexual passion--not, however, for Dr. John, but for M. Paul Emmanuel. And in my view, her experience is certainly not confined to--indeed does not consist of--the pseudo-orgasmic episode Goldfarb cites. On the contrary, it has the deep, whole-souled quality typical of the female sexual experience as I find it depicted in the Victorian novel. But Villette, with its foreign setting, its gothicized world, its hyper-romantic sensibility, does not fit into the category of realistic fiction. Although Charlotte Brontë treats of female sexuality in a fashion unusual for the age, she builds a special world to accommodate it--significantly a school world, in which her heroine may appropriately feel the force of social and mental energies that give resonance and conviction to her sexuality. Trollope

and George Eliot, on the other hand, see their passionate female characters, their anti-heroines, as cabined, cribbed, and confined in an English society that denies them sexuality, and denies them also creative and intellectual expression in all but the private and domestic spheres.

I purposely link sexual energy with creative and intellectual energy, and with social responsibility and power, because they have long been linked in Western religious tradition, and have remained linked through the secularization of religious values that has taken place since the Renaissance. The Biblical joining of carnal knowledge and worldly wisdom lies at the root of both Judaism and Christianity. Reaffirmation of the link is implied in the rites and sacraments of both religions, which stress the connections between physical maturation and the assumption of adult social, intellectual, and spiritual responsibilities. This connection between sacred and secular has been as much a part of Western Europe's cultural and literary as of its religious tradition. We see it clearly, of course, in Dantè, Shakespeare, Milton, and Wordsworth. In English fiction, the tradition is less clearly marked, although certainly we feel its influence in Fielding, Richardson, and Jane Austen, all of whom treat heterosexual love in a context of social, ethical, and intellectual values. In the Victorian novel, however, love in the domestic sphere is largely de-sexualized, de-socialized, and de-intellectualized, as women--at least, women as a group; there were of course

individual exceptions--in Victorian society had been by convention de-sexualized, de-socialized, and de-intellectualized. When the theme of sexual love is explicit in novels before the 1860's, as it is in Ruth and Adam Bede, it tends to be distanced by either a rural or historical setting. When the sexual theme is heightened and transformed, as in Wuthering Heights, it loses touch with a quotidian existence. Whatever mimetic connections we may establish between Wuthering Heights and the Victorian world,<sup>9</sup> we find it difficult to establish any between Catherine Farnshaw's experience of love and that of the average Victorian woman. Dorothy Van Ghent writes that "the passion of Catherine and Heathcliff is too simple and undeviating in its intensity, too uncomplex, for us to find in it any echo of practical social reality."<sup>10</sup> I am not sure that it is quite so simple and undeviating as Van Ghent suggests, but I believe that the reality it echoes is the asocial reality of Victorian female fantasy, which might best be approached from the standpoint of social psychology.<sup>11</sup>

For the purpose of this study, it is enough to say that sexuality in what we conceive to be the normal social and domestic relationships of men and women is not to be found in the novels of Emily and Charlotte Brontë. Nor is it to be found in the novels of Charles Dickens. When Esther Summerson and Allen Woodcourt marry, they withdraw from the world into a place of private refuge, as do Amy Dorrit and Arthur Clennam. These unions are at once insulated from outside assault and

from the erosions caused by unconscious inner impulse. In a hostile, precarious environment, they somehow achieve a permanent poise. Trollope and George Eliot, on the other hand, conceived of the female characters I study in this Chapter as having a full range of sexual, social, and intellectual capabilities, and thus as vulnerable, rather than immune, to worldly conflict and pressure. Placing such women in a society modeled on actual English society, these two novelists restored to the fictional female some measure of what convention had taken away; defined the nature of the damage and loss; and imaginatively constructed the experience that such a woman in such a society would have. Seen from the perspective of the modern novel, their efforts effectively countered a process which had so far fragmented human sexuality as to produce distortion at two poles of the Victorian literary world. At one extreme was pornography, which divorced physical coupling from its emotional component, eliminated the possibility of any discourse of reason between the sexes, and dammed the flow of social and mental energies that normally accompany a reasonably mature, civilized person's sexual awakening. At the other extreme was the conventional novel, which fragmented human life in another way, by depicting love between male and female without its physical component. The result was also distortion rather than mere selection and exclusion, because what was left out was not just one element among others, but a catalyst capable of activating other

elements. The concept of human experience of a Henry Ashbee<sup>12</sup> and the very different concept of the conventional Victorian novelist alike produced fictive distortions of life.

The inclusion or exclusion of sex is crucial to the form the novel takes, the kind of society it presents, and the kind of experience all the characters in it--not merely the nubile female characters--have. Passionate love on the part of a female character presupposes response in a male character, if heterosexual love is in question. And a mutual relationship of that kind, fully conceived and developed in the realistic novel, will obtrude into all aspects of the lives of both partners, as well as into the lives of relatives, friends, enemies, employers, and so on to servants and chance acquaintances. The inner lives of each partner are similarly affected by this experience, so that each is prompted to act in new and different ways, thus provoking new and different responses from those around them. Such a relationship cannot be contained in a highly plotted, controlled scheme. It must spread itself out and create the events of the novel. Trollope makes the point explicit in his Autobiography. It was his principle, he writes, never to publish any part of a novel until the entire work was completed, since "an artist should keep in his hand the power of fitting the beginning of his work to the end."<sup>13</sup> Here Trollope is not simply describing a preferred method of work; he is formulating

an aesthetic imperative for the realistic novel as he envisioned it. And it is interesting that he defends his practice with the example of a young woman whose conduct at the end of the novel might demand that the description of "angelic purity with which you laid the first lines of her portrait should be slightly toned down."<sup>14</sup> For it is the young women, the anti-heroines in the novels that I discuss in this Chapter, who most conspicuously assert their independence of preconceived structures and schemes.

It was not possible, then, to insert female sexuality into the novel as an added ingredient to season or strengthen what was already there. A world that can produce a Lady Laura Standish, whose passionate love for a beautiful young Irishman changes every part of her life and his, and nearly destroys them both, is no longer the world of the conventional Victorian novel. Recognizing the full implications--emotional, social, and intellectual--of sexuality in the mature female, Trollope and George Eliot were constrained to recognize as well the social conflicts that would be generated as such a woman struggled to reach out and confront directly a world that has designated the corner of the garden in which she is to grow. There is an analogy here, I think, to the actual Victorian world, which had begun to see that the women's movement, if it achieved any success, would do much more than change the rules governing votes, jobs, university degrees, divorce, and property ownership. Women's redefinition of

themselves would of necessity force redefinitions of men, of male-female relationships, of social institutions and values. Women's questioning of their nature and capacities actually represented a questioning of assumptions that in Victorian society seemed to have taken on the aspect of fact: steady, evolutionary progress in the public sphere, and comfortable stability in the private. Suddenly, private explosions and public revolution seemed equally possible. Similarly in the novel, traditional interpreter of social reality: changing concepts of the nature and role of the female implied changing concepts of the nature and role of the male, which changes in turn generated new concepts of society itself.

In the novel of the sixties and seventies we see this change taking place. Not only is the nature of the sexual relationship enriched and expanded, but the sexual relationship itself is seen to extend into all aspects of personal and group life. Sex is re-socialized, re-intellectualized, and re-integrated into the fictional tradition, while at the same time the breadth and depth of the erotic component in heterosexual relationships is reaffirmed. The two developments are linked, as the novels of Trollope and George Eliot that I discuss in this Chapter are linked by their common concern with sex and society and with the profound force of sexuality in the individual life. In the Phineas Finn novels, however, it seems to me that the focus is more distinctly on

society, while in Daniel Deronda it is more distinctly on the individual, and so I shall discuss the two authors and their works separately.

"Lady Laura Standish is the best character in Phineas Finn and its sequel Phineas Redux."<sup>15</sup> That was Trollope's judgment in the Autobiography, and although in that work he consistently underrates, and sometimes misconceives, his achievement, I think that about Lady Laura he is right; in a large cast of distinctive individuals, she is outstanding. Certainly she is the most vital force in the network of social and personal relationships set in motion in the Phineas Finn novels (I shall refer to them, for convenience, as separate works, although they form an artistic whole and were so considered by their author).<sup>16</sup> The fact that Lady Laura is so commanding a presence in these novels seems at first glance a paradox, and on closer study bears out the views I have just advanced concerning fundamental change in the novels of the sixties and seventies. Lady Laura is a passionate, brilliant, generous, ambitious woman, a character whose energies seem almost literally to set off sparks, not only when she appears on the scene but when other characters merely speak of her. At the beginning of Phineas Finn her potential for action and growth seems well-nigh limitless. In actual fact, however, her free progress in almost every avenue of life is blocked, with the result that tension is

generated not through a sequence of breathlessly plotted events, but, paradoxically, through an absence of event. Lady Laura's vital energy, blocked outwardly by circumstance and inwardly by a confused and mistaken judgment of herself, acquires the force of a contained explosion.

The actual events of Lady Laura's life are easily summarized. In Phineas Finn she falls in love with Phineas, a poor but immensely promising and personable young man just commencing his political career. She represses that love to contract what seems to her a wise and dutiful marriage, eventually leaves her husband, and resigns herself to an exiled life in Dresden, where, chaperoned by her father, she can escape her husband's legal attempts to bring her back. In Phineas Redux she returns to London and becomes one cause of a sequence of ugly events that nearly destroy Phineas's career; but well before that happens, she has ceased to figure in the romantic conflicts that absorb Phineas's private energies. What, then, is the source of her artistic force? The answer, I think, has to do with Trollope's management of background scene and foreground event, and with the concept of individual and social interaction that distinguishes the Paliser novels.

In these novels, we become aware of patterns in the principal characters' lives, and become capable of interpreting these patterns and assigning them a meaning, only as we are able to relate the closely-focussed foreground event, or

series of events, to the more distantly focussed events in the background. We might compare the process to studying an allegorical tapestry--bearing in mind that Trollope's novels are not at all allegorical--in which figures and scenes become comprehensible as we recognize the signs and symbols, the full signification, of the background design. In an essay on politics and personality in George Eliot's novels, William Myers takes a passing critical thrust at Trollope's novels, accusing Trollope of "a refusal to see human problems socially, an insistence that the only problems are personal, the only changeable factor in human affairs the individual personality."<sup>17</sup> Such a comment indicates a misunderstanding of Trollope's fictional method, in which there is always a dynamic tension between personal act and social context. An author can suggest the social implications, and social determinants, of the personal events he describes in a number of ways, and Trollope's way is subtle and understated. In essence, he gives the reader all the materials he needs in order to form ethical and intellectual judgments about characters and events. As David Skilton has observed, Trollope's practice is to include "as many of the rules of operation of the fictional world as possible in the novel itself, to obviate the necessity of constant . . . reference to a world outside it."<sup>18</sup> Thus, in each novel, background events illuminate characters and characters illuminate background events, so that each must be seen in terms of the other and situational conflict analyzed

with reference to both. But the author does not judge or analyze for us; having provided a key to the tapestry, he declines to label it.

There are risks in such a method. The reader may fail to make the proper connections between background and foreground. Or the author may so lose himself in the depiction of background events that they become little vignettes in themselves, attractive but, insofar as they are detached from the telling of the story, excrescences. In Phineas Finn Trollope occasionally is lured by the antics of Mr. Daubeny and other stars of his political stable into the kind of digression that as a critic he ruthlessly condemns,<sup>19</sup> Yet what seems at first to be digression or self-indulgence sometimes turns out to be intimately connected with one of the larger themes of the novel. A major theme in Phineas Finn is enfranchisement/disenfranchisement, participation or non-participation in the governing process. The chartist efforts of Mr. Bunce and the long discussions between Phineas and Joshua Monk about the ballot are obviously relevant to Trollope's working out of this theme. Monk desires to extend political privilege (short of the ballot) to those classes and groups that do not have it, and perhaps do not yet want it. He sees political participation as an educative measure and a means toward social betterment. Bunce, on the other hand, sees himself and his class as economic underdogs, and the vote as a means to more money and power. Monk's theories

and Bunce's actions help us to see the nature of the career Phineas has chosen to embark on, to weigh its difficulties and his aptitude for dealing with them, to judge how far his initially high-minded motives may be open to corruption by the power establishment that has put him on the first rungs of the ladder.

Enfranchisement and disenfranchisement are equally central to the sexual drama of Phineas Finn, since the women in the novel form the most important disenfranchised group. The background events of the novel--the cabinet and committee meetings, parliamentary debates, lobbies and divisions, in-fighting at the clubs, journalistic trickery at the People's Banner--create a world of life and action, variety and change, an attractive world that seems to hold out a rich and tempting array of choices. Against this background we see Phineas Finn, newly arrived in London from County Clare, working his way toward a position of command, and meeting as he goes men who already have such positions: Barrington Erle, Joshua Monk, Laurence Fitzgibbon. Also in the foreground are the three beautiful and intelligent women whom Phineas meets and loves: Lady Laura, Violet Effingham, and Madame Max Goesler. But with the busy political life that forms the background of the novel, with the rich and various world that Phineas wishes to conquer, these women have only a tenuous, indirect connection. They see that the most important ministers take the most personable ladies in to dinner, make sure that

the various political factions are properly disposed around tea table or croquet lawn, arrange to receive news of the latest debate from their husbands or lovers the minute the House adjourns, or go in person to hear the debate--even though, as a cabinet minister's wife comments, "the place they give us is so unpleasant."<sup>20</sup> The women are irresistibly drawn to political life--as indeed is the reader--and when Trollope shifts his focus from the men at the House to the women in their houses, they are typically found discussing something that has happened in the lively and attractive world from which they are barred. The final effect, produced very subtly and gradually by the author's easy shift between the public and private lives of his characters, is to portray the women as leading a second-class, second-hand existence. As Lady Laura puts it, "I feel that a woman's life is only half a life, as she cannot have a seat in Parliament." (I,70).

The deprivation strikes the reader as most keen in the case of Lady Laura, because she, more than almost any character in the book, male or female, seems to possess the kind of magnetism and intellectual force that we associate with a successful political career. Moreover, her father, the Earl of Brentford, is himself an important Whig peer, and has a parliamentary borough at his disposal, for which Lady Laura's brother could stand if he wished. But he does not wish. Although Laura is politically ambitious for her brother, he has no such ambitions for himself, and the seat finally goes--at

Laura's instigation--to Phineas. At this point, putting together some of the information Trollope has made available to us in the manner I suggested, we reach some interesting conclusions. The parliamentary world is clearly the center of English life, and politics the finest and most attractive of careers. Yet this career, though open to men who are relatively unfit for it--as for example Robert Kennedy, the man Lady Laura marries--and to men who do not care for it, as Lady Laura's brother does not, is closed to Laura herself. Having spent her life in a world of politics and power, understanding thoroughly the ways of that world and caring passionately for what is done there, she nevertheless can approach it only indirectly, through a father, a lover, a male relative or friend. Each of Laura's crucial acts--her surrender of her fortune to pay her imprudent brother's debts, her consequent loveless marriage to a rich man, her obsession with furthering Phineas's career after she has rejected his love--when seen in relation to the vibrant political world that Trollope has created, becomes a dramatic demonstration of Laura's fettered position as a female in that world.

It is not, then, that Trollope did not "see human problems socially," but that readers have not fully seen Trollope. In Phineas Finn, one of the many problems that he sees in fullest social context and dramatizes through Laura's experience, is the political disabilities of women. After we have grasped the complex inter-weaving of character, background,

and event, the proportions of the total pattern and the relative significance of its parts become accessible to us.<sup>21</sup>

One might argue, with some justification, that the dramatic connections between Laura's personal world and the Parliamentary world are loose; that the debates of Daubeny and Gresham, the dinners of Turnbull and Monk, hardly touch her life. But this loss in dramatic tension and dramatic unity is partly made up for by a gain in dramatic irony. Laura's intimate associations with men of power give her a sense of wielding power herself--an illusion from which she is freed only when the disasters of her personal life demonstrate to her her powerlessness. The reader, however, is privy to the talk at the Reform club and in the lobbies of the House, and sees all along how deluded and defective Laura's vision is. The men whom she hopes to influence, whom she looks up to as representing the public interest, are all too frequently engaged in petty power games aimed solely at self-aggrandisement and self-perpetuation in office. Such men will listen to the Laura Kennedys of the world only when they, too, speak the language of power; until then, Laura's concerns are as remote from theirs as if they had never met her, let alone dined at her table. That is one of the lessons Laura learns as a consequence of her attempt to gain political influence through sexual power.

I have said that in the anti-heroine of the sixties and seventies sexuality is conceived of as a rich and expansive

part of the female nature, and that far from positing some arbitrary division of sexual, social, and intellectual faculties and functions, Trollope and George Eliot see these as integrated in the human animal. A comparison of Lady Laura Standish in the Phineas Finn novels with Edith Granger in Dombey and Son may illustrate this point. Both these women enter into loveless marriages. Both novels attack the commercialization of love and marriage, and depict the social evil that arises from the subversion of the spiritual and emotional to the material. But a basic difference between Trollope's idea of Lady Laura and Dickens's idea of Edith Granger leads to radical differences in the nature of the conflicts depicted, the concept of society envisioned, and the structural scheme of the novels themselves. In Dombey and Son, Edith Granger marries Dombey against her will, fully realizing that what she does is wrong. Bowing to her witless mother's wishes and to the pressures of a materialistic world, she makes a sexual choice that is morally wrong. Her problem is external in that evil forces outside her oblige her to do evil. Dickens does not suggest alternative choices for her, nor acquaint us sufficiently with her character and feelings so that we can imagine her inner nature changing as a result of exterior events. In fact, we dismiss her from the narrative when she runs away, and are content with the one farewell appearance Dickens allows her. Since we do not see her as an integral part of any world except the Dombey world--that is,

since she is a character in an idiosyncratic, self-referring social order--we cannot, and need not, envision other desires that might impel her to other acts, other circles in which she might move, other enterprises in which she might take part, other emotions she might inspire or share. Dickens's scheme is complete without these social reverberations.

Lady Laura's loveless marriage to Robert Kennedy, however, is a much more complicated affair. Trollope conceives of Laura not as primarily a victim of outside pressure but as a member of the society in which such pressure originates, and thus as an agent of her own fate. Yet she is not quite a free agent, for society makes certain demands and places certain restrictions on her, just as she makes certain demands and places certain restrictions on herself. We might describe her as a semi-independent accomplice to her own crime--if we view her marriage as a crime. And the affair is even more complex, for in many ways Laura's complicity is made to seem both predictable and circumstantially justified. Those people with whom she lives, and whom she loves, either have, or seek, wealth and power. Moreover, Trollope persuades us that some of them--for example, Phineas Finn and Lady Laura herself--possess the attributes of heart and mind that would enable them to wield power in a just and honorable fashion. Therefore, when Laura represses her love for Phineas in order to marry a rich man through whom she expects to acquire social power and political influence, we find ourselves unable to

judge her act from the outside. We are disposed to see it through her eyes, especially since we know that her generosity to her brother, which is also reinforced by her social conditioning, has to a large extent restricted her freedom of choice. Society in a Trollope novel is not, as it frequently seems to be in a Dickens novel, a force somehow independent of the individuals within it. In Trollope's world, people shape and are shaped by their society. Thus, Lady Laura's desire to be a political person in a political world is a logical consequence of both her social background and her personal gifts; it is a valid desire. And since the accident of sex makes it impossible of direct fulfillment, we see the need for vicarious indirection. And here we approach the genesis of some of the major crises in the novel: Laura's marriage to a man she does not love, together with her rejection of the man she does love, is an act both public and social and private and sexual, with consequences in public and private spheres.

If the reader is to credit Laura's act and its consequences, he must accept the validity of her public ambitions, the force of her sexual nature, and the exigencies of her social position. As I have said, Trollope persuades us of the first by placing Laura firmly in a world that values political power and looks on its acquisition as a personal duty. In order to establish the force of Laura's sexual nature, and justify from a social point of view her attempt to deny it, Trollope makes use of a device whose full significance in Victorian literature

we have begun to recognize--the pairing of siblings in a duality that heightens the singularity of each.<sup>22</sup> In Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux, Trollope's pairing of Lady Laura and her brother Oswald (Lord Chiltern) has the effect of prompting in the reader a fleeting sense that these two might be twins, in whom--because their environment and social conditioning have been different--a similar raw material of nature has taken dissimilar shapes. Specifically, Chiltern seems to display in a semi-savage condition qualities that in Laura have been honed down and polished through a rigorous process of restraint and inhibition, in the course of which she has not only bowed to the restraints but internalized the values of the world that imposes them. By setting up in the reader's mind this comparison between Laura and Oswald, Trollope makes vivid for us the contrasting social environments of Victorian male and female, while at the same time suggesting the naked human elements common to each.

Oswald and Laura are emotionally bound to each other, and frequently appear together in the novel, as they do in the chapter that introduces them both. Here is Trollope's introductory description of Laura:

Phineas had declared at Killaloe that Lady Laura was six feet high, that she had red hair, that her figure was straggling, and that her hands and feet were large. She was in fact about five feet seven in height, and she carried her height well. There was something of nobility in her gait, and she seemed thus to be taller than her inches. Her hair was . . . of a deep thorough redness. Her brother's hair was the same. . . . Her face was very fair, though it lacked that softness which we all love in women.

Her eyes, which were large and bright, and very clear, never seemed to quail, never rose and sunk or showed themselves to be afraid of their own power. Indeed, Lady Laura Standish had nothing of fear about her. . . . she would lean forward when sitting, as a man does, and would use her arms in talking, and would put her hand over her face, and pass her fingers through her hair,--after the fashion of men rather than of women;--and she seemed to despise that soft quiescence of her sex in which are generally found so many charms. (I,40).

And here is his introduction of Chiltern:

At that moment the door of the room was opened, and a man entered with quick steps, came a few yards in, and then retreated, slamming the door with him. He was a man with thick short red hair, and an abundance of very red beard. And his face was red,--and, as it seemed to Phineas, his very eyes. There was something in the countenance of the man which struck him almost with dread,--something approaching to ferocity. (I,43).

Trollope tells us that from her earliest years Laura has resolved to "use the world as men use it, and not as women do" (II, 13), and the parallels he draws between Laura and Chiltern emphasize this desire even as they signal the futility of the effort. As Chiltern is an intense, powerful, compelling man, Laura is an intense, powerful, compelling woman. He is a person of violence and passion, and in her way she is the same. Chiltern falls in love only once, and eventually wins the woman he loves, Violet Effingham. Laura, too, falls in love only once, and her passion for Phineas resembles her brother's passion for Violet, just as the violence of her remorse after she has given him up resembles Chiltern's violence at the very thought that Violet might marry someone else. Yet the contrasts between these two are as striking as the likenesses, and Trollope uses likeness and contrast to compare

the emotional nature and social role of men and women. For instance, although Laura is by nature as honest and straightforward as her brother--a fact we learn from her dealings with him and with her trusted friends--she has learned to be tactful and calculating in her dealings with the world. As an only daughter and her widowed father's constant companion and hostess, she sees mainly men, and mainly political men, and has become a diplomat in her relations with them. In a curious way too, she has become as diplomatic in her relations with herself as she is with others. While Chiltern knows himself down to the soles of his shoes, Laura's concept of herself is a blurred composite of her own perceptions and images presented to her from the outside that tell her what she is expected to be. When inner perceptions clash with outer expectations, Laura suppresses her recognition of the conflict, pouring oil on the troubled waters of her own life as she does on the lives of the politicians who frequent her drawing room. Thus, although her heart and soul are in politics, she persuades herself that an indirect role is what she wishes to play: "the cause of the Rights of Women generally," Trollope writes, "was odious to her; but, nevertheless, for herself, she delighted in hoping that she too might be useful;--and in thinking that she too was perhaps, in some degree, politically powerful" (I, 108). As an ambitious woman in a man's world, contradictions and indirection characterize Laura's life, yet so firmly are they built into

it that she has come either to embrace them or deny that they exist.

Her private independence, for example, is in complete contradiction to the dependent role she must play in public. Trollope says at the start that "the point in Lord Brentford's character which had more than any other struck our hero [Phineas Finn] was the unlimited confidence which he seemed to place in his daughter. Lady Laura seemed to have perfect power of doing what she pleased. She was much more mistress of herself than if she had been the wife instead of the daughter of the Earl of Grentford" (I,41). And, the reader might add, as much master of herself as if she had been his son, since the Earl, estranged from the savagely independent Chiltern, has made of Laura both a son and a daughter. As mistress of a household and in command of her own life. Laura is free to follow her inclination, which is to be as close to the scene of political action as possible. Although her father's interest in politics is chiefly a deferring to family tradition, hers is a passion. When her cousin, a Liberal of the party-above-all persuasion, twits her with the folly of trusting a man who thinks of himself as a leader of the people, she replies, "That's all very well for you . . . who call yourself a Liberal simply because Fox was a Liberal a hundred years ago. My heart's in it!" (I, 258). But Laura fails to grasp the significant fact that the privileges and interests she enjoys privately are publicly denied to her. Private

autonomy blinds her to her public impotence. She does not even see that private life as the wife of Robert Kennedy may be very different from private life as the only daughter of the Earl of Brentford. Less than a year after her marriage, her father puts into words what she has persistently refused to recognize: "'He is so hard and dry, and what I call exacting,'" he says of Kennedy: "'now Laura has never been used to that. With me she always had her own way in everything, and I always found her fit to have it. I do not understand why her husband should treat her differently'" (I, 381).

Before marriage, however, Laura can envision no intolerable restraints, just as her sense of unlimited energy prevents her from imagining any blocking of channels into which the energy might flow. Even her intelligence and initiative work against her, since they lead her to over-estimate her control over herself and others. Her relationship to Phineas is a prime example. In the beginning she assumes almost the role of an elder sister--the brother-sister relationship in Victorian literature frequently providing, as here, a basic pattern for heterosexuality in the Victorian female. "'I wonder whether you will be angry if I take upon myself the task of mentor,'" (I, 89), she asks Phineas, shortly after his election to Parliament from a small Irish district. And then, scarcely waiting for an answer, she proceeds to introduce him to the right people and advise him how to treat them; to wangle

invitations for him to the right dinners and weekend gatherings; to make sure that his political rise is both safe and rapid. Because her powerful connections can further his success, because she knows much more of the world he hopes to conquer than he does, because she realizes that he is falling in love with her, she assumes that she is in perfect control of herself and him.

The sisterly role, however, is a partly willed, partly unconscious self-deception. Again using Laura's brother to heighten the reader's perception of Laura herself, Trollope draws a subtle comparison between the fierce, monogamous passion of Chiltern for Violet Effingham and the equally fierce, monogamous passion of Laura for Phineas Finn. But while Chiltern goes after what he wants the way he rides his horse at a fence, Laura, her own desires masked by her need to respond to social expectations, walks with a kind of sublime ignorance into disaster.

That Laura's position as a woman constricts her and contributes to her tragic misfortune, Trollope makes quite clear. While Phineas is walking with her by the falls of Loughlinter, mustering his courage for a declaration of love, Laura tells him that she has accepted an offer of marriage from Robert Kennedy. At first Phineas is crushed and angry, But Laura's explanation of her reasons softens the blow. "Early in the spring," she tells him, "I paid my brother's debts. His affection to me is more than a return for what I

have done. . . . But when I did this . . . I made up my mind that I could not allow myself the same freedom of choice which would otherwise have belonged to me.'" (I, 170). Presumably Laura could have given up wealth and position to marry Phineas, but he does not really question her decision, and nor does she. It seems to her that she is doing what she actually wishes to do. "'I have accepted the owner of Loughlinter as my husband,'" she says, "'because I verily believe that I shall thus best do my duty in that sphere of life to which it has pleased God to call me. I have always liked him, and I will love him.'" (I, 169). In a man, the speech would sound pompous and absurd, In a woman of Lady Laura's spirit it ought to sound so, and yet it does not, because it is entirely consistent with the conditions under which women live in the model of society that Trollope sets up. Lord Brentford thinks that Violet Effingham ought to marry his son, and makes their marriage a condition of his willingness to be reconciled with Chiltern. That situation differs from Laura's in that Violet is independently rich, and in love with the man she is urged to marry, yet the pattern of social expectations as determinants of private choices is the same. Of course, this expectation affects Chiltern as well, but he, unlike Laura, recognizes that no one has a right to make such demands; as he tells the earl, he will do exactly as he pleases.

Laura's act is not only a logical response to the

demands placed on upper-class women, it is also consistent with what we have learned of her nature--namely, that she under-estimates her feelings and over-estimates her control. As a woman, she has been conditioned to do so, another bit of information that we gain through comparing Laura's conduct with Chiltern's in parallel situations. When Chiltern learns that Phineas has proposed marriage to Violet Effingham, he fights a duel in which he actually tries to kill the rival who has been his dearest, most trusted friend. By contrast, Laura, when she realizes that Phineas has transferred his love from her to Violet--who is her dearest friend--feels at first a passion of grief and a desire for revenge; but then, schooling herself to repression, she gradually comes to want for Phineas what he wants for himself. So thoroughly does she bury her own desires that she even opposes her brother's interest to further Phineas's suit. It is, perhaps, a lesson in selfless love, the kind of love Victorian women were taught to feel, but it is a costly lesson. Just how costly, Trollope shows us in the course of the two novels, as Laura gradually changes from a young woman of force and spirit into a lonely, embittered, futile creature, grown old before her time.

Fiction that leaves out of account the sexual impulse and fiction that dwells on it exclusively share a common assumption: that sexuality is a force separable from the other forces of human nature. In life we often make a similar assumption, regarding human beings as capable of a conscious

allocation of instinctual energies, able to channel what would normally flow in one direction into some other direction if the first is blocked. Trollope's concept of sexuality as articulated in the Phineas Finn novels is quite different. He sees the need for sexual fulfillment as fundamentally linked with other human needs--for domestic affection, social participation, personal growth. In the history of Lady Laura's marriage he shows how the failure of one link in this elemental chain weakens all the others. When Laura's prospects, so high at the start, begin to fall away, not only Laura but her husband and his career, her father and his career, and very nearly Phineas himself, are dragged down with her. The disintegration process begins at the falls of Loughlinter, on almost the spot where a few months earlier Laura had so confidently predicted the success of her coming marriage. Now she has been married less than a year, and yet, as she tells Phineas, the time has gone very slowly.

"I do not think it has been slow with me," said Phineas.

"No; you have been active. You have had your hands full of work. I am beginning to think it is a great curse to have been born a woman."

"And yet I have heard you say that a woman may do as much as a man."

"That was before I had learned my lesson properly. I know better than that now. . . ." (I, 367).

Laura's disillusioned discovery of women's shackled position in the world is closely linked to her sexual and emotional frustration, and I will take up the second subject first, since it is essential to make clear the nature and consequences of her sexual self-denial. Victorian literature

often seems disarmingly accessible. We know that many words in Renaissance poetry must be looked up and in essence translated; we realize that sixteenth-century customs and manners were different from ours; we know what we do not know. About the Victorian period, however, we know enough, and enough of what we know bears some rough correspondence to current customs and usage, that we sometimes overlook crucial differences. The scene by the falls of Loughlinter illustrates one such difference. In the course of it, Lady Laura says to Phineas:

"The truth is, my friend . . . that I have made a mistake."

"A mistake?"

"Yes, Phineas, a mistake. I have blundered as fools blunder, thinking that I was clever enough to pick my footsteps aright. . . . I have blundered and stumbled and fallen and now I am so bruised that I am not able to stand upon my feet." The word that struck him most in all this was his own Christian name. She had never called him Phineas before. He was aware that the circle of his acquaintance had fallen into a way of miscalling him by his Christian name, as one observes to be done now and again in reference to some special young man. Most of the men whom he called his friends called him Phineas. Even the Earl had done so more than once on occasions in which the greatness of his position had dropped for a moment out of his mind. Mrs. Low had called him Phineas when she regarded him as her husband's most cherished pupil; and Mrs. Bunce had called him Mr. Phineas. He had always been Phineas to everybody at Killaloe. But still he was quite sure that Lady Laura had never so called him before. Nor would she have done so now in her husband's presence. He was sure of that also. (I, 368-69).

To overlook the subtleties of such a code of salutation is tantamount to missing part of the action of the novel. Trollope provides against that by revealing clearly the rules

of naming, just as he reveals all the rules of his fictive society. For example, he shows us that when a hack journalist begins a letter to Phineas with the overly-familiar salutation "My dear Finn," Phineas will call on the man personally rather than address a letter to him in the same fashion. Again, when Lord Chiltern is angry with Phineas, he calls him "Sir," although they have shared lodgings on terms of perfect mutual trust. And while the Duke of Omnium calls Madame Max Goesler "Marie," she addresses him always by his title, even after a near-marriage that is followed by years of affectionate friendship. The salutation used by one person to another may tell much about both--social rank, length and terms of acquaintance, the degree of assurance that each feels in himself, or senses in the other, at a particular moment. In the encounter between Phineas and Lady Laura at Loughlinter, the use of first names indicates on Laura's part an acknowledgement of sexual feeling hitherto hidden, and on Phineas's part a tentative response to that acknowledgement and all it implies. Sitting on the bench by the lake, with Phineas stretched on the ground at her feet, Lady Laura tells herself that she did not give up this man for money, but for the chance of doing something in the world--a chance she now knows that she will never have. She compares her husband's dry lack of sympathy, his harsh domestic rule, with Phineas's beauty of outward form and inner nature. Finally she says:

"Phineas . . . I have in you such perfect confidence that I will tell you the truth;--as one man may tell it

to another. I wish you would go from here. . . . Not to-day, or to-morrow. Stay here now till the election; but do not return. He will ask you to come, and press you hard. . . . He has a pleasure in seeing you here. But he must not have that pleasure at the expense of trouble to me."

"And why is it a trouble to you?" he asked. Men are such fools;--so awkward, so unready, with their wits ever behind the occasion by a dozen seconds or so! As soon as the words were uttered, he knew that they should not have been spoken.

"Because I am a fool," she said. "Why else? Is not that enough for you?"

"Laura--," he said.

"No,--no; I will have none of that. I am a fool, but not such a fool as to suppose that any cure is to be found there." (I, 370-71).

The "cure" that Laura rejects is clearly an extra-marital liaison with Phineas. We know, because Trollope has shown us, that just as women are attracted to Phineas, he is attracted to them. Though honorable, he is susceptible, very ready to love and be loved. His use of Lady Laura's first name without her title--almost the only occasion in the book when he does so use it--reveals as much to her as her use of his first name reveals to him. To the modern reader it may seem a very timid sexual advance, yet there is no question that Lady Laura asks Phineas to leave because she doubts that she can remain faithful to her husband with temptation so close at hand. As for Phineas, he realizes later that what had prevented him from responding to Lady Laura's confession with what Trollope delicately terms "criminal tenderness" was the sudden arrival on the scene of Mr. Kennedy, and the obvious fact that Mr. Kennedy was utterly devoid of suspicion. Such trust, Phineas reflects, is an obligation, binding him "by all social laws to

refrain from such tenderness" (I, 373).

Laura's statement that she is not such a fool as to see a cure in dalliance also suggests a social and pragmatic, more than a moral and abstract, judgment. And this is consistent both with Trollope's presentation of the individual in society and his treatment of social and moral issues. When an individual can bring his desires into harmony with social realities, his personal prosperity contributes as well to the general social good. Violet Effingham's marriage to Lord Chiltern, for example, is not only a source of happiness to them both but also productive of public gain, in that Chiltern, who has previously wasted his talents, employs them in a socially useful way. The union also produces children. Lady Laura's marriage, on the other hand, is sexually and socially barren, a source of public and private misery and waste.

When in the light of background events we analyze the three most important sexual unions in the Phineas Finn novels we see that each bears a resemblance to one of the socio-political groupings that figure in the over-all design. Violet and Chiltern together represent the landed aristocracy, bound by a common heritage, by cherished traditions, by affection and trust that has developed through years of sharing the same customs, the same duties, the same pleasures. Violet refers again and again to a time when she and Chiltern, as boy and girl, ran away to the woods with ginger toffee in

their pockets. Each time she visits Saulsby, Lord Brentford's house, she visits the cottage in the wood where Chiltern had dried her wet riding boots. "'I have done my devotions now . . . and am ready to return to ordinary life,'" she says after one of these visits. And they are indeed a kind of rite, one that avows the efficacy of private tradition in the same way that the Queen's address avows the efficacy of public tradition. It is significant, too, that Chiltern, as responsible husband and father, becomes a Master of Hounds, in one stroke turning his private pleasure into a public service--at least for the hunting citizenry, who represent, in Trollope, a solid, vital part of English life--and a means of livelihood. Violet at first resists Chiltern's suit, fearing to trust herself to such a tempestuous, headstrong man. In the end, she does not yield out of a practical conviction that he will change, but because she is willing to put her early affection and belief in him to the test. Their union symbolizes the somewhat irrational, gentleman's-agreement kind of trust that is possible among members of a small, long-established social enclave, and it is entirely appropriate that they live their married life almost exclusively in the country, among members of their own group, removed from the commercial and political pressures of London life.

The marriage of Robert Kennedy and Lady Laura, however, is an uneasy alliance of opposites, forged for convenience in a brightly-lit public arena. As such, it declines first into

an ugly power struggle and finally into tragedy. In chronicling its descent, Trollope demonstrates that absence of sexual tenderness and sympathy cannot remain merely an absence of something--it evolves into the presence of something else. In Laura, the consciousness of having done her husband injury prompts her initially to submit to his demands. But he, subconsciously aware that he is being offered penitence instead of love, responds by tyrannizing over her to the full extent that law and custom allow, stopping short only of physical brutality. As in the Casaubon marriage in Middlemarch (for which it seems to me that Trollope's earlier depiction of the Kennedy marriage may have provided a germ of inspiration), Mr. Kennedy tries to tame his wife's spirit, to reduce her intellect and aspiration to the level of his own:

He always had prayers at nine, and breakfasted at a quarter past nine, let the hours on the night before have been as late as they might. . . . After breakfast he would open his letters in his study, but he liked her to be with him, and desired to discuss with her every application he got from a constituent. He had his private secretary in a room apart, but he thought that everything should be filtered to his private secretary through his wife. He was very anxious that she herself should superintend the accounts of their own private expenditure, and had taken some trouble to teach her an excellent mode of bookkeeping. . . .

Those two hours . . . with her husband in the morning became very wearisome to her. At first she had declared that it would be her greatest ambition to help her husband in his work, and she had read all the letters from the MacNabs and MacFies, asking to be made gaugers and landing waiters, with an assumed interest. But the work soon palled. . . . Her quick intellect discovered soon that there was nothing in it which she really did. It was all form and verbiage and pretence at business. . . . Lady Laura wanted to meddle with high politics, to discuss reform bills, to assist

in putting up Mr. This and in putting down My Lord That. Why should she waste her time in doing that which the lad in the next room, who was called a private secretary, could do as well? (I, 255).

The tiresome, futile nature of this work, and Robert Kennedy's peculiar need to subject his wife to it, illustrate Mill's argument in "The Subjection of Women" that "every one who desires power, desires it most over those who are nearest to him, with whom his life is passed, with whom he has most concerns in common, and in whom any independence of his authority is oftenest likely to interfere with his individual preferences."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the marriages in the Phineas Finn novels frequently suggest that Trollope found in Mill a theoretical, philosophical base for the kinds of sexual relationships that he actualized in his fictive social world. The Kennedy marriage becomes what Mill called a "school of despotism,"<sup>24</sup> one that brings out the worst in both partners. For Laura it becomes a prison:

She had married a rich man in order that she might be able to do something in the world;--and now that she was this rich man's wife she found that she could do nothing. The rich man thought it to be quite enough for her to sit at home and look after his welfare. (I, 370).

Thus confined, her spirit festers. Her candor shades into rudeness, her ardor frequently approaches rage. Pent up in her Scottish castle, with no congenial tasks at hand, she suffers what today would be called psychosomatic ailments. "'Headache in nine cases out of ten comes from the stomach,'" Mr. Kennedy informs her, and proposes to send for the doctor.

"It is nothing of that sort," said Lady Laura, impatient at having her ailment inquired into with so much accuracy.

"Then what is it? You cannot think that I can be happy to hear you complaining of headache everyday,--making it an excuse for absolute idleness."

"What is it that you want me to do?" she said, jumping up from her seat. "Set me a task, and if I don't go mad over it, I'll get through it. There are the account books. Give them to me. I don't suppose I can see the figures, but I'll try to see them."

"Laura, this is unkind of you,--and ungrateful."

"Of course;--it is everything that is bad. What a pity that you did not find it out last year. . . ." (I, 377-78).

Kennedy, too, changes for the worse. In his brief joy at winning his chosen bride, he had occasionally risen from dull, stolid mediocrity toward a level almost approaching charm. His delight in the beauty of his Scottish acres, his courtesy to his guests, his generosity in the matter of a marriage settlement (later reversed), testify to a nature capable at least of wholesome, if not spectacular, growth. But for both Kennedy and Laura, sexual misalliance cuts off all prospects. The marriage demonstrates the point I made at the beginning of this chapter--that Trollope conceives of sexuality as being integrated with the impulse toward social participation and personal growth; that a general flowering or a general withering is more likely than a disproportionate blossoming of one branch in default of another. Further, the marriage shows, in terms of fictive characters in a fictive model of society, the effect on human relationships of social conditions corresponding to conditions in the real Victorian world. The marital history of the Kennedys provides a dramatic

demonstration of the consequences of the disenfranchisement of women, the control by the husband of marital property, and the right of a husband to enforce cohabitation on a truant wife.

The marital law forces Laura into a dreary exile in Dresden. Away from her friends, cut off from London life, she becomes obsessed with Phineas's career--as though she could still live her life through him. After a brief retirement in Ireland, Phineas regains his parliamentary seat, subject only to a scrutiny of corrupt votes; this event initiates the action of Phineas Redux. While waiting to hear his fate, Phineas visits Laura in Dresden, and as they wander about the massive fortress of Königstein, she assures him that he was right to return to politics:

"Whether it be a bad life or a good life. . . . You and I understand equally well that no other life is worth having after it. We are like the actors, who cannot bear to be away from the gaslights when once they have lived amidst their glare." As she said this they were leaning together over one of the parapets of the great fortress, and the sadness of the words struck him as they bore upon herself. She also had lived amidst the gaslights, and now she was self-banished into absolute obscurity.<sup>25</sup>

The situation is the symbol. Trollope here uses a favored technique--suggesting social situations or psychological states through the use of landscape and physical surroundings. In Phineas Redux, the portrait of a despondent Robert Kennedy shutting himself up in his castle, becoming first a recluse and then a miser, depriving himself of candles and coal, and finally sinking into a madness that matches the darkness and

cold all about him, is one of the finest examples of this kind of symbolism in all Trollope's work. It also has an important symbolic function in connection with the subject of this Chapter--the sexual and marital choices of the anti-heroine. The picture of Kennedy at his highland castle has as a companion piece the picture of Lady Laura pacing the desolate, wintry landscape at Königstein. Together, they tell a story of two people who are at once the victims of their social system and participating members of the system to which they fall victim. Lady Laura's choice, as I have shown, was free insofar as she was capable of free choice. Similarly, Robert Kennedy, once he realized the unhappy position his wife had put herself in, used to the fullest the power society gave him to keep her there. He was as imprisoned in the male role as she in the female. Yet when this social bond is broken and these two part, each reverts to an almost primitive state, as if the trappings of convention and the conditioning of group life could be peeled away like bark. Kennedy actually goes mad, and makes an attempt on Phineas Finn's life. In Lady Laura, when she comes back to London to await her husband's death, we see the smothered remnant of a fire deliberately quenched in her youth. She now cares nothing for social expectations, feels only contempt for conventional rules, asserts her will and owns to her passions as heedlessly as her brother ever did. Indeed, at the end of Phineas Redux the two seem almost to have reversed roles. Laura is now beyond the

reach of society, and no longer cares, while Chiltern sees it as his duty to force her to conform to society's expectations. At the beginning of Phineas Finn it was Laura who had urged conformity on a rebellious Chiltern. Now, he is so disgusted at the violence of her grief when she hears that Phineas has been imprisoned on a false charge of murder, that he tells her she is disgracing herself.

"I am disgraced," said Lady Laura, slowly rising and placing herself again on the sofa. . . . "I do not care what happens to me now, or who knows it. They cannot make my life worse than it is." (II,112).

Laura disobeys her brother and defies convention in order to visit Phineas in prison; and it seems that from the moment she ceases to care what others think of her behavior, she is able to understand why she behaves as she does, and to recognize her feelings. When Phineas, released from prison, tells her that he is to marry Madame Max Goesler, she does not stamp out her jealousy as she had done earlier in the case of Violet Effingham. She abuses Madame Max, accuses Phineas of marrying for advantage, tells him she will never receive his wife--and finally throws herself into his arms in an agony of grief. "When I was younger," she tells him, "I did not understand how strong the heart can be. I should have known it, and I pay for my ignorance with the penalty of my whole life" (II, 421). But society, too, must bear part of the responsibility for Laura's ignorance, as Trollope's comprehensive, dispassionate analysis of her marriage makes clear. In

internalizing society's values, she acquiesces in the waste of her talents and the suppression of her needs, and comes to require of herself what no one should rightfully have required of her. One mistaken choice opens her eyes to the social laws that have shaped her life, and of which she has been curiously unmindful. Appropriately, we learn the force of these laws through Laura's experience, just as we learn the force of society's conditioning through Laura's attitudes.

Robert Polhemus, commenting on Lady Laura, refers to the "sympathy" the reader feels for her "feminine courage and nerve in the face of institutionalized repression."<sup>26</sup> While the reader may have such a reaction, it is a mistake, I think, to look at Trollope's presentation of his world as a polarity of sympathetic and unsympathetic portraiture. In general, he shows compassion for the human condition and all those who find themselves in it. About his society, however, I think he was as ruthlessly objective as a writer could possibly be, in effect setting up his working model and allowing it to run its course. The model of society he sets up in the Phineas Finn novels is characterized by what anthropologists might call dual organization--male opposing female--and concentric structure, with males occupying the central space and females relegated to the periphery.<sup>27</sup> And Trollope's attitude to this society resembles--insofar as is possible in a writer of fiction--that of an anthropologist recording the workings of the model structure he has built. Lady Laura provides an excellent

illustration of the process, for she does not, in fact, become more sympathetic as she faces social repression; on the contrary, she becomes edgy and disagreeable, as prisoners and caged animals tend to do.

In many novels that deal with social problems, society is conceived of as an independent entity, a more or less immovable force against which the individual contends, or to which he conforms. In the Phineas Finn novels the relationship between society and the individual is more like that between dependent variables in a mathematical equation, one changing in proportion and relation to change in the other. Or we might liken society and the individual to a wave and the particles that make up its mass; the wave moves, carrying the particles along, but the particles have their own motion that is related to, but not the same as, the motion of the mass. This concept, as it is worked out in the novels, makes for a feeling of constant motion and change. The reader is continuously aware of evolving life, of a flow of action not limited to the specific events under consideration at any one moment. It is perhaps revealing, too, to think of the personal relationships in these novels as a sequence of sound vibrations, of which at any one time some will sink almost below the threshold of audibility, some will reach thunderous pitch, and some will be lightly but consistently distinguishable from all the others. In Phineas Finn we are constantly aware of Lady Laura, whether her voice is a present cry, a distant hum,

or merely a vibration whose tone we recognize. Appropriately, as she prepares for her departure to Dresden, and her voice becomes quieter in our ears, the vibrations she has stirred die down as well. She has introduced Phineas to her brother Lord Chiltern, to her father the Earl of Brentford, to her cousin Barrington Erle, to her friend Violet Effingham, to all the important figures in the center and on the perimeter of Trollope's social system, and thus she has been a felt presence in each of these relationships. Her physical departure for Dresden marks a formal pause between the two novels, significant in terms of time scheme, structure, emotional pace, atmospheric change, and character development. It performs in a novelistic sense a function similar to the dramatic function performed by Hamlet's departure for England. By the time she returns to London, English society has changed. Although still a central figure, Lady Laura is not the genetrix of this world, as she had been of the world of Phineas Finn.

We learn the constitutive powers of society in Phineas Redux partly through the sexual choices of the individuals in it, just as their actions tell us how society has acted on them. A child who throws a ball expresses personal impulse and social conditioning; if he throws the ball through a school window, he also expresses something about his inner and outer worlds and the connections between the two. In Phineas Finn, Lady Laura's marital choice expressed a need to

bring into harmony social expectations and inward desire, a need to play the social game. The marriages in Phineas Redux are strikingly different. Violet Effingham, who in Phineas Finn had said brightly, "'I shall knock under to Mr. Mill, and go in for women's rights. . . . Matrimony never seemed to me to be very charming'" (II, 145) becomes in Phineas Redux thoroughly domesticated and content to be so. But Violet and Chiltern both hunt, and are both professionally concerned in the vital business of caring for the hounds and providing proper breeding conditions for the foxes; as a result, their marriage is as much a joint enterprise as if they were farmers, or squire and lady in the days when both managed the estate and if necessary bore arms. Violet's choice represents to a large degree a retreat from the bright political world in which Lady Laura had wished to figure, but which had relegated her to a peripheral place; the marriage is a metaphorical ball through the schoolhouse window insofar as both Violet and Chiltern come from a class whose elders felt that political participation was a social duty.

The marriage between Phineas Finn and Marie Max Goesler represents a different kind of sexual expression and sexual adaptation to a changing world. Marie Max Goesler is a widow, a German and probably a Jew, rich and socially ambitious, an outsider who deliberately plans to buy her way into the best London society. Outsiders in Trollope's novels frequently represent the unorthodox, the innovative, the brash but not

necessarily bad, the new blood wanted to revitalize a dilute English strain. The description fits Madame Max, and even Phineas himself, who is a Roman Catholic, son of a country doctor, a johnny-come-lately beside the lords of the treasury and peers of the realm among whom he lives. Not long after Phineas and Madame Max meet, she proposes to him, and even before that she tells him that her money, of which she has too much, is at his disposal for his political use if he wishes it. This offer she makes in French because, as she points out, in England "there are things one may not say. . . . that are tabooed by a sort of consent,--and that without any reason" (II, 121).

In the hands of a lesser novelist, Marie Max Goesler--dark, exotic looking, calculating, worldly, intelligent, a thoroughly independent, self-reliant woman--might have been poured into the stereotyped mold of the female adventurer. In the Phineas Finn novels she is an anti-heroine who turns into a heroine as we read, and once again Trollope's conception of a female character is central to his conception of the society in which she moves. Urban society and English politics are, as I have said, radically different in Phineas Redux from what they are in the earlier novel. Parliament is no longer an insular gentleman's club, and political gatherings no longer suggest a group of vestrymen discussing parish affairs. The scandalmongering journalist, Quintus Slide, stands for election, and Phineas, who once represented the

pretty little Irish borough of Loughshane, now fights his battle at Tankerville, "a dirty, prosperous, ungainly town, which seemed to exude coal-dust or coal-mud at every pore" (I, 36). It is a dirty fight, with Phineas's opposition openly buying votes, a bit of corruption that seems to exemplify politics as a whole. Legislative rivalries are savage, friendships expendable, personal and professional ties subject to the demands of factional interest. In Phineas Redux the old order changes. The Earl of Brentford, model of the useful political peer, grows senile, while the Duke of Omnium, model of the old aristocracy justifying itself by the mere grace and grandeur of its existence, dies. The new order is less disciplined than the old, more violent, less protected from the outside and less protecting of its own, no longer living by its professed code. Phineas is accused of murdering a political rival, and during his imprisonment it becomes clear to him that few of those he had considered his friends believe in his innocence. The social background of Phineas Redux, with its shifting class alignments, its influx of new blood (besides Madame Goesler there is Joseph Emilius, a charlatan Bohemian preacher who is actually guilty of the murder Phineas is accused of), its frangible loyalties and its cut-throat rivalries, begins to resemble less and less the bright world of Phineas Finn and more and more the clouded world of twentieth-century politics. It is a world of dark corners and dangerous turnings, in which one walks

at one's peril; a world in which men and women must help each other, and both must have their wits about them. That is one message that the union of Phineas Finn and Madame Max Goesler seems to convey. Each has confronted the world and faced its dangers. They hope to be less vulnerable together than they were apart.

This marriage recognizes social dislocation, acknowledges practical exigencies like money and power, accepts the idea that a changing social milieu produces new kinds of sexual unions. Mme. Goesler's and Phineas's romance--for it is a romance, despite its practical advantages for each of them--virtually reverses normal patterns of courtship. She has the money, she proposes, she provides financial support. And Phineas's acceptance seems quite consistent with the new social system that Trollope has constructed, in which conventional male prerogative gives way to generous human response. During Phineas's term of imprisonment and trial, Madame Max has provided not only moral support but the practical efforts that save his life, and this despite the lack of any formal or informal engagement. It is through her cunning and resourcefulness that he is finally acquitted, free to take up his old life with some hope of success. But in fact he refuses the cabinet position that is offered to him after his release; he has suffered bitterly from his colleagues' lack of trust, and cannot help feeling that the Prime Minister's offer, coming after his long ordeal, is more a reward for

hardship than a recognition of his fitness for office. In truth, Phineas is disenchanted with the world that at first seemed to hold out such rich and various opportunities. He sees that the people who succeed in politics sacrifice principle to party interest, and that a man of no independent fortune can scarcely afford principles at all. As Mme. Goesler's husband he will be able to afford principles, and to wait for an offer more acceptable than the one he has turned down. Yet even though he loves her, his decision troubles him, for as he tells her, she is rich while he has nothing. To which she answers:

"If you ever remind me of that again I will strike you. . . . Between you and me there must be nothing more about that. It must be an even partnership." (II, 427).

The idea of marriage as an even partnership had great social currency in the late 1860's and 1870's. Discussions of women's rights in the periodical press, particularly in the women's journals, came sooner or later to the question of how marriage would be affected by a change in the position of women.<sup>28</sup> Although there was disagreement about the causes, there was general agreement about the fact that the current form of marriage, in which a totally dependent woman submitted to her husband's rule, was unsatisfactory. The marriage of Phineas Finn and Madame Goesler reflects this contemporary belief that equality in marriage would contribute to social good--just as Lady Laura's marriage was shown to be a festering sore in the social body. Between Phineas and Madame

Goesler there is a mutual give and take that is honestly acknowledged and sanctioned by love, as was not the case in the marriage of Lady Laura and Robert Kennedy. Marie Goesler is as different from Laura Kennedy as the political atmosphere of Phineas Redux is different from that of the earlier novel. She conforms to convention because she finds life pleasant as an accepted member of a congenial group, but she can distinguish between her own desires and the behavior that external considerations may require. "'Of course decency, morality, and propriety, all made to suit the eye of the public, are the things which are really delightful,'" she remarks to Phineas, but adds, "'I am sure you agree with me that you often envy the improper people . . . the people who don't trouble themselves about keeping any laws except those for breaking which they would be put into . . . prisons'" (II, 389).

Madame Goesler's independent views are consistent with her independent life, and her rootless, classless position in the English social scheme. Lady Laura had all the virtues of her class--courage, self-assurance, a sense that the world was hers--and those virtues, with their related vices of overconfidence and lack of self-knowledge, helped to destroy her. Madame Max is self-distrustful and self-questioning, cautious before she acts and reflective afterwards. These qualities, giving rise, as they do, to habits of introspection and self-examination, fit her for the world she moves in. They help

her to form correct judgments of herself and others. She sees before Phineas does that Violet Effingham will choose a man from her own rank; as she tells him, "'I do not know this Violet that is not yours. . . . But I know she is one that always lived with lords and countesses. A girl who has always lived with countesses feels it to be hard to settle down as a plain Mistress'" (II, 179). She also sees that if she leaves Phineas's fate to an attorney who cannot see beyond his last brief, and is not in any case convinced of his client's innocence, that client may well be hanged. Therefore she takes her own steps to establish his innocence. She is able to do this because she has money and a knowledge of the world outside the bounds of England, both of which circumstances help to differentiate the social order of Phineas Redux from that of Phineas Finn. In the earlier novel, Lady Laura and Violet Effingham had each spoken of Mill and women's rights, had each chafed against their female bondage. But although their minds were broad, their scope was narrow; speech did not issue in action. In Phineas Redux, however, Madame Goesler acts in a manner consistent with theories of female independence and equality. She has her own money--Trollope insists on the reality of money as a necessary base for independent action, for male as well as female--and controls and manages her own business in Vienna. Of these activities she has earlier told Phineas:

"I wonder whether you would know me, if you saw me;-- sometimes sitting on a stool in a counting-house, sometimes going about among old houses, settling what must be done to save them from tumbling down. I dress so differently at such times, and talk so differently, and look so much older, that I almost fancy myself to be another person." (II, 294).

The reader almost fancies her as another person too--a woman who has two lives, just as the men have their public and their private lives. In *Madame Goesler* we have a foreshadowing of the New Woman of the late Victorian and early Edwardian age, a hint of the young working woman in the novels of George Gissing and Arnold Bennett.

At the beginning of this chapter I said that the novels of Trollope and George Eliot that I consider here re-sexualize, re-intellectualize, and re-socialize the female, and thus restore heterosexuality in its fullest context to the novelistic tradition. The end of Phineas Redux provides an example of the process at work. Phineas, on trial for his life, feels that he has been all but deserted, in an emotional sense, by his one-time political friends. Even those who publicly stand by him are secretly swayed by circumstantial evidence that points to his guilt. The machinery of legal process has already been shown, in the trial of the vote-buyers at Tankerville, to be cumbersome and subject to corruption. But *Madame Goesler's* belief in Phineas never wavers. Trollope describes the moment when she and Phineas first meet, after his acquittal and the long separation caused by his trial:

He did not speak, but walking across the room to the window by which Marie Goesler stood, took her right hand in

his, and passing his left arm around her waist, kissed her first on one cheek and then on the other. The blood flew to her face and suffused her forehead, but she did not speak, or resist him or make any effort to escape from his embrace. As for him, he had no thought of it at all. He had made no plan. No idea of kissing her when they should meet had occurred to him till the moment came. (II, 363).

In this brief event physical and emotional instincts unite, need and response merge, outward gesture expresses interior feeling and thought. Viewed against the background of Phineas's trial, his political struggle, the ugly consequences of his morally blameless acts, the moment seems to declare the sexual impulse to be one of the few whole, spontaneous, humanly sufficient expressions left to men and women in a social order characterized by interlocking systems of relative value, reward and punishment, quid pro quo. In the sexual relationship ungrudging mutual exchange, simultaneous giving and receiving of pleasure, trust grounded in the desire of each to trust and be trusted by the other, may exist as they do not--perhaps cannot--exist in the extended relationships of a larger world. Sexual feeling, Trollope seems to suggest, has its own force and integrity, and is its own reason for being. In the nature of things, its expression will be mediated by social forms, yet as pure essence, it can flow through social channels with a cleansing, strengthening force, a force to which Phineas's rescue seems to testify.

While Madame Max is searching Europe for evidence of a stolen key that will show murderous intent on the part of

Joseph Emilius, another, quite fortuitous, event helps to establish Phineas's innocence. A small child, playing in a garden, finds the actual murder weapon:

A beautiful little boy was seen playing in one of those gardens through which the passage runs with a short loaded bludgeon in his hand. He came into the house with the weapon, the maid who was with him having asked the little lord no question on the subject. But luckily it attracted attention, and his little lordship took two gardeners and a coachman and all the nurses to the very spot at which he found it. Before an hour was over he was standing at his father's knee, detailing the fact with great open eyes to two policemen, having by this time become immensely proud of his adventure. (II, 274).

Trollope's juxtaposition of these two events produces a provocative cluster of images and associated ideas. The beautiful child playing with the murderous weapon, the garden and the narrow passage that runs through it, in which the murderer had concealed himself, are rich in Biblical allusion--to the garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, innocence and the fall. Madame Max's journey fits into another pattern of Christian myth--that of the quest, which typically involves a journey across water for an object that has both actual and figurative value. Madame Max searches for a key, a real door-key but also the figurative key that will unlock Phineas's prison cell. Her voyage is spiritual as well as physical, in that it represents a voluntary service for which no reward or recognition--beyond the good of the person served--is asked or envisioned. As a novelistic event, it parallels both temporally and structurally Phineas's physical detainment and his spiritual ordeal.

Seen, then, in relation to the events that precede it--Phineas's trial and Madame Max's rescue--and to the religious images that surround it, the marriage between Phineas Finn and Marie Goesler becomes more than a social event in Trollope's London heterocosm. It is an affirmation of the moral, intellectual, and social nature of human sexuality, a statement about the value of heterosexual love. Seen from the perspective of fictional tradition, the Phineas Finn novels break through the convention of loveless sex and sexless love--as exemplified by the pornographic and the "official" Victorian female--deconstruct the conventionally divided male/female world, and open the novel to kinds of social exploration and aesthetic experimentation that could only take place after the old molds had been broken.

Both George Eliot and Anthony Trollope depict through their anti-heroines the struggles of women to achieve sexual and social independence. Their concepts of society and of female sexuality differ, however, and on the whole George Eliot's are more closely related both to psychoanalytical theories formulated after her work, and to the social and sexual attitudes which dominate modern fiction.

Trollope saw very well the traps that Victorian society laid for women, and understood how women tended unconsciously to entrap themselves. In his novels he shows women who long

for, yet deny themselves, sexual pleasure, who restrict themselves as their culture has restricted them. In his understanding of the social role of women, and his imaginative construction of personal conflict generated by the normal functioning of the social group--of what we would call situational neurosis--he is far in advance of writers of the earlier Victorian period. His recognition of the force and range of the female sex drive also puts him ahead of his own time, and attunes him to ours. It is a remarkable fact that this man who is so often considered the classic Victorian, mirror of his age, nevertheless created female characters in whom the modern woman can recognize herself (whether she likes what she sees is another question).

Yet there is a fundamental optimism and conservatism in Trollope's views, an assumption of social and individual health--achievable if not yet achieved--that is at variance with the dominant assumptions of modern fiction. His female characters typically have a large capacity for sexual devotion, and his favored idea is that if they can express it freely--that is, if they choose the right mate--problems arising from conflicting personal and social goals will dissolve, or can be transcended. He does not probe as fully as George Eliot the psychological complexities of the female sex drive, its many normative and eviating modes of expression. Very often he depicts a sexual conflict in which repressed impulses provoke drastic acts or behavior that is perverse according to the

more conventional social prescriptions of the time. For example, in Can You Forgive Her? Alice Vavasor's rejection of the eligible John Grey, and her ambivalent attraction to her dangerous cousin George, clearly represent a leap into the forbidden area not so much of passion as of a kind of anarchic social defiance, a potentially violent breaking through of the protective social and emotional fences that enclosed the middle-class Victorian woman. Yet Trollope backs away without exposing the painful nerve ends of the infection he has localized. Alice's melancholic withdrawal after she discovers that her cousin is using her for his own ends has a strong masochistic element of which Trollope seems well aware, and which he analyzes sensitively and accurately. Alice is punishing herself for desires she feels she ought not to have had, and which she must now exorcize in a depressive self-loathing. Yet Alice eventually solves her problem with the realization that all along she has wished to marry John Grey and be taken care of--a realization that does not quite satisfy the reader, who sees in Alice's nature an obstinate force, an emotional inaccessibility, that may elude John Grey's serene assumption of control. The prospect of a social solution is so attractive to Trollope that it sometimes leads him to violate or blunt his own acute psychological insights.

Alice Vavasor's considered rejection of John Grey, and her later remorse and self-punishment, suggest in some

ways the experience of Gwendolen Harleth in Daniel Deronda. But George Eliot sounds the depths of Gwendolen's neurotic predicament, and in creating out of the elements of Gwendolen's interior struggle an exterior drama, she anticipates the methods of psycho-drama, in which the reality of the mental or emotional state is conveyed through objectification.

In Daniel Deronda, George Eliot shows how external forces of repression set up internal mechanisms of self-punishment; she exposes the morbid twists that the subconscious will take when normal paths are blocked; and she hints at the surreptitious, self-wounding pleasures the thwarted female psyche may unconsciously indulge. Guilt for feelings one is not supposed to have--and in the Victorian era these commonly included not only sexual desire but also the desire to please oneself or impose one's will on others, since women were supposed to find their pleasure in self-sacrifice--can be punished so effectively that the feelings themselves do not enter the consciousness, even though they motivate one's actions. Some such process takes place in Gwendolen Harleth, as she ruthlessly scourges herself and courts humiliation for criminal thoughts that she cannot with any clarity describe. Deronda provides the humiliation, and gives a name to the thoughts, thus performing for Gwendolen the function that the severe, self-denying, soul-withering religious creeds that George Eliot turned to in her youth must have performed for her.<sup>29</sup>

Gwendolen Harleth seems the least autobiographical of George Eliot's female characters. Yet the author's sexual and moral development must have contributed in large measure to her understanding of Gwendolen's. Like Gwendolen, George Eliot formed a union with a man sexually experienced, bound to another woman, supporting her and her children.<sup>30</sup> All that the self-righteous Daniel says of Grandcourt's position vis-à-vis Gwendolen might have been said of G. H. Lewes's position vis-à-vis George Eliot, except that in the book the legal status of the unions is reversed, with the common-law marriage preceding the legal one. Lydia Glasher's position with Grandcourt is in fact similar to that of Lewes's wife with Thornton Hunt, since the two lived together and had children while she was still legally married to Lewes. Further, George Eliot's position resembles Gwendolen's, in that each was the object of a second passionate attachment following a first that had cooled. Although Gwendolen as a character lacks the intellectual and personal force of George Eliot, there seems little doubt that her stumbling, her confusion, her guilt-ridden submission to second-hand judgments, and her final realization that she must drive her own way through life, arise out of the author's experience. In telling Gwendolen's story George Eliot performs what is genuinely an "experiment in life,"<sup>31</sup> one that the reader can understand only by actively participating in it.

A basic difference, then, between Trollope's concept of

female sexuality and George Eliot's is that while for the most part he sees the female nature as fundamentally whole, though frequently lacking--as a result of social conditioning or social restriction--the opportunity for wholesome expression, she sees it as fragmented, an interior embodiment of exterior distortion and division. In Trollope's novels a process of gradual ameliorative change holds society, and usually the individual, together. In George Eliot's last novel, which most strikingly expresses her concept of female sexuality, the world splits apart. The divided world is a representation of the divided psyche, and Gwendolen's experience a quest for unity. When Daniel leaves for the East, we realize that he has been all along less a human being than an experience painfully undergone and finally understood. His departure with Mirah merely literalizes the strangeness, apartness, and implausibility--the incomplete humanity--that we have felt about these two and their half of the novel from the first. It defines spatially their absolute distance from the solid English world of Davilows, Grandcourts, and Gascoignes.

Critics usually consider the *Deronda* half of the novel George Eliot's idealized view of life--a moral testament that is unfortunately also an artistic lapse. Joan Bennett says that it represents what happens when "intellect and conscience usurp the place of creative power."<sup>32</sup> F. R. Leavis thinks it is more the produce of emotional than intellectual

indulgence, but nonetheless a failure in creativity.<sup>33</sup> Both critics consider Daniel George Eliot's human ideal; Bennett calls him her "conscious conception of ideal personality,"<sup>34</sup> while for Leavis he seems to be a male Dorothea Brooke who realizes the dreams of service, love, and duty that for Dorothea remained dreams, and who is thereby enabled to point out the proper path to an erring Gwendolen.<sup>35</sup>

These views leave the reader with fundamental questions to which no very satisfactory answers have yet been given. Does the pompous, moralizing Daniel truly represent George Eliot's ideal of manhood? And does an existence devoid of impulse and passion, drained of irrationality and reduced to the formulaic, an existence that is in essence a negation, really represent George Eliot's ideal of life? Studying the novel from a perspective different from those of most other critics, I have arrived at different answers to both questions. In my view, the Hegraic world of Mordecai is in fact not shown as ideal; nor is Daniel meant to be either Gwendolen's role model or George Eliot's personal declaration of faith. On the contrary. As an emblem of faith, Daniel represents at best the past with which the new and vital impulse must come to terms before it can grow. As mentor, the most he does for Gwendolen is to force--painfully--her recognition of the fact that she must formulate her own convictions and learn to live by them. In the process he occasionally, if unwittingly, deludes her, undermines her sense of the real, and

partially paralyzes her will. I believe that George Eliot fully recognized these dangers to which Gwendolen's dependency relationship with Daniel exposes her. I suggest that she depicts what Gwendolen gains from the relationship, along with the dangers, in order to show the tricky, unpredictable, trial-and-error process by which the individual conscience is formed, the risks one inevitably takes in leaving the shallow waters of childhood ignorance to plunge into the fullness of adult life.

The average Victorian young woman was poorly equipped for the plunge, since in limiting her sphere of action, society also limited her opportunities for moral and intellectual growth. Self-discipline pre-supposes self-knowledge, or at least self-awareness--an ability to recognize and evaluate one's feelings. To reach that phase of development requires an inward and outward freedom that the Victorian female seldom had. In general, her virtues and her vices were bred of ignorance and fed on fantasy. Codes of conduct were thrust on her--as indeed they were thrust upon males--but the female code extended beyond acts to rigid prescriptions for the regulation of mind and soul. And for the most part the code was handed down to her by males. Nor could she test it, as could men, in the rough and tumble of the marketplace. She lived her physical, mental, and moral life in an enclosed space, an easy target for the critical judgments of others and a natural prey to her own fears.

All these conditions obtain in the life of the heroine-anti-heroine of Daniel Deronda. Morally ignorant and spiritually untrained, Gwendolen Harleth places herself under the physical subjection of one man and the moral subjection of another. The first finds her sexually desirable and worthy of being possessed. The second finds her sexually dangerous but worthy of being saved. Her moral subjection to Daniel is shown to be mistaken, in that she counts on him for support he cannot give, and thus prolongs the term of her infancy. Her destruction of Grandcourt represents an attempt to submerge rather than confront the impulses in herself that have led her to accept bondage. In another sense, however, it represents Gwendolen's decisive assertion of selfhood, a violent leap toward independent self-knowledge. The dual significance of Grandcourt's death in Gwendolen's spiritual odyssey is indicated by her final plunge into the water after him. As elsewhere in George Eliot, the drowning in Daniel Deronda has dramatic value as an event and thematic value as metaphor. We need not ascribe to it a single, literal interpretation; this objective submersion draws together the repressed fears and desires that have ruled Gwendolen's subjective life with Grandcourt.

In the end, Gwendolen's story remains unfinished. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that at the end it is only beginning, as Gwendolen attempts to reconstruct herself in her new awareness of the elements of her inner and outer worlds.

She is left to work out her destiny with nothing to sustain her beyond the affections of her early nurture and her unquenchable sense of life. And she is finally bereft of the two essential props of the official Victorian female--love for a male and faith in a patriarchal God.

In the course of the novel, Gwendolen moves restlessly between two worlds, finding what she seeks in neither, and entrapping herself somewhere in between. In the Daniel-Mordecai world the will is subordinated to tradition and moral law; faith is kept alive by mystical transmission, philosophical discourse, and belief in a projected future of heroic accomplishment; individuals find themselves through group action and social sacrifice. It is a world that protects and segregates its women, a world in which the female is caretaker, transmitter, guardian of the hearth, and, perhaps, savior of her people. Its references are to Eastern and Hebrew myth, to the Thousand and One Nights (recalled in the many allusions to Daniel as Prince Camaralzaman) and the Old Testament legend of Mordecai the wise, whose female ward, Esther, saves the Jews by finding favor in the eyes of the Persian king.

In the Grandcourt-Gwendolen world, too, women submit, but they may also enjoy sexual triumph. Or meet sexual defeat. For whereas male-female relationships in Daniel's sphere are reassuringly neuter, in Grandcourt's they are explosively charged, and grounded in male power. In this world passions

are singular and interior rather than plural and exterior, and the key mythic reference, alluded to several times in the novel, is the story of Jason and Medea.<sup>36</sup> The Gwendolen-Grandcourt drama is not social but psychic, and is played out along the lines of Greek tragedy. Indeed, with their horses and their yachts, their paintings and their parks, the Mallingers and Mallinger-Grandcourts live in an Olympian here-and-now, carelessly assured of their pre-eminence and coolly trusting in their power. Whatever Hellenic sweetness and light there is in this world--and there is some to balance its fatal flaws--derives from a certain heedless acceptance of life, an easy traffic with danger that glitters most brilliantly when viewed next to the cautious brown virtues of the Hebraic world.

Formally and thematically, the two worlds fulfill the classic functions of the double plot: setting each other off by means of parodic, pastoral, and satiric comment; providing dramatic and bathetic contrast; playing one value system against another, and showing the common ground in each.<sup>37</sup> In keeping with its double structure, the novel has not one but two endings. In one, a bride and groom join their lives in an ode to duty, to live in bliss and, one suspects, die of happiness. In the other, a confused and depressed young woman deliberately fails to save her husband from drowning, and learns after his death what she ought to have known before: that the fundamental relationship between male and

female is sexual, that the sexual relationship is based on power, and that the absence of sexual sympathy will cause the appearance of sexual coercion. Much of the thematic content of this ending--the life-and-death struggle between Gwendolen and Grandcourt, the master-slave matrix for their relationship, the fatal lack of communication between master and slave--becomes the potent subject matter of modern fiction. Read in this way, Daniel Deronda not only divides into two parts but also faces in two directions. The Daniel-Mordecai half parodies the ample, holistic, beneficently ordered world of the conventional novel. It shows male and female as each supposes the other ought to be, and holds up to the Victorians a ghastly mirror image of this Pelagian vision. In Daniel, George Eliot constructs a male who has the wide-ranging benevolence, freedom from personal ambition, goal-less intellectuality, joy in self-sacrifice, and eagerness to live out the vision of another that the ideal Victorian female was supposed to have. As readers, we are left to judge for ourselves whether such a creature is humanly possible or desirable. The Gwendolen half of the novel, by contrast, shows male and female locked in a potentially disastrous sexual contest, programmed to a destructive social pattern of attraction and repulsion, dominance and submission. The terrible reality of this sexually conflicted, psychically fragmented world is the source of Daniel Deronda's strength, and its special link with the modern psychological novel. As Donald Stone has said à propos

of English fiction in the 1880's, "With Daniel Deronda . . . George Eliot intuitively realized that the compromised world of Middlemarch was beyond salvation."<sup>38</sup>

In the divided world and in the two plots of Daniel Deronda, situations and events in one half parallel those in the other so that in the end, Daniels' world can be seen as in part a sentimentalized, parodic gloss on Gwendolen's. In his world, for example, the widowed Mrs. Meyrick and her daughters are "united by a triple bond--family love; admiration for her finest work, the best action; and habitual industry."<sup>39</sup> The industry, chiefly sketching and the embroidering of sofa cushions, helps to keep all four comfortably in a miniature house that overlooks the river in front and gardens behind; the love binds their days each to each in a Wordsworthian piety; the admiration for the finest work, the best actions, insures that they will duly appreciate Daniel and Mirah. Mrs. Davilow, on the other hand, widowed by a man who has lived on her income and sold off her jewels, is only just beginning to enjoy her independence when her capital is squandered in speculation. The prospect for the family--daughters again, but less adept at brush and needle than the young Meyricks<sup>40</sup>--is Sawyer's Cottage, ungraced by a river view, distinguished by ugly, claustrophobic rooms within and by a "little garden with cabbage-stalks, and the yew arbour

all dust and cobwebs" (III, 310) without. We should note that Gwendolen journeys from Central Europe to confront this unlovely prospect, just as Mirah journeys from Prague to find her childhood home destroyed. But while Mirah's journey leads to Daniel as guardian angel, the Meyricks as surrogate parents, and a successful career in music, Gwendolen's leads to Sawyer's Cottage, a sexually experienced and emotionally disturbing suitor, and a dreary post as governess to a bishop's three daughters.

Through her marital choice, Gwendolen saves herself from the Bishop's household and her family from entombing itself in the spirit-damping cottage; but in fact, family spirits are at a reasonably low ebb already. The Davilow girls irritate one another in the normal fashion of sisters. Isabel, who knows when to pour salt on wounds, teases Gwendolen about her fear of empty spaces, and peeks into the locked cabinet she is forbidden to touch. Mrs. Davilow's control over this female brood is only partial and intermittent, and she is obviously under Gwendolen's thumb--as wispy mothers of imperious beauties are likely to be. Mrs. Meyrick, by contrast, organizes and manages to perfection. Kate, Mab, and Amy tease but never sting one another, and the little mother enlivens the twilight hours by reading aloud. We need not sense ridicule here--reading aloud was a favored pastime for George Eliot and Lewes, and she often called herself "little mother" in reference to the Lewes children.<sup>41</sup> Yet we

do suspect calculated comparison, for as we read about the Meyricks we are forced to distinguish the hard edges of life from the softened outlines of this unreasonable facsimile. And when we read of them that "the daughters were to match the mother. . . . Everything about them was compact, from the firm coils of their hair, fastened back à la chinoise, to their grey skirts in puritan nonconformity with the fashion," we have a teasing sense of something in the author's mind that almost, but not quite, takes on the aspect of intention. A few lines later the intention seems unmistakable:

All four, if they had been wax-work, might have been packed easily in a fashionable lady's travelling trunk. Their faces seemed full of speech, as if their minds had been shelled, after the manner of horse-chestnuts, and become brightly visible. (III, 238-39)

The comparison to horse-chestnuts, in combination with the other images, approaches the ludicrous: a set of wax dolls, their shelled minds glistening like shoe-buttons, are packed together in a case, to be tumbled out at the owner's will and placed in a doll's house completely furnished down to the Persian cat. Echoes of Little Women--published in London in 1868, and a popular success--awaken in our minds, and are reinforced by some rather strained references to the American Civil War.<sup>42</sup> The book Mrs. Meyrick reads from, though, is about the Napoleonic wars, which prompts the breathless Mab to cry, "Oh--oh--oh. . . . I wish I had three wounded conscripts to take care of'" (III, 239). Here, we cannot help setting Mab's response to the world and its wars

next to Gwendolen's naïve ignorance of any worlds beyond her own. Is George Eliot telling us that sentimentalized altruism is better than ingenuous self-absorption, or is she showing us that they are two sides of one coin?

The prose in this section strengthens our sense that parodic contrast is intended. Resigning herself to a lack of wounded conscripts, Mab cries:

"Oh--oh--oh. . . . I wish something wonderful would happen. I feel like the deluge. The waters of the great deep are broken up and the windows of heaven are opened. I must sit down and play the scales."

Mab was opening the piano while the others were laughing at this climax, when a cab stopped before the house, and there forthwith came a quick rap of the knocker.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Meyrick, starting up, "it is after ten, and Phoebe has gone to bed." She hastened out, leaving the parlour door open. (III, 239-40).

Mab's anti-climactic remark signals the conscious descents from poetic peak to prosaic plain that characterize the style in the *Deronda* portion of the novel. This particular passage suggests a juvenile story, and as in such a story, the rap on the door announces the start of a grand adventure: it is *Deronda* come like a genie to grant Mab's wish. It is George Eliot, however, who has put into our minds the Arabian Nights. At first sight of Daniel, Mab decides to paint him as the Prince Camaralzaman. And once in charge of Mirah, she transforms her from street urchin to fairy princess:

It was Mab who ushered her down--with some price in the effect produced by a pair of tiny felt slippers which she had rushed out to buy because there were no shoes in the house small enough for Mirah, whose borrowed dress ceased about her ankles and displayed the cheap clothing that moulding itself on her feet seemed an adornment as choice as the sheathes of buds. (III, 249).

Though Mirah might be a Cinderella, who wears a size three shoe when everybody else wears a seven or eight, Mab casts her as Queen Budoor, the beautiful young girl who marries Prince Camaralzaman in the Thousand and One Nights tale. In the original story, these legendary Persian lovers, who marry after a bizarre series of separations and misadventures, so closely resemble each other that they can pass for twins; and in fact they exchange identities, Budoor on one occasion disguising herself as her husband and espousing a wife.<sup>43</sup> The effect of this comparison, to which George Eliot recurs several times, is to confirm our perception that Daniel and Mirah are not true male and female, that they have no distinct gender signification, as do Gwendolen and Grandcourt. Rather, each exists as a spiritual emanation called forth by the other. "We each of us think it would be better for the other to be good," (IV, 383), Daniel says of men and women, and he and Mirah create each other according to this formula.

A contemporary reviewer, R. E. Francillon, called Daniel Deronda a romance and Daniel a nineteenth-century Red Cross Knight.<sup>44</sup> Certainly the basic events of the Deronda plot--his miraculous recovery of Mirah, his discovery of his parentage and the melodrama surrounding it, the revelation that he is Mordecai's long-awaited disciple--fit the genre of romance. But the Deronda plot impinges on the Gwendolen plot in a peculiarly disturbing way, so that it becomes

difficult to accept the one as a world of romance that is merely contrasted with the world of reality. Daniel, as I will show, operates in Gwendolen's world in ways that from an objective point of view cannot be called either beneficent or responsible. These actions, in addition to the parallel situations I have noted, point to George Eliot's concern with the way romance, or unreality, may impinge on reality. Her concern is particularly for women, whose enclosed position prevents them from directly encountering the world, and thus makes them peculiarly liable to accept the distorted picture of the world and themselves that comes to them through the eyes of men. We should note, for example, that the novel actually begins in Deronda's mind:

Was she beautiful or not beautiful? And what was the secret of form or expression which gave the dynamic quality to her glance? Was the good or the evil genius dominant in those beams? Probably the evil; else why was the effect that of unrest rather than of undisturbed charm? Why was the wish to look again felt as coercion and not as a longing in which the whole being consents?

~~She who raised these questions in Daniel Deronda's mind was occupied in gawling, not in the open air under a~~ Southern sky, tossing coppers on a ruined wall, with rags about her limbs; but in one of those splendid resorts which the enlightenment of ages has prepared for the same species of pleasure at a heavy cost of gilt mouldings, dark-toned colour, and chubby nudities. . . . (I, 35).

What we are being introduced to is not Gwendolen Harleth as the narrator conceives her, but Gwendolen as another character in the novel--namely Daniel--sees her. John P. Kearney writes of this introduction that "the questioner (and by extension the reader) cannot decide whether Gwendolen's physical beauty is Lamia-like . . . or is infused with the 'ideas' which

are the necessary foundation of true beauty. . . ."45 It seems to me more likely that by identifying Daniel as the questioner, George Eliot is warning readers not to consider themselves merely extensions of Daniel's consciousness. In my view this introduction tells us that we are to look not at a unified image lit from a central source, but at separate images illuminated by diffracted rays from different sources--that the two halves of the work will comment on, reflect, and correct each other.

As we look at Gwendolen in the light of Daniel's vision, we learn that what most concerns him is her physical appearance: is she, or is she not, beautiful? His next concern is her moral nature: is it good or evil? He concludes that it is probably evil, reaching this conclusion on the basis of the effect that Gwendolen has on him. She compels his attention instead of soothing his mind; he senses "unrest" where he would prefer to find "undisturbed charm"; feels "coercion" where he would like to surrender himself willingly to a "longing in which the whole being consents." The comparison that follows--of Gwendolen's gambling to the penny tossing urchins under a Southern sky--adds to the picture of Gwendolen as decadent, a hot-house growth. But as if to warn us not to be blinded by Daniel's vision of Gwendolen, George Eliot trains her own ironic vision on Daniel. Disgusted by the "dull, gaspoisoned absorption" of the gamblers at Leubronn, he reflects that "the gambling of Spanish shepherd-boys had seemed . . .

more enviable" (I, 37). To which George Eliot comments dryly, "So far Rousseau might be justified in maintaining that art and science had done a poor service to mankind" (I, 37). Later references to Rousseau work retroactively with this one to reinforce our sense of an ironic detachment at work in both halves of the novel. When Catherine Arrowpoint announces to her mother that she plans to marry Klesmer, George Eliot as narrator remarks:

Imagine Jean Jacques after his essay on the corrupting influence of the arts, waking up among children of nature who had no idea of grilling the raw bone they offered him for breakfast with the primitive couvert of a flint. . . . Something of the same sort befell the authoress of "Tasso" when what she had safely demanded of the dead Leonora was enacted by her own Catherine. (III, 288).

The general effect of such comments is to counter the romantic view of life with an earthy skepticism; to suggest that what we most value in theory may be what we find most uncomfortable in practice; to point out that abstract judgment of ourselves and others is often mistaken and sometimes dangerous. Viewed in relation to their specific context--Daniel's presuming to weigh Gwendolen on his romantic scale when he knows nothing of her realistic problems, Mrs. Arrowpoint's horrified rejection of romance when it leaps from literature into life--such comments suggest that in Daniel Deronda George Eliot is seriously concerned with the relationship between romantic vision and practical necessity, and the ways in which the first may hinder us from coping with the second.

Just as we see Gwendolen first from the region of

Daniel's mind, so we first see Deronda from Gwendolen's:

But in the course of that survey her eyes met Deronda's, and instead of averting them as she would have desired to do, she was unpleasantly conscious that they were arrested--how long? The darting sense that he was measuring her and looking down on her as an inferior, that he was of different quality from the human dross around her, that he felt himself in a region outside and above her, and was examining her as a specimen of a lower order, roused a tingling resentment which stretched the moment with conflict. . . . But Deronda's gaze seemed to have acted as an evil eye. Her stake was gone. . . . Yet when her next stake was swept away, she felt the orbits of her eyes getting hot, and the certainty she had (without looking) of that man still watching her was something like a pressure which begins to be torturing. . . . "Faites votre jeu, Mesdame et Messieurs," said the automatic voice of destiny from between the mustache and imperial of the croupier; and Gwendolen's arm was stretched to deposit her last poor heap of Napoleons. "Le jeu ne va plus," said destiny. And in five seconds Gwendolen turned from the table, but turned resolutely with her face towards Deronda and looked at him. There was a smile of irony in his eyes as their glances met; but it was at least better that he should have kept his attention fixed on her than that he should have disregarded her. . . . (I, 38-40).

What Gwendolen reads in Daniel's mind corresponds to what the reader knows is there. She thinks that he is measuring her, as he is, and that he finds her wanting, as he does. But for Daniel's superiority, his right to judge and measure, we have no evidence beyond the fact that Gwendolen grants it. And the granting of it stings her into a healthy resentment, which, however, translates itself into a "torturing pressure" to hold his attention--if not by winning strikingly, then by losing strikingly. Gwendolen is ready to risk all she has for Daniel's approval, and even disapproval strikes her as better than indifference.

The binary, and bisexual, structure of the novel is

driven firmly into the reader's consciousness from the first. A female character is balanced by a male character, and each is seen through the other's eyes. Further, a tension, a relationship of demand and response, is established between these two. The weight of Daniel's judgment provokes in Gwendolen first humiliation, then resentment, then an "inward defiance" that expresses itself outwardly in her resolve to "go on playing as if she were indifferent to loss or gain" (I, 39). These unspoken demands of Daniel's, to which Gwendolen feels compelled to respond, become a concrete obligation when he returns the turquoise necklace she has pawned after her gambling loss. We experience her reaction to this act as if we ourselves had been shamed:

He knew very well that he was entangling her in helpless humiliation; it was another way of smiling at her ironically, and taking the air of a supercilious mentor. Gwendolen felt the bitter tears of mortification rising and rolling down her cheeks. (I, 49).

The scene acquires added poignancy from the fact that we know the part Daniel's critical scrutiny of her has played in Gwendolen's reckless decision to gamble away her winnings. We feel instinctively that anonymous letters and gifts are not true charity when the anonymity is spurious, and merely deprives the receiver of a straightforward means of expressing thanks. We also begin to feel that Gwendolen's sense of self-reproach is disproportionate to any personal fault; that her sense of guilt springs from no specific cause; that although she thinks herself free, she is actually bound up in an

invisible net of imagined deficiencies.

As I have said, critics generally assume that the moral posturing, the vague idealism of *Deronda*, and the portion of the novel in which he is the central figure, represent George Eliot's own philosophical and ethical ideal. Calvin Bedient says that Gwendolen is clearly intended for "the role of the egoist who repents," but that for a time her exuberant energy eluded her author's attempts to tame her; "in Gwendolen, she [George Eliot] so far forgot herself as a moralist that she became a novelist."<sup>46</sup> But the novel that Bedient sees as emerging despite its author's intent in fact leads us to question both the sincerity and the utility of the moralistic (as distinguished from the truly moral) approach to life. It shows us that what seems to be concern for others may spring from repressed internal need, and raises the question of how far one person may be justified in, or capable of, interfering constructively in the life of another. Addressing itself, through a duality of character and event, to a broad inquiry about the nature of the real and the ideal, it defines the role played by trial and error--by life experience --in the creation of a mature capacity for moral response. Certainly Bedient is right when he says that Gwendolen's "delight in life" is "turned to sorrow." But I question his argument that George Eliot felt compelled to turn Gwendolen into a "social saint, whose only loves are for others and for an 'ideal whole'"<sup>47</sup>--or in other words, that she wished to turn

Gwendolen into a female Daniel. George Eliot, as I have already suggested and as I will further show, recognizes and exposes Deronda's faults--for her he is no saint. And as for transforming Gwendolen into something like him, the two endings of the novel suggest a totally different outcome and a totally different intention. In our last glimpse of Daniel, he, Mirah, and the dead Mordecai compose a type of Old Testament trinity. The final epigraph is from Milton's Samson Agonistes:

"Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail  
Or knock the greast; no weakness, no contempt,  
Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,  
And what may quiet a death so noble." (VIII, 883).

Daniel seems to merge into Mordecai's death as he has merged into his life. No individual act bespeaks his living breath, and the final benediction enfolds all three figures, shutting off response, forbidding concern. Our final vision of Gwendolen, on the other hand, is charged with an intensity of life. Widowed, again at Offendene as she had been only a few years ~~before~~, Gwendolen ~~yet seems to have travelled~~ an enormous distance, and to be only starting her journey. "'I shall live. I mean to live'" (VIII, 879), she cries to her mother, and we believe her, this indefinite resolve striking us with a more specific force than the geographical exactitude of Daniel's aspiration. As religious iconography, the tableau of the Deronda ending seems to enfold the human spirit within the protective arm of law and tradition, while the Gwendolen ending expresses the radical message of rebirth and personal

salvation. Or to carry the religious analogy a step further, one ending is Old Testament, the other New.

How does one fit with the other? If we study the interaction between these two worlds, the effect of persons in one on those of the other, and the characters and deeds of those persons, the common assumption about a flawed and an ideal world breaks down. That the narrator sometimes looks at Daniel ironically I have already noticed in my discussion of his initial, romanticized view of Gwendolen's gambling, and the dry, corrective comment on Rousseau that follows it. In addition, a subtle disparity between Daniel's professed feelings and his express actions gradually exposes to the reader chinks in his armor. Despite his whole-souled idealism and his grand wish to serve others, his approach to life is wary, not to say mistrustful. He suspects that the "evil genius" is dominant in Gwendolen; that the upright Sir Hugo has been a libertine in his youth; that he, Daniel, is the only person in the Frankfort synagogue to whom the service is truly meaningful; that Mirah's relatives may be vulgar and perhaps had better not be found. These suspicions have no factual basis; acting on them, Daniel frequently brings about unintended and mischievous consequences. His suspicion of Sir Hugo arises not from the gossip of his guardian's sophisticated acquaintances, but from a profundity of imagined nonsense. Daniel is as much bemused by Gothic sin as Jane Austen's Catherine Morland was bemused by Gothic villainy. In effect, he visits

the sins of the early Popes on his comfortably domesticated Victorian uncle. In this section of the novel, George Eliot uses architectural and historical reference rather than direct description to characterize attitudes and habits of mind. Daniel spends his boyhood in a house

at once historical, romantic, and home-like; a picturesque architectural outgrowth from an abbey, which had still remnants of the old monastic trunk. Diplo [Grandcourt's house, from which he meets Gwendolen] lay in another county, and was a comparatively landless place which had come into the family from a rich lawyer on the female side who wore the perruque of the Restoration; whereas the Mallingers had the grant of Monk's Topping under Henry the Eighth, and ages before had held the neighbouring lands of King's Topping, tracing indeed their origin to a certain Hugues le Malingre, who came in with the Conqueror. . . . (III, 204).

We note that the Restoration fits Grandcourt, who has supposedly indulged his worldly appetites, as neatly as the Gothic fits Daniel, who has fed mainly on his imagination. When Daniel, sequestered with his tutor in his Gothic cloister, learns that the "nephews" of the early Popes were their illegitimate sons, he immediately translates fancy into fact:

---

He had not lived with other boys, and his mind showed the same ~~blending of child's ignorance with surprising knowl-~~edge which is oftener seen in bright girls. Having read Shakespeare as well as a great deal of history, he could have talked with the wisdom of a bookish child about men who were born out of wedlock and were held unfortunate in consequence, being under disadvantages which required them to be a sort of heroes if they were to work themselves up to be an equal standing with their legally born brothers. But he had never brought such knowledge into any association with his own lot, which had been too easy for him ever to think about it--until this moment when there had darted into his mind with the magic of quick comparison, the possibility that here was the secret of his own birth. . . . The impetuous advent of new images took possession of him with the force of fact for the first time told, and

left him no immediate power for the reflection that he might be trembling at a fiction of his own. . . .  
(III, 205-06).

What he takes as fact is, however, fiction, and his mistake-- though not in this instance downright hurtful--causes him to disappoint Sir Hugo's hopes and to drift into a rootless, dilettante existence, awaiting the mysterious sign that will provide the purpose and destiny he cannot seem to make out for himself.

Along with an overdeveloped imagination that leads him into mistaken and ungenerous judgments of others, Daniel has a talent for indirection worthy of Polonius. He follows up his first, anonymous reproof of Gwendolen with a visit to Dip-low that is ostensibly social but is actually a sort of espionage mission, suggested by the odious Lush. Daniel is to find out how far Grandcourt might entertain an offer for the purchase of Dip-low. Deronda, we learn, does not especially care about the outcome of this assignment, but he is curious about "the drama of that girl's [Gwendolen's] marriage" (IV, 369). He speculates that she must have felt "repulsion" for Grandcourt (the reader has already learned that to her surprise she did not); and imagines that the "transition from fevered worldliness into poverty" (IV, 369) must account for her betrothal. (Whatever descriptive terms might fit Gwendolen, "fevered worldliness" does not.) But for Daniel's purpose, she must be engaged in difficulty and struggle--"elements of life which had a predominant attraction for his

sympathy, due perhaps to his early pain in dwelling on the conjectured story of his own existence." In Fact, Daniel actively dislikes happiness or contentment:

Persons attracted to him, as Hans Meyrick had done, in proportion to the possibility of his defending them, rescuing them, telling upon their lives with some sort of redeeming influence; and he had to resist an inclination, easily accounted for, to withdraw coldly from the fortunate. (IV, 369).

On this visit to Diplow Daniel learns little about Gwendolen and Grandcourt, but when the couple visits Sir Hugo at Mond's Abbey, he finds out from the ubiquitous Mr. Vandernoodt about Grandcourt's previous alliance with Lydia Glasher. This conversation, in which Deronda appears to discourage Vandernoodt's gossip while listening eagerly all the while, prompts the reader to make a comparison between Daniel and Grandcourt that does not come out in Daniel's favor. As Vandernoodt pours out his third-hand scandal, he says to his listener, "I don't want to be hard on a man because he gets involved in an affair of that sort. But he might make himself more agreeable. I was telling him a capital story last night, and he got up and walked away in the middle. I felt inclined to kick him" (IV, 487). To the reader, who by now knows Vandernoodt's taste in stories, Grandcourt's rudeness stands to his credit. And Daniel's curiosity about Gwendolen's private life, and the indirect ways in which he satisfies it, begin to resemble prurience.

Daniel's conduct in Mirah's affairs is as cautious and

indirect as his meddling in Gwendolen's. Although Mirah's one desire is to find her mother and brother, Daniel delays the search, justifying his hesitation by telling himself that Mirah's relatives may be disappointingly common and unworthy of her; that an all-out search might have unwished-for results. In reality, as the narrator makes clear, his fear derives from his unfounded suspicions about his own parentage.

. . . the mixed feelings which belonged to Deronda's kindred experience naturally transfused themselves into his anxiety on behalf of Mirah.

The desire to know his own mother, or to know about her, was constantly haunted with dread; and in imagining what might befall Mirah it quickly occurred to him that finding the mother and brother from whom she had been parted when she was a little one might turn out to be a calamity. When she was in the boat she said that her mother and brother were good; but the goodness might have been chiefly in her own ignorant innocence. . . . (III, 246).

Substituting for Mirah's innocent trustfulness his own tendency to anticipate, and even court, the worst, Daniel makes some rather roundabout, aimless excursions into the Jewish quarter of London. He discovers and ingratiates himself with the unsuspecting Cohen family, lies to little Jacob Cohen about a knife he does not possess, deceives the amiable Ezra into thinking that he needs money, and accepts the hospitality of these open-hearted people in a spirit of arrogant patronage. He finds Ezra Cohen "the most unpoetic Jew he had ever met with in books or life" (he has scarcely met any in life); thinks his diction "as little as possible like that of the Old Testament"; groans inwardly at his rosy good health, since by rights he should show some physical damage traceable

to growing up under the "shadow of a Suffering Race" (IV, 442-43).

Daniel is arrogant, too, in assuming that what he feels is what everyone else either feels or ought to feel. He does not suspect, for example, that Mirah's response to the Cohen family might differ from his: "If these were really Mirah's relatives, he could not imagine that even her fervid filial piety could give the reunion with them any sweetness beyond such as could be found in the strict fulfillment of a painful duty" (IV, 444-45). But George Eliot is careful to tell us Mirah's response, so that we may compare it with Daniel's and draw our own conclusions:

"Oh, they are dear good people; I feel as if we all belonged to each other," said Mirah, with a tinge of merriment in her smile.

"What should you have felt if that Ezra had been your brother?" said Deronda, mischievously--a little provoked that she had taken kindly at once to people who had caused him so much prospective annoyance on her account.

Mirah looked at him with a slight surprise for a moment, and then said, "He is not a bad man--I think he would never forsake anyone. . ." (VII, 680).

---

~~At this point in the novel we are not, as is Mirah, sur-~~  
 prised at Daniel's thoughts and actions. We have discovered that he is a young man with a potent capacity for meddling in the lives of others and concealing his reasons from himself. As George Eliot has pointed out, "a meditative interest in learning how human miseries are wrought--as precocious in him as another sort of genius in the poet who writes a Queen Mab at nineteen--was so infused with kindness that it easily passed for comradeship" (II, 219). There is a difference

between kindness and kindliness, and I think that George Eliot uses the latter word deliberately, to distinguish Daniel's cultivated benevolence from the spontaneous generosity that is shown, for example, by the Rev. Mr. Gascoigne when Mrs. Davilow loses her fortune, or by Klesmer when he realizes that in order to protect Gwendolen from future pain and humiliation, he must be honest about her professional prospects. Daniel lacks the down-to-earth good nature of the first, and the fine apprehension of the second. When Gwendolen's response to Mirah is not exactly as he wishes it to be, he is rude and disagreeable, and counters her abject request to be told what has displeased him with the outrageous remark that "'It is impossible to explain such things. . . . One can never communicate niceties of feeling about words and manner'" (VI, 624). He does, in truth, have some insight into his defects, but he sees them only as a source of trouble to himself, not to others. Thus he can say, at a moment when his harsh criticism has reduced Gwendolen to tears of despair:

"I seldom find I do any good by my preaching. I might as well have kept from meddling," said Deronda, thinking rather sadly that his interference about that unfortunate necklace might end in nothing but an added pain to him in seeing her after all hardened to another sort of gambling than roulette. (VI, 624).

In Daniel, George Eliot shows us that the reverse side of the coin of moral righteousness is cruel insensitivity. For Daniel's intervention in Gwendolen's world, though

thoughtlessly irresponsible rather than purposefully evil, brings cruel consequences. She is to some degree victimized by his tendency to substitute inward fantasy for outward fact; to rewrite the events of everyday life to suit his own heightened tastes; to judge from the depths of his ignorance and to discount how that judgment might affect others. In Daniel's own world, events turn out as he would have them; life accommodates itself to his needs. Mirah obligingly offers him the reflected image of himself for which he longs; Mordecai lends him his vision and purpose; Alcharisi restores to him the paternal authority and sanction without which he cannot function. Through these events, George Eliot suggests that the consciously altruistic, doctrinally moral, tradition-centered, culturally defined approach to life may suffice for those who willingly embrace it. They may shape events in conformity with their pre-conceptions; reject what does not fit (as Daniel rejects the part of Alcharisi's confession that ~~destroys his image of maternal love~~); ~~and avoid personal con-~~ flict by erecting a set of laws by means of which internal problems may be externalized and externally dealt with. The woman who chooses this world exchanges daughterly submission for paternal protection: "'I never thought of anything else,'" (IV, 410) says Mirah of the segregated female gallery in the synagogue. Accepting her traditional role, she seeks in her husband, and finds in Daniel, a "rescuing angel" (VIII, 880).

But those who find this approach to life congenial are

dangerously tempted to force it on others, often with untoward results. The gentle Mordecai scares little Jacob Cohen half out of his wits with his misanthropic--and misogynist--prophecy, which strikes us as obscene when poured into the ears of a child:

"A curse is on your generation, child. They will open the mountain and drag forth the golden wings and coin them into money, and the solemn faces they will break up into earrings for wanton women! And they shall get themselves a new name, but the angel of ignominy, with the fiery brand, shall know them, and their heart shall be the tomb of dead desires that turn their life to rottenness."

The aspect and action of Mordecai were so new and mysterious to Jacob--they carried such a burthen of obscure threat--it was as if the patient, indulgent companion had turned into something unknown and terrific: the sunken dark eyes and hoarse accents . . . the thin grappling fingers. . . . Jacob lifted up his small patriarchal countenance and wept aloud. (V, 535).

In Mordecai's voice one hears a Carlylean thunder; he is for the moment like a non-conformist preacher, defying sin but suspiciously entranced by his vision of it. Was it such a voice, one wonders, that prompted the youthful George Eliot to ~~abstain from the vain pleasures of opera and concert hall?~~

As for Daniel, his officious preaching, his insistence that life conform to his bookish visions, is as egoistical, as self-centered, as Gwendolen's naïve wish that people and events should order themselves to suit her pleasure. And her self-absorption is in truth a mere protective shell. Pitted against Daniel's moral armor it cracks, and her confidence cracks with it. It does not occur to her to ask by what

right or standard he judges her, nor does it occur to him--he is indeed a Daniel come to judgment. Accepting him at his estimate of himself, and accepting his estimate of her, Gwendolen falls prey to the self-mistrust and self-dread that lurk beneath the surface of her outward poise. She in her ignorance calls on him as mentor, and he in his ignorance presumes to teach. Yet of the elements that shape her life--personal powerlessness, material need, physical passion, jealousy, desire for sexual possession--Daniel knows nothing. His cloistered home has hid from him the sharp edges of life, and his cautious nature has enabled him to keep a firm check on all emotions that might prove inappropriate. Just as his mother was able to subordinate her sexual and parental instincts to her professional ambition, so Daniel is able to subordinate all interior feelings to his exterior vision. He will not be fired by ambition until he learns what ambition he ought to be fired by. He will not see that Mirah loves him ~~until he knows that it is all right for him to love her (and even then someone else must tell him).~~

How different a face life shows to Gwendolen! Unlike Alcharisi, Mrs. Davilow has no sustaining artistic genius, and has clearly been unable to check her affections, having made a second imprudent marriage on the heels of the first. There is stress relating to parentage in the backgrounds of both Daniel and Gwendolen, but while he has rationalized and externalized his problem, she has characteristically buried hers.

At age twelve she asked an embarrassing question: "'Why did you marry again, Mamma? It would have been nicer if you had not.'" Her mother's response--"'You have no feeling, child!'" (I, 52)--was sufficiently violent to insure absolute silence henceforth on the subject of male antecedents. Gwendolen's childish rejection of the sexual interloper, and her inward shame at her mother's rebuke--a shame in which we sense the child punishing herself for her sexual curiosity by literally making the mother's rebuke come true--explains in terms quite acceptable to modern psychology the "fierceness of maidenhood" and resistance to sex that rule Gwendolen's young womanhood. Moreover, the blend of spontaneous affection and childish resentment--the latter overlaid with a more mature sense of obligation--that Gwendolen feels for her mother accords very well with the facts of the mother-daughter relationship as both poets and psychologists have described it. In becoming a sexual being, a young girl feels both triumph and guilt, for ~~both of which propitiation is due her mother, in Gwendolen's case, the guilt is deflected onto Mrs. Glasher, while the propitiation is made to Mrs. Davilow in the form of a comfortable income.~~

Gwendolen's sexual fears answer to a corresponding feeling in Daniel, whose suspicion of bastardy distorts his emotional development. He feels grievously wronged by the man who from his earliest remembrance had been his hero. "Who," George Eliot writes, "cannot imagine the bitterness of a first

suspicion that something in this object of complete love was not quite right?" (II, 214). This newly awakened, painfully suppressed sensitivity receives a harsh blow when Sir Hugo marries, an event that Daniel feels as "the silent consciousness of a grief within, which might be compared in some ways with Byron's susceptibility about his deformed foot" (II, 213). Sir Hugo is no more alert to Daniel's resentment and suspicions than Mrs. Davilow is aware of what gives rise to Gwendolen's fits of dread, and the painful conviction that she cannot love. And both young people convert the grief of childhood betrayal, or what seemed to them betrayal, into an adult mode of feeling and acting. Daniel enforces on himself a penance of compulsive forgiveness: "the indignation which had long mingled with his affection for Sir Hugo took the quality of pain rather than temper; and as his mind ripened to the idea of tolerance toward error, he habitually linked the idea with his own silent grievances" (II, 215). As for Gwendolen, ~~the irrational instincts that occasionally seize her,~~ and give rise to such remorse--her killing of the canary bird, her cruel rejection of Rex Gascoigne--cruise at will in her consciousness, capable of attaching themselves to any ready anchor.

The occasion on which the explosive elements in Gwendolen's subconscious combine with those in Daniel's subconscious to make a dangerous compound takes place at the Christmas house party that Sir Hugo holds at the Abbey. Gwendolen has

received the Grandcourt diamonds and the poisonous letter from Lydia Glasher that accompanies them. At her husband's insistence, she wears the diamonds, but she also wears the turquoise necklace that Daniel has redeemed, as a sign of her remorse. Daniel speculates--correctly--that Gwendolen's misery arises from the sense that she has wronged Mrs. Glasher, but his feeling for Gwendolen feeds disproportionately on feelings and needs of his own:

His own acute experience made him alive to the form of injury which might affect the unavowed children and their mother. Was Mrs. Grandcourt, under all her determined show of satisfaction, gnawed by a double, a treble-headed grief--self-reproach, disappointment, jealousy? He dwelt especially on all the slight signs of self-reproach: he was inclined to judge her tenderly, to excuse, to pity. . . . He thought he saw clearly enough why Sir Hugo had never dropped any hint of this affair to him; and immediately the image of this Mrs. Glasher became painfully associated with his own hidden birth. Gwendolen knowing of that woman and her children, marrying Grandcourt, and showing herself contented, would have been among the most repulsive of beings to him; but Gwendolen tasting the bitterness of remorse for having contributed to their injury was brought very near to his fellow-feeling. If it were so, she had got to a common plane of understanding with him on some difficulties of life which a woman is rarely able to judge of with any justice or generosity; for, according to precedent, Gwendolen's view of her position might easily have been . . . that her husband's marriage with her was his entrance on the path of virtue, while Mrs. Glasher represented his forsaken sin. And Deronda had naturally some resentment on behalf of the Hagers and Ishmaels. (V, 489).

Daniel's judgment of Gwendolen's situation and conduct here represents an act of supererogation. With no knowledge of Grandcourt, Mrs. Glasher, or the relationships between them, and inspired mainly by the mistaken notion that his childhood was tainted by a similarly illicit episode, he

creates for his own needs a morality drama in which Gwendolen as principal player encounters temptation, resists then succumbs to it, and finally repents, while he, Daniel, plays the role of audience, observing, criticizing, approving. Gwendolen, of course, has already branded herself a transgressor, and hardly needs Daniel's help to acknowledge her sin--which to the Victorian world, as George Eliot shows us in this passage, would not necessarily have been a sin, the reformation of the erring male by the chaste woman being, in fact, one of the era's most cherished and approved myths. But the real significance of this passage is twofold: it shows how Daniel's psychological bias casts a false light on everything within its range, and it indicates, through the reference to Hagar and Ishmael, that he has progressed from playing judge to playing God. In the Bible, God expressly tells Abraham to heed Sarah's wish and send Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness; He will provide for them. But Daniel cannot leave the ~~question of Grandcourt's sin or what seems to him a sin--and~~ Gwendolen's complicity either to those whom it concerns or to God. He eagerly adopts the role that Gwendolen would have him fill, and allows himself to stand to her "in the stead of God" (VIII, 878). The difficulty, of course, is that he does not see, although Sir Hugo warns him, that he is playing with fire. And since he is as humanly self-absorbed as other human beings, he has no godlike understanding of her needs, and fills his role in accordance with his own. Gwendolen seeks him

out in the library at the Abbey, convinced that he can help her, since from the first he has impressed her as being "her superior; in some mysterious way . . . a part of her conscience" (V, 468). Yet when she timidly approaches him, her face wearing the "peculiar expression which comes with a mortification to which tears are forbidden" (V, 468), he flings her a casual greeting, turns on his heel, and leaves the room. As a god, he is singularly unobservant.

The chapters that take place at the Abbey are of central importance in the telling of Gwendolen's story and in the presentation of George Eliot's concepts of sex and society, animal instinct and human aspiration. At almost the exact physical center of the novel is the beautiful description of the choir loft at Monk's Topping, now transformed into a stable:

Each finely-arched chapel was turned into a stall, where in the dusty glazing of the windows there still gleaned patches of crimson, orange, blue, and palest violet; for the rest, the choir had been gutted, the floor levelled, paved, and drained according to the most approved fashion, and a line of loose-boxes erected in the middle: a soft light fell from the upper windows on sleek brown or grey flanks and haunches; on mild equine faces looking out with active nostrils over the varnished brown boarding; on the hay hanging from racks where the saints once looked down from altar-pieces, and on the pale-golden straw scattered or in heaps; on a little white-and-liver colored spaniel making his bed on the back of an elderly hackney, and on four ancient angels, still showing signs of devotion like mutilated martyrs--while over all, the grand pointed roof, untouched by reforming wash, showed its lines and colours mysteriously through veiling shadow and cobweb, and a hoof now and then striking against the boards seemed to fill the vault with thunder, while outside there was the answering bay of the blood-hounds.

"Oh, this is glorious!" Gwendolen burst forth, in

forgetfulness of everything but the immediate impression. . . .

But she had no sooner said this than some consciousness arrested her, and involuntarily she turned her eyes toward Deronda, who oddly enough had taken off his felt hat and stood holding it before him as if they had entered a room or an actual church. . . . (V, 473-74).

The choir-stable presents as a unified picture, a whole, elements of social and individual life, and aspects of the human being's mental, emotional, and animal nature that are fragmented in the characters and events of the novel. Further, the response of each character to the scene indicates dominant elements in his or her character, while the responses in combination suggest the complex diversity of human nature as a whole. On entering the stable Daniel involuntarily takes off his hat. Grandcourt sneers at the gesture, and directs his attention to the physical points of the horses, animals he finds greatly inferior to his own. Gwendolen's response is a spontaneous, unchecked delight in the whole--in the beauty of beast and choir stall alike. But even as she ~~cries out with joy, she checks herself with the thought that~~ perhaps this beautiful place should by rights be Deronda's, and the thought spoils her pleasure.

Gwendolen's first reaction represents the childlike, appetitive instinct--healthily appetitive, and capable of enjoyment--while her second represents the awakening consciousness of others' needs, rights, and feelings which inevitably subdues the infantile joys we derive from the satisfaction of our own. Daniel's responses have already been disciplined to

a rationalized, almost ritualized formality, signified by his removal of his hat, an involuntary gesture that is nevertheless an unconscious obedience to the structure of formalized ritual. Daniel has developed a rational, social self that gives him both external and internal protection, that insulates him from the pain of directly encountering others' feelings and his own. This social and personal mask allows him to forestall any grief at the prospect of being dispossessed of his childhood home by telling himself that he will always have the memory of it, and memory, unlike reality, cannot disappoint. In a similar way, he is later able to console himself for the loss of the mother he has just found, and for the father he never knew, by the heirloom chest which is left to him, and which contains the relics of his father's scholarly research. Daniel's approach to life has already matured into a stable philosophy, which he characteristically attempts to impose on others. Thus, he directs the search for Mirah's lost relatives in a manner that will allow him to control the pace of the revelations and her response to them; and in a similar way he attempts to filter Gwendolen's experience of Grandcourt's death through his own lens, screening out the aspects of it that seem to him irrelevant or inappropriate.

The contrast between Daniel's approach to life and Gwendolen's frenzied but fervent steps toward direct understanding, is best indicated in Daniel's remark as the sightseeing party at the Abbey examines the old cloister: "'I wonder whether

one oftener learns to love real objects through their representations, or the representations through the real objects. . . . When I was a little fellow these capitals taught me to observe, and delight in, the structure of leaves'" (V, 476). Gwendolen still delights in leaves as leaves and horses as horses; when the hounds break away she is off at a gallop, not asking why--it is simply in her blood. Her task, then, is to acquire the measured judgment of a Daniel, without losing the ability to desire as children desire, and grieve as they grieve. As for Grandcourt, he is concerned neither with beauty nor its modes of appreciation, and even less concerned with reverence or childhood memory. He sees solely the physical reality of the scene around him, and attends to it solely in terms of appraisal: the horses are not worth possessing, the women are not worth looking at, Daniel is a fop. The circumstance that evokes his strongest expression of feeling is the lack of a cigar. Gwendolen's task is somehow to assemble these fragmented impulses and attitudes inside and all around her into a whole that will unite, as does the stable itself, past and present, tradition and innovation, spirit and matter, moral reverence and physical vitality.

In giving this task to a female character, George Eliot not only suggests the social, intellectual, and emotional restraints from which women must free themselves, and the goals they must attempt to reach; she seems also to suggest

that in males, attitudes to life have often hardened into an inflexibility that unfits, or at least partially disables, them for the task of self-reconstruction essential to a social rebirth. By contrast, women--even though under control and subjection, encountering life through the eyes and perspective of men--may have retained the simplicity of the humbled or childlike; with little possibility of ever winning the world, they need not lie to themselves, or create rational masks with which to confront, and affront, it. The use of the choir-stable in this central scene, which conveys a central message, inevitably recalls the other uses of Christian imagery in the novel, in particular Gwendolen's baptismal leap into the water after Grandcourt. The suggestion seems to be that there is a need, not only in male and female individually and together, but also in the larger social world, for a new gospel of understanding and forgiveness, for an upset of the established patriarchal order, for a humanitarian revolution which will insure that the meek are at least among those who inherit the earth.

What, then, of Grandcourt, and his effort to control Gwendolen, body and soul? What of her pathetic notion that she can control him, and her compulsion to confess to Daniel her sins of commission and omission? In this personal drama, as in the two halves of the book, the attitudes and forces of the individual, and of the social environment, are objectified through character and event. The social environment determines

in part the course of individual development, but it also provides the individual with the means of knowing himself, and thus of becoming an active agent in shaping his own destiny. In a similar way, the attitudes and drives within the individual play a determining part in his development, but so, too, do the attitudes and drives within the persons whose lives are connected with his. Obviously, other people's attitudes and drives are interior for themselves and exterior for him, as his are interior for himself and exterior for others. In combination, they make up what the individual sees as real, in both his personal and social lives. In the life of Gwendolen and Grandcourt, the fundamental reality is a sexual battle. The terms of the battle and the terrible inequality of the antagonists signify in heightened form the actual social and sexual repression of women in the Victorian world. Within the terms of the struggle are also expressed the rage, and the impulse toward self-assertion, of the female in such a society, along with the fear and self-hatred that inevitably accompany an institutionalized inferiority which is itself a constant reminder of the futility of attempts at rebellion or escape. This social conflict is at the same time a psychic conflict, in which Grandcourt represents the male principle carried to a morbid or pathological extreme, while Gwendolen represents the female who is unable to express the savage impulse she sense in herself and for which she feels profoundly guilty. She desires

to absolve herself before she commits her crime, but is half conscious all the while that only through acting it out can she begin to distinguish rage from guilt and hatred from denial. And only then can she begin to piece the separated fragments of herself into a whole.

The relationship between Gwendolen and Grandcourt is the relationship they make it, a compound of elements that each contributes. Her ignorance provokes his arrogance, her dependency answers to his tyranny, her guilt and secretiveness invite the tormenting cruelty they receive. Marriage, writes George Eliot in Romola, is a "relationship of sympathy or conquest,"<sup>49</sup> but it is in Daniel Deronda rather than in Romola that she embodies most fully this view. Some mysterious attraction draws Gwendolen to Grandcourt, but the terms of their relationship allow only for the destructive elements of the attraction to reach full growth. This dynamic concept of heterosexuality is a crucial part of George Eliot's message in this novel, for the truthful rendering of which it is essential that Grandcourt be an enigma. We learn that in his past life he has been passionately romantic, ardently generous, sexually devoted; he is also icily cruel, sadistically tormenting, sexually changeable. He is a Lovelace without the eighteenth-century dash but with a touch of the nineteenth-century demon by way of compensation, an unpoetic Byron firing his pistols in Annabella's (Gwendolen's) boudoir. We must take him seriously--as seriously as we take

the social order within which he operates, and the psychic structures that have their correspondence in these social laws--but we must realize, too, that in the emotional economy of George Eliot's scheme his role is ultimately productive, in that he forces Gwendolen to invest her capital and realize her assets. For better or worse, Grandcourt literally whips Gwendolen into life, and in some paradoxical way we must half respect him for seeing the vital force in her, though he cares only to crush it, and for provoking the hidden strength in her, though she uses it to destroy him. The lessons Gwendolen learns from Grandcourt she could hardly have learned from Daniel, who is as disturbed by her sexuality, though she unconsciously represses it, as she is by Grandcourt's, though he consciously controls it. There are fleeting allusions to sexlessness, trans-sexuality, or asexuality, in connection with Daniel--not merely the references to him as a fairy-tale prince, but comments on the part of other characters that he seems womanish in his sensitivity and emotionality, and that his spiritual rectitude is somehow incompatible with earthly marriage. By such references I do not suppose that George Eliot means to establish a value system founded on qualities perceived as masculine or feminine, potent or impotent. Rather, the effect of the Gwendolen-Grandcourt coupling and the Daniel-Mirah coupling is to emphasize the fact that male-female communication at its deepest level is sexual communication, whether the relationship is

pre-structured to eliminate elements of passion and conflict, or whether these elements break free to structure the relationship. Further, these sexual contrasts extend our perceptual grasp of the two worlds of the novel and Gwendolen's position in between. Grandcourt's maleness forces upon us the reality of the power struggle in which Gwendolen is an ignorant, unarmed participant, and for which the pious altruism of Daniel's world suffices neither as purifying agent nor emotional defense. Against Grandcourt's sexuality, even at its most cruelly aggressive, Daniel's genderlessness seems bland and attenuated, shadow without substance. Yet the reality of the one is in a sense achieved within the terms of its co-existence, and contrast, with the other. Laurence B. Holland has shown that many events in the Kate Croy-Merton Densher half of the Wings of the Dove are complex analogies of events in the Milly Theale half, so that action and situation do not so much contrast with as complete one another.<sup>50</sup> In a similar way, characters and events in one half of Daniel Deronda are fully realized through our apprehension of their similarities and differences to characters and events in the other half. We feel chilled as the wind blows through the vacuous spaces in Daniel's world, but it is through those spaces that we see most clearly the terrible solidity of Grandcourt's.

The striking fact about the triangle of Grandcourt, Gwendolen and Deronda, from the point of view of this study, is not that Grandcourt is wrong and Deronda right, or the

reverse, but that Gwendolen is caught between them, unable to judge for herself. Even the most independent among George Eliot's women finds it hard to reach the deep core of belief, the sense of self, that lies beneath the social, the moral, the wifely, the dutiful, the frivolous, the selfish, the sacrificial, and all the other selves she sees reflected back at her in the eyes of others, especially males. Gwendolen sees her own plight through Daniel's eyes, and instead of relying on a direct perception of herself and her husband, allows Daniel's perception to obscure her vision. And since Grandcourt can see in Gwendolen only what relates to him, has "no imagination of anything in her but what affected the gratification of his own will" (VI, 616), the circle of misunderstanding is complete.

The epigraph to the chapter in which Grandcourt begins his courtship of Gwendolen is from Henry IV, 1:

"Oh, gentlemen, the time of life is short;  
 To spend that shortness basely were too long,  
 If life did ride upon a dial's point,  
~~Still ending at the arrival of an hour "~~ (II, 160)

As ironic parody, it is surprisingly apt. Hotspur and Prince Hal fight a duel in which the passions of war and love seem strangely mingled; they are partners in a dance of death. So too, are Grandcourt and Gwendolen, but in the sexual war that George Eliot depicts we look in vain for gallantry and honor, although we find a fine excess of rage. The intimacy of this pair is inevitably war, since it cannot be love. Gwendolen's history is in fact a type of working through of the conflicts

and opposed needs that governed the erotic life of the Victorian woman, and that made freely expressed passionate love a highly problematic achievement. The impulse to pleasure met a censorious super-ego that demanded denial; healthy shoots put forth by self-will withered in the frost of social duty; and guilt, always and everywhere, found fertile soil and a climate for growth. Not that George Eliot suggests that only an inhuman moral code prevents female sexual fulfillment: on the contrary: the instinctual battle of the sexes rages in Daniel Deronda as it did fifteen years earlier in The Mill on the Floss and 130 years earlier in Clarissa. Gwendolen Harleth no less than Maggie Tulliver finds that sexual surrender involves the risk of destruction of the self and an arbitrary ending to the course of personal development she has willy-nilly embarked on. Gwendolen's quest, though much less self-conscious and purposeful than Maggie's or than Dorothea Brooke's, is nevertheless a quest, though at times it seems merely a struggle for survival. It reaches its climax on the occasion of Grandcourt's drowning and the scenes with Deronda that follow.

This final catastrophe comes about in consequence of a guilelessness in both characters that leads them to endanger themselves without fear or forethought. Gwendolen walks naïvely into the trap set for her by Lush and Mrs. Glasher, never thinking to ask if it is a trap, or for what purpose it is set. Grandcourt himself does not foresee that Lydia and

Lush may act against him in this way. In his case the cause is not naïveté, but a peremptory refusal to consider other people's motives at all. "'I wish to hear what you say to me --not to other men'" (IV, 384), he says to Gwendolen when they are first engaged. And even when he suspects her of concealment he says proudly, "'What I care to know, I shall know without your telling me'" (V, 503). In this mood of reckless confidence, he takes Gwendolen into the gulf of Genoa on a tiny sailboat. The actual circumstances of his death are somewhat ambiguous. None of his acquaintance doubts that he could swim, and Gwendolen is certain that he could, which leads Deronda to conclude that he must have suffered a cramp. The story as Gwendolen tells it suggests a different sequence of events:

"I saw him sink, and my heart gave a leap as if it were going out of me. I think I did not move. I kept my hands tight. It was long enough for me to be glad, and yet to think it was no use--he would come up again. And he was come--farther off--the boat had moved. It was all like lightning. "The rope!" he called out in a voice--not his own--I hear it now--and I stopped for the rope--~~I felt I must--I felt sure he could swim, and he would come back whether or not, and I dreaded him. That was in my mind--he would come back. But he was gone down again, and I had the rope in my hand--no, there he was again--his face above the water--and he cried again--and I held my hand, and my heart said, 'Die!'--and he sank; and I felt, 'It is done--I am wicked. I am lost!'" (VII, 761).~~

What seems clear from Gwendolen's account is that Grandcourt saw her face, saw her withhold the rope, and sank in the knowledge that she would not save him. Realizing for the first time how she hated him, he must also have realized that there was little left for him to do but die; in the final

struggle of wills, hers had prevailed. On her side, the plunge into the water after him indicates an involuntary effort to recall her murderous impulse, a recognition that a part of herself is drowning with him, and an instinctive attempt to recover and confront this partial self. In her first wish that death might deliver her from Grandcourt's dominance, Gwendolen has projected the wish onto him: "The thought of his dying would not subsist; it turned as with a dream-change into the terror that she should die with his throttling fingers on her neck avenging that thought" (VI, 669). In the event, this double phantasm is dredged up from Gwendolen's subconscious to make a hideous but clarifying moment which she tries to describe to Deronda: "'I only know that I saw my wish outside me'" (VII, 761).

But Deronda characteristically sees the problem in terms of where and in what degree to apportion blame; to understand one's acts is to him less important than to fit them into an all-purpose ethical structure that will tell you what to feel about them. His attempts at consolation, too, relate to his own needs. Suddenly realizing, in his last interview with Gwendolen in London, the depths of her emotional illness and his own unfitness to deal with it, he had been about to offer the one pertinent bit of advice he could give--to confess everything to Grandcourt--when Grandcourt himself walked in. If, then, Gwendolen is responsible for Grandcourt's subsequent death, Daniel's ineffective intervention in her life, coupled

with his failure to intervene in the one way that might have been effective, connects him with the tragedy. He does not entertain such a thought. Instead, he allows himself the final luxury of absolving Gwendolen of murder. He convinces himself that "there had been throughout a counterbalancing struggle of her better will . . . that her murderous thought had had no outward effect--that, quite apart from it, the death was inevitable" (VII, 761-62). And he counsels her--as so often before--to think of her mother, her friends, to turn her thoughts outward. But it is like advising a depressed patient to take a cruise; until the inward work has been done, no outward diversion will avail.

The inward work Gwendolen must do herself, and although Deronda helps, what she learns from him is not at all what he thinks he teaches, or what she expects to be taught. We see what she learns in their last scene together, when Daniel tells of his plans to live and work for the Jews in the East. ~~Critics have generally overemphasized Gwendolen's first re-~~ sponse to these words,<sup>51</sup> while almost overlooking the second. It is true that as she thinks of Daniel's mission the world seems to grow larger and larger, and she a smaller and smaller speck in its midst. But the significance of this dislodgment of self-supremacy is not solely--perhaps not primarily--that Gwendolen recognizes "great movements" and "wide-stretching purposes" beyond her own (which purposes, incidentally, are here, as elsewhere in the book, associated with warfare and

carnage--as though grand ideas lead as often to division as to unity). The immediate effect of her recognition of other worlds is that she begins to see her own world, and the people in it, more clearly; she begins to think for herself. Her actions reveal the change. She senses, for example, that Deronda is withholding the most important part of his story, and when he finally tells her that it is Mirah's brother who has influenced his plans to go to the East, she realizes at once that in fact the real influence comes from Mirah:

"Did she tell you that I went to her?" said Gwendolen, abruptly looking up at him.

"No," said Deronda. "I don't understand you."

She turned away her eyes again, and sat thinking. Slowly the colour died out of face and neck, and she was as pale as before--with that almost withered paleness which is seen after a painful flush. At last she said, without turning towards him--in a low, measured voice, as if she were only thinking aloud in preparation for future speech--

"But can you marry?"

"Yes," said Deronda. . . . "I am going to marry."

At first there was no change in Gwendolen's attitude: she only began to tremble visibly; then she looked before her with dilated eyes, as at something lying in front of her, till she stretched her arms out straight, and cried with a smothered voice

---

"I said I should be forsaken. I have been a cruel woman. And I am forsaken. " (VIII, 877).

Of this outburst, Calvin Bedient objects that Gwendolen has done nothing for which she can call herself cruel, that the person chiefly hurt by her marriage is herself.<sup>52</sup> But surely Grandcourt, no matter how icily obdurate, did not deserve to die for it. And Gwendolen's self-reproach is clearly for her sin of omission on the boat. The outstretched arms mimic her gesture on the rescue vessel at Genoa, and a similar gesture

later when she reënacts for Daniel the accident and the drowning. After the drowning, what Gwendolen recalls is Grandcourt's face above the water, so that his face becomes fused with the picture of the dead face and the fleeing figure which was the objectified image of her childish dread. Grandcourt dead is thus linked with the two other dead males in Gwendolen's life, her father and stepfather. And the drowning becomes, symbolically, the submersion of Gwendolen's sexual curiosity, hostility, and jealousy-- childhood sins for which she has ruthlessly punished herself in her adult life.

It is finally Deronda who frees Gwendolen from the guilt and self-loathing that she has projected onto him, and which he for his own interior reasons has magnified. But he frees her in a way he does not anticipate. Gwendolen's sudden wish to know if Mirah told Daniel of her [Gwendolen's] visit is prompted by her recollection of the occasion for that ~~visit--the wish to prove that Grandcourt's assertions about a~~ sexual attachment between Daniel and Mirah were untrue. Now she realizes that although Grandcourt has interpreted this relationship in the characteristic fashion of the English gentleman, in essence he was right. And that recognition forces another: that just as Mirah was jealous of her, Gwendolen, and kept her jealousy hidden, so she, Gwendolen, was jealous of Lydia Glasher and kept her jealousy hidden. In Gwendolen's case, the jealousy was kept hidden even from

herself, but the reader has been given a clue:

What others might think could not do away with a feeling which in the first instance would hardly be too strongly described as indignation and loathing that she should have been expected to unite herself with an outworn life, full of backward secrets which must have been more keenly felt than any associations with her. True, the question of love on her own part had occupied her scarcely at all in relation to Grandcourt. The desirability of marriage for her had always seemed due to other feelings than love; and to be enamoured was the part of the man, on whom the advances depended. Gwendolen had found no objection to Grandcourt's way of being enamoured before she had had that glimpse of his past, which she resented as if it had been a deliberate offence against her. His advances to her were deliberate, and she felt a retrospective disgust for them. Perhaps other men's lives were of the same kind--full of secrets which made the ignorant suppositions of the woman they wanted to marry a farce at which they were laughing in their sleeves. (III, 343).

In describing Gwendolen's complicated response to Grandcourt, George Eliot identifies some central elements in the sexual experience of the Victorian woman: her rigid conditioning toward passivity and emotional withdrawal; her secret curiosity about "fallen" women--those who have released their sexual feelings; her natural resentment at a double standard of sexual morality; and the painful sense of inferiority that flourishes in a climate of repression and ignorance. An equally important aspect of the Victorian female's reaction to sexual repression is expressed symbolically in Daniel Deronda in the episode concerning Gwendolen, Mrs. Glasher, and the Grandcourt diamonds. Since sexual desire was socially condemned as lascivious and corrupt, the "pure" woman who had such desires might covertly identify with the "impure" or fallen woman. George Eliot suggests such an identification on

Gwendolen's part when she describes her hysterical reaction to the poisoned diamonds. They come, as it were, from Lydia's hands to Gwendolen's, thus signifying that now she rather than Lydia is Grandcourt's sexual possession.

But with Deronda's help, Gwendolen has poured a muddy moral varnish over these unacceptable feelings, and only when he leaves can she confront them. Here, too, he helps, for the realization that he leaves her for Mirah carries with it the realization that Mirah's gain is her loss, as her gain had been Mrs. Glasher's loss--if one can weigh human feelings and actions on such a scale. But in fact, an important insight that Gwendolen gains--and that the reader gains as he threads his way through the double plot of Daniel Deronda--is that life cannot be reduced to calculations of gain and loss; that generous human impulse cannot be confined within a system of structured benevolence, or a Utilitarian belief in the greatest good for the greatest number; that a schematized morality inevitably fails to encompass the full range of human passion. George Eliot feared that what she called the Jewish element in the novel would please nobody.<sup>53</sup> It might have pleased Jews less than it apparently did if they had noted that George Eliot's concept of Hebraic values in Daniel Deronda resembles Shakespeare's concept in The Merchant of Venice--a concept that, as has been shown,<sup>54</sup> represented the Elizabethan view of Puritanism and its Old Testament morality. Prudence, subordination of the spontaneous

instinct to law and tradition, a cautious weighing of justice and duty against mercy and pity, a tendency to measure and quantify the heart's promptings--these traits are associated with Shylock in the Merchant and with Mordecai and Daniel in Daniel Deronda, while a reckless, improvident trust in life is associated with the Christian community both in Shakespeare's play and in George Eliot's novel. The reliance on law and duty rather than mercy is revealed most forcibly in Mirah's brother's reception of their prodigal father:

" . . . We will share our food with you--you shall have bed and clothing. We will do this duty to you, because you are our father. But you will never be trusted. . . . That such a man is our father is a brand on our flesh which will not cease smarting. But the Eternal has laid it upon us; and though human justice were to flog you for your crimes, and your body fall helpless before the public scorn--we would still say, 'This is our father; make way, that we may carry him out of your sight.'" (VIII, 847).

The contrasting mode of forgiveness which the reader is to supply is, of course, the joyous reception accorded the prodigal son in the gospel.<sup>55</sup>

But as I have said, we are not meant to choose one world over the other, but to experience both: the earnest moral striving and sense of common purpose that unify the Hebraic world, the aesthetic and sensuous appreciation and respect for the individual, irrational impulse that illuminate the Hellenic, or Christian. We are shown the recto and verso of both worlds, and sometimes experience the two together, as in the "Hand and Banner" scene, in which the novel enacts its truth through form and language, while the reader absorbs it in the act of

aesthetic apprehension. The discourse of these unworldly philosophers is tedious, and seems to end in futility, "as if they had come together to hear the blowing of the shophar, and had nothing to do now but disperse" (VI, 599). But the full, measured presentation of the occasion and the argument requires us to take heed of the truths embodied in the sententious rhetoric, and to acknowledge that ideas may live even on mordant tongues. In this way, Daniel Deronda does what Laurence Holland has described The Wings of the Dove as doing: it "'marries' form and content." Gwendolen's experience, in particular, marries the two worlds of the novel.

Of special significance in this study of Gwendolen as anti-heroine is the fact that in each of the worlds between which she restlessly wanders, males and male values dominate; and each world presents to her a different image of herself. George Eliot once told a friend that in Gwendolen she wished to portray a girl of the period,<sup>56</sup> and one can easily see in ~~Gwendolen Harleth Mrs. Linton's journalistic anti-heroine,~~ the pleasure-loving, self-willed young woman who wished to do as she liked. But as George Eliot developed the character of Gwendolen, she must have seen that even though actual young women of the day confessed in print to being exactly like Mrs. Linton's creation, the girl of the period was in fact a figure made up of fused images of what young women were thought to be. In Gwendolen we find all the images. The girl of the period liked to gamble, to flirt, to hunt, to be admired, to

have fun--sins for which she was roundly castigated, chiefly by male journalists, though also by some of her own sex. The model held up as her opposite, on which it was supposed that young women should model themselves, was capable but not ambitious; loving but not passionate; self-possessed but not self-willed; accomplished but not desirous of fame; eager to improve herself but not anxious to change her lot; mature beyond her years but childishly innocent. In short, she was Mirah. In creating her girl of the period, then, George Eliot suggests that the heterosexual experience of the Victorian woman was a masquerade, a trip through a house of distorted mirrors at the end of which--if she ever reached the end--she might possibly find herself. And part of George Eliot's genius in Daniel Deronda is that she forces the reader to take the same trip, to be beguiled as Gwendolen is beguiled, and freed when she is free.

---

---

---

## CHAPTER V, FOOTNOTES

1. Quoted in Steven Marcus, The Other Victorians (New York: Basic Books, 1964), p. 31.
2. Marcus, pp. 272-73.
3. Marcus, p. 251.
4. See Marcus, pp. 76-196, for an analysis of this nineteenth-century work.
5. Vladimir Nabokov, Lolita (New York: Putnam, 1958).
6. In Philip Roth's Portnoy's Complaint and Joyce Carol Oates's Them, the intent seems to be to de-eroticize sex. In other recent novels the intent is less clear.
7. Russell M. Goldfarb, Sexual Repression in Victorian Literature (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1970).
8. Goldfarb, pp. 149-53.
9. See Arnold Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel, 2 vols. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960), I, 138-55, for a discussion of the Victorian class struggle as reflected in Wuthering Heights.
10. Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1953), p. 154.
11. Ellen Moers, "Female Gothic: Monsters, Goblins, Freaks," New York Review of Books, (April 4, 1974), pp. 37-38, ~~suggests that Emily Brontë's childhood fantasy underlies the Catherine-Heathcliff relationship. See also Richard Chase, "The Brontës, or Myth Domesticated," Forms of Modern Fiction, ed. William Van O'Connor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964), pp. 102-19.~~
12. See Marcus, pp. 34-76, for discussion of this Victorian pornographer's life and work.
13. Anthony Trollope, Autobiography (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1911), p. 121. Only once, Trollope writes, did he violate this principle.
14. Autobiography, p. 122.
15. Autobiography, p. 277.
16. Autobiography, p. 277.

17. William Myers, "George Eliot: Politics and Personality," Literature and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Fiction, ed. John Lucas (London: Methuen, 1971), p. 107.

18. David Skilton, Anthony Trollope and his Contemporaries (London: Longman, 1972), p. 139.

19. Autobiography, p. 206.

20. Anthony Trollope, Phineas Finn (London: Oxford World's Classics, 1941), I, 413. This edition binds two volumes together, with consecutive chapter headings but separate pagination for each volume. Further references are indicated within the text by a Roman numeral for volume, arabic numerals for pages.

21. Robert Polhemus, The Changing World of Anthony Trollope (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 155-57, notes Lady Laura's attempt to reconcile worldly ambition and sexual need. But in describing Laura as a "neurotic" and "defensive" woman Polhemus seems to leave out of account Trollope's deliberate contrasting of the social environments and social conditioning of male and female.

22. See Moers, op. cit., for a discussion of sibling relationships in Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market," and Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights.

23. John Stuart Mill, On Liberty, Representative Government, The Subjection of Women, intro. Millicent Garrett Fawcett (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 438.

24. Mill, p. 479.

25. Anthony Trollope, Phineas Redux (London: Oxford World's Classics, 1952), I, 122. Like Phineas Finn, this is a singly-bound double volume with consecutive chapters and separate sequences of pagination. Further references are indicated within the text by a Roman numeral for volume, arabic numerals for pages.

26. Polhemus, p. 156.

27. I use these terms in the sense in which I find them used in Claude Levi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf (New York: Basic Books, 1963), pp. 132-63.

28. For such views on marriage see "The Ladies' Parliament," The Lady's Own Paper, NS 1 (1868), 34, 66; "Vox Pellicani," The Pelican, I (1874), 37. These and similar articles

in other women's journals pointed out that female suffrage, female education, and married women's property rights would improve the tone of female society and enable women to play useful roles in the world, roles that subjection to the male had prevented them from taking. In thus contributing to the world's work they would become equal partners in marriage, and marriage itself would become a more satisfying and ennobling relationship.

29. For George Eliot's later thoughts about the effect of such teaching, see her 1853 essay "Evangelical Teaching: Dr. Cumming," Essays of George Eliot, ed. Thomas Pinney (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 158-89.

30. Joan Bennett, George Eliot: Her Mind and her Art (Cambridge: University Press, 1962), pp. 62-73, gives a brief account of this period in George Eliot's life.

31. The George Eliot Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven: Yale, 1954), VI, 216.

32. Bennett, p. 181.

33. F. R. Leavis, intro. to Daniel Deronda (Goucester: Peter Smith, 1973), p. xvii.

34. Bennett, p. 189.

35. Leavis, op. cit., p. xvi.

36. See David L. Higdon, "Eliot's Daniel Deronda, Chapter 36," Explicator, 31 (1972), item 15, on these allusions.

37. See William Empson, "Double Plots," Some Versions of Pastoral (New York: ~~New Directions~~, 1968), pp. 27-86.

38. Donald David Stone, Novelists in a Changing World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 153.

39. George Eliot, Daniel Deronda, ed. with intro. by Barbara Hardy (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967), II, 238. Roman numerals indicate which of the eight books of the novel is referred to; arabic numerals indicate pagination, which is consecutive through the eight books. Further volume and page references follow quotations in the text.

40. Mrs. Davilow and her girls undertake to embroider a tablecloth border and communion cloth for Pennicote Church, but there is no suggestion that such work would provide more than a pittance.

41. See Haight, III, 419, for example.
42. DD, I, 112; II, 159.
43. The Thousand and One Nights, trans. Edward William Lane, 3 vols. (New York: Bigelow, Brown, nd), II, 239-333.
44. George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1971), p. 391.
45. John P. Kearney, "Time and Beauty: 'Was she beautiful or not beautiful?'" NCF, 26 (1971), p. 288.
46. Calvin Bedient, Architects of the Self (Berkeley: University of California, 1972), p. 61.
47. Bedient, p. 62.
48. See Helene Deutsch, The Psychology of Women (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944), pp. 24-148, for analysis of mother-daughter feelings in puberty and adolescence.
49. George Eliot, Romola (New York: Harper & Bros., Library Edition, nd), p. 370.
50. Laurence Holland, "The Wings of the Dove," Henry James's Major Novels, ed. Lyall H. Powers (East Lansing: Michigan State Press, 1973), pp. 274-313, esp. p. 301 ff.
51. See Henry James's comments in "Daniel Deronda: A Conversation," Partial Portraits (London: Macmillan, 1899), p. 89.
52. Bedient, p. 64.
53. ~~Haight, VI, 238.~~
54. For this subject see, among others, Harley Granville-Barker, Prefaces to Shakespeare (Princeton University Press, 1947), I, 335-66; E. C. Pettet, "The Merchant of Venice and the Problem of Usury," The Merchant of Venice Casebook (London: Macmillan, 1969), pp. 100-13; Elmer Edgar Stoll, Shakespeare Studies: Historical and Comparative in Method (New York: G. E. Stechert, 1942), pp. 262-336.
55. Luke 15: 11-32.
56. Mathilde Blind, George Eliot (Boston: Roberts Bros; 1885), p. 262.

## CHAPTER VI

### AFTER THE ANTI-HEROINE

#### Changes in the Novel

By the end of the 1870's the anti-heroine is thoroughly accommodated into the English novel. Her successors are the heroines of Henry James; the impetuous rebels and resentful conformists of Arnold Bennett and George Gissing; the self-contained women of D. H. Lawrence, who even in sexual union maintain their fierce singularity. The protected reserve of selfhood from which Mrs. Morel baffles and taunts her husband, the cold brilliance of Gudrun Brangwen's emotional armor, are akin to the sense of self painfully achieved by Maggie Tulliver, and to the composure with which Dorothea Brooke acknowledges the fact that her superiority to the men about her will inevitably remain a matter of inward awareness rather than outward manifestation. Lawrence's vital, assertive English country women, recklessly abandoning themselves to love and just as recklessly abandoning love for the precious remnant of individuality that they prize above passion, are natural heirs to George Eliot's resolute country women, to Maggie and to Dorothea. Similarly, the finely aspiring heroines of Henry James are natural heirs to the intelligent, well-born young women in

Trollope who try to achieve equilibrium in a world that as often as not presses its claims against all the higher claims of head and heart.

These kinships between the Victorian anti-heroine and the heroines of early modern fiction are not merely connected branches on which to trace a family history of the novel; they are signs of a persistent and vigorous strain evident in English fiction from Richardson on, reaffirming itself in an era of social change, playing its part in the radical changes taking place in the novel itself at that time.

In Richardson, heterosexual conflict not only bears a structural burden, it also carries an immense load of social, moral, and philosophical freight. In Clarissa and in Pamela, the middle classes could see embodied their cherished beliefs, could acquire a sense of their place vis-à-vis a still-powerful aristocracy, could savor in the one heroine's death their own righteousness and in the other's marriage their own fortitude. In novels of the ~~second half~~ of the nineteenth century, sexual relationships bear a similar burden. They bear it not so much in terms of sexual warfare and class realignment, for in a sense all classes were alike disoriented by the growth in technology and material production and the decline in religious, familial, and communal cohesiveness that characterized Victorian England.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the emergence of the fictive female from a sheltered

place in a more or less settled social scheme into a capricious, alien world in which she must make her own way, a world in which her sexual attachments are dangerous, problematic, yet extremely important to her personal growth and accomplishment, may be seen as relating to a variety of tensions and changes in Victorian society. They relate especially to recurrent conflicts between ethical belief and pragmatic behavior, and between traditional group values and the emergence--doubtless under fire of desperation --of a new sense of personal liberty. Mill's concern with female emancipation is of a piece with his concern for the absolute protection of whatever rights of self-expression and self-determination remain to human beings in an age when production and consumption are regarded as all-important process and producer and consumer as less important agent. Questions of why these ideas of personal liberty, self-determination, self-assertion, and self-expression become so crucial in the second half of the nineteenth-century lie in ~~the realms of social science and social history. But that~~ they were crucial, and crucially related to the idea of female emancipation, is clear to lay reader and scholar like; the presumptive connections have in fact recently been the subject of at least one scholarly study of Mill's work.<sup>2</sup> Equally clear is the growing importance of personal liberty and self-development as a value in the novel after the mid-nineteenth-century, to the point where it becomes almost the

one commonly accepted value in novels of our own time.<sup>3</sup>

What is most germane to my thesis here is the fact that in novels of the 1860's and 1870's the anti-heroine is frequently the figure who embodies this idea of personal freedom; who struggles to maintain it within a hostile, materialistic, restricting environment; who commits her moral and social errors in praiseworthy, if misguided, attempts to impress her own image on an indifferent universe. The rage of Laura Kennedy, the cunning of Lizzie Eustace, the valor of Maggie Tulliver, and the agonized guilt of Gwendolen Harleth are related in that they are all in some measure responses to the binding paradox of being, or feeling themselves entitled to be, free souls in a world that not only drastically limits their freedom but so shapes them that they may drastically limit, or even willfully destroy it, themselves. And it is not too great a step from these Victorian anti-heroines to the heroines of Henry James, who represent individual aspiration and fineness of moral apprehension transcending the bounds of material circumstance.

Novelists found a felicitous symbol in the female, charged with embodying and preserving the moral and religious values of the Victorian age, arriving at a new sense of self at just the time when human individuality, though upheld in theory, was in practice being ground down in Carlyle's machine universe. The Victorian anti-heroine expresses some of the Victorian age's prime contradictions, being at one and the

same time sublimely self-assured and touchingly vulnerable. She also expresses two of its prime conflicts: human aspiration defying social restriction, nascent self-awareness challenging cultural dehumanization. In addition, she expresses a feeling that has become almost a commonplace for characters in the modern novel: bewildered rebellion in the face of increased social expectations and decreased social support. Further, the anti-heroine, particularly in George Eliot, speaks not only to new definitions of the female role but also to a new ideal of self-realization that is sexually non-specific. Like the later Jamesian heroine, whose soaring social and spiritual aims are thwarted by petty, yet inescapable limitations of circumstance or by seemingly random mischance, the anti-heroines of George Eliot embody in a particularly affecting way the plight of the sensitive individual consciousness in the brutalizing modern world.

So too with heterosexuality in novels of the 1860's and 1870's. In both Trollope and George Eliot, sex is a troubled and troubling area of female experience, requiring sacrifice, perhaps yielding satisfaction but perhaps not, calling into play envy, rage, and self-seeking as well as the more acceptable emotions of affection and faith. The intense seriousness with which both authors view the sexual experience, the intense reality of the social scene in which they place it, can be seen by the modern reader as a step in the gradual process by which the moral and ethical center of

life in the nineteenth-century novel moves away from the social concerns that occupied the "problem" novelists of the earlier Victorian era toward the introspective, individual concerns that occupy the serious modern novelist.

While Victorian group and cultural values were by common custom vested in particular members of the group or culture, namely women, novelists tended to view the male's conflict as an outward struggle against intractable social forces or as an inward struggle against character faults which prevented him from embracing the pure woman and all the values she represented. Within such a milieu are engendered both the dramatic struggles against social evil and the dramatic struggles against personal defects of the Dickens hero. I raise that oft-mentioned point here because it leads to a point that has been less often mentioned, and has hardly been studied: that the changed concept of the female character in novels of the 1860's and 1870's is integrally related to changed concepts of society and changed perceptions of individual experience in the later novel. When in real life women rejected their assigned role and sought active participation in a world conceived of as materialistic and destructive of spiritual values, they figuratively shook up the ingredients of the Victorian social and philosophical mix. A value system lodged outside the male universe and inside the female one can hardly serve a world in which women undergo the same conflicts, struggles, and temptations of

day-to-day material existence as men do, as often as not competing with men in the process. When society changes in this way, as it did in the nineteenth century, women, instead of providing a moral system to which men may subscribe as to an exterior system of law, provide instead a means whereby men may see the moral contradictions, paradoxes, and evasions of their system, and the failures of the social system generally.

In The Awkward Age Mrs. Brookenham makes a comparison between little Aggie, whose cloistered virtue the corrupt society of the novel cherishes, and herself, who has to act within that society in whatever way she can. The comparison indicates exactly the comparison I wish to make between Victorians as woman worshipers and Victorians as men and women alike seeking their moral bearings in a dangerous world.

"'Aggie,'" Mrs. Brook says, "'is the Duchess's morality, her virtue; which, by having it, that way, outside of you . . . you can make a much better thing of. . . . A woman like me has to be herself, poor thing, her virtue and her morality!'"<sup>4</sup>

While the Victorian novel kept its virtue outside itself, vested in a female who was only a limited participant in material life, a certain amount of painful introspection and ruthless self-examination was quite naturally averted. Once the anti-heroine alters that balance and challenges the system, the earlier world view begins to seem a falsification of reality. Human experience for both male and female comes

to be seen as a matter of losing and finding, struggling within and against oneself, rather than as a matter of the male doing battle with the world and finding in the female his rest from the struggle, his spiritual reward on earth.

There were many reasons why novels in the late nineteenth century turned from sentimentalism, sensation, and dramatically heightened action toward realistic plotting, sound psychological portraiture, and conflict arising out of character and situation. Popular taste changed as manners and modes of life changed. Moreover, as Richard Stang shows in The Theory of the Novel in England: 1850-1870, the novel was becoming increasingly responsive to a body of critical theory, formulated by the nineteenth-century periodical reviewers, which saw the novel as serious art, as life-enhancing mimesis, rather than as mere entertainment. Stang quotes an anonymous reviewer in Bentley's Quarterly who makes much the same point I am stressing about the influence on the entire novel of the anti-heroine (he does not use the term), the independent, autonomous female character. This reviewer criticizes Bulwer's heroines as vacuous creatures with no force or identity of their own, whose function is to worship and eventually marry the hero. Such an ideal, he complains, makes the novelist's job impossible; love, "the ostensible core of the Bulwerian novel, cannot exist in such a world where the 'woman's being is to be merged into her lover's without any reciprocal fusion.'"<sup>5</sup>

The reciprocal fusion lacking in Bulwer is a vital source of the sexual, social, and ideological tension so strikingly present in Trollope and George Eliot. A shift in the balance of power between male and female made itself felt in altered social forms and individual expression; it made itself felt in realistic fiction in new modes of organizing and perceiving social and individual life.

#### Henry James

Defining some of the forces for change that affected the novel in the Victorian years, Kathleen Tillotson notes the moral influence of Carlyle: "all serious novelists were affected by it in some degree, both in ways common to all and individually modified; and it is an influence not merely upon the content but upon the mode and temper of the novel."<sup>6</sup> The change in temper resulted in a new seriousness, a moral and philosophical tension preparing the way for modernism: "There were, and have continued to be, innumerable novels produced by his [Carlyle's] two arch-toes, Dilettantism and Mammonism; but the 'novel proper' as distinct from the novel as the product of an amusement industry was helped by Carlyle to a status in literature it has hardly yet lost."<sup>7</sup>

Changes of mode and temper almost necessarily coincide, and we of the twentieth century can see in retrospect how novelists of the later nineteenth century, working in the midst of social change, forged the materials of aesthetic change. Without reducing the novel to a mere imitation of

of life, or placing it on a chronological assembly line, each age adding its special parts to a developing whole, we nevertheless can see that in fact the novel did not become overnight capable of expressing the finely tempered moral sensibilities--and especially the moral ambiguities--of Henry James. In Novelists in a Changing World, Donald David Stone analyzes the social change of the late nineteenth century and compares two artistic modes of dealing with it, that of George Meredith and that of Henry James.<sup>8</sup> In essence Stone says that while Meredith sought to preserve within the novel Victorian values--the sense of social community and of shared beliefs--James established as the highest artistic value the novelist's own consciousness, and asserted that "the individual--specifically, the Jamesian artist--must be free from the claims of society or history or even personal ties."<sup>9</sup> It is true that James's sketches for his novels and stories, his notebook entries, usually concentrate on a specific personal incident capable of dramatic development and containing the seeds of individual conflict--which for James always meant moral conflict, whatever other kinds (sexual, familial, social) it might also mean. Similarly, the brief comments on the genesis of his works which Trollope gives us in his Autobiography concentrate on personal situations capable of generating moral response on the part of the characters concerned. But both James and Trollope, so different in so many ways, are alike in this: neither author's

discussion of the initial concepts of his own work gives much indication of the scope and depth of the finished product. In neither do we find much seeming awareness of the extent to which, in their novels, personal crises and individual moral issues transcend local habitation, acquiring the resonance of a deep and wide-ranging social concern.

I have already shown that social context and personal event are linked in Trollope's novels in such a way as to indicate, subtly but effectively, the social significance of the individual experience. The Awkward Age provides an example of James's different, but related, method of achieving a similar result--as it provides an example, in Nanda Brookenham, of the relationship between the Victorian anti-heroine and the modern heroine. Without plunging into the special critical problems raised by The Awkward Age,<sup>10</sup> I wish merely to note that the key relationships within which James explores the moral and ethical questions he raises in this novel are sexual relationships and that a key element in his ethical system is a personal accountability in human relationships. Yvor Winters has noted that James characteristically isolates the momentous ethical choices that the characters in his novels must make by allowing them to be relatively unhampered by limitations of material and social circumstance.<sup>11</sup> Although that statement does not really apply to a character like Nanda Brookenham, who must marry and presumably marry well, the question is less important than

another question this novel raises. For Winters, The Awkward Age is "a tragedy of manners, in which no genuine moral issue is involved."<sup>12</sup> Though granting Vanderbank's subsurface of "silt, of ugly feeling far too subtle to be called suspicion, but darkening his entire nature and determining his action,"<sup>13</sup> Winters believes that the situation arising from it--that is, his sudden and brutal rejection of Nanda, whose lack of hypocrisy he interprets as evidence of corruption--is insufficient to sustain the weight of moral significance James gives it. "The tragedy far outweighs the motive, and the relations between character and character are frequently so subtle as to be indefinable."<sup>14</sup> But such a judgment places the moral issue somewhere above and outside the relationships of the characters, as though morality were vested within an ethical system or code against which human actions may be measured. Such a judgment also carries the subtle suggestion that some human beings and some human actions are more worthy of moral concern than others. But the dramatic plan that James conceived for The Awkward Age<sup>15</sup> suggests an altogether different view. In this novel, as in the Christian gospel and the Christian parable, morality is conceived of as immanent; it rests precisely within human relationships and is enacted and realized through the behavior of one human being to another, distinctions of quality, rank, or degree having no relevance. If we see this view as informing James's dramatic concept for The Awkward Age, then

the line Winters seems figuratively to draw hardly applies. One cannot reasonably limit the degree of moral significance an author may give to questions of personal trust or personal failure and betrayal except to demand that the characters be of sufficient weight to support the writer's conception. Nanda and Vanderbank seem to me to sustain this weight as individuals. As social beings, they also sustain it if one sees their plight in the larger context of sexual relationships in a world that, in abandoning its mid-Victorian patterns of behavior and its code of professed beliefs, has somehow arrived at a crisis of both manners and morals. The Awkward Age portrays a society based on ambiguities of a kind that gives rise to particularly ugly forms of behavior between men and women, parents and children--or in other words within the primary intimacies on which our social system rests.

In these failed relationships the special vices of James's London society--hypocrisy, evasion of responsibility, willful blindness masquerading as innocence, and cruelty disguised as candor--most clearly declare themselves. In Nanda, James reveals the genuine virtue of a comprehensive moral intelligence, as in little Aggie he exposes the specious virtue of moral ignorance. And in the Brookenham drawing room he shows the world in which the modern young woman comes of age, a world that is sexually knowing, socially ruthless, materially crass. If we have read Trollope's fiction of the 60's

and 70's closely enough, we can recognize aspects of that world in the Palliser novels, as we can recognize aspects of Nanda Brookenham's experience in the experience of those of Trollope's young women who are tossed into the world to fend for themselves.

Alice Vavasor, for example, in Can You Forgive Her? is exposed through her friendship with Lady Glencora Palliser to exactly the same situation of marital unhappiness and proposed adultery that Nanda is exposed to through Tishy Grendon; and Alice, like Nanda, grows through her exposure, is strengthened rather than corrupted.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, sex, money, and power--three elements in life of which the conventional, conformist segment of Victorian society liked to consider its women ignorant--are shown in Trollope, as later in James, to be basic and central to the female experience. In coping with these elements, Trollope's anti-heroines anticipate the heroines of James, and occasionally even suggest the novelistic structures that James builds around them,

From The Princess Casamassima, for example, we can conveniently look backward to the Palliser novels, tracing continuities between the Princess and Phineas Redux: between the subsurface political violence in the one and the anarchist agitation in the other; between the tragic impotence of Laura Kennedy, all her hopes and ambitions thwarted in her stifling social milieu, and the splendidly cool, ironic rage of the Princess, offering herself as a sacrifice to a new

social order only to find that what that order wants is her estranged husband's money. The interior conflicts engendered by Laura's conflicting desires--to love, to win power, to triumph over as well as live within the laws of her world--presuppose a view of individual and group akin to the view in the Princess. Similarly, Laura's impossible situation bears some resemblance to that of the Princess. Each has passion, intelligence, and an appetite for life that will be satisfied with nothing less than "everything", yet each operates within a set of circumstances (and each by her own acts helps to create that set of circumstances) in which the alternative to everything is nothing.<sup>17</sup>

The social situations and problems that give rise to James's finest explorations of tragic themes are at times remarkably similar to those that give rise to Trollope's finest comedic explorations of manners and mores. The Eustace Diamonds and The Wings of the Dove, for example, might seem the most widely divergent novels, yet on closer study Trollope's concept of a Lizzie Eustace scheming to achieve social autonomy through her rich young husband's death (his age is crucial--a rich old husband would have reduced this sensitive, bittersweet comedy to vulgar farce) is not impossibly far from James's concept of a Kate Croy scheming to win from a dying Millie Theale the funds that will allow her to marry Merton Densher. Trollope makes of Lizzie a clever minx from a Restoration comedy, prancing blithely through London

society, outwitting her dull lovers and their equally dull lawyers. James makes of Kate Croy a woman capable of both love and sacrifice and thus worthy of the tragic seriousness with which he views her. In following her story to its painful end, James meets in tragic terms the social and sexual dilemma that Trollope, with his comedic social solution, averts. Yet allowing for the total difference in tone and treatment, one must recognize that these two novels raise similar questions about the ambiguous attitudes of male toward female, and about the hypocritical contradictions in society's attitude toward women from which women are themselves the chief sufferers. In both novels, too, there are beneath these questions deeper questions about what is or is not morally and humanly acceptable in relationships between men and women--which is to say, in life.

The triangular relationship of Densher, Kate, and Milly, for example, raises again the question of an immanent morality so prominent in James's later work. Densher's final turning away from Kate, his realization that he loves the thing he kills, is sometimes interpreted as a moral rebirth, a transcendent illumination,<sup>18</sup> and sometimes as an act of moral cowardice, since it follows a long period during which he has lent himself to Kate's scheme and has exacted her sexual surrender as his price for doing so.<sup>19</sup> Densher's moral and intellectual cowardice are thus pitted against Kate's moral and intellectual ruthlessness. Or,

alternatively, Densher's spiritual regeneration, symbolized by his spurning the money Milly has given him, is pitted against a materialistic, pragmatic, and unregenerate Kate. Their union is thus rendered impossible: Milly's wings have stretched to cover them both. Yet a Christian morality would see Milly's forgiveness and trust as acts complete within themselves, would see her passion--to make explicit James's religious metaphor--as a moral exemplum whose meaning might be summed up in the words, go, and do thou likewise.<sup>20</sup> Viewed in that light, Densher's suspicion that Kate deliberately sent Lord Mark to Venice to say the words that led to Milly's death (as she did not), his attempt to test and entrap Kate by offering her Milly's sealed letter to him and sending her unopened the letter from Milly's lawyers, indicate that he has not profited from the lesson.<sup>21</sup> Instead of enacting within his life the faith that Milly has enacted within hers, he uses her gift as a scourge. Far less important than our interpretation of Densher's actions and the meaning of Milly's legacy, however, is our recognition of the fact that the radical tension of James's design directs us to entertain alternative views, and that James locates the dramatic center of this social and moral design within the heterosexual relationship.

One can cite other important continuities and likenesses in the novels of Trollope and James: the large number of young women in both who are either orphaned or

motherless, cast into the world by fathers like John Vavasor or Lionel Croy, and who testify to a slackening of family and social ties; the ability of each author to dramatize the working through of fine ethical problems in the context of everyday life; the spacious, compassionate, but never lax or spongy moral vision that each has of his characters and their acts. But surely one of the most significant continuities lies in each author's portrayal of the female character: the fictional use he makes of her potential for moral and sexual passion, and for independent, autonomous action. In these respects the Trollopian anti-heroine is a Victorian counterpart of the Jamesian heroine.

#### D. H. Lawrence

As in James we often feel the presence of Trollope, so in Lawrence we often feel the presence of George Eliot. Since F. R. Leavis's study of Lawrence and George Eliot as transmitters of the English tradition<sup>22</sup> makes needless a lengthy consideration of that subject here, I wish merely to focus on elements in Lawrence's vision of heterosexual life that represent a deepening and strengthening of artistic perceptions and modes of expression whose potentialities George Eliot glimpsed as early as 1860, in The Mill on the Floss.

Simply as uninstructed readers we note the kinship between George Eliot and D. H. Lawrence. We are conscious of it in the intimate associations with earth and with nature that the characters of both novelists feel; in the way they

are unalterably shaped, touched for life as it were, by their early surroundings and early affections, so that they cleave soul and body to the natural and social history of the bit of land they are born into. Perhaps even more strongly, we feel the kinship of these two novelists in the passion for self-realization that George Eliot's female characters share with most of the female and some of the male characters of D. H. Lawrence. As I have indicated in my discussion of her anti-heroines, for George Eliot the female's experience is different from the male's, and it is in general the female experience that is most deeply and fully revealed in her novels. To some extent the same holds true for Lawrence, despite the fact that he dwells with a brooding, painstaking introspection on the feelings and thoughts of his heroes. Though Paul Morel is the central figure in Sons and Lovers, he is less well realized than his mother, or than the women he loves. Similarly in Women in Love: it can be argued that Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen are more vivid, more complexly motivated, more finely articulated, more completely achieved than any of the men in the novel. The same judgment might be made for the women vis-à-vis the men in The Rainbow.

In her exploration through the anti-heroine of the female life as it touches the male life and the male world, George Eliot insists, as I have said, on absolute individuation, on the kind of figurative hugging of one's own soul

that is characteristic of Lawrence's women. In Lawrence, individuation is frequently enough self-defeating. One reaches the inner core of one's soul, grasps it, and holds nothing; while in George Eliot the realization of the self is still a high value, conferring, as in the case of Maggie Tulliver, an almost super-human capacity for effective, compassionate action. Even for Gwendolen Harleth, whose life proceeds along a course of painful error and mistaken judgment, the possibility of some final self-knowledge is seen as a good. For George Eliot descent into the self holds the possibility of ascent, while for Lawrence that possibility sometimes seems to evaporate; descent is descent.

That doubt about the final ends of human existence, a doubt arising really out of a kind of despair over the collective life into which the individual life is of necessity gathered, is not a part of what Lawrence learned from George Eliot. But for a particular mode of looking at the social world and at human relationships--a mode modern novelists have only begun fully to exploit--Lawrence seems to me to be indebted to the earlier novelist. That mode is characterized by a dual vision<sup>23</sup> by means of which the interior and exterior experience of the individuals who create the social world, namely men and women, is seen through separate single lenses and in fusion through combined lenses. The result, in Lawrence, can scarcely even be described in visual terms, since tension and slack, torsion and distortion, a pull and balance

of equal and unequal forces, a vibrancy of movement and a constant regrouping of temporarily opposed or temporarily reconciled elements, are its predominant characteristics. Much of this tension derives, in my view, from the importance given in Lawrence's novels to the mental force and emotional intelligence of women. As in George Eliot, women in Lawrence are valid interpreters of life and valid critics of society. What we see through their eyes of themselves, of males and the male world, of the larger purposes of human existence, or of a terrible lack of larger purpose, has a weight equal to, frequently greater than, the registered weight of the male view of life.

To take the earlier novelist first: in Middlemarch George Eliot describes Dorothea looking out from her bedroom at Lowick Manor toward the road and fields beyond: "On the road there was a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her baby. . . . Far off in the bending sky was the pearly light; and she felt the largeness of the world and the manifold wakings of men to labour and endurance. She was a part of that involuntary, palpitating life. . . ."24 Dorothea feels herself a part of that life, though she is prevented from entering into it fully. Nevertheless, it is through her quick apprehension, retarding its rashness with the weight of mature experience, that we receive our most comprehensive and reliable (though not our only) view of that life. Dorothea's woman's view--and it is a woman's view,

although its range is nowhere more limited than a man's would be--recreates for us a male-dominant culture. An objectivity born of distance, a subjectivity born of participation (vigorous mental and emotional participation if not a full social sharing), together with a certain fidelity to instinct and feeling characteristic of George Eliot's women, distinguish Dorothea's comments on this culture. When we compare her view with the view of the world that we get through the eyes of male characters--through Lydgate, for example, who fragments both intellect and feeling and works at life in fits and starts--the tension of opposed perceptions, contradictory convictions, and radically different values becomes almost palpable. And this tension is an essential part of the force of the novel.

A contrasting of world views forms the basic structure of Daniel Deronda; through the struggles of the anti-heroine, Gwendolen Harleth, the reader penetrates, comprehends, and approaches a kind of synthesis of these worlds. In the end there is no abiding synthesis, only the insight--expressed through Gwendolen's spiritual rebirth and renewed heart for the struggle--that life is in some essential way a working through of oppositions, a seeking for balance that requires a rigorous training of mental and emotional capacity and a prodigal expenditure of mental and emotional force. Whatever their situation and limitations, George Eliot's anti-heroines work at living, directing their energies not toward

understanding, adaptation, and acceptance, but toward that strenuous mental, moral, and emotional penetration of the elements of life which she sees as requisite to individual growth and social change.

These "female" insights into life George Eliot's women share with D. H. Lawrence's women. And as in George Eliot, males in Lawrence may set against them in bitter resentment their own views (though male and female in Lawrence may also share insights and instincts). In such works as The Rainbow and Women in Love, and earlier in Sons and Lovers, the conflict and combustion generated by heterosexual physical and mental fusion--for fusion we may also read fission--is at the heart of Lawrence's achievement: it is somehow a core quality. Lawrence's ways of authenticating this dual vision even remind us at times of George Eliot's. Thus, Dorothea's view from Lowick Manor comes to mind when we read of the view the women see from the Brangwen cottage:

Looking out, as she must, from the front of her house towards the activity of man in the world at large, whilst her husband looked out to the back at sky and harvest and beast and land, she strained her eyes to see what man had done in fighting outwards to knowledge, she strained to hear how he uttered himself in his conquest, her deepest desire hung on the battle that she heard, far off, being waged on the edge of the unknown. She also wanted to know, and to be of the fighting host.<sup>25</sup>

Through a series of encounters with life--youthful attempts at mastery, ardent young efforts that end in frustration--that recall Maggie Tulliver's encounters with the world beyond Dorlcote Mill, Lawrence organizes Gudrun Brangwen's

struggles toward individuation in Women in Love. Rushing the highland cattle, she flaunts what she feels as a power, an invincible rashness of defiance; but the drowning in the marsh pond tames all that. Confronted with the real power in nature, she is shocked back into social patterns that her whole being has questioned. Gerald Crich has a corresponding, though not similar, experience; imposing his will on the Arab mare he exults in his own life power, only to be struck back, after the futility of his efforts to save the drowned young couple, into an abyss of recognition of death and nothingness. The point is that both Gerald and Gudrun oppose a blind human will, a savageness of being, on elements in life that they cannot comprehend, direct, make use of, connect with themselves, just as each opposes his or her will against the other. I am less struck than many readers by differences between the female and male understanding and experience in Lawrence. Enormous sexual hostility and enormous differences in the expression of physical love, yes; but in their general apprehension of themselves and the world they are often much the same. Both rage at life, expend their energies, impose their wills, indulge in frenzied fantasies of total organization and final comprehension amounting almost to madness, in what seems to me very much the same manner, allowing for inevitable social differentiation. It is precisely this similarity of will and desire that leads to conflict. That is surely true of Gudrun and Gerald in Women

in Love. And just as surely, Ursula and Birkin express other apprehensions and judgments of life, and are more like each other than either is like the other pair. Paired oppositions, individuation in union, some ultimate link between a limitless blind nature and a limited rational vision, between the powers of darkness and the powers of light, each in its own way both creative and destructive--all these elements in Lawrence's vision of human existence are applicable to both male and female, and are more significant as shaping forces in his art than are divisions between a phallic force and a life-smothering reason, a will to be free and a will to possess, or any other of the dualistic schemes that some critics see in Lawrence's characterization and treatment of men and women.

Lawrence's is in essence a wholeness of vision that can be seen as whole only when we realize that wholeness of vision in the modern novel implies recognition of division, diversity, plurality, disunity, fragmentation, tension, opposition, ambiguity--all the adjectives of dissolution that are applied so readily and so freely to modern life. The basic outlines of this twentieth-century world can be glimpsed in novels of the nineteenth century. What I have been concerned to show here is that the female's social and sexual participation in that life, fully developed in Lawrence, can also be glimpsed in the nineteenth century; that it truly begins with Trollope and George Eliot in the 1860's and 1870's.

## CHAPTER VI--FOOTNOTES

1. Among many social and historical studies of Victorian England, the following are comprehensive and useful: Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind (New Haven: Yale, 1957); G. M. Young, Portrait of an Age (London: Oxford, 1960). Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians, ed. Harmon Grisewood (New York: Dutton, 1966) is a useful collection of essays in reevaluation of the Victorian era. For the effects of industrialism, see Neil J. Smelser, Social Change in the Industrial Revolution (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959). For changing patterns of family life see J.A. Banks and Olive Banks, Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1965), and J. A. Banks, Prosperity and Parenthood (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1954).

2. See Gertrude Himmelfarb, On Liberty and Liberalism (New York: Knopf, 1974). For another view of Mill's theories in relation to women's rights, see Rise B. Axelrod, "Argument and Strategy in Mill's The Subjection of Women," Victorian Newsletter, 46 (1974), 10-14.

3. Donald David Stone, Novelists in a Changing World (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972) argues that Meredith was the last great novelist to conceive of fiction as serving society, and that with James the individual and his inward awareness of the outward world became the paramount value in fiction.

4. Henry James, The Awkward Age (New York: Pantheon, 1949), p. 256.

5. Richard Stang, The Theory of the Novel in England: 1850-1870 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 63-64.

6. Kathleen Tillotson, Novels of the Eighteen Forties (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), p. 150.

7. Ibid. p. 156.

8. Stone, op. cit., pp. 1-5, and passim.

9. Ibid., p. 5.

10. Some of these are considered in Oscar Cargill, The Novels of Henry James (New York: Macmillan, 1961), pp. 267 ff; and in Ivor Winters, In Defense of Reason (Denver: Alan Swallow, n.d.), pp. 320-22.

11. Winters, op. cit., pp. 311-12.
12. Ibid., p. 320.
13. Ibid., p. 321.
14. Ibid.
15. See James's preface to the novel in the edition referred to above; and in Henry James, The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces, ed. R. P. Blackmur (New York: Scribner's, 1934), pp. 98-118.
16. See George Levine, "Can You Forgive Him?" Victorian Studies, 18 (1974), 5-30 for a different view of Alice and Lady Glencora.
17. Sallie Sears, The Negative Imagination (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), pp. ix-x, notes the tendency of James's heroes and heroines to "define happiness as having everything, all alternatives," and thus to be destroyed by circumstances that inevitably limit their aspirations.
18. See, for example, Alfred Habegger, "Reciprocity and the Market Place in The Wings of the Dove and What Maisie Knew," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 25 (1971), 461-63; Milton Kornfeld, "Villainy and Responsibility in The Wings of the Dove," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 14 (1972), 337-46.
19. See Sallie Sears, op. cit., pp. 87-98; also Robert G. McLean, "Love by the Doctor's Direction: Disease and Death in The Wings of the Dove," PLL, 8 (1972), 128-48.
20. Luke 10:37.
21. Sears, op. cit., p. 94, notes that Densher's "testing" of Kate is unlike the "'grace' that Milly extended to him."
22. See F. R. Leavis, D. H. Lawrence: Novelist (New York: Knopf, 1956), and The Great Tradition (Garden City: Doubleday, n.d.).
23. Dorothy Van Ghent, in her essay on Sons and Lovers in The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1953), pp. 245-61, speaks of Lawrence's multiple vision. But Van Ghent's interpretation of Lawrence's sexual polarities seems to me to simplify a very complex question.

24. George Eliot, Middlemarch (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1956), p. 578.

25. D. H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (New York: Viking, 1961), p. 2.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### WORKS CITED

- Altick, Richard. The English Common Reader. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Amberley, Viscountess. "The Claims of Women." Fortnightly, NS 9 (1871), 95-110.
- Anderson, Elizabeth Garrett. "Sex in Mind and Education: A Reply." Fortnightly, NS 15 (1874), 582-94.
- "Antioch College." English Woman's Journal, 12 (1863), 217-28.
- Austen, Jane. Emma. New York: New American Library, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Mansfield Park. New York: New American Library, 1964.
- Axelrod, Rise B. "Argument and Strategy in Mill's The Subjection of Women." Victorian Newsletter, 46 (1974), 10-14.
- Banks, J. A. and Olive. Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1965.
- Banks, J. A. Prosperity and Parenthood: A Study of Family Planning Among the Victorian Middle Classes. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954.
- de Beauvoir, Simone. The Second Sex, ed. and trans. H. M. Parshley. New York: Knopf, 1964.
- Bedient, Calvin. Architects of the Self. Berkeley: University of California, 1972.
- Bennett, Joan. George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art. Cambridge: University Press, 1962.
- Blackburn, Helen. "The Pursuits of Women." Englishwoman's Review, NS 20 (1874), 237-46.
- Blind, Mathilde. George Eliot. Boston: Roberts Bros., 1885.

- Burrows, Montagu. "Female Education." Quarterly Review, 126 (1869), 448-79.
- Butler, Josephine. "The Employment of Women." Woman's World, July 1868, pp. 150-53.
- "Capabilities and Disabilities of Women." Westminster Review, NS 11 (1857), 49-72.
- "Capacities of Women." Westminster Review, 83 (1865), 466-83.
- Cargill, Oscar. The Novels of Henry James. New York: Macmillan, 1961.
- Carlyle, Thomas. Past and Present, ed. Richard D. Altick. Boston: Riverside, 1965.
- Carroll, David, ed. George Eliot: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971.
- Chase, Richard. "The Brontës, or Myth Domesticated." Forms of Modern Fiction, ed. William Van O'Connor. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964, pp. 102-19.
- "The Colliery Woman." Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, 15 (1873), 18-21.
- Cross, John Walter. George Eliot's Life as Related in her Letters and Journals, rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1965.
- Deutsch, Helene. The Psychology of Women. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1944.
- Dickens, Charles. Bleak House. New York: New American Library, 1964.
- "The Domestic Grievance." St. James, 2 (1861), 228-34.
- "Domestic Tyranny." Tinsley's, 5 (1869), 30-34.
- "The Education of Women in London." Victoria, 3 (1864), 481-85.
- Eliot, George. Daniel Deronda, ed. with intro. by Barbara Hardy. Middlesex: Penguin English Library, 1967.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Essays of George Eliot. ed. Thomas Pinney. New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The George Eliot Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight, 7 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954.

- \_\_\_\_\_. The Mill on the Floss. London: Oxford University Press, 1950.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Romola. New York: Harper & Bros. Library Edition, n.d.
- "The Employment of Women." Ladies' Treasury, 4 (1860), 6-8.
- "Employments for Women." Ladies' Treasury, 8 (1864), 73-75.
- Empson, William. "Double Plots." Some Versions of Pastoral. New York: New Directions, 1968, pp. 27-86.
- "The Excessive Influence of Women." Temple Bar, 49 (1872), 213-21.
- "Facts Versus Ideas." English Woman's Journal, 7 (1861), 73-84.
- Faithfull, Emily. "The Unfit Employments in Which Women Are Engaged." Victoria, 2 (1863), 65-73.
- "Female Labour." Fraser's, 61 (1860), 359-71.
- French, A. L. "A Note on Middlemarch." Nineteenth-Century Fiction, 26 (1971), 339-47.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. Wives and Daughters. London: Everyman's Library, 1966.
- Goldfarb, Russell M. Sexual Repression in Victorian Literature. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1970.
- Granville-Barker, Harley. "The Merchant of Venice." Prefaces to Shakespeare, 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947. I, 335-66.
- Habegger, Alfred. "Reciprocity and the Market Place in The Wings of the Dove and What Maisie Knew." Nineteenth Century Fiction, 25 (1971), 455-73.
- Hardy, Barbara. "The Moment of Disenchantment in George Eliot's Novels." Review of English Studies, NS 5 (1954), 256-64.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn. Towards a Recognition of Androgyny. New York: Knopf, 1973.
- Higdon, David Leon. "Eliot's Daniel Deronda, Chapter 36." Explicator, 31 (1972), item 15.

- Himmelfarb, Gertrude. On Liberty and Liberalism. New York: Knopf, 1974.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Victorian Minds. New York: Knopf, 1968.
- Hodgson, W. B. "The General Education of Women." English Woman's Journal, 5 (1860), 73-84.
- Holland, Lawrence. "The Wings of the Dove." Henry James's Major Novels, ed. Lyall H. Powers. East Lansing: Michigan State Press, 1973, pp. 274-313.
- Hopkins, A. B. Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Works. New York: Octagon Press, 1971.
- Houghton, Walter. The Victorian Frame of Mind. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Howe, Irving. "The Middle-Class Mind of Kate Millett." Harper's, March 1970, pp. 110-29.
- Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians. Ed. Harman Grisewood. New York: Dutton, 1966.
- James, Henry. The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James, ed. R. P. Blackmur. New York: Scribners, 1934.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Awkward Age. New York: Pantheon, 1949.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Princess Casamassima, introd. by Lionel Trilling. New York: Macmillan, 1948.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Daniel Deronda: A Conversation." Partial Portraits. London: Macmillan, 1899, pp. 65-93.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Notebooks of Henry James, ed. F. O. Matthiessen and Kenneth B. Murdock. New York: Braziller, 1955.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Wings of the Dove. New York: Modern Library, n.d. First pub. 1902.
- "John and Mary Scott; or Ill Effects of a Mother Leaving Home." British Workwoman Out and at Home (March, 1864), pp. 38-39.
- Kearney, John P. "Time and Reality: 'was she beautiful or not beautiful?'" Nineteenth Century Fiction, 26 (1971), 286-306.
- Kettle, Arnold. An Introduction to the English Novel. 2 vols. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960.

- Kingsley, Charles. "Women and Politics." Macmillan's, 20 (1869), 552-60.
- Kornfeld, Milton. "Villainy and Responsibility in The Wings of the Dove." Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 14 (1972), 337-46.
- "Ladies and their Money." Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, 8 (1863), 112-17.
- "The Ladies' Cry, Nothing to Do!" Macmillan's, 19 (1868-69), 451-54.
- "The Ladies' Parliament." Lady's Own Paper, NS, (1868), 34, 66.
- "The Ladies' Petition." Westminster Review, 87 (1868), 29-36.
- "The Lady and her Marriage Settlement." Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, 8 (1864), 207-23.
- Lawrence, D. H. The Rainbow. New York: Viking, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Sons and Lovers. New York: Modern Library, n.d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Women in Love. New York: Modern Library, n.d.
- Leavis, F. R. D. H. Lawrence: Novelist. New York: Knopf, 1956.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Great Tradition. Garden City: Doubleday, n.d.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Introd. to Daniel Deronda, by George Eliot. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973, pp. i-xxiii.
- Levine, George. "Can You Forgive Him?" Victorian Studies 18 (1974), 5-30.
- Levi-Strauss, Claude. "Do Dual Organizations Exist?" Structural Anthropology, trans. Claire Jacobson and Brooke Grundfest Schoepf. New York: Basic Books, 1963, pp. 132-63.
- Linton, Eliza Lynn. Modern Women and What is Said of Them, 2 vols. New York: J. S. Redfield, 1868.
- "The London Needlewoman." Victoria, 3 (1864), 59-68.
- Marcus, Steven. The Other Victorians. New York: Basic Books, 1964.

- Markby, Thomas. "On the Education of Women." Contemporary Review, 7 (1868), 242-61.
- "Mary Dystan; or the Fatal Mistake." British Workwoman Out and at Home (March, 1866), pp. 230-31.
- Maudsley, Henry. "Sex in Mind and Education." Fortnightly, NS 15 (1874), 466-83.
- Maurice, F. D. "On Sisterhoods." Victoria, 1 (1863), 289-301.
- Mayor, J. B. "The Cry of the Women." Contemporary Review, 11 (1869), 196-215.
- McLean, Robert G. "Love by the Doctor's Direction: Disease and Death in The Wings of the Dove." Papers on Language and Literature, 8, suppl. (1972), 128-49.
- "Medicine as a Profession for Women." English Woman's Journal, 5 (1860), 145-60.
- "Men's Rights." Ladies' Edinburgh Magazine, 4 (1878), 559-62.
- Mill, John Stuart. "The Subjection of Women." On Liberty, Representative Government, and The Subjection of Women, introd. Millicent Garrett Fawcett. London: Oxford University Press, 1971, 427-548.
- "Modern Domestic Service." Edinburgh Review, 115 (1862), 409-31.
- "Modern Inconsistency." English Woman's Journal, 8 (1862), 308-14.
- Moers, Ellen. "Female Gothic: Monsters, Goblins, Freaks." New York Review of Books, April 4, 1974, pp. 35-39.
- Mozley, Anne. "Mr. Mill's On the Subjection of Women." Blackwood's, 106 (1869), 309-21.
- Mudrick, Marvin. Irony as Defense and Discovery. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.
- Myers, William. "George Eliot: Politics and Personality." Literature and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Fiction, ed. John Lucas. London: Methuen, 1971.
- "On Mill's The Subjection of Women." Edinburgh Review, 130 (1869), 572-602.
- "On the Obstacles to the Employment of Women." English Woman's Journal, 4 (1860), 361-75.

- "Our Ten Thousand." English Woman's Journal, 4 (1860), 311-16.
- Paris, Bernard J. Experiments in Life. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1965.
- Parkes, Bessie Rayner. "What Can Educated Women Do?" English Woman's Journal, 4 (1860), 289-98.
- Pettet, E. C. "The Merchant of Venice and the Problem of Usury." The Merchant of Venice Casebook, Ed. John Wilders. London: Macmillan, 1969, pp. 100-13.
- Polhemus, Robert. The Changing World of Anthony Trollope. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.
- "The Power of the Husband Over the Wife." Ladies' Treasury, 6 (1862), 201-02.
- Richardson, Samuel. Clarissa, Ed. with introd. by John Angus Burrell. New York: Modern Library, 1950.
- "The Rights of Women." Blackwood's, 92 (1862), 183-206.
- Ruskin, John. "Ad Valorem." The Genius of John Ruskin, ed. John D. Rosenberg. Boston: Riverside, 1963, pp. 254-72.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Traffic." The Genius of John Ruskin, ed. John D. Rosenberg. Boston: Riverside, 1963, pp. 273-95.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Sesame and Lilies." The Works of John Ruskin, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 31 vols. London: George Allen, 1905. XVIII, 53-144.
- Sears, Sallie. The Negative Imagination. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963.
- Skilton, David. Anthony Trollope and His Contemporaries. London: Longman, 1972.
- Smalley, Donald, ed. Anthony Trollope: The Critical Heritage. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1961.
- Smelser, Neil J. Social Change in the Industrial Revolution. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959.
- "Something to Do." Young Englishwoman, NS 6 (1875), pp. 218, 271, 627-29.

- Stang, Richard. The Theory of the Novel in England: 1850-1870. New York: Columbia University Press, 1959.
- Stoll, Elmer Edgar. "Shylock," Shakespeare Studies: Historical and Contemporary in Method. New York: G. E. Stechert, 1942, pp. 255-336.
- Stone, Donald David. Novelists in a Changing World. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Stump, Reva. Movement and Vision in George Eliot's Novels. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959.
- Taylor, Harriet. "Enfranchisement of Women." Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review, 55 (1851), 289-311.
- Taylor, Henry. "Mr. Mill on the Subjection of Women." Fraser's, 81 (1870), 143-65.
- "Teachers and Teaching." Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, NS 1 (1865), 18-20.
- The Thousand and One Nights, trans. Edward William Lane, 3 vols. New York: Bigelow, Brown, n.d. II, 239-333.
- Tillotson, Kathleen. Novels of the Eighteen Forties. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.
- Trilling, Lionel. "Manners, Morals, and the Novel." The Liberal Imagination. Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953, pp. 200-15.
- Trollope, Anthony. An Autobiography. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1911.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Eustace Diamonds. London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Higher Education of Women." Four Lectures, ed. Morris L. Parrish. London: Constable, 1938, pp. 67-68.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Phineas Finn. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Phineas Redux. London: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- "Tuition or Trade." Englishwoman's Journal, 27 (1860), 173-83.
- "Two Girls of the Period." Macmillan's, 19 (1868-69), 323-39.

- "Two Views on the Convent Question." Macmillan's, 19 (1868-69), 534-43.
- "Unprotected Females." Lady's Own Paper. Dec. 1, 1866, p. 25.
- Van Ghent, Dorothy. The English Novel: Form and Function. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1953.
- "Vapors, Fears and Tremors." Blackwood's, 105 (1869), 228-37.
- "What is the Girl of the Period For?" Girl of the Period Miscellany, 1 (1869), 5-11.
- "What Women Think About Men." Temple Bar, 28 (1869-70), 216-22.
- White, Cynthia L. Women's Magazines: 1693-1968. New York: Humanities Press, 1971.
- "Who Will Set an Example?" Ladies' Treasury, NS 7 (1869), 64-67, 84-86.
- Winters, Yvor. "Maule's Well, or Henry James and the Relation of Morals to Manners." In Defense of Reason, 3rd ed. Denver: Alan Swallow, 1943.
- "The Woman's Cry and the Man's Answer." Kettledrum-Woman's World, April 1, 1869, 248-54.
- "Woman's Past, Present, and Future." Lady's Own Paper, Nov. 24, 1866, pp. 8-9.
- "Woman's Proper Place in Society." Temple Bar, 33 (1871), 168-78.
- "Woman's Rights." Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine, NS 12 (1872), 221-22.
- "Woman's Rights." Lady's Own Paper. Jan. 19, 1867, p. 137.
- "Women and Politics." English Woman's Journal, 12 (1863), 1-6.
- "Women Electors." Victoria, 5 (1865), pp. 277-78.
- "Women in Politics." Macmillan's, 20 (1869), 552-61.
- "The Women of the Day." Saint Paul's, 2 (1868), 302-14.
- "Women's Education." Fraser's, 79 (1869), 537-52.
- Young, G. M. Portrait of An Age. London: Oxford. Univ. Press, 1960.

OTHER WORKS ON VICTORIAN FEMINISM  
AND THE WOMAN QUESTION

- Becker, Lydia. "Female Suffrage." Contemporary Review, 4 (1867), 307-16.
- Boucherett, Jessie. "The Duties of Educated Women Toward Working Women." Kettledrum-Woman's World, April 1869, pp. 207-11.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Legislative Restrictions on Women's Labour." Englishwoman's Review, NS 16 (1873), 244-58.
- Butler, Josephine, ed. Woman's Work and Woman's Culture: A Series of Essays. London: Macmillan, 1869.
- Cairnes, J. E. "Woman Suffrage: A Reply." Macmillan's, 30 (1874), 377-88.
- Cobbe, Frances Power. "What Shall We do with our Old Maids?" Fraser's, 66 (1862), 594-610.
- "Condition of Women as Affected by the Law." English Woman's Journal, 10 (1862), 124-27.
- Cowes, Herbert. "Sex in Mind and Education." Blackwood's, 115 (1874), 736-49.
- Davies, James. "Female Education." Quarterly Review, 119 (1866), 499-515.
- "The Education and Employment of Women." Woman's World, July 1868, pp. 139-41.
- "The Education of Women." Contemporary Review, 1 (1866), 396-414.
- "The Education of Women." Girl of the Period Miscellany, 1 (1869), 69-70.
- "The Experience of a Gentlewoman in Search of Ladies' Remunerative Work." Ladies' Treasury, 8 (1863), 211-17.
- "The Factory Girls of the Period." Girl of the Period Miscellany, 1 (1869), 185-86.
- Fawcett, Millicent Garrett. "Education of Women of the Middle and Upper Classes." Macmillan's, 17 (1868), 511-17.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Old and the New Ideals of Women's Education." Good Words, 19 (1878), 853-60.
- "Female Suffrage: An Answer to the Article in the Pall Mall Gazette," Woman's World, May 1868, pp. 57-58.
- Fitch, J. C. "The Education of Women." Victoria, 4 (1864-65), 432-53.
- "The Franchise." Pelican, 1 (1874), 83-85.
- "The Influence of University Degrees on the Education of Women." Victoria, 1 (1863), 260-71.
- "Insanity Among Women." English Woman's Journal, 7 (1861), 145-57.
- Kamm, Josephine. Rapiers and Battleaxes: The Women's Movement and its Aftermath. London: Allen & Unwin, 1966.
- "Lady Doctors." Victoria, 3 (1864), 126-37.
- "Lady Latinists." Saint Paul's, 6 (1870), 473-84.
- Linton, Aliza Lynn. "The Modern Revolt." Macmillan's, 23 (1870), 142-49.
- "The Man of the Period." Woman's World, July 1868, pp. 157-58.
- Marshall, Theodosia. "Love and Money." Kettledrum-Woman's World, June 1869, pp. 355-59.
- McGregor, O. B. "The Social-Position of Women in England: 1850-1914; A Bibliography." British Journal of Sociology, 6 (1955), 48-60.
- "The New College for Women." Woman's World, August 1868, pp. 197-200.
- "On the Female Franchise." Kettledrum-Woman's World, March 1869, pp. 154-58.
- "On the Woman Question." Woman's World, November 1868, pp. 26-29.
- "A Plea for Woman as M.D." Woman's World, October 1868, pp. 359-61.
- "The Powers of Women and how to Use Them." Contemporary Review, 14 (1870), 521-33.

- "Property of Married Women." English Woman's Journal, 13 (1864), 310-13.
- "Public Opinion on Questions Concerning Women." Englishwoman's Review, 2 (1867), 94-112.
- "Should Women be Permitted to Vote?" Ladies' Treasury, NS 5 (1868), 171-74.
- Smith, Goldwin. "Female Suffrage." Macmillan's, 30 (1874), 139-50.
- "The Subjection of Women." Once a Week, 21 (1869-70), 32-36.
- Wedgwood, Julia. "Female Suffrage and its Influence on Married Life." Contemporary Review, 20 (1872), 360-70.
- "Woman." The Mother's Friend, NS 4 (1863), 75-76.
- "Woman's Crusade." Kettledrum-Woman's World, February 1869, pp. 88-92.
- "A Woman's Letter to the Pall Mall Gazette." Woman's World, August 1868, pp. 219-20.
- "A Woman's Protest." Woman's World, June 1868, pp. 87-88.
- "Women and Criticism." Macmillan's, 14 (1866), 335-40.
- "Women Physicians." Macmillan's, 18 (1868), 369-80.