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THE NOVELS OF ELIZABETH GASKELL AS AN ETHNOGRAPHIC
SOURCE ON MIDDLE CLASS VICTORIAN DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION

City University of New York

PH.D. 1981

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THE NOVELS OF ELIZABETH GASKELL
AS AN ETHNOGRAPHIC SOURCE ON MIDDLE CLASS VICTORIAN
DOMESTIC ORGANIZATION

by

DEBORAH PALEY

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate
Faculty in Anthropology in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City
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1981

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

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The City University of New York

The present splendid brotherhood of fiction writers in England, whose graphic and eloquent pages have issued to the world more political and social truths than have been uttered by all the professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together, have described every section of the middle class from the 'highly genteel' annuitant and Fundholder who looks upon all sorts of business as vulgar, to the little shopkeeper and lawyer's clerk. And how have Dickens and Thackeray, Miss Brontë and Mrs. Gaskell painted them?

(Marx 1975 [1854]: 216)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to establish the validity and importance of the novel as a source of data for anthropological research. The study shows that the novels of Elizabeth Gaskell, a mid-nineteenth century English novelist, contain the same information as does a source more conventionally acceptable to the social sciences--the census--and that, furthermore, the richness of the data in the novels makes them useful tools with which to interpret census and other such data.

In this study of the novel as an ethnographic source on middle class Victorian household organization, data from several novels by Elizabeth Gaskell are treated as quantifiable and as comparable to census data from the period. Anthropologists have hesitated to use the novel in a systematic way as source material, despite the novel's vivid detailing of such things as kinship, domestic organization, material culture, and so on. The hesitance of anthropologists to use the novel is at least partly due to ambivalence and ambiguity in the discipline as to whether it is a hard science or a part of the

humanities. In this study it is assumed that there is no real dichotomy between "hard" and "soft" data, and that anthropology cannot be categorized in such an "either/or" way.

Despite the tendency of some social scientists to see a dichotomy between "hard" and "soft" data (Harris 1969; Laslett 1979; Murphy 1971), this study takes the position that anthropology's greatest contribution to the social sciences lies in its concern with culture and with the underlying assumption that human behavior cannot be analyzed in a culture-free context. The basic assumption here is that not only are culture-free or value-free studies of social phenomena impossible, but that attempts to do them lead to distortion and inaccuracy. For anthropologists, who emphasize a cultural context, there is an urgent need, as we become more involved in the study of past societies, to find sources which detail the daily life and work and the meaning of experience to the actors within a society. This material is needed not just about official policy-makers, but also about people who are marginal to official record-keeping and policy-making. This often means the poor, and often, as for example in Victorian middle class England, it means women.

For middle class Victorian England, the dominant literary form by far was the novel. Dickens, for example, was idolized by a huge public and in his own lifetime was

called "the soul of his age." In the year 1854, Dickens' contemporary, Karl Marx (1975 [1854]: 216) noted the excellence of contemporary novelists as social commentators on the middle class. One of the novelists cited by Marx, Elizabeth Gaskell, will be used as the source in this study.

Anthropology can use its concern with culture to contribute an awareness of belief systems such as those governing kinship, gender and relations within and between households, to the field of family history. Most family history to date has been undertaken from the viewpoint of sociology--relying on broad scale, already generalized data from sources such as the census and parish registers. Many family historians have been reluctant to use literary sources such as the novel, in which the culture, world view and biases of the record keeper are more evident. The influential Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, for example, takes this position (Laslett 1967, 1976). This study, however, contends that novels are at least as reliable as more conventional sources, such as the census, and that while the census may be useful, it is important to recognize that it is also a biased source.

Official documents such as the census reflect the more formal aspects of a social structure. Therefore,

they tend to be treated as "objective reality." However, they contain multiformed biases without clearly revealing the sources of these biases. In addition, they do not reflect the fluidity with which "real" people manipulate formal rules in ways that can influence official data. In contrast, the cultural and personal background and political interests of novelists--the direction of their biases--are fairly clear. Furthermore, the details about daily life contained in novels (which, as with participant observation, are enmeshed in a dynamic context) make them particularly useful, not only to anthropologists studying past societies, but also to those studying any society in which the novel is a literary form. There is, then, a need to develop a methodology for incorporating the descriptive data from novels into anthropological analyses.

The basic assumption of this study, that all social data reflect the social, political and economic interests and cultural context of their collectors and that a neat dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" data does not exist, is supported by scholars in several branches of the social sciences. For example, Schuyler (1978) uses oral histories from a nineteenth-century community as a tool for historical archeology. He shows that the use of three different sets of data--oral history, archeological artifacts and the census--leads to a richer understanding

of the site than does reliance on any one of the data sets alone and that, in fact, the census data can be misleading outside the context of the other sources. Rather than being treated as unbiased, the census data are treated as subjectively patterned. This patterning itself can be usefully examined, says Schuyler, because it reflects a social process.

Official records reflect the interests and attitudes of the record keeper, the authority behind him and the subject (Berkner 1974). For example, census data may reflect the stereotyped assumptions of a census taker regarding middle class household organization, which correspond to the categories the census bureau is paying him to document. They may also reflect the desire of the household head to seem respectable according to the standards of the census taker. Novels sometimes show why people lie in official documents. Questions can be framed in gathering data for "objective" purposes such as tax collection or measuring intelligence, which are just as biased as those framed by a novelist (Leacock 1971; E.P. Thompson 1972). Furthermore, sample populations for official documents are skewed, de facto excluding others.

A related assumption of this study, that art is the product of society and not simply of the individual who makes it, has long been accepted by most anthropologists.

This assumption is basic to the anthropological study of visual arts, dance, music, and myth and folklore. Studies emphasizing symbolic expression, aspects of economic organization such as trade routes or technology, have been done through the use of the arts as sources of data. Such studies have usually been done by archeologists and by cultural anthropologists studying simple societies, or minority or impoverished segments of complex societies. However, the study of complex societies and of privileged groups within them is now growing in anthropology. Yet to date, we have neglected art forms as sources of data on such groups.

Anthropologists need to develop methodologies by which to use the arts, including the literary forms, of all the social groups in complex societies as sources of data. In this research, it is assumed that art is a statement about the world by an individual or individuals, shaped by their society. The position of individuals in the economic and social structure is a fundamental factor influencing what they choose to be interested in and how the data are perceived and expressed. Class, and differences within class such as sex, are therefore of major significance. The novel, which evolved in Europe along with the rise of capitalism, is associated with the various strata of the bourgeoisie. It is for people who

are literate but who do not read sacred or courtly literature. In its emphasis on the individual, it expresses basic values of capitalist society. It is thus a reflection of the type of society in which it evolved. As a social artifact, the novel is an important source.

Perhaps the neglect of the novel by anthropologists results in part from the fact that unlike official documents of a period, or evidence such as newspaper articles, journals, diaries, memoirs, or statements by living informants, the novel clearly identifies itself as fiction. In addition, unlike the statements of an informant who gives information in response to the anthropologist (even if on an informal basis), the information selected by the novelist is not under the control of the anthropologist. The novelist may ask and attempt to answer questions which do not correspond exactly to the categories the anthropologist is researching. Yet this shaping of the data by a member of a society, rather than by an anthropologist from outside it, can be useful if the sociocultural, economic and political context of this individual is understood.

Perhaps the aspect of the novel which best explains its neglect by anthropologists is that unlike myths and folklore, novels are written from an individual viewpoint. This seems to create a mystique about the novel, which

places it outside the realm of social data. We have suggested that this stress on the individual is, in itself, a comment on the societies in which the novel is a literary form. Furthermore, the novel exists in relation to an audience who buys and reads it. This audience expects to find a "familiar" world in the novel. As Raymond Williams points out, "It is part of a traditional method--an underlying attitude or stance--that the novelist offers to show people and their relationships in essentially knowable and communicable ways" (1973: 165). The novelist creates a world in which familiar details about material culture and social relationships form the context for real social tensions to be acted out.

The novel is an important source as a guide to social relationships. It lays out and takes stock of the range of acceptable behavior and the boundaries of ethics of social relationships, including relationships within and between classes, sexes, age groups and households. It gives evidence of the standards and guidelines used by people in their daily interactions and in structuring their lives. Novels have been criticized as sources on the grounds that they tend to depict "atypical" social situations (Laslett 1976). This is undeniable. However, every life is filled with deviations from social norms. These deviations exist in census material and all other

accepted sources of social information. However, because of the interests or worldview of the informant or the selected interest of the census itself, they are disguised in a way that makes exploration of them impossible. In this sense, normative data are biased and can be misleading. Additionally, it is an important part of anthropological methodology that deviations from norms give insight into the norms themselves, into the social groups with an interest in maintaining them, and into those with an interest in breaking through these limits (Murphy 1971). The dramas and conflicts which arise in straining social limits give clues not only to social function, as Silverman (1967) has pointed out, but also to areas of social change.

The novel and the ethnography share the convention of verisimilitude. That is, both claim to describe events which take place in a "real" world. Of course there is a wide range of types within both of these genres. Regarding the novel, it has been argued, however, (Williams 1976: 113) that all serious fiction, from the historical novel to stream of consciousness, uses this convention. Ethnographies also range widely, from problem oriented, largely statistical studies to classical "thick" description. While style and emphasis differ in general, all ethnography describes human experience as observed by

an ethnographer. The novel describes human experience as observed and invented by the novelist.

The word "invent" is used guardedly since it can connote fantasy, a connotation which is not intended here. Furthermore, it is also argued in this study that compilers of official records, as well as historians and social scientists who use such sources, in a certain sense "invent" their descriptions, but according to different conventions from those of the genre of the novel. "To invent" is used here to describe part of the process of fiction writing which Tolstoy describes by saying "the artist realizes a certain event to himself" based on information from various sources, including his own experience (Tolstoy 1970: 542). The process of synthesizing observed information is defined somewhat differently in social science writing and in fiction writing. Tolstoy goes into some detail about the difference in the ultimate aim, technique, data sources and interpretation of data in the genre of the historical novel as opposed to the genre of conventional historical writing and record keeping, and his discussion applies as well to the non-historical novel and to social science writing other than history.

An historian and an artist describing an historical epoch have two quite different tasks before them. As an historian would be wrong if he tried to present an historical person in his entirety, in all the complexity of his relations with all sides of life, so the artist would fail

to perform his task if he were to represent the person always in his historical significance...

An historian is sometimes obliged by bending the truth to subordinate all the actions of an historical personage to the one idea he has ascribed to that person. The artist on the contrary, finds the very singleness of that idea incompatible with his problem, and tries to understand and show not a certain actor but a man.

In the description of the events themselves the difference is still sharper and more essential.

The historian has to deal with the results of an event, the artist with the fact of the event . . . Either from his own experience, or from letters, memoirs, and accounts, the artist realizes a certain event to himself, and very often (to take the example of a battle) the chief source is to be found in the reports of the commanding officers and of the commander-in-chief. The artist can draw nothing from such sources; they tell him nothing and explain nothing to him. More than that, the artist turns away from them as he finds inevitable falsehood in them. . . [B]esides this necessary error in the narration of historical events, I noticed in the histories of the epoch on which I was engaged. . . a special kind of highflown diction in which the falsehood and perversion extended not merely to the occurrences but also the interpretation and significance of them.

But an artist must not forget that the popular conception of historical persons and events is not based on fancy, but on historical documents insofar as the historians have been able to group them, and therefore, though he understands and presents them differently, the artist like the historian should be guided by historical material. Wherever in my novel historical persons speak or act, I have invented nothing, but have used historical material . . .

(Tolstoy [1868] 1970: 541-545,
Tolstoy's italics)

Tolstoy is here contrasting conventional record-keeping and writers of official history with the novelist; he is not contrasting ethnographic and novel writing. On the one hand, more so than do most novelists, most anthropologists try to present people in their "historical significance" or rather, their social significance, and in this have more in common with historians or sociologists than with novelists. On the other hand, Tolstoy is discussing the importance of holistic social description as opposed to narrower problem oriented description. This holism in good fiction writing is one of its prime similarities to ethnography, and the holism of most ethnographic writing distinguishes it from most other writing in the social sciences.

Just as does the ethnographer, the novelist tries to create, through detailed and holistic description, a world which rings true to the reader (and it should be noted that the audience of the novel is usually presumed to belong to the culture described). In novels, people and events may be invented, but they must seem possible, even if unusual.

While, as Tolstoy puts it, the social scientist "bends the truth" and while the novelist invents much of what he describes, this is not to say that there is no reality and that to approach and report it is inconceivable. Rather, it is assumed here that good theory combined with empathy for one's subject matter make

for more informed description and discussion in both ethnographies and in novels. This is a much discussed issue in anthropology and is fairly obvious. In novel writing there is also some underlying theory, even if not always clearly formulated, which dictates priorities, problems, style and themes.

Sometimes a novelist's theory is very clearly formulated. For example Tolstoy, both in the text of War and Peace and in an epilogue to it, as well as in other writings, tries to work out an epistemology and a series of "laws" about history or social process, and who, in this context, discusses his writing technique as helping him to get at the subtlety of the workings of human laws. On the other hand, the work of some novelists is not shaped by a clearly formulated theory, but rather by their general worldview, a series of rules which contain a certain epistemology. Gaskell, for example, does not have a clearly stated theory either about her working technique or her general view of the world. Nonetheless, various factors such as her religious beliefs and her cultural background, formed her worldview, which might be regarded, loosely, as a theory about the world. This in turn shaped her technique for constituting a world in her novels.

Both the novelist and the ethnographer struggle to depict what they observe of human experience, using their theories and techniques, within the framework of their genres. A sociologist, Nisbet, argues that

artist and scientist alike are primarily concerned with the illumination of reality, with, in sum, the exploration of the unknown and, far from least, the interpretation of physical and human worlds.

(1976: 10)

Specifically, Nisbet shows that descriptions of social phenomena in novels and in writings by sociologists of the nineteenth century are nearly identical in terms of particular themes. Thus he demonstrates that not only do novels and sociological description aim to constitute reality, they also share certain aspects of form. Both the arts and the social sciences "face precisely the same problems and utilize mutatis mutandis, precisely the same means or forms for conveying an understanding of reality to others" (ibid.: 7).

Furthermore, both novelistic and ethnographic writing usually employ the convention or technique of presenting details so as to allow the description to stand by itself and to avoid the intrusion of the author's voice. The avoidance of intruding the author's voice became a more and more conscious convention in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in novel writing. In this Gaskell was somewhat ahead of her time, for she made it part of her technique to avoid editorializing or directly addressing the reader, common devices in the Victorian novel. Nonetheless, even Victorian writers such as Dickens, Thackeray and Brontë who rely more heavily

on these devices than does Gaskell, also use abundant detailed description. This is further discussed in Chapter Five. The point is that there is a tradition in novel writing and in ethnographic writing of creating a "real" world through detailed, holistic description. Both genres deal with what Malinowski refers to as "the imponderabilia of actual life" (Malinowski 1961 [1922]: 20), or what Tolstoy calls "all of the complexity of [a person's] relations with all sides of life" (op. cit.).

Despite all of these similarities between these two genres, the novel and the ethnography, one of the major differences between them is that the ethnography employs the convention of "objectivity" and the novel does not. In terms of their acceptability as data sources, the distinction made between novels and more conventional data sources for anthropology rests upon the perceived dichotomy between "subjectivity" and "objectivity," between art and science which shapes modern western thought. This assumed dichotomy has two corollaries. One is that the sources used for social science must be "hard," "pure" and "objective". The second is that social science writing itself must be "objective" and free from the emotional and cultural influences of the social scientist. However, the assumed dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" data is in itself a "culturally constituted bias" (Crapanzano 1980: ix) and is a "blind spot within the anthropological gaze" (ibid.)

which weakens anthropological analysis.

Anthropologists have been inclined to proclaim neutrality and even invisibility in their fieldwork; certainly they have tended to efface themselves in their descriptive ethnographies. I have come to believe that in so doing they have acted in what Jean-Paul Sartre (1956) would call bad faith and have presented an inaccurate picture of ethnography and what it can reveal.

(Ibid.)

As will be discussed in Chapter Five of the present study, both the ethnography and the novel are fashioned from the observations of individuals as they interact with their subject matter, in fieldwork and in life experience, and as they interact with their audience in the process of writing and even of gathering data. The ethnography is a synthesis, analysis and reconstruction based on various techniques which could be summed up as: (1) participant observation, (2) work with an informant and/or informants, (3) use of written records, and (4) quantification of carefully selected observable data. Any given ethnography will rely more heavily on one than another of these components. For example, Malinowski's Argonauts of the Western Pacific relies more heavily on the first two than on the last two, while Rappaport's Pigs for the Ancestors relies more heavily on the last. Nonetheless, it is important to note that any of these techniques is a cultural product. Thus, it is impossible that cultural, emotional, political and other aspects of the individual

do not shape the novel or the ethnography.¹

Malinowski briefly discusses some of these issues in the introduction to his classic ethnography, Argonauts of the Western Pacific. In this introduction he stresses that ethnography is a field of "scientific, methodic inquiry" (1961 [1922]: xv) but is unique among the social sciences in the subtlety of its subject matter. The "final goal of which the Ethnographer should never lose sight is...to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world" (ibid.: 25). One of the ways to reach this goal is to carefully observe "the imponderabilia of actual life," a "series of phenomena of great importance which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning or computing documents, but have to be observed in their full actuality" (ibid.: 18).

As to the actual method of observing and recording in field-work these imponderabilia of actual life and of typical behavior there is no doubt that the personal equation of the observer comes in here more prominently than in the collection of crystallised ethnographic data. But here also the main endeavour must be to let the facts speak for themselves.

(Ibid.: 20)

Malinowski acknowledges that it is precisely when the ethnographer is dealing with this subtlety in human experience that "the personal equation" enters most

¹A classic illustration of this point is the debate over the Tepotzlan ethnographies.

strongly into the observation and recording of data. He believes however, that a rigorous scientific method can compensate for this difficulty.

Malinowski is raising two points which are particularly relevant to the discussion at hand. First, he stresses the importance of "objective" empirical observation and the use of a scientific method in which "concrete, statistical documentation" and abundant descriptive data are given. Inferences can be made from these objective data. He stresses that anthropologists, trained in a scientific method of social observation, are better than any other observer for this purpose. Another observer, such as a missionary, a trader, or a government official, has some interest other than the scientific observation of the culture, and enters into "active relations with the native" and, "if he has to transform or influence or make use of him, this makes real unbiassed, impartial observation impossible" (ibid.: 18)

Thus, according to Malinowski, anthropologists do not enter into "active relations" with the subjects of their study, but rather are scientists, and like scientists in any other field their responsibility is to provide abundant objective data from which scientific inferences can be made. The facts the ethnographer provides are fragments of "objective reality" according to Malinowski, and they stand by themselves. This is a position taken by most ethnographers, from before Malinow-

ski's time to the present. On the other hand, because he kept a personal diary, Malinowski is an unusually good illustration of the fact that all ethnographers in the field not only enter into "active relations" with the natives and influence them, but they are also influenced and transformed.

It is obvious from A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term (1967 [1914-1918]) that Malinowski was very much influenced and transformed by his relationship with the Trobriand Islanders. For example, after some time in the field he speaks of a "feeling of permanently being exposed in an uncomf. [sic] position to the eyes of a crowded thoroughfare: an inability to achieve inner privacy" (ibid.: 253). In the same entry, he says that he is "on a war footing with my boys (i.e. with Ginger), and the Vakuta people irritate me with their insolence and cheekiness, though they are helpful to my work. Still making plans for subjugating Ginger, and still irritated by him" (ibid). Finally, his diary ends with the words, "Truly, I lack real character" (ibid.: 298).

Despite the agony of cultural disorientation, loneliness, confusion, rage and resistance to participation in Trobriand life which Malinowski expresses in his diary, his ethnography reads like a coolly detached scientific document. Although in the introduction Malinowski acknowledges the possibility that "the personal equation" might enter into the interpretation of data, in the actual

ethnographic text no indication of this is made. The result is a loss to ethnography. One of the great values of Malinowski's diary is the intense visceral impact of its revelation of the extent to which people are cultural animals. In a sense Malinowski is the real subject of a human experiment. Having voluntarily uprooted himself from his own culture, we see him struggling through the oppressive webs of his own and an alien culture, often interacting with the Trobrianders on the basis of some lowest common denominator, such as hunger, lust or curiosity.

Furthermore, the failure of his ethnographic writing to deal with his interactions with the Trobrianders as a mutual dialectic causes him to ignore certain clues which his diary suggests might have been fruitful. For example, in his diary he says, "The old man began to lie about burials. I became enraged, got up and went for a walk" (ibid.: 35) and "Whenever I touched upon magic or intimate matters, I felt they were telling lies; this vexed me" (ibid.: 240). Malinowski does not mention this in his ethnography in the discussion of methodology for gathering information on magic, although he does say that to pose overly generalized questions about magic can make it impossible for a native to give an accurate or useful answer. Perhaps he is referring to his experience with their persistent lying about "magic or intimate matters." It is impossible to know, since he

does not refer to his own experience in this discussion. Additionally, Malinowski says very little in his ethnography about change caused by the interaction of the Trobrianders with white traders, missionaries and officials, although in his diary he compares the "characterlessness" of "these lousy villages," with their "'missionarized'" houses, to older seeming, more "'deep-rooted'" ones on more remote islands (ibid.: 129,277).

Malinowski's Argonauts of the Western Pacific is a masterpiece of its genre. However, it is important to recognize that this genre has certain traditions which should be examined and questioned and perhaps eliminated. A fundamental tradition of the ethnography is that ethnographers gather "objective" data from which they write an "objective" document, the ethnography. The assumption is that if anthropology is a science then it both collects "objective" data from its original sources and it adds to the body of scientific knowledge by producing more "objective" data. From the holistic context of "the imponderabilia of actual life," an anthropologist distills "objective" data. On the other hand, data distilled from this context by a novelist who does not claim to be scientific or "objective" is generally discredited as an anthropological source because of the false dichotomy between "subjective" and "objective" data.²

²It is a basic assumption of this study that this perceived dichotomy is false. Nonetheless, as is obvious,

The assumption of this study, that this perceived dichotomy is false and that it is necessary to get beyond it not just in anthropological writing but also in anthropological research, has several implications for methodology. For one, the data contained in novels can be regarded in one sense as holistic description of a culture and in this way as similar to classic ethnographies. In another sense, it is holistic description provided by an informant from the culture studied, and is a rich source of data for problem oriented ethnographic work.

Second, ethnographic data collected and recorded by anthropologists are of vital importance, but are no more "objective" than novels, although these data may be more focused on matters of specific concern to anthropology and the data more distilled from their original holistic context than in a novel. A third implication is that in anthropological writing which is rigidly defined in terms of "objectivity" and "subjectivity," crucial information about what transpired between the anthropologist and the people he studied is missing. This should be regarded as ethnographic data also.

Therefore, the exploration of the novels of

it is difficult, even within the vocabulary available, to transcend this dichotomy, since for most people in modern western culture this dichotomy seems real, and it is difficult for modern westerners who wish to get beyond this cultural limitation to avoid getting entangled in defunct terminology. For this reason terms such as "subjective" and "objective" appear in quotation marks in this study.

Elizabeth Gaskell as a source helps in the exploration of the usefulness of the genre of the novel for anthropological research, and is also an aid in overcoming some of the limitations which have traditionally been imposed on ethnographic writing and on the definition of appropriate anthropological source material.

Test Problem

Karl Marx (1975 [1854]) cites Dickens, Thackeray, Brontë, and Gaskell as excellent sources on the middle class in England. Three of these novelists remain familiar to a large audience. Gaskell has not retained her fame and popularity to the same extent. An exploration of her work to see if, as Marx suggests, she also is a rich source of social data, will help establish the validity of the novel as a source.

The novels by Elizabeth Gaskell chosen for this study have a particular style of verisimilitude. While Gaskell's novels are unique in style and subject matter, just as is any given ethnography, their rich detailing of human experience is common to the genre of the novel, not discounting the wide variety of styles contained within it.³ It is therefore hoped that this study of Gaskell's novels as an ethnographic source will contribute to an

³This is discussed in Chapter Five of the present study.

acceptance of novels as a rich and valid source in anthropology.

The aim of this study, then, is to get beyond the division made between "subjectivity" and "objectivity" in establishing the reliability of the novel, which is usually seen as a "subjective" source, and its usefulness for anthropology, which is usually seen as a scientific, and hence "objective" field of study. In order to do this, census material, which is widely accepted as a reliable source for anthropological studies, will be compared to data from novels in terms of two aspects of domestic organization--middle class household composition and middle class women's paid work. This comparison will be done statistically based on the assumption that, like novels and like the census, the statistical method cannot be categorized as either "subjective" or "objective" and is applicable to data from both sources. It is shown that not only do novels give clues which enable the researcher to better understand quantified data, but they provide reliable data in themselves. Data from the novels are allowed to stand by themselves without the support of descriptive data from other sources such as wills, letters, town directories, and so forth, because the aim is to demonstrate the viability of the novel as a source in itself, not merely as descriptive material which supports "harder" data from other sources.

A reading of Gaskell's work to see what in particular she contributes to an analysis of the middle class in nineteenth-century England impressively reveals the ethnographic skill with which she describes social phenomena. In one novel in particular, Cranford, she describes a small country town in which the majority of people are middle-aged and elderly single women of the middle classes.⁴ The general setting of the town is made believable by the build-up of detail and by the psychological insight with which she relates human interactions.

Her description emphasizes the disproportionate number of women in the community. The town is "in possession of the Amazons; all of the holders of houses, above a certain rent, are women" (Cranford: 39). This situation may seem peculiar and unlikely, perhaps comic exaggeration. Nonetheless, the realism of the description seems to insist on its being a product of Gaskell's observation of a particular place. This is how it will be regarded in this study.

The comparison of this town as described by Gaskell to the British census of what evidence indicates is the same town, also sheds light on a situation which is interesting in itself. A better understanding of the

⁴The same setting is also described in three other works to be used in this study: "The Cage at Cranford," Mr. Harrison's Confessions, and Cousin Phillis.

disproportionate number of women in the middle class community leads to a clearer theoretical understanding of the cultural complexity of the newly forming English middle class in this period. The examination of this specific situation also sheds light on how gender affects one's experience of changing class structure and one's role in this process.

Gaskell's novel, Cranford, and her other works, make it clear that the nineteenth-century English middle class was complex and that its heterogeneity was not uniform. That is, one would not find a middle class neighborhood in which there was an even distribution of "genteel annuitants," "little shopkeepers," and "lawyers' clerks." Rather, there were patterns as to where members of the middle class lived, who interacted with whom and in what ways and for what reasons. There were also differences within and between segments of the middle class as to how gender affected one's life. While in general these observations seem obvious, Gaskell's work enables the researcher to formulate specific questions about them and to devise ways of approaching these issues. The complexities revealed in the work are precisely the sort which would be concealed in the census and therefore resist interpretation. This study compares the two sources to see in what ways and to what extent this is true.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Background

A basic assumption of this study is that human behavior cannot be analyzed in a culture-free context. As Clifford Geertz says so clearly:

As our central nervous system--and most particularly its crowning curse and glory, the neocortex--grew up in great part in interaction with culture, it is incapable of directing our behavior or organizing our experience without the guidance provided by systems of significant symbols.

(Geertz 1973: 49)

E. P. Thompson, in his essay "Anthropology and the Discipline of Historical Context" (1972), makes the point that to take the theoretical position that data can be cleansed of "subjective" content leads to oversimplification, inaccuracy and to missing much of the complexity of human phenomena. An understanding of the experience of actors in a society, and the cultural categories of significance to them, is necessary to an understanding of all aspects of social change. Furthermore, this experience and these cultural categories are built into any and all social data.

Despite the particular contribution which anthropology can make to the social sciences through its concern

with culture, values, and informal rules, there is a tendency nonetheless, in anthropology as in other social sciences, to make a dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" data and to distrust the latter. Harris' (1971) discussion of "emic" and "etic" data is a good example of this. In much anthropology and other social sciences there is a neat hierarchy of sources ranked in terms of an assumed dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" data. This is exemplified by Laslett (1967, 1976) who strongly maintains the superiority of quantified sources and holds that literary sources should be treated with some suspicion.¹

In his recent article, "The Dialogic of Ethnology," the anthropologist Kevin Dwyer takes issue with the theoretical assumptions underlying such a position, and in the process he discusses both political and methodological implications which this "scientistic" approach embodies.

Dwyer notes that in anthropology the status of the "'anecdotal' mode grounded in 'subjectivity'" is low in comparison to the "'explanatory' mode grounded in 'objectivity'" (1979: 221). This is partly due to the "reflected prestige of the natural sciences." However, this dichotomy of "subject" and "object" and the general preference for so-called "objective" data, is not

¹The hierarchy of sources suggested by Laslett is elaborated below.

merely a matter of prestige but of deep rooted assumptions in anthropology which spring from its history as what Gough (1968) calls "the child of imperialism."

Dwyer quotes Asad who says,

We are today becoming increasingly aware of the fact that information and understanding produced by bourgeois disciplines like anthropology are used most readily by those with the greatest capacity for exploitation. This follows partly from the structure of the research, but more especially from the way in which these disciplines objectify their knowledge . . . anthropology . . . is most easily accommodated to the mode of life, and hence to the rationality of the world power which the West represents.

(Asad, quoted in Dwyer:
206, Dwyer's italics)

The pervasive tendency in anthropology to see a dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" data, and between the "subject" and "object," the anthropologist and the informant, is, as Dwyer points out, grounds for both "conceit" and "despair" in the process of anthropological research (ibid.: 210). This "conceit" allows the anthropologist to play a role in maintaining the world hierarchy of dominance and exploitation through the unquestioning acceptance of its basic assumptions.

In this "scientific" (ibid.) approach, the anthropologist assumes the role of objective observer. The informant is seen as a passive object to be scrutinized.

The dominant language of Anthropology has remained . . . 'contemplative': it presumes that its Object, that the Other, operates in a realm distinct and removed from the Subject, and that the Subject (the anthropologist) itself is like a lens which in

principle, can be made free of distortion and capable of observing and capturing the Object in its true nature.

The self-protective effects of this language are readily apparent: the denial of the dialectical relationship between Subject and Object hides the influence, and thus the responsibility, of the Subject in 'creating' its Object; the assumption of a Subject freed from its own history and culture--a 'contentless' Subject--limits all challenges to those which aim to purify the Subject and to endow it with finer, more precise tools.

(Ibid.: 206)

Dwyer maintains that the project at hand in the field of anthropology, if it is to abandon its role as an agent of dominant and oppressive forces for the status quo, is to take this dialectical relationship as valuable material which adds to a better understanding of social phenomena --their history, context and trajectory.

Furthermore, the project is not simply to admit that the dialectic of anthropologist and informant--of "subject" and "object"--exists, and then to attempt the hopeless task of "correcting" its data accordingly. This is the "despair" intrinsic to the posited split between "subject" and "object." This attitude is exemplified by Murphy:

In the final analysis, one who studies society can do this only by transcending himself. Thus we speak of the need for "objectivity," which means, in part, that we should not be led astray by our subjective states regarding the people under study. At the same time, however, we strive for "empathy" with our subjects, which can be downright perilous for the maintenance of objectivity. We want to be inside our informants' head and emotions, but we wish to stand aside and be

aloof from them. This is what Claude Levi-Strauss has called being engagé and degagé at the same time. It is the dialectics of reducing people to objects while trying to achieve understanding of them and of converting ourselves into instruments while struggling to maintain our identities. The yield of the agonizing process of ethnography is always incomplete; we skim off the top and come away, if we have done our jobs properly, with a sense of loss and unfulfillment.

(Murphy 1971: 11)

The despair in this approach lies in the creation of a false dilemma about the impossibility of ever getting fully "into the head and emotions" of another person. It is possible to achieve an empathic relationship with another human being, and to have a relationship in which both persons exchange information about themselves and about their experience of the world, including their experiences of each other, in which they mutually affect each other. While neither participant in this relationship can "be inside [the other's] head and emotions," something new is created in this dialectical process.

Recently, several authors have commented on the mutuality of this relationship. Crapanzano notes that the anthropologist's "sense of self is altered" by it (1977: 71). Furthermore, "what is observed necessarily responds to the observer because the objects of the study are also subjects . . ." (Dimen 1981: 7), and "both parties change and develop as they interact with one another" (Dwyer 1979: 217). Crapanzano discusses the fact that both fieldwork and the writing of ethnography involve "a

particular confrontation between the two or more individuals," and that "this confrontation is anxiety-provoking" (Crapanzano 1977: 69). Murphy (op. cit.) speaks of "struggling to maintain our identities" and is thus indirectly stating that the anthropologist is changed by the dialectical process of fieldwork. Even in cases where the anthropologist hangs back from intense involvement with the people he is studying, "even if his response to field-work has been conservative--a stubborn refusal to go native" (Crapanzano 1977:69), the relationship is just as much a dialectic, and the "objective" data collected are a product of this relationship.

The relationship between anthropologist and informant, Dwyer states, should be the very stuff of fieldwork and of ethnographic writing. Rather than attempting to render "transparent" the real differences between the observer and the observed, the anthropologist and the informant, this relationship can be recognized as a dialectic which generates new meaning.

The data generated in fieldwork and in ethnographic writing constitute this new meaning, although these data are not usually recognized as such. Rather they are usually viewed as the "objectively true" product of scientific observation, recorded and frozen in time. This new meaning is neither "subjective" nor "objective." It is not random, chaotic, unselfconscious "subjective" experience, nor is it pure "objective truth." It

. . . is not a series of steps towards absolute knowledge of a pristine, discrete Other, or a prior reality, but involves the creation of an interdependent Self and Other which constitutes a new reality.

(Dwyer 1979: 217)²

A concern with the actor's experience of a culture is also present in the life history studies of Kluckhohn (1945) and Radin (1963). Both wanted to get at the concrete subjective experience of another human being, from another culture. Both wanted to present this information as the "objective" truth about a person's

²Dwyer continues to use the concepts "subject" and "object" although it is clear that the approach he recommends does away with the dichotomy between these two posited entities. Similarly Lukacs, whom Dwyer cites at length, uses this terminology, perhaps for lack of another, in discussing the historical moment in which workers' consciousness can and must include the continuity, the oneness, of "subject" and "object".

Lukacs forecasts that such a development will result from the process which, under capitalism, forces the human subject "to objectify his labor-power over his total personality" . . . Now reification may be exposed since, "the role of the object is no longer pure and immediate" and, "because of the split between subjectivity and objectivity induced in man by the compulsion to objectify himself as a commodity, the situation becomes one that can be made conscious. Yet the change in consciousness which Lukacs envisages . . . is different in principle and in quality from what is normally described as consciousness "of" an object . . . [for] when the worker knows himself as a commodity, his knowledge is practical . . . this knowledge brings about an objective structural change in the object of knowledge . . .

(Dwyer 1979: 213)

experience. In striving to objectively distill "subjective" experience, their life history studies resemble the cognitive school exemplified by Frake (1962) and Conklin (1962). There is an assumption of transparency and the implication that the anthropologist has torn away the differences separating him and the informant, and gotten into "the head and emotions" of "the Other."

At the same time, ethnographic data presented in "an explanatory mode" (Dwyer 1979: 221), often in quantified form and in a framework used in natural or physical science, also assume transparency--that this presentation has transcended the distortion of culture and found out the "truth" about some aspect of the culture. This implication of transparency, of getting at the "truth", is, of course, also present in other sources of quantified data such as the census.

The implication of transparency, should, says Dwyer, be recognized as "fiction" (ibid. 216). The data generated in the relationship between the observer and the person or persons he is observing are just that--they are the product of this relationship. This is a point which is also made by Clifford Geertz:

We begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, and then systematize those . . . In short, anthropological writings are themselves interpretations, and second and third order ones to boot (by definition, only a native makes a first order

one: it's his culture). They are thus fictions; fictions in the sense that they are "something made, something fashioned"--the original meaning of fictio--not that they are false, unfactual or merely as if thought experiments.

(Geertz 1973: 15-16)

Geertz goes on to compare anthropological writings with novels:

To construct actor-oriented descriptions . . . is not all that different from constructing similar descriptions of, say, the involvements with one another of a provincial French doctor, his silly adulterous wife and her feckless lover in nineteenth century France

(Ibid.)

Similarly, Crapanzano says:

The act of writing--the evocation of the response of the other and the constitution thereby of the self and his meaningful world is reified, in its product, the written word. The self is objectivated in the written word, and insofar as the self is objectivated, the other is also The act of writing ethnography is an act of self-constitution--of a willing objectivation of the self well worth the price of alienation.

(Crapanzano 1977: 71-72)

Crapanzano, Geertz and Dwyer make the point that novels, ethnographies, and sources of quantified data (such as the census) are equally "fictions" in that they are "something made," that is, the product of a dialectical relationship in which the observer and the observed are participants. The observer is not just a recorder of "objective" information, but a creator of data, in this sense.

In the writing of novels, the intense emotional involvement of the writer in the project of observing and

describing data is generally acknowledged and recognized. In western culture there is the expectation that the novelist be absorbed in and affected by this process, and it is implicitly understood that the novel is a creation of the novelist's dialectical relationship with his or her subject matter. The social scientist on the other hand is not normally thought of in terms of creativity, but rather, as Dwyer puts it, as "a vehicle" for the transmission of "objective" information, or, as Murphy puts it, as an "instrument" for the analysis of "objective" data. Dwyer notes that both Weber and Marx, however, saw the social scientist as creative:

Weber, for one, did see the scholar as creative rather than passive, as constituting data rather than simply observing them . . . Marx, much earlier, had challenged the "objective" nature of the world when he stressed . . . that reality is not given to man, but is formed by man's productive activity . . .

(1979: 212)

These assertions by Marx and by Weber have not borne much fruit, however; there continues to be a dichotomy seen between "objective" and "subjective" data, and a "scientific" approach to data has predominated.

Anthropology and History

Anthropology and history have borrowed concepts from each other for some time. However, the appropriateness of using these concepts and the use to which they are put has been a matter of debate.

Historians (Tawney 1933; Thomas 1963; E.P. Thompson 1972) have expressed an interest in the greater use of anthropological concepts in their discipline. It is the view of some historians that their discipline, which tends to be defined as part of the humanities and a "soft" social science, could benefit from the theoretical rigor of anthropology and its scientific aim to generalize about human behavior (Thomas 1963).

Paradoxically, the anthropologist, Evans-Pritchard (1950: 123), has urged the study of history, stating that like history, anthropology is an "art" rather than a science. Radcliffe-Brown (1958) directly opposed this view and denounced the study of history in anthropology, saying that anthropology must be a science, in which social phenomena are observed and recorded and from which theoretical generalizations can then be made. He strongly opposed the broad generalizations made about human evolution; he saw them as founded on little hard evidence and as unscientific.

In the United States, Franz Boas (1896) also reacted strongly against unscientific evolutionism. However, unlike Radcliffe-Brown, his goal was the historical reconstruction of particular cultures based on empirically collected data. Only after extremely rigorous and minute analysis of copious data could generalizations about social processes or any historical reconstruction be made.

As Charles Hudson (1973) points out, although as their name indicates, the historical particularists were concerned with history, in fact they did little historical work, instead describing in detail what remained of Native American cultures.

While the historical particularists had the distant goal of compiling enough data to eventually reconstruct the histories of the cultures they studied, they did not often use historic documents in their work, but instead relied largely on the study of material culture and on living informants who were sometimes regarded as remnants of dead or dying cultures (Kroeber 1961; Radin 1963). The use of historic documents grew in American anthropology in the 1950's. One influence in this trend was the United States Land Claims Commission, which was founded in 1946, and which employed anthropologists to scrutinize historic documents in order to reconstruct treaties between Native Americans and the United States government. This had a lasting effect on American anthropology partly because of the large number of anthropologists employed in this project. Another influence in this trend was the archeologist, William Duncan Strong, several of whose anthropologist students have written classic studies in ethnohistory (Codere 1950; Leacock 1954; Secoy 1953). From the 1950's onward there has been an increasing use of historic

documents in anthropological work in other parts of the world as well as in North America (Geertz 1963; Murra 1962; Wolf 1959).

In both Britain and the United States the debate over the study of history in anthropology has long been tied in with the discussion as to whether anthropology is a hard science or a branch of the humanities. However, such an "either/or" view of the discipline is counterproductive. The study of a society seen as a dynamic system of interrelated structures, in the context of a theory designed to understand large scale as well as small scale change, can give great depth and richness to interpretations. This is illustrated by Marx in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in which he states:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted in the past. The tradition of the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just as they seem engaged in revolutionizing themselves and things, in creating something that has never yet existed, precisely in such periods of revolutionary crisis they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service and borrow from them names, battle cries and costumes in order to present the new scene of world history in this time-honoured disguise and this borrowed language.

(1973 [1852]: 398)

In The Eighteenth Brumaire Marx minutely analyzed the cultural trappings which distinguished segments within the two conflicting sides in the French Revolution of 1848 from each other, metaphorically comparing cultural belief systems and symbols to "languages" and "costumes," and showing that these symbolic systems profoundly affected the political behavior of groups within the potentially revolutionary classes. Similarly, in discussing British society, Marx was sensitive to cultural categories, such as rank, and distinguished culturally significant social categories from one another. He consistently showed that empiricism includes observable, quantifiable "facts" embedded in the context of cultural beliefs, values and ideology. Not only is there nothing contradictory in an empirical approach which includes attention to cultural beliefs and values, indeed, such an approach is necessary.

The interest among anthropologists in the study of history has recently intensified. Fewer and fewer of the simple societies traditionally studied by anthropologists, those relatively isolated from western influence, still exist. Thus, while anthropologists have often taken on the role of chroniclers of dying cultures, such cultures have become increasingly difficult to find. They must therefore be studied historically. Furthermore, anthropologists have become more sophisticated about the inter-

action of seemingly isolated simple societies with one another and with more complex societies (Fried 1967), with western culture in particular (Leacock 1954; Murphy and Steward 1956), as well as of peasant societies with metropolitan powers (Wolf 1966).

Anthropology's concern with the interplay of western and non-western cultures and with the process of colonialism stems largely from the fact that most of the cultures studied by anthropologists have been in areas of the world which are colonies or neocolonies of western powers. Moves to intensify the penetration of the relatively isolated or "underdeveloped" parts of the world have met with opposition from many quarters. This has stimulated an interest among some anthropologists in the history of each such culture's interaction with capitalist powers.

Resistance to the spread of capitalism in the very societies which had traditionally been the ground of anthropological fieldwork has had several consequences. For one, it has meant that anthropologists from western cultures often have gone elsewhere to do research, sometimes to work in their own back yards in Europe and the United States. Thus many anthropologists have become involved in the study of societies with long written histories. Another consequence of the resistance to

capitalist expansion in third world countries is that it has forced an awareness that even the most remote, most traditional-seeming hinterlands are part of a capitalist system. It is thus essential to understand not only how such societies fit into the larger system, but also to see how the larger system operates (Frank 1968; Gough 1968).

Andre Gunder Frank has suggested that anthropologists have something particular to offer the social sciences in the study of the capitalist world system:

Anthropologists more than anybody can be expected to know that values and mythology, science and other facets of culture are intimately related to the structure of the society -- even if many anthropologists like to observe this fact only among other people and societies.

(Ibid.: 137)

As Frank implies however, there is ethnocentrism in anthropology as well as in other social sciences, whereby the "values and mythology, science and other facets of culture" of western societies are taken for granted. Too often, these things are used as cultural categories against which aspects of different, non-western or past societies are measured and compared. For example, recent research on household and family (Berkner 1974; Rapp 1978; Sanjek 1981; Yanagisako 1979) indicates that western middle class nineteenth-century and post nineteenth-century notions of domestic organization have been unquestioningly applied to non-western, non-middle class, and pre-nineteenth century cultures.

It is therefore important to understand the historical development of western cultural concepts. As Hudson suggests,

It could be that the most important contribution that anthropology can make at this point is of a historical nature: the anthropological point of view could be of great service in the re-examination of the way the modern world as a whole got to be the way it is today.

(1973: 136)

This reexamination will enable us to recognize western belief systems as such and to analyze them as the products of a specific culture. For example, it will better enable us to refine our use of general concepts such as household and family so that they are either truly universal or are acknowledged to be culturally limited. As Frank points out, western belief systems must be seen in the context of the structure of the society.

Anthropologists usually take a community, region or other unit which is defined as their unit of study and analyze it holistically. That is, societies are seen as ever-changing systems of interrelated structures. Any one structure must be seen in this context. As the historian, Keith Thomas, puts it:

Thus Evans-Pritchard writes about many different aspects of the Nuer--political and social structure, kinship and marriage, religion. But historians still specialize by subject matter--economic history, legal history, military history . . .

(1963: 7)

The bounding off of relatively small geographic areas or

population segments as units of study has been a problem and sometimes a deficit in anthropological studies, particularly evident as anthropologists have become more aware of the small communities they study as part of a larger world capitalist system. Nonetheless holism and concern with the micro-level can be vitally important in the study of past societies if seen in the context of a theory which assumes change and which assumes the inter-relatedness of micro- and macro-levels.

As Thomas points out, "the attraction of anthropology [for historians], is that it does constitute . . . an attempt to explain things in terms of each other" (ibid.). Anthropologists, who have the examples of simpler societies before them, can see that in complex societies, as "in a primitive society, there is no relationship which is of a purely economic character" (ibid.) or of a purely religious, or purely kin-oriented character, for that matter.

Anthropology and Literary Sources

Historians have used novels and other literary sources to contribute to an understanding of large scale social processes, usually using them to support arguments based on data from other sources (Butwin 1978; Hobsbawm 1962), but sometimes using them as primary evidence. For example, E. P. Thompson, in a review of Keith Thomas's Religion and the Decline of Magic, comments that at some

points, "the text shouts for Lear," and, he continues, "[i]t seems impossible that this material should not be deployed, not as illustrations to the point but as major evidences . . ." More strongly, Thompson asserts that "[h]is work is actively weakened by his reluctance to draw upon 'literary sources'" and that

In the end men consume their lives in the form of experience: for their experience, their illusions, and their self-understanding we must rely upon "literary" sources; and if historians cease to be interested in understanding how past generations experienced their own existence, that will be a large oversight.

(1972: 49)

Despite a recent trend in history, exemplified by the cliometric school as well as by The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, history has been fairly consistently defined as a branch of the humanities, not a "hard science." Perhaps this helps explain the frequent use of literary sources in historical work. Yet, as Charles Tilly (1975: 7-12) has pointed out, historians often use the historical records left by elite members of literate societies--their letters, diaries, art and literary forms, as well as their official records. E. P. Thompson (1966), Herbert Gutman (1977), and other social historians have begun to seek out and use sources which enable them to get at the history of people who are marginal to official record keeping and policy making. It is no accident, therefore, that social historians are much influenced by anthropology.

One of the initial tasks of the anthropological researcher is to select for study those categories that are culturally significant. As Mead and Metraux (1953) noted, this is difficult when researchers do not have members of the culture before their eyes and are not able to intensely experience the ordinary round of events and the conflicts and difficulties that arise. Societies which no longer exist are the quintessential "cultures at a distance," which cannot be studied by means of traditional anthropological techniques such as participant observation and conversations with living informants. Novels are a uniquely useful source for the study of such societies.

Novels were used in the "study of culture at a distance" by Mead and Metraux and others (notably, Leites 1953) but the "culture at a distance" studies used novels more for extrapolating information on culture and personality than for detailed examination of daily life and values in terms of social and economic change. Anthropologists have also used novels to gain a general feeling for an area of study or to illustrate theoretical points with vivid examples. Geertz (1973), Goody (1975), V. Turner (1974), Wolf and Hansen (1972), and others have explored other literary forms such as myths, plays, folklore, religious tracts and songs. Crapanzano (1972), Kluckhohn (1945), Langness (1965) and Radin (1963), among

other anthropologists, have explored the life history. Novels, however, have rarely been used systematically as an ethnographic source.

To my knowledge, virtually the only really systematic use of novels to date is Schapera's study of the kin terminology of the "Janeites", his term for the people described in Jane Austen's novels. Schapera remarks that he had not meant his study for publication but had "intended [it] to be a jeu d'esprit, not a technical discourse" (1977: vi). In this paper, Schapera demonstrates the unique value of Austen's novels as a source of kinship data.³

In his preface to this work, Schapera explains that his initial hesitance in working the data up for publication stemmed from the fact that this "would have demanded much more knowledge than I had of the relevant literature." In publishing this short paper, Schapera made the decision to let the information supplied by Austen stand by itself. He makes the "entirely fictitious" assumption "that Jane Austen's novels constitute the reports of the only anthropologist to have

³They are unique, Schapera says, in that "the Austen 'texts' . . . have one outstanding advantage very seldom, if ever, found in standard ethnographies: they give information not only about what anthropologists usually mean by 'relationship terms,' but also about all the other ways (including for instance the use of personal names) in which people designated their genealogical connections (Schapera 1977: vii).

studied those people in the field and must therefore be used as such, with no attempt to supply omissions, or correct apparent inconsistencies, from other sources" (ibid.: vii). While Schapera's study is as rigorous as any in the British tradition, he makes the disclaimer that "it does not claim to be a critical study of how accurate a reporter of English usage she was . . ." (ibid.). While his study demonstrates the validity and usefulness of Austen's novels as a source, there is, in such statements, an insecurity revealed about their reliability.

Anthropology has traditionally concerned itself with people who are not politically or economically powerful and with informal aspects of social life (i.e., not official social policy or law), often perceived as mundane or everyday. Therefore, most anthropologists have distrusted representatives of dominant powers such as colonial administrators, as sources of information on the subject peoples they so often study.

Anthropologists have become more involved in the study of past societies. However, the usual focus on dominated peoples makes such subjects difficult to study in an historical context. Sources which detail the daily life and work of ordinary people in their social context are rare. Thus, we can learn about the political beliefs, the sexual lives, even the toilet training (Marvick 1974) of kings and queens. But as our interests take us further

down the social hierarchy into the realm of persons not directly involved in the official policymaking process in a society (for example, women, in most western societies), the research becomes increasingly difficult. Anthropologists share this difficulty with social historians. However, anthropologists usually focus on micro-level social phenomena, such as domestic organization in a particular community, taking the analysis from the specific to the general. In studying a particular, usually small, group of people within its larger context, anthropologists learn about social behavior which has a general theoretical significance. This approach distinguishes anthropology from most social history, which usually begins with macro-level problems. As anthropologists study history, it is therefore of crucial importance to find sources which will allow the kinds of investigation they often do of extant societies.

In the anthropological study of history various such sources have been found. Travellers' accounts, such as the Jesuit relations, have been put to use. For example, Leacock (1954, 1955) uses them to show that the observed social behavior of the modern day Naskapi cannot be validly used to reconstruct their past social organization and that, furthermore, it is not possible to understand either their past or current values without an understanding of their history. Silverman (1979) analyzes the layers of symbolism of a Siennese ritual in their

historical context, and comes to a better understanding not only of the symbolism itself, but also of the political history of the town. Schneider (1980) looks at an artifact--trousseaux--and using information from informants and written records, constructs the cultural significance of types of trousseaux, to explore women's economic strategies in nineteenth-century Sicily.

All of these historical studies by anthropologists have in common that they seek out the culturally significant categories in order to come to a better understanding of a social group. In her aforementioned studies Leacock shows how the values of a western, capitalist, male-dominated society distort the interpretation of social behavior in another culture. Rohrllich-Leavitt, Sykes and Weatherford (1975) call into question anthropological research in which the male biases of ethnographers were unconsciously incorporated into the work. Margery Wolf (1972) shows how the male and female experiences of household and family in a Taiwanese community are so different that these units should be defined differently for men and for women. Failure to do so leads to a misinterpretation of social relationships.

Anthropologists may gain a great deal from literary scholars who have used novels and other literary sources to get at the history of political and social consciousness and the development of major cultural categories or themes. For example, Raymond Williams

(1973) uses novels to explore the dichotomy between country and city in western thought. Schwarzbach (1979) explores the rural/urban theme in the works of Charles Dickens, relating Dickens' personal history to the phenomenon of massive urbanization. Vicinus (1974b) analyzes working class literature, such as street ballads, theater and poetry, to reveal a great deal about working class political movements and major themes in working class life such as that of the country bumpkin versus the sophisticated city dweller. Marcus (1974) uses a Victorian gentleman's sexual memoirs to reach an understanding of the predominant middle class sexual beliefs and values. All of these works have much to offer anthropologists, in part because of their theoretical clarity in relating social consciousness and cultural beliefs and values to class. With all of these authors, the themes they explore, as well as the novelists or poets they describe, are discussed in these terms.

Other literary scholars (Collins 1968; House 1976) have also used novels to reconstruct aspects of a society, but have been oriented more toward social issues such as crime, charity, religion, and so on, or have been limited to antiquarian collection of data (Firor 1962). While potentially useful sources for anthropologists, these studies are not stimulating in theoretical or methodological terms since they tend to ignore class and

have no clear theoretical approach to social analysis. These studies, while sociological in orientation, are not concerned with culture. On the other hand, the studies which analyze major themes, such as those by Williams, Vicinus and Marcus, do share this interest with anthropology and can be instructive to anthropologists studying societies to which their analyses are relevant or who are using novels as a source. These studies however, which have a theoretical position enabling them to look at the relationship between class and social and political consciousness, tend to make this kind of analysis on a general macro-level. A major contribution of anthropologists in the social sciences is their focus on the particular communities or social segments, and in their minute analyses of everyday life, from which they make broader generalizations. Therefore it seems likely that as anthropologists become more involved with the study of literate groups in complex societies both past and present, specific techniques for the use of the novel which help to answer questions raised in anthropology will have to be developed.

Limitations of Family History

Anthropology can add greater depth to the understanding of the articulation of micro- and macro-levels--in the case of this study, the articu-

lation of family and class. In the context of the larger society, the anthropological practice of examining a community on a micro-level reveals a set of processes involving family and class as they affect and are affected by a community. Most family history to date has limited the level of analysis to household and family, and too often class has been inadequately considered.

The Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, headed by Peter Laslett, is extremely important in the field of family history, influencing the work of researchers in other branches of the social sciences who wish to make connections between the family and large scale social processes. While it has made significant contributions, the Cambridge Group exemplifies several deficits in the historical study of family and domestic organization, in particular, a lack of concern with class (Berkner 1974; Flandrin 1979). The following discussion therefore focuses on work by this group, and by Laslett in particular.

Laslett is well known for his work in which he attempts to negate LePlay's claim that extended and "stem families" were the norm until the French Revolution of the late eighteenth century imposed bourgeois values on the French population. To do this, Laslett prepared statistics on many English villages and parishes, using

censuses over an approximately two hundred and fifty year period--1574 to 1821. He found that nuclear family households were the norm in England throughout this period. In his introduction to Household and Family in Past Time, an anthology comprised of papers by historians, family historians and anthropologists from several countries, Laslett (1972) generalizes that the nuclear family household was the universal norm and that it should be expected to be the norm in any society unless proven otherwise.

Berkner and Flandrin both criticize Laslett for his misuse of statistical data. They demonstrate that the use of broad scale statistics conceals important processes involving family and class. In discussing the Cambridge Group's typology of family structure, Flandrin says,

It is unfortunate that the British historians have not indicated in which social sectors these different types of family were to be found. It may, however, be assumed that the families of . . . the very poor . . . only rarely had a complex structure . . . One would . . . have liked to know whether among the propertied classes . . . the conjugal family was as preponderant, and extended and multinuclear families as uncommon.

(Flandrin 1979: 69)

Flandrin then goes on to re-use some of Laslett's statistics for a particular town, paying special attention to class and to social sectors within classes, and finds more useful results with regard to the problem he poses above.

Berkner also criticizes Laslett on the grounds that he ignores class. In addition, he discusses the importance of paying attention not only to "snapshots" of the household as presented in any census, but to its developmental cycle. The nuclear family household may only be only one stage in the developmental cycle of the domestic group. Furthermore, he emphasizes that while for demographic or economic reasons there may be more nuclear family households than extended households at a given point in time, the ideal, the cultural norm, may be the extended family.

Cultural beliefs and values about household and family are important for understanding social behavior. Berkner, in particular, points up the importance of studying the experience of actors in a society, social processes and the cultural systems in which production, reproduction, consumption and other household activities are embedded. To illustrate this point he cites the example of Douglass's (1971) study of two Basque villages in which ideals about family relationships, centering on inheritance rules, affect migration behavior even after the economy radically changes and the inheritance rules no longer carry the same import as previously. Looking at cultural themes and the ideology of family affecting such things as kinship and marriage practices, we can see that

cultural "lags" continue to affect behavior in the process of a fast changing socio-economic situation in which different developmental cycles are "spawned" (Yanagisako 1979).

By accepting the pre-defined categories of the census, Laslett perpetuates the assumptions and biases of the census takers. His over-confidence in these numbers and categories leads to the glossing over of important social processes, merely because the households which represent stages in these processes are not numerically prevalent. This fault in Laslett's approach stems from his desire to make family history a "hard science," as explicitly stated in at least two articles (1967, 1976) where he criticizes the use of literary sources in the study of family history and urges the use of what he perceives as more reliable numerical data found in sources such as the census and parish registers.

Laslett's argument against the use of literary data is disappointingly superficial. For example, he claims that "popular conviction" as to the early age of girls at marriage "in earlier times" is based on "one literary context, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet" (1976). He then comments that quantified data from parish registers and census do not support this. Once again, he ignores class and specific locale in his discussion. Similarly, in an

article on Restoration comedy as a source of information about the extent of bastardy during the Restoration, he compares data from parish registers to comments about bastardy in the plays, lumping together plays by several authors, but primarily by Wycherly. The plays are set among people in the court of St. James and in the countryside outside London, and it is clear from the plays that their comments are addressed to an audience of ladies and gentlemen, as Laslett himself notes. Nonetheless he proceeds to compare the comments in the plays to data drawn from parish registers scattered all over England, ignoring class within these parishes.

Thus, because its use of quantified sources is not sufficiently critical, Laslett's critique perpetuates the distortion they contain. Nonetheless, Laslett (1967) considers parish registers (as well as the census) to be "most reliable" and claims that they can be "unambiguously quantified" (*ibid.*, addendum: 1). "High literature," on the other hand, is deemed "least reliable of all" for the study of social structure. In this discussion Laslett posits a hierarchy of thirteen sources for family history, in which he places implicitly "objective" sources at the top with the census number one. "High literature" is number thirteen, at the bottom. It is placed beneath "inferior literature" which is number twelve. The

implicit assumption seems to be that since the writer of high literature is an exceptional individual making a personal statement, and is more aware of what he or she is communicating than is a less intelligent or less skilled writer, such sources are more heavily loaded with cultural and personal meaning--they are not naive, unguarded, "neutral" sources. By assuming this, Laslett perpetuates the misuse of census data, ignoring its limitations, and misses the richness of literary sources.

Our contention of course, is that all sources carry a load of personal, cultural and political meaning. None are ever "neutral." Furthermore, just as the anthropologist in the field seeks out exceptional informants with whom to develop a certain rapport, a mutual empathy that enables him to better understand the culture he is studying; just as he seeks informants with a great interest and awareness in the meaning of social relationships and social norms and values and an interest in detail; the anthropologist can seek out novelists with similar skills as informants. It is obvious that different informants are useful to anthropologists in different ways and for different reasons. The same is true of novelists.

Furthermore, novels often provide data on particular locales or "communities." Community is defined by the novelist's or "the observer's" social position

(Williams 1973). Thus, in addition to providing information on family organization in the context of class and cultural themes, the novel is a source which can give access to micro-level social phenomena, showing the articulation of family, community and class.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Assumptions and Hypothesis

There are several general assumptions on which this study is based. It is a given that there is no real dichotomy between "objective" and "subjective" data in the social sciences. All social data are cultural products subject to the biases of both their collectors and the original informants. More holistic sources, such as novels or fieldwork, are useful in ways which "harder" quantified data cannot be, because they enable researchers to ask questions more dynamically pertinent to the actors involved in the social processes studied. Given that novels are holistic and reliable sources, nonetheless, novels vary in their usefulness as literary sources for specific social problems of study. That is, one novelist will give more data on a particular problem or type of problem than will another novelist. A different novelist will be as useful in the description of other social phenomena. As will be discussed in Chapter Five, the specific usefulness of a novel as a source depends on the

selected interests and worldview of the novelist, and these interests as well as the skill of the novelist also affect the reliability of that novelist as a source. It also follows that to the extent that literary and quantified sources interpret social phenomena in a similar light, this is due to the analogous class and cultural backgrounds of their respective chroniclers.

In addition to these general assumptions, the following specific assumptions are basic to the comparison of Elizabeth Gaskell's novels to the 1851 British census.

Gaskell is describing a particular locale in several of her novels, referred to here as her "Cranford" works. This assumption is widely held by scholars of her work and can be supported by statements made by her and by local historians of the town she describes. Her novels describe specific time periods which are identifiable in the texts.

Questions can be asked of the data taken from the novels which are suggested by the plots. In some of Gaskell's works the demographic structure of a given population in terms of sex, age and marital status is a major issue, for example. Questions can also be asked of the novel data on issues which are not major bases for plots but which have adequate documentation as, for example, the range of occupations of middle class women in Gaskell's novels and in the census.

Works by Gaskell which are used in this study describe a particular social segment within the town in which the stories are based. This social segment is middle class and, more specifically, it is the genteel segment of the middle class population in the town.

The novels of Gaskell will enhance the usefulness of the census as a source since they will help clarify its categorization of a given population.

While any of the novels of Gaskell set in this town and in this time and place describes a particular social segment, it cannot be expected to give as full a representation of this population as do all of the novels combined.

As a member of the middle class, Gaskell describes a particular community from within essentially the same set of enculturated middle class values as that of the census enumerators and the authority backing them. At the same time, Gaskell and the census enumerators differ to the extent that Gaskell has specific interests stemming from her individual history, gender and specific class and local background which diverge somewhat from the British bureaucracy and the enumerators who collected the census data. They will also differ because Gaskell's position as an observer is less likely to cause mistrust than that of a bureaucrat who represents the government.

Hypothesis

A "census" of the population described by Elizabeth Gaskell in her "Cranford" novels will agree statistically in terms of specific variables with the same social segment reflected in figures from the 1851 census enumerators' books.

Procedure

The sources for the present study are the 1851 British census and the following works of Elizabeth Gaskell: Cranford (1976[1853]); Mr. Harrison's Confessions (1911[1851]); "The Cage at Cranford" (1976 [1863]); Cousin Phillis (1976[1863]).

While one of Gaskell's novels describes a particular social segment or "community," every other novel which describes the same social segment both adds reliability to the data contained in the first novel and adds specific knowledge. Thus, all of Gaskell's novels about this particular social segment in its particular setting together provide the best sample. Since Cranford, named after the town it describes, is the best known of these works, the community described in all will be referred to as "Cranford."

Census enumerators' books from Knutsford, England, will be compared to the novels. The 1851 census enumerators' books are in excellent condition and are perfectly readable, except that fourteen pages are missing. See Appendix 1, sample page. There are fifty-seven households missing out of five hundred and sixty-four recorded in the numerical summaries at the end of each book. There is no way of knowing how many of these are middle class.

Unfortunately, the 1841 census enumerators' books for the town are so faded as to be almost completely illegible. Only nineteen middle class households are discernible at all, and even with these few, not all of the information needed is legible. Nor are the 1801 through 1831 censuses suitable for the present purposes

because they do not ask the necessary questions regarding household organization and women's work.

The basic census category is the household. The definition of household which was used in the 1851 English census was chosen as the format for gathering data for the present study, since it facilitated the compilation of comparable populations from the two sources. According to this definition, a household or "occupation unit" consisted of "the occupier of the house . . . his wife, children, servants, relatives, visitors, and persons constantly or accidentally in the house" (quoted in Armstrong 1972:49). This is clearly the ideal. For example, the head of a household was not always a married man, and many other divergences from this ideal occurred. The census enumerator listed each household separately with the head of household first.

In gathering the data for this study, all middle class households were recorded from both the census enumerators' books and from the novels, including the appropriate setting in time and place. The following information pertaining to each household was recorded, based on the format and categories of the 1851 British census.

1. Age, marital status and "occupation or rank" of:
 - a. head of household.
 - b. spouse of the head of household.
 - c. children of the head of household.
 - d. any other members of the household (except for servants). This includes visitors, lodgers, apprentices, shop assistants, in-laws, grandchildren, foster children, etc.
2. Number of servants.

Statistical Model

In the statistical comparison, a "goodness of fit" model is used, where percentages in the two populations are compared. Here one is posing the question: How likely is it that the Knutsford and "Cranford" sets of data are accurately reported samples of the same population, whose differences arise from the randomness of the sampling process? To do this, one groups the two samples (Knutsford and "Cranford") together to form a theoretical distribution of cases into categories, e.g. male or female heads of household. The percentage of all cases from either sample which fall into each category is computed and taken to be the expected percentage in that category.

Now, one can apply the χ^2 statistic, comparing either the "Cranford" or Knutsford distribution to the theoretically expected distribution. Since the samples are of different size, one works with percentage of distribution. In each category, one takes the difference between the percentage observed in a data set (e.g. the

"Cranford" novels) and the percentage expected in that category, squares that difference and divides by the expected percentage. This number:

$$\frac{(\text{observed\%} - \text{expected\%})}{\text{expected\%}}$$

is large or small as the difference between observation and expectation is large or small, and is "normalized" to be expressed as a multiple of the percentage expected. These numbers are computed for all categories together to form the statistic

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(o-e)^2}{e} .$$

For a given sample size and number of categories, one may compute the likelihood of χ^2 being outside of a particular range. This likelihood corresponds to the probability that the difference between observed and expected case distributions represented in a χ^2 score were caused by chance. If χ^2 is large, then the probability that the difference can be explained by random variation in the sampling is small. One would say that the data do not fit the hypothesis that Knutsford and "Cranford" are fairly reported samples of the same population. If χ^2 is small, then there is a good fit of the data to this hypothesis.

Research Questions

The first set of questions asked of each set of data, the novels and the census, pertains to an issue raised in the plots of several of the novels, i.e. the large proportion of elderly and middle aged unmarried or widowed middle class women in the town. Much is made of the peculiar demographic structure of the fictional town described by Gaskell. The narrators of the stories and characters within them all make comments such as:

In the first place, Cranford is in possession of the Amazons; all of the holders of houses, above a certain rent, are women. . . .

(Cranford: 36)

You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five sixths of our householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are the only gentlemen in the place . . .

(Mr. Harrison's Confessions:120)

So much is made of this, in fact, that one might wonder if this description is not merely comic exaggeration. Taking this description seriously and comparing it to another source, the census aids in our understanding of the novel as a source.

Question 1A: Ratio of Male to Female Household Heads

A comparison of the middle class population in the novels to information gleaned from the census enumerators' books is made to see if the two sources agree that there is an unusually large number of middle class women as heads of household.

Question 1B: Marital Status and Eligibility

The marital status of all of the adult males in middle class households, including visitors and

boarders is compared to that of all the adult females, in both the novels and in the census enumerators' books.

Question 1C: Age Structure

The age structure of the adult middle class population is compared in both the novels and the census enumerators' books.

The second area of investigation, women's work, is not a major issue in the novels, but is well-documented in them.

Question 2A: Middle Class Women's Work

Data on the occupation of every female middle class head of household in the novels are compared to the census enumerators' books. Types of jobs are classified, and the distribution of occupations and sources of income as described in the novels and the census is compared.

All of the comparisons are done statistically, through the use of the "goodness of fit" test previously discussed.

Defining the Population

A. Locale

Support for the assumption that Cranford is in fact based on a specific town and exists in a specific period of time, allows the inclusion of populations from more than one novel in the sample. It allows the comparison of a specific town in the novels to a specific town in the census enumerators' books, in a specific time period.

Comments by Gaskell pertaining to this specific town were found in order to establish that Cranford was based on a particular place. Other sources, such as local historians, were also consulted. Existing research on this topic was taken into account. Other works were located in the same town based on these criteria, also taking into consideration their similarity to the town described in Cranford.

It is generally recognized that Knutsford, the town in Cheshire where Gaskell grew up, is the prototype of the country town described in Cranford and several other of Gaskells' works of fiction. Mrs. Gaskell herself states this in at least one letter:

I am so glad your mother likes it [Cranford] too! I will tell her a bit more of Cranford that I did not dare to put in, because I thought people would say it was ridiculous, and yet, which really happened in Knutsford!

(Letters of Mrs. Gaskell: 747)

After her death a relative wrote:

We buried her at the little town of Knutsford in Cheshire yesterday afternoon, whither I had taken her coffin on Thursday. Knutsford I do not doubt you know is her 'Cranford'.

(Letter from Thurstan Holland to Charles Eliot Norton, *ibid.*: 971)

In her non-fiction piece "The Last Generation in England" it is clear that she is describing a town where she once lived. She emphasizes that, ". . . every circumstance and occurrence which I shall relate is strictly and truthfully told without exaggeration" ("Last Generation in England":

319). In this piece, the town she describes has a general social structure which is clearly the same as that of Cranford. She mentions specific incidents which are described more vividly in the fictional context of Cranford. For example, the story of an unfortunate cow appears in both this short piece and in the novel.

A local historian of Knutsford, writing in 1859, tells this story:

A woman of advanced age who was confined to her house through illness, . . . asked me to lend her an amusing or cheerful book. I lent her 'Cranford' without telling her to what it was supposed to relate. She read the tale of 'Life in a Country Town,' and when I called again, she was full of eagerness to say, "Why sir, that 'Cranford' is all about Knutsford. My old mistress, Miss Harker, is mentioned in it; and our poor old cow . . . she did go to the field in a large flannel waistcoat because she had burned herself in a lime-pit."

(Green 1859: 114)

Sydney Holland recalls that when he was a little boy in the 1850's he visited Knutsford

to stay with two old great-aunts, Mary and Lucy Holland, the heroines of Mrs. Gaskell's novel, Cranford. I imagine I am one of the very few people alive who has been carried in a sedan chair--I mean in the ordinary way of life and not as artificial 'experience.' One sedan chair survived in Knutsford long after the others had disappeared off the face of the land . . .

(Holland 1926:7)

In Cranford, Gaskell mentions "Mrs. Jamieson, who . . . always went out in a sedan chair to the very shortest distances" (Cranford: 126). It is clear from her description that the sedan chair is meant to be seen as rather old fashioned, even for that time. There are other such details, too numerous to mention, which establish that Gaskell based several of her novels in Knutsford, the town where she spent her childhood and subsequently often visited as an adult.

It is not surprising that Mrs. Gaskell describes her childhood home town, nor is the fact that she describes specific incidents. What is important is the consistency with which she uses this to create a recognizable, believable world. She does not merely weave interesting and humorous anecdotes and characters into a setting which is the creation of her imagination. She bases the action of her novels in what she strives to make a realistic description of a time and a place.

Other novels and stories obviously based on her childhood home town are "The Cage at Cranford" and Mr. Harrison's Confessions. Written shortly before Cranford, the latter is also set in a small country town in which most of the people "of a certain rank" (Mr. Harrison's Confessions:120) are women. As one commentator, in pointing out the similarity of the locale in the two works says . . . "even the name Hoggins is here to denote someone who

is regarded as vulgar by the ladies of Duncombe [the name of the town in Mr. Harrison's Confessions], but who nonetheless marries into their circle" (Keating 1976:13). A "Mr. Hoggins" does the same in Cranford. The small country town is also a setting in the beginning of Ruth. However, since it is not clearly the same locale as Cranford and Mr. Harrison's Confessions, it will not be included to provide data for this study.

While the early part of North and South is based on a small country town, we know that it is not based on Knutsford because we are specifically told that the country town of "Helstone" is in Hampshire. On the other hand, Cousin Phillis is based on the general area of Knutsford, and takes place on a farm on the outskirts of the town of "Eltham." The small part of the nouvelle which takes place in the country town of "Eltham," will be included in our compilation of data. As Keating points out, "Eltham" is "traditionally assumed to be based in Knutsford," (Keating:356), and this assumption is validated by the description of the town. "Hollingford" in Wives and Daughters seems very clearly to be based on Knutsford, and is generally considered to be so (ibid.). The novel, while not autobiographical, conveys the sense of Mrs. Gaskell remembering her own girlhood. It is

perhaps significant that in this work there is an old aristocratic family, the Hamleys of Hamley Hall, and in the nouvelle A Dark Night's Work, the country town is called "Hamley." 'Nonetheless, since there is no real description of the town in the latter work, it is not possible to tell if it is also based on Knutsford. Therefore it will not be included in the compilation of data.

To summarize, the novels and stories which are set in Knutsford are: Mr. Harrison's Confessions, 1911[1851]; Cranford, 1976[1853]; "The Cage at Cranford", 1976[1863]; Cousin Phillis, 1976[1864]; and Wives and Daughters 1969[1864-66].

B. Time

In order to present comparable data from the census and the novels, it is also important to set the novels in time. Setting Gaskell's novels in time is usually made fairly easy by her specificity about dates. Often, she gives very specific dates in setting the action. Where she does not, it is still possible to place them in time. Peter Keating points out that within the "framework of specific dates"

Mrs. Gaskell builds up, with precision and subtlety, a structure of references and allusions which she employs partly to establish a sense of period, but more importantly, to indicate the nature of social change in the early nineteenth century. . . . The specific details of furniture, fashions, eating habits, ways of speaking, and books or authors read or admired, act as social and historical indices filtered through the consciousness of the narrator. . . .

(Keating 1976: 17)

Various methods were used, depending on the way this information is presented in the novel. Where specific dates are given, they were recorded, and ages that are given of the characters in the story, or remarks such as "three years later" were used to keep track of the passing of time thereafter. The action of "The Cage at Cranford" takes place in a period of a few weeks, and we are told straightforwardly that it is "May, 1856" ("The Cage at Cranford": 319)

One novel which we can set in time with specific dates is Wives and Daughters, in which we are told on the second page:

Five and forty years ago, children's pleasures in a country town were very simple, and Molly had lived for twelve long years without the occurrence of an event so great.

(Wives and Daughters: 36)

Since the book was written and published from around 1864-1866, we know that the action begins around 1820. The main character is twelve at the beginning of the book.

The book skips several years, from the introduction to the main body of the narrative, and Molly is presented as from twelve to nineteen during the course of the action. The book thus covers the period from about 1820 to 1827, and is therefore not included as a source of quantified data for comparison with the 1851 Knutsford census, since the time period is earlier than that covered by this study (circa 1841 to circa 1851).

Where no specific dates are given, often historical events are mentioned which make dating the action quite simple. Of one such book, Cranford, Peter Keating says:

[I]t is possible to date the action of Cranford with some precision. The references to the railways, the Catholic Emancipation Act, the publication of Dickens' novels, fixes the main period as the 1830's and forties. Miss Jenkyns dies in 1843, slightly older than her sister Matty who is in her fifties . . . [T]here are several references to show that Miss Jenkyns and Matty grew up during the years of the Napoleonic Wars. . . .

(Keating 1976: 17)

Again, the ages of characters and mentions of time passing serve to keep track of the setting in time. Thus Cranford is set mainly in the period from approximately 1830 to 1845.

We know that Cousin Phillis takes place in the early 1840's because of comments such as, "the penny post

reform . . . had come into operation a short time before" (Cousin Phillis: 301). The reform was instituted in January, 1840. The action of Cousin Phillis spans a period of somewhat less than two years, judging from the ages of the characters.

Where neither historical events nor specific dates are given, it is still possible to place the novels in time. The tone, thematic structure and details about daily life serve as guides. Mr. Harrison's Confessions, published in 1851, does not contain any specific dates although Mr. Harrison mentions that he read Vanity Fair, which was published in 1847 (Mr. Harrison's Confessions: 190). Mr. Harrison is a modern young man, who views many of the older characters in the story as quaint. It is clear that the book is meant to be about a contemporary man recounting to a friend a sequence of events which took place in the recent past. Mr. Harrison's friend wants to hear the history of Mr. Harrison's "wooing and winning" of his young wife who has "just gone upstairs to put baby to bed," "since I want to have the recipe for getting such a charming little wife of my own" (Mr. Harrison's Confessions: 111-112). The course of Mr. Harrison's courtship, which forms the main substance of the book, lasted no more than three years. Assuming that "baby" is the first and only child, and was born within two years after the

marriage, and that it is approximately two years old, the story can be dated to cover a three year period beginning about seven years prior to the publication of the book-- that is 1844 to 1846, or possibly the period from 1846 to 1849 (if the baby is younger and was born sooner after the marriage).

Thus, taking both time and locale into account, the novels and story selected as sources of quantified data in this study are Mr. Harrison's Confessions, Cranford, "The Cage at Cranford," and Cousin Phillis.

Class

Setting the novels in time and place is fairly straightforward and simple. Specifying the population described by Gaskell in this setting, however, is more complex, requiring a discussion of the social, political and cultural context of the changing class structure in nineteenth-century England.

Gaskell indicates through the plots of the novels that a concern with gentility is a cultural screen concealing social change. The fact that the theme of gentility was so popular and recognizable to Gaskell's reading audience, and the fact that she chose this topic at all, indicate that the cultural category of gentility is important for understanding social change going on in the mid-nineteenth century.

Gaskell describes the middle class of the country town of "Cranford." Within this middle class she focuses on the genteel community, a network of homes in which live "genteel" middle aged and elderly women, most of them widowed or never married, and professional men with their families. This segment of the middle class, the "genteel" middle class, is defined both by Gaskell and by the characters of the novels and stories themselves, in relation to the non-genteel middle class. It is a cultural category which is not easily discernible in the census of the town of Knutsford without additional data from Gaskell's novels. Indeed, the novels point out this cultural category in the census.

In order to select comparable middle class populations from both the census and the novels, one of the major criteria used was the keeping of one or more servants. This criterion is commonly used by analysts of census data and parish registers as an indicator of membership in the middle class (e.g. McLeod 1977: 63; Flandrin 1979: 70). There are two reasons for this. First, virtually every middle class household had at least one servant. Second, the keeping of servants is very clearly presented in the census enumerators' books. While the novels do not always give the exact number of servants per household (although they often do) it is always clear whether or not a household has no servants, at least one servant or a large number of servants.

While this criterion is extremely useful in gathering a sample middle class population from a census, it has certain methodological limitations. For example, a household with eight servants might be that of a well-to-do industrialist or that of a small aristocrat. Furthermore, because of errors and idiosyncrasies in the census enumerators' books, it is not impossible that a household recorded as having eight servants might really be a household in which eight of the family members are servants. It was therefore helpful to use a second criterion in distinguishing a sample middle class population, that of occupation. Occupation is almost invariably very clearly stated in the novels. The census, on the other hand, is less clear with regard to this. For example, a "tallow chandler" in a census might be a working man employed at making candles, or he might be the wealthy owner of a candlemaking business. Despite such ambiguities in the census, the criterion of occupation is useful because it helps to avoid making the gross errors one might make if one simply scanned the census for number of servants and ignored occupation. For example, in the Manchester census, one enumerator consistently left the "relationship to head of household" of servants blank. That is, he did not write "servant" under this heading, as he should have, and instead included it only under the

"occupation" column. In this case, a scanning (for servants) in the "relationship to head of household" column in the census, in which the word "servant" is supposed to be listed, would have led the researcher to omit a very large number of middle class households. Taking occupation into account also enables us to distinguish the well-to-do middle class from the aristocracy and gentry, as previously stated.

Thus two criteria, the keeping of servants, which is listed under the "relationship to head of household" column of the census, and the rank or occupation of the head of household, which is listed under the "rank or occupation" column in the census, were used together to gather a sample middle class population from the general population described in the novels.

A wide range of income brackets is included in the definition of middle class. For example, taking number of servants as a rough indicator of income, an "annuitant" with one servant, a lawyer with three servants, and a factory owner with eight servants are all considered middle class. The decision to define "middle class" in this way is based on Gaskell's implicit definition as reflected in the population she describes.

Gaskell's implicit definition of the "middle class" population is essentially the same as that of her

contemporary, Karl Marx. He specifically praises Mrs. Gaskell's portrayal of the middle class which, he says, includes " every section of the middle class from the 'highly genteel' annuitant and Fundholder who looks upon all sorts of business as vulgar, to the little shopkeeper and lawyer's clerk" (Marx 1975[1854]:216). The middle class included mainly upwardly mobile former members of the working classes, but also the downwardly mobile segments of the gentility (F.M.L. Thompson 1963: 22). In general, both Marx's and Gaskell's definitions include an even broader range than does the above quote, encompassing all strata which, as Marx puts it, "are hemmed in by the aristocracy on the one hand and the working classes on the other" (1975[1854]:216)¹. By the mid-nineteenth century, the middle class had grown tremendously in size. While of great social and political import, its cultural significance was in the early stages of crystallization. The nuances of its cultural definition and identity are a pervasive theme in Gaskell's novels.

¹The term "middle class" includes a higher social stratum in much of nineteenth-century British literature than it does in the twentieth-century United States. In Britain, it refers to the wide range between the aristocracy and the gentry on the one hand and the laboring classes on the other. Thus the "middle class" in this usage includes very wealthy people who, in the twentieth-century United States, would be considered upper class but who in early Victorian England, since their wealth is not based on aristocratic land ownership, are referred to as middle class.

The growing economic power of the middle class, while the aristocracy and gentry² still remained in political control, forced the propertied classes to come into contact with the various segments of the mercantile and industrial middle class. As Engels points out, the aristocracy needed to make alliances with the middle class in order to stay financially afloat and the middle class in turn, needed political power and prestige. This process was well underway by Gaskell's time (Engels 1973: 111; F.M.L. Thompson 1963: 19-20).

In this period of rapid socio-economic change, the vestigial cultural category "rank" still had great

²The gentry is defined by F.M.L. Thompson, who says that the landed gentry

. . . came in a bewildering variety of shapes and sizes but contemporaries were confident that they formed a reasonably homogeneous group; the solid core of the landed interest, mainstay of the hunting field, and backbone of the resident magistracy which managed the country. To the genealogist and lawyer it was a simple enough matter to define them: they were the untitled aristocracy . . . entitled to hereditary arms.

(1963: 109)

He goes on to say that while it was often presumed in the nineteenth century that those with arms also had land, in fact this was often not the case. "In 1871, Burke was beginning to drop from the landed gentry families which had become separated from their land though not from their arms" (ibid.). Thompson shows that membership in the gentry was not subject to clear cut rules, but was "essentially a matter of social judgement" having to do with quantity of land, old family income, and "until after the middle of the nineteenth century . . . [lack of] connection with trade."

(Ibid.:110)

significance in terms of one's sense of belonging to a social group. Considering rank or occupation in isolating a middle class population from census lists also adds the dimension of culture to the definition of the middle class, since powerful cultural values were associated with different ranks and occupations--from "the 'highly genteel' annuitant and Fundholder to the little shopkeeper and lawyer's clerk" (Marx 1975[1854]: 216). Specifically, some middle class occupations were viewed as "genteel" and some were not.

The middle class households described by Gaskell are genteel. The term "genteel middle class" is derived from Gaskell's novels, in which the households described, while not wealthy, are comfortably off (though sometimes barely comfortably). They are not upper class; they are not aristocrats or gentry, yet they have a certain very distinct identity which is sometimes directly stated in the novel--they are "genteel."³ If they were considered to be part of a homogeneous middle class, their particular genteel attributes would be overlooked.

The genteel households described by Gaskell and the non-genteel households outlined in the census are not the

³The term "genteel middle class" is also supported by Marx's article, "The Middle Class in England" in which he mentions this particular "section of the middle class."

same in their composition. The discrepancies revealed between these two social segments teach us something about the complexities of the middle class as they are experienced in everyday life, on the domestic level, and with regard to demographic acts such as marriage. These differences between segments of the middle class will be explored in depth in the discussion of results.

While the genteel middle class described by Gaskell is not part of the gentry, it identifies itself culturally with the gentry. On the one hand, the genteel middle class defines itself in relation to the non-genteel middle class, looking down upon this other social segment. For example, when a genteel schoolteacher marries a wealthy but non-genteel man, it is exclaimed, "How can her gentility like being married to a tallow chandler?" (Mr. Harrison's Confessions: 193). On the other hand, it sees itself in relation to the gentry whom it admires and strives to emulate. Members of the genteel middle class occasionally interact with the gentry. For example, on a summer outing in Mr. Harrison's Confessions, "there were the Miss Tompkinsons, and two of their young ladies -- one of them belonged to a 'county family', Mrs. Bullock told me in a whisper . . ." (ibid.: 130).

Some of the genteel middle class are related to gentry families and even to the aristocracy through

affinal and consanguineal ties of various degrees of distance. For example,

Mrs. Forrester, although her circumstances have changed . . . was born a Tyrrell, and we can never forget her alliance to the Bigges of Bigelow Hall.

(Cranford: 107)

If a Baron's daughter-in-law could ever be supposed to snore, I should have said Mrs Jamieson did so then. . . .

(Ibid.: 112)

The heroines of Cranford, the Miss Jenkyns, are among the highest ranking of the genteel middle class "Cranford" group. They are related to a family called the "Arleys, of Arley Hall," and interacted with this family when their father was alive. Their younger brother, Peter, was of interest to Sir Peter Arley. Their brother's career

lay before him rather pleasantly mapped out by kind friends. . . . He was to win honours at Shrewsbury school, and carry them thick to Cambridge, and after that, a living [as a minister] awaited him, the gift of his godfather, Sir Peter Arley.

(Cranford: 93)

Many of the women in Cranford have some sort of connection with gentry families such as this, although some do not. The case of Mrs. Fitz-Adam proves enlightening, since the ladies of Cranford, who rather begrudgingly include her in their circle, discuss their criteria for so doing:

Now Mrs. Fitz-Adam was the widowed sister of the Cranford surgeon. . . . Their parents were respectable farmers, content with their station. The name of these good people was Hoggins. . . . Soon after Miss Mary Hoggins married Mr. Fitz-Adam she disappeared from the neighbourhood for many years. She did not

move in a sphere of Cranford society sufficiently high to make any of us care to know what Mr. Fitz-Adam was. He died . . . and then Mrs. Fitz-Adam reappeared in Cranford . . . a well-to-do widow, dressed in rustling black silk. . . . I remember the convocation of ladies who assembled to decide whether or not Mrs. Fitz-Adam should be called upon by the blue-blooded inhabitants of Cranford. She had taken a large rambling house, which had been usually considered to confer a patent of gentility upon its tenant; because, once upon a time, seventy or eighty years before, the spinster daughter of an earl had resided in it.

(Cranford: 108-109)

As this passage indicates, there are several patents of gentility in addition to being of "good family." If one's lifestyle is sufficiently genteel, for example if one dresses genteelly, and lives in a fine old house, and especially, for women, if one marries well,⁴ one might achieve genteel status. Genteel status may be achieved by men upon entering a profession which is defined as genteel. Mrs. Fitz-Adams' brother, Mr. Hoggins, for example, is in a social position similar to his sister in terms of marginal membership in the genteel community. He is a doctor, but his family were farmers. Mrs. Jamieson, the judge of all matters of etiquette in the genteel

⁴The discussion about Mrs. Fitz-Adam illustrates the importance in terms of genteel values, of the rule of hypergamy, which holds that a woman must marry her own rank or above it, and that she then assumes her husband's rank. The significance of this rule will be explored later in this study.

social circle, "tabooed him as 'vulgar,'"

. . . not merely on account of his name, but because of his voice, his complexion, his boots, smelling of the stable, and himself, smelling of drugs . . .

(Ibid.: 167)

Thus, Mrs. Fitz-Adam and her brother Mr. Hoggins illustrate the cultural complexity of the category "genteel."

For men, occupation is a very good indicator of gentility despite all the subtleties involved in categorizing anyone as genteel. The men who are included in the genteel society of "Cranford" are all professional men. In terms of the actual population of "Cranford" described in the novels, the professions of men considered genteel include: lawyer, officer in one of the branches of the armed forces and clergyman. Doctors were also considered genteel. Gaskell also indicates that teachers are genteel because of their access to high culture. For example, Mr. Hale, a poor tutor in North and South is more genteel than a wealthy industrialist who comes to him to be tutored in the classics. As his daughter Margaret explains:

'No,' said Margaret, 'That's very true [we don't have much money]. But we are educated people, and have lived amongst educated people. Is there anything so wonderful, in our being asked out to dinner by a man who owns himself inferior to my father by coming to him to be instructed?'

(North and South: 199)

Teaching is one of the only professions for genteel women in "Cranford." There are two sisters who run a school for young ladies (Mr. Harrison's Confessions). The young doctor, Mr. Harrison, has a rather unusual living arrangement in which the genteel widow of a doctor lives with him as a housekeeper, in exchange for rent. There is also the exception of Miss Matty Jenkyns. She runs a tea shop briefly in a period of crisis until her brother saves her from this situation, but she is still considered genteel. Most genteel women, even if not married, do not work. They live on independent means, in the form of annuities, rents or invested inherited money. Two of the men are only marginally genteel--Mr. Hoggins, the doctor son of a yeoman farmer and Mr. Harrison, a doctor. While genteel in manner, values and profession, Mr. Harrison is worried that the fact that his father was a tradesman will interfere with his chances of marrying the vicar's daughter. These professional men support themselves through their work, and also, perhaps with the exception of Mr. Hoggins, have sources of inherited income. This is occasionally explicitly stated. For example, Mr. Harrison receives an inheritance of five hundred pounds from a distant relative. The inherited incomes of these people are not enough, however, for a family to live on in a genteel manner. Therefore, the men must also work in one of the genteel professions. The

women more often manage to live genteelly on their modest annuities. They would not be able to support families on them, however. (See Appendix 2.)

Obviously these genteel households are very different economically from the landed gentry. They own no means of production. The men, who are allowed to work, must work in order to support families. The women sometimes work at the few occupations open to them, in order to support themselves. Nonetheless, this social segment does not identify culturally even with the non-genteel middle class, let alone with the working class. They see themselves as culturally and socially akin to the gentry and aristocracy and as superior to the non-genteel middle class, even to those who are wealthier than they are. The genteel middle class imitate and identify solely with those superior to them in rank--the gentry and the aristocracy. In turn, they are imitated by many in the non-genteel middle class. The Misses Barker, retired milliners, "aped their superiors in having 'nothing to do' with the class immediately below theirs" (Cranford: 106).

The Barkers carefully respect the rank of the genteel ladies of the town. Miss Barker gives a tea party, to which she invites the Cranford ladies. In discussing the guest list with Miss Jenkyns, she reveals the importance of the rules of social rank to her:

'Mrs. Jamieson is coming, I think you said? . . .'
'Yes, Mrs. Jamieson most kindly and condescendingly
said she would be happy to come . . .'

'Mrs. Fitz-Adam--I suppose--'

'No, madam. I must draw the line somewhere. . . .
I have the greatest respect for Mrs. Fitz-Adam--but I
cannot think her fit society for such ladies as Mrs.
Jamieson and Miss Matilda Jenkyns.'

Miss Betty Barker bowed low to Miss Matty, and
pursed up her mouth. She looked at me with sidelong
dignity, as much as to say, she was no democrat, and
understood the difference of ranks.

(Cranford: 107)

The Barkers' near obsession with rank and gentility, like
that of the Cranford ladies, is somewhat quaint and
old-fashioned. It conveys the sense that in their concern
with gentility the ladies are "protesting too much." Thus
Gaskell uses this obsolescent cultural category to
indicate large scale social change.

It is relevant to note the timing of what F.M.L.
Thompson sees as a change in the definition of gentry in
the context of the timing of Gaskell's novels. Thompson
says that until the end of the middle of the nineteenth
century, men who made their wealth through trade were not
considered to be part of the gentry, unless they were
retired and had acquired a landed estate, in which case
they were marginally acceptable. In Gaskell's novels,
which take place at this turning point, not only were such
people not part of the gentry, they are also not classed
as part of "the genteel middle class" which imitates the
gentry. Margaret Hale, the daughter of a poor clergyman,
makes this clear.

'Gormans,' said Margaret. 'Are those the Gormans who made their fortunes in trade at Southhampton? Oh! I'm so glad we don't visit with them. I don't like shabby people . . .'

'You must not be so fastidious, Margaret dear!' said her mother . . .

'No! I call mine a very comprehensive taste; I like all people whose occupations have to do with the land: I like soldiers and sailors and the three learned professions, as they call them . . .'

(North and South: 50)

Nonetheless, while this character is very definite as to what social categories it is appropriate for her to associate with, the entire plot of North and South is based on Margaret Hale's gradual recognition that in the context of industrial capitalism the cultural category "genteel" has changed in meaning. She is thus able to marry the self-made industrialist whom she loves.

The changing definition of class is brought up in the context of marriage in Cranford also. In the novel, set mainly in the 1840's, we look backward at Matty Jenkyn's youthful decision not to marry Mr. Holbrook, the yeomen farmer whom she loved. After Mr. Holbrook, now aged around seventy, dies, Miss Matty begins to wear widow's caps. Her effort to conceal her grief and regret is "the beginning of the tremulous motion of head and hands which I have ever since seen in Miss Matty"

(Cranford: 81). Matty Jenkyns' decision not to marry Mr. Holbrook is explained thus:

'And how came Miss Matilda not to marry him?'
'They did not like Miss Matty to marry below her rank. You know she is the rector's daughter, and somehow they are related to Sir Peter Arley . . .'

(Cranford:69)

On the other hand, thirty years later (in the novel's present), the more modern Lady Glenmire, an impoverished aristocrat, but higher in rank than anyone else in Cranford, happily marries Mr. Hoggins (the doctor who is a son of a yeoman farmer), oblivious to social rank and the rule of hypergamy. Her marriage is a clear contrast to Miss Matty Jenkyn's decision to opt for respectable spinsterhood. The ladies of "Cranford" react to the news with horror:

The person whom [Mrs. Jamieson] had left in charge of her house to keep off followers from her maids to set up a follower of her own! And that follower a man whom Mrs. Jamieson had tabooed as vulgar, and inadmissible to Cranford society . . .

Mrs. Forrester's surprise was equal to ours and her sense of injury rather greater, because she had a feel for her Order and saw more clearly than we could do how such conduct brought stains on the aristocracy.

(Ibid.: 167-68)

Nonetheless, the scandalous couple are very happy.

Gaskell is telling us that times have changed, or have begun to change, and that thirty years before it would have been much more difficult for Miss Matty to make the decision which Lady Glenmire made. Nonetheless, the culture lag embodied in the category "genteel" points out important aspects of social change in nineteenth century

England and illustrates how this change was experienced differently by different sections of the middle class.

Summary

The middle class as a whole is defined according to the criterion of the keeping of servants, the most crucial aid in finding middle class households in lists such as the census enumerators' books. The second criterion, that of rank or occupation, is helpful in isolating a middle class population from the census because it helps prevent errors. Furthermore, while rank or occupation is sometimes rather sketchy in the census, it is richly imbued with detail and with cultural meaning in the novels. This cultural meaning helps us make a further distinction, of segments within the middle class--of "genteel" and "non-genteel." The failure of the census to reveal this distinction leads to an initial contradiction between the census, which seems to describe a homogeneous middle class, and the novels, which include more detail and heterogeneity. The category "genteel" which the novels show to be obsolescent in some ways, is revealing, since the fact of its obsolescence is indicative of social change and gives clues to understanding particular aspects of change.

While Gaskell describes particular social situations and settings which are defined by her own class

background and interests, this in no way diminishes the "reality" of these settings. They existed in time and space. Gaskell does not, for example, describe the entire town on which Cranford is based, but she does describe in detail a particular social segment of that town, the genteel middle class. This social segment can be found in the census enumerators' books once one has been alerted to look for it. In other words, Gaskell's accurate observation of social phenomena is not only rich and dependable as a source of ethnographic material, it also gives clues as to how to interpret other sources. Once correctly used, it is possible to establish very strong statistical agreement between the census enumerators' book and Gaskell's novels. In this way we can establish that Gaskell was in fact describing social situations which she observed and not which she invented.

CHAPTER IV

CENSUS DATA

It is important for anthropologists who use the census as a source to have a critical awareness of the limitations of census data, and to recognize this source as a product of a particular political, economic and cultural context. The following discussion will explore the interests and cultural assumptions which produced specific categories of investigation in the nineteenth-century British census.

Historical Background

As early as 1753, a bill proposing a census of Great Britain was introduced to Parliament. It was defeated, however, amid great controversy. It was not until 1800 that an "Act for taking an Account of the Population of Great Britain, and of the increase or Diminution thereof" was passed into law (Glass 1978: 91). The decision to take the census was motivated by several issues. England was involved in a rivalry with France at the time and her wartime economy created new political and economic needs. For example, it was important to have an

enumeration of the able-bodied men potentially available for conscription as well as for purposes of taxation. Furthermore, the families of absent soldiers created an increased demand for poor relief, and poverty was exacerbated by the bad harvest of 1800 (ibid. and Drake 1972: 8). Even more important than the specific problems of the wartime economy, was the huge political and economic upheaval of the early Industrial Revolution and of the massive changes in agriculture. With industrialization and with the spread of capitalist farming policies, there was a great displacement of population, a tremendous growth of cities and widespread rural and urban poverty. The early mercantilist idea that all population growth was beneficial was challenged. Furthermore, by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the landed interest and the growing manufacturing interest were at odds with regard to the price of corn, the manufacturing interest calling for the import of corn and hence low corn prices, lower wages and lower overhead, and the landed interest calling for insured high revenues through the limitation of imports. This was the period in which Malthus wrote his treatise on population growth, expounding a view which supported the interests of the landed sector.

Two specific issues which John Rickman, the "father" of the British census, put forth in his argument

for a census were that Britain had changed from a corn exporting to a corn importing economy and that it was vital to understand this in terms of supply and demand within Britain for future policy-making. "No society can confidently pretend to provide the requisite quantity of food, till they know the number of consumers" (Rickman, quoted in Glass: 108). The price of corn was the cause of hunger and rioting. Another issue he raised was the need for the government to develop a better image among the people to avoid open rebellion:

We have seen the Government of England terrified by the attempts of certain obscure individuals, who would not have attracted its notice but from a higher fear of more general disaffection. It would certainly tend much to the repose of any Government, if a general conviction of its inclination and attempts to promote the public good should pervade the public mind.

(Rickman, quoted in Glass: 109).

Rickman was convinced that the census would be interpreted by the public as an attempt to improve the standard of living by lowering the price of corn. He thus represented the industrial sector, who wanted to keep corn prices, and hence wages, down. He also saw this aid to government policy-making as potentially leading to even greater benefits:

The causes [of population increase] . . . might be successfully scrutinized and attended to by an intelligent administration . . . On such a foundation what a glorious plan might be sketched by some happy intellect--what glorious superstructure might be raised by Government anxious for the good of its subjects!

(Rickman, quoted in Glass: 108)

As Drake (1972: 30) points out, the history of the census attests to the struggle going on among the various segments of the ruling class in England in the nineteenth century. Opponents of the census were drawn in large part from the ranks of the landed sector who opposed lowering of the price of corn. Proponents were drawn largely from the industrial and mercantile middle class. However, the complexity of the situation is illustrated by the fact that the industrial and mercantile interests, who advocated a laissez-faire policy with regard to grain import, were in this instance advocating a measure which gave more power to the state. Proponents of the census, such as Rickman, advocated greater centralization, an expanded government bureaucracy, and greater penetration of the state into daily life.

While in general these were the groups which took part in the debate over the census, as Glass remarks, "it is difficult to be categorical in respect to the final decision to introduce the Census Bill" (1973: 97). Drake shows that during the first three decades of the nineteenth century at least, neither side really took precedence over the other, but that they battled out a series of compromises. This, says Drake, is exemplified by the fact that each decennial census was the subject of heated debate in Parliament as to whether it would be carried out at all. There was also "extreme reluctance to

extend the range of inquiries, the refusal to set up a permanent office, the marked emphasis on the costs of the operation, all [of which] indicate a deliberate unwillingness to exploit the full potential of the census" (ibid.).

Census Procedure

The early censuses (1801, 1811, 1821, 1831) were carried out under the directorship of John Rickman. They were administered by the Overseers of the Poor. Partly due to Rickman's low opinion of the intelligence of these bureaucrats (ibid.: 24), the questions asked in the early censuses were very simple. They were a basic tallying up of the population and included very general information as to sex, age and occupation. The questions asked are so general that it is impossible to glean from them detailed information about household composition.

Rickman died before the 1841 census was taken, although he may have had a hand in its design (Glass 1978: 91). The 1841 census was carried out under T. H. Lister, the Registrar General, whose office was founded in 1837 in an attempt to centralize information from parish registers as well as from other sources of demographic information. Thus the 1841 census was much more thorough and informa-

tive and more efficiently carried out than were the earlier censuses.

The new census was supervised by officials of the Registrar General's Office. With the creation of this office, six hundred and twenty four registration districts each with a Superintendent, were delineated. These districts were coextensive with the new Poor Law Unions of 1834. Each district was divided into subdistricts (two thousand, one hundred and ninety in all) and these were further divided for the census into enumeration districts (in 1841, over thirty thousand) (Armstrong 1972: 30). Census enumerators were chosen by the Superintendent Registrars on the basis of literacy, good character references and if possible, a familiarity with the enumeration district. It was also considered preferable for the enumerator's permanent employment to be in "any degree of a similar kind" (Census Commissioners of 1841, quoted in Drake 1972: 25), such as clerk, schoolmaster or other profession involving writing and arithmetic.

Lister, aiming to minimize the distortion caused by the high degree of mobility of the population, devised a plan whereby the census would be completed in one day. People were counted as part of whatever household they were in at the time of the census, whether they were residents of that household or not. Hence, the British census is de facto, not de jure. Householders' census schedules were distributed a few days before the census.

Then all of these forms were collected in one day by the census enumerators. The enumerators looked over the forms in the presence of the householder, filling in any incomplete data by verbal inquiry. They then collected them to transcribe information into their enumerator's books according to a complete set of instructions (see Appendix 3).

The enumerators also tabulated some basic population summaries. After the one week allowed for this, their books were sent to the local registrar, who examined them for errors and after making the necessary revisions, shipped them to the census office in London. In London, the enumerators' books were subject to further scrutiny. More revisions were made for such things as inconsistent entries of age and sex and correctness of totals at the bottom of each page (Armstrong 1972: 31).

The most significant improvements of the 1841 census, for the purposes of students of household composition, were the recording of the address of the house, the Christian and surnames of each household member, the age of persons over fifteen years old, rounded off to the nearest, lowest fifth year interval. It is possible to extrapolate a great deal of information on household composition from these data. On the other hand, much conjecture is still necessary, because one can only use sex, surnames and relative ages to reconstruct

relationships between members of the household.

Relationships are not explicitly stated.

The 1851 census took a great stride forward in improving the data for the study of household composition by requiring that the relationship of each household member to the head of the household be clearly stated. The categories of relationship allowed in the census enumerators' instructions are: kin, such as wife, mother, daughter, son, granddaughter, aunt, brother-in-law, stepdaughter, etc., servant, visitor, and lodger. Sometimes the enumerators had difficulty fitting their subjects into these categories, and resorted to idiosyncratic categories, such as: "apprentice," "governess," "nurse-child" (which means foster child), and so on. For example, one entry in the Knutsford census of 1851 shows a woman's relationship to the head of household to be "midwife" and a baby son is listed as "less than one month old." Perhaps the baby was born at the time the census was being taken, and the midwife was in attendance. These idiosyncratic categories are very useful to the student of household organization since they are much more explicit than the proper categorization. Unfortunately, however, they are very rare. More often than not the enumerators squeezed people into categories which did not quite fit--for example, calling an apprentice or governess

a "servant," or calling a foster child or a midwife "visitor." The enumerator's decision to categorize people in such ways, while adhering to the rules of the census, is just as idiosyncratic, but the idiosyncracies are disguised where the enumerator adheres to the prescribed forms.

Problems with the Census Material

As most historical demographers are aware, the use of even the 1851 census and those following it for the study of household composition is fraught with difficulties. Armstrong 1972; Tillot 1972; Anderson 1972; and Wrigley 1972, are just a few of the historical demographers who describe these difficulties in detail. As Wrigley pointed out:

There is a delusive clarity and apparent authority in the printed word or digit. But what is printed in a census volume or any other statistical publication represents the last operation in a long chain of data collection and collation, subject to error, omission and misinterpretation at every stage from the phrasing of the original enquiry to the proofreading of the printer's galley.

(1972: 1)

One of the inaccuracies incurred in the nineteenth century is the result of a lack of cooperation among

segments of the population.¹ Drake describes the resistance of the poor in rural Ireland to the census of 1841 (1972: 21). The urban poor were also often elusive subjects (ibid.: 23). On a smaller scale, difficulties also came up when particular members of a population misrepresented themselves to the enumerator for whatever reason--perhaps fear that the enumerator, who was often known to the neighborhood, would spread gossip; perhaps a more general desire to appear to adhere to socially acceptable norms.

Another source of error was the lack of cooperation or the incompetence of the enumerator. The problems of the minimal literacy of the enumerators and of instances of dishonesty and incompetence, were commented on by Registrars General and by the press (ibid.: 25). Furthermore, the prejudices of enumerators caused them to superficially gloss over certain segments of the population. For example, it is evident that undercounting resulted from the enumerators' often peremptory inquiries in slum housing, where they were loathe to spend the time necessary to get more complete information (ibid.). It also seems likely that the enumerators, who in 1841 were allowed to choose between being paid by number of houses

¹The importance of this as a cause of error is evidenced by the 1980 census of the United States.

or number of people counted, might add to the total.

Another possible source of error is inconsistency in the enumerators' use of the census categories--as for example under the heading "relation to head of household" discussed above. There was also the tendency to sometimes include servants as part of the household (as instructed) and sometimes not. Further problems in the collection of census data had to do with timing. For example, there was adverse comment on the timing of the 1841 census, which took place during the June harvest period when many people were away from home, sleeping in outbuildings in the fields and when there were many temporary Irish migrant laborers (*ibid.*: 29).

As should be evident, there is an almost infinite number of possible practical problems in the gathering of census data. Many of these are very simple and straightforward, such as those discussed above. However, a more elusive and possibly more pervasive source of error in the collection of data has to do with the definition of categories. This problem has already been touched on with regard to the census enumerators' idiosyncratic definitions of "relation to head of household." In addition, certain terms might be differently understood in different regions, as seems to have been the case with the

word "nurse," for example. In 1841 there were many "nurses" in England or Wales, while in Scotland there were none, indicating that the word was interpreted differently there (ibid: 29). An even more fundamental source of error resulting from the problem of definition of categories has to do with the definition of the basic social unit studied by the census--the household.

The Household

The household is the basic census category, and one with which this study is concerned. It is therefore important to explore some of the changes in the definition of "household" during the nineteenth century.

In 1841, there was no consistent definition of "family" or "household" spelled out for the enumerators by the Registrar General. Rather, the instructions to the enumerators of that census left it to their individual discretion to record this social unit. See Appendix 3. Ten years later, in the 1851 General Report on the Census, the problem of definition of "family" and "household" was explicitly addressed. It was stated that the household, had in the previous census been tacitly defined in terms of what the General Report implied to be the "traditional" English definition of family:

The family in the sense which it has acquired in England, consists of the occupier of the house (his other roles--householder, master, husband, father), his wife, children, servants, relatives, and visitors

and persons constantly or accidentally in the house.

(Quoted in Armstrong 1972: 49)

In other words, "family" as traditionally defined in England was similar to the Roman familia.²

It is significant that this definition became a matter of discussion in the mid-nineteenth century. While still not entirely consistent in its usage, the 1851 census redefined the social unit it was studying, and distinguished between (1) the household, or "unit of occupation" and (2) the natural "family." The "natural family" was given the more modern usage--husband, wife and dependent children, as well as a few close relatives. It was made clear that this was not the unit which the census was recording. The census was recording what it defined as "occupation units" or "households." This social unit was defined in terms virtually identical to those of the 1851 General Report quoted above in describing the traditional "family." The "occupier" is (1) a resident owner or a person who pays the rent whether as (2) a tenant or as a (3) lodger, for any distinct floor or apartment (ibid.). This social unit as recorded in the

²Gaskell uses the term "family" in this sense. For example she enumerates her family thus: "we are a large family,--(Mr. Gaskell, myself, and four daughters, not always at home, cook, housemaid, waiter, nurse, and sempstress)" (Letters of Mrs. Gaskell: 618). In a discussion of French middle class life, she says that to live on one floor, in a flat, is beneficial to the relationship between mistress and maids because it unites them "in a more complete family bond" ("French Life": 609).

1851 census is almost identical statistically to the "traditional" family recorded in the earlier censuses. We can thus be confident that we are comparing the same units of analysis in the censuses prior to 1851 and those done in 1851 and after.

In cultural terms, however, what is even more significant is that the term "natural family" was officially given a new, more modern usage, referring to the nuclear family and a few other close relatives (ibid.). This is a usage which emphasizes its separateness from society. Such a redefinition of "household" and "family" has implications which reflect political, economic and cultural change during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Davidoff argues that in the period 1780 to 1850 there was a process of redefinition of masculinity and femininity, home and work.

The central belief that emerged during this period was that of a male breadwinner gaining a livelihood through work and maintaining his female (and child) dependents within the home, . . . In this view, husband and wife were the archetype, but father and child, brother and sister, uncle and niece, master and servant reproduced the relationships of clientage and dependency. These expectations were not only themes in contemporary commentaries; they were embodied in important new legal codes such as the Poor Law of 1834.

(Davidoff 1979: 64)

The census was also an area in which these expectations about sex roles were embodied.

In the process of industrialization and urbanization, the locus of productive work moved from the

household to the factory and office. As Tilly and Scott (1978) have shown, while lower class women continued to work both in the household and in the factory or in the fields, middle class women were not generally wage earners. Davidoff (1979) points out, however, that many lower middle class women and well-off working class women contributed substantially to the family income through work such as tending to lodgers in their homes.

With the general economic growth and the growing bureaucracy of this period, the middle class crystallized primarily out of the upwardly mobile working class. In this process, it became a widespread status symbol for women not to work. The economic, technological and political forces which separated the middle class from the working class were augmented by cultural and ideological justifications of this separateness. The idealization of the nuclear family is a good example of this. As Rapp (1978) has pointed out, the role of the middle class woman, the keeper of the cozy nest, the "haven in a heartless world" (Lasch, cited in Rapp), was a luxury which the poor could not afford, since poor women often worked outside the home. Furthermore, it should be stressed that the middle class romanticization of the home as a nest and of the woman as its keeper was not merely a luxury nor a passive mode of behavior. Rather, it must be understood as an active ideological statement by the

various strata of the middle class of their separateness from the working class.

This then is the basic political significance of the redefinition of the terms "family" and "household" for the 1851 census. While continuing to count the patriarchal household in the same terms as "family in the sense which it has acquired in England" in the earlier censuses, within this group of not necessarily related people, it posited a smaller "natural family." This is made explicit in the General Report on the census issued in 1873. Here, the "Domestic Class" of the occupational census, was divided into two "Orders": Order Five, which referred to servants, and Order Four, which

consists entirely of women; it embraces the majority of the women engaged in the most useful of all occupations, that of wife, mother, and mistress of the family . . .

(Quoted in Davidoff 1979: 67)

The 1873 Report goes on to say that women in Order Four "are not paid directly in money for their services as they form a part of the natural family" (ibid., italics added). One of the implications of this statement is that the social unit "household" contains servants and others under the authority of the pater familias, and that within the household is a subset, the "natural family."

Laslett's work shows a specific example of potential distortion caused by the non-critical use of census categories. He relies heavily on the 1851 British

census for his definition of the "co-resident domestic group" or household. His definition is as follows:

In the first place come the man, his wife and their socially recognized children. In the second place come all other resident relatives. . . . In the third place come all servants. . . . Servants like other members of the group, were subject to the jurisdiction of the head of the household. . . . Common subjection to domestic authority . . . made servants as much members of the master's family (that is, his household in our usage) as his wife, his children and his resident relatives (footnote #42: for the jurisdiction of the household head as a defining principle, see the English census of 1851). . . . But there were, and are, certain . . . residents of the household in an ambiguous position. These are the visitors, guests of the family, the lodgers and boarders.

(Laslett 1972: 26)

Looking back at the 1851 census definition quoted above, it is clear that Laslett's definition of the "co-resident domestic group" is based, almost verbatim, on the 1851 census discussion of "the family in the sense which it has acquired in England." Laslett intends this definition to function as a neutral, scientific tool for the study of households in all societies. He is thus ignoring a crucial point. The very fact that the household had to be redefined in this period and distinguished from the "natural family," indicates that household organization and its cultural significance were changing. There is nothing natural or universal about this particular definition of the household unit. In fact, as this study shows, even in nineteenth-century England, there were problems in applying this model of the household, which was not completely isomorphic with

reality for all segments of the middle class.

The definition of categories of investigation in the census and the decision to take the census, were by no means objective. Rather, they were products of specific historic processes and represent economic, political and socio-cultural change.

CHAPTER V

THE NOVEL

The Novel as a Source

The novel emerged in the eighteenth century as a literary form inviting readers to view their world or the world of another time and place as a reflection of the society they lived in. Sometimes the novel depicts the adventures of an individual like Moll Flanders, buffeted from one hostile and competitive environment to another; sometimes it describes a child like David Copperfield or Pip growing up in a world where human values have been perverted by acquisitive, greedy adults, and only a rare kindly adult (like Joe or Magwitch in Great Expectations or Betsy Trotwood in David Copperfield) can provide refuge from a hostile world; sometimes it explores the individual psyche through stream of consciousness and reveals the texture of the society through amassing the details impressed upon an individual, as in James Joyce or Virginia Woolf.

Whether the novel centers on an individual's stream of consciousness or tackles the manners of the society at

large, it reveals through its selection of detail the world of its time. Since they carefully detail the physical and social world to present a setting in which characters interact and think, these details, if used methodically, can provide concrete ethnographic data.

The word "fiction" has had both derogatory and favorable meanings attached to it. "Deceptive invention" is the derogatory connotation, while "imaginative descriptive writing" is clearly more favorable (Williams 1976: 113). Williams shows that the word "novel," which came to be applied to a particular kind of fiction work in the late eighteenth century, also had two connotations which paralleled those of "fiction." The word "novel" had been associated with "fiction" in the sense of "deceptive invention" until the mid-nineteenth century, when it began instead to connote "imaginative descriptive writing." The word "novelette" took on the more derogatory meaning. Williams observes that, "Indeed we can now say that sometimes novelettes, or bad novels, are pure fiction, while novels (serious fiction) tell us about real life" (ibid.).

Williams also notes the importance of "social alignment," that is, the recognition of "specific (and in Marxist terms, class) relations" of "specific men" to "specific situations and experiences" (1977: 201) in

shaping fiction. "Political commitment," meaning "conscious, active, open . . . choice of position" is also important (ibid.). As Williams notes, Marx and Engels recognize this in criticizing "tendentious" literature in which political phrases and opinions are almost gratuitously inserted (ibid.). Since social alignment and sincere political commitment are lacking in such fiction, it does not ring true. Conversely, "the splendid brotherhood of fiction writers in England" produce "the profound social and historical critique and analysis" (ibid.) which they do, because their clear social alignment and political commitment make possible a thorough absorption in the culture they describe.

Contrary to the view that "high literature" is the "least reliable" source for social research, less reliable than "inferior literature" (Laslett 1966), good novels, "serious fiction," can better be regarded as telling us "about real life" (Williams 1976: 113). That is, they aim to constitute reality as much as do sources such as official records or ethnography. Furthermore, the social alignment and political commitment motivating the constitution of reality in some ways make the novel richer than other sources.

This aim, to constitute reality, is an important similarity between novels, official record, and ethnography. These forms differ, however, largely with

regard to their uses of the convention of "objectivity" versus that of "subjectivity." All of these forms exist in relation to an audience, which expects certain uses of them. In fiction the emotional involvement of the writer as well as the reader is expected. This emotional involvement is defined in western culture as "subjective." At the same time, the reader expects a "real" setting and expects the characters to be convincing, even though the events which take place are usually dramatic and often atypical. The reader anticipates more intense living in the novel than in actual life, but this intensity is expected to be believable and familiar in the sense that, however unlikely the circumstances, they are possible, and the human beings described are psychologically capable of behaving as they do.

While fiction is defined as "subjective," sources like ethnography and official records employ the convention of "neutral objectivity." This is certainly the case with census material, although it is as subject to bias and inaccuracy as any other source. Other literary sources, journalism, for example, are expected to be more "objective" than the novel. Nineteenth-century travel writing, a form which Gaskell used, was expected to give "true" descriptions, to serve the purpose a photograph or documentary film now serves, satisfying the

viewer's desire to believe that he may now draw his own conclusions about the image conveyed to him by the seemingly culturally aseptic vehicle of the camera.¹

Ethnography, of course, also employs the convention of scholarly "neutral objectivity." Like all these other sources, the ethnography is the product of dialectical relationships, in this case between anthropologist and informant and between anthropologist and audience. The general expectation of the audience, that the ethnography will be "objective," thorough and "true," very much shapes its writing. As noted earlier Murphy (1971), Crapanzano (1977), Dwyer (1979), and Dimen (1981) all comment on the disjointedness of the experience of ethnographic writing, in which the anthropologist who accepts the convention of "objectivity" finds it impossible to convey his experience within this limitation. Murphy theoretically accepts but emotionally rejects this limitation saying that "a sense of loss and unfulfillment" always accompanies the writing of ethnography, "if we have done our jobs properly," i.e. if the study is "objective" (1971: 11).

Part of the difference between the novel and ethnography comes from the differences in the authors' ideas of their audience. The audience for novels is

¹Of course, as Sontag (1977) and Berger (1980) have pointed out, photography is as much a product of cultural and individual expression as writing or any other medium.

usually people who are either like those described in the book, or at least of the same society even if of different class background. The novelist gives a microcosmic view of the daily experience of these people, heightened in emotional intensity. The novelist's position is usually that of a very knowledgeable native of the culture he is describing. Ethnographers on the other hand, in using the convention of objectivity, take the position of observers of a culture, removed from the emotional experience of the people described. People's emotions may be discussed, and sometimes descriptions may be very moving, but the aim of the ethnographer is not to describe daily life in an emotionally intense context. While some anthropologists are concerned that their ethnographic work ring true to people in the culture studied, the audience is not generally the people in the culture described. Rather, it is specific people in the culture of the ethnographer-- usually other anthropologists and social scientists who can use the "objective" information provided for their own studies, and who will respect the ethnographer for the skillfulness of his work.

As anthropologists become more involved in the study of complex, literate cultures it becomes increasingly possible for informants to read the ethnographer's work. Nonetheless, the convention of objectivity still removes the ethnographer from his

informants, no matter how much he respects them. He is not entering into their world fully and emotionally as long as he employs this convention. As Dwyer (1979) points out, when the convention of "objectivity" is abandoned and the actual relationship between ethnographer and informant is taken seriously, the richer exploration of the interaction between people from two cultures gives a better understanding of both.

Good fiction combines aspects of ethnographic writing, fieldwork and of firsthand informants' accounts. Like ethnographic writing it describes people in their daily socio-cultural context and aims to constitute "reality." Like fieldwork, the process of fiction writing involves a dynamic relationship between the writer and the people described. Like firsthand informants' accounts, fiction is the product of a person who actually belongs to the culture in question and who thus constitutes "reality" from within culturally significant categories. Furthermore, good novelists try for psychological verity, are openly and sincerely socially aligned and politically committed and engage emotionally with both the audience and the subject matter. They thus accomplish much of what Dwyer recommends for ethnographers. Even if the narrator has a detached stance, it is still acknowledged that the author is familiar with the cultural web of meaning, knows the cultural categories of significance with subtle

awareness and in fact is not culturally separate from the people described, even if the work is satirical or critical of them. The very act of satirizing or criticizing indicates involvement in a society by an interest in changing it.

A similarity between ethnographic and novel writing is that both ethnographer and novelist constitute reality within a particular structure. Ethnographers structure this according to a theory. The theoretical assumptions point up particular themes as important. Such themes might include relations between the sexes, subsistence techniques, political systems and/or symbolic systems. Similarly, novelists use a thematic structure, a plot, to order their constitution of reality. They combine observation with theoretical assumptions and hypotheses, just as ethnographic writing combines these elements. In selecting particular themes as important, the novelist is employing a kind of theory, since it contains certain assumptions of priorities and certain hypotheses about cause and effect. According to these assumptions and hypotheses, novelists describe events they invent or elaborate. The thematic structure, the plot, of a novel involves crises, such as the violation of social norms or the occurrence of calamities. Novelists show how people's relationships shift in the context of such crises.

Anthropologists (Murphy 1971; Silverman 1967) have shown that it is precisely when a norm is violated or when some crisis occurs that cultural categories and systems of relationships are thrown into bolder relief. This is true in novels as well. Novelists imagine such crises and the reactions to them, based on thorough enculturation in the society described and on the ability to reflect on and observe this society. Ethnographers cannot plan these complications (although they may create some themselves by their very presence). Instead, they try to observe what happens when the cultural categories they have constructed based on participant observation, conversations with informants, interviews, etc., are run up against when a crisis occurs in the society studied. The cultural categories which ethnographers observe and record are challenged in actual occurrences, just as the cultural categories forming a novel's plot are challenged in the crises which make for dramatic interest.

Ethnographers have an advantage over novelists in that they can conceive of alternatives to behavior which may seem natural and inevitable to the novelists and their audience. Novelists are limited both in what they can present as a dramatic crisis and in the responses of the characters they have created to this crisis by their own cultural experience and by that of their audience. This is, however, only a slightly different form of limitation

from that of even the most thorough and empathic ethnographers who, after all, are limited by their own cultural experience, interests and theory as well as by those of their audience. For example, the excellent Tiwi Wives (Goodale 1971) focuses largely on female subsistence activities as perceived by a female anthropologist doing her field work in a period when men's and women's economic roles were the focus of much debate. Another anthropologist with another set of theoretical interests, personal concerns and cultural background would have written a different ethnography.² Thus, both novels and ethnography are structured by the cultural limitations, interests and theoretical concerns of the writers and their audience.

At the same time, the very limitation of the novel--the fact that it is culturally limited, that the cultural categories and the crises themselves are of necessity reflective of the novelist's own point of view and cultural background--is one of its great strengths as an ethnographic source. In this sense, novelistic data may be compared to data gathered from informants. It should also be noted that in terms of the anthropological study of history, the student of the literate society in

²In fact, Goodale makes the point that the ethnographic writings done by Hart and Pilling (1960) did depict this society very differently in many respects.

which the novel is an art form has a great advantage over the student of non-literate societies. A novel may be regarded as an interview structured by the informant rather than by the anthropologist, containing answers to questions which the anthropologists may never have thought to ask. Sources such as traveller's or missionary's accounts, on the other hand, necessitate constant allowances for the writers' tendency to order data in terms of their own cultural categories which differ from those of the natives.

To a great extent, anthropologists depend on data given by informants. Some informants may only submit to be interviewed for the sake of the material reward they expect in return. Some may perceive the anthropologist as representing a dominant, feared and resented political power. They may lie outright, may try to please by answering in terms of their own cultural ideals, or may answer in terms of what they perceive to be the ideals of the culture they see the anthropologist as representing. There are many instances in which anthropologists describe such problems. Evans-Pritchard provides the classic example. The British colonial government was actively raiding the Nuer when he did his field work, so that:

When I entered a cattle camp it was not only as a stranger but as an enemy, and they seldom tried to conceal their disgust at my presence, refusing to answer my greetings and even turning away when I addressed them.

(1972 [1940]: 11)

Evans-Pritchard does not make the obvious connection between the fact that he was an enemy, and that he had difficulty communicating with the Nuer.³

On the other hand, many informants sincerely enjoy talking with an anthropologist, who may be one of the only persons they will ever meet to whom reflective conversations about their own culture and their life histories, as well as mundane gossip and reminiscence are important. With these informants too, anthropologists have to continually struggle to develop an effective conscious and unconscious mode of communication. They must learn to understand this individual's motivation in giving a piece of information and the mood between the two of them, as well as the meaning of a gesture or of a tone of voice.

Many anthropologists have described informants who, because of their exceptional powers of observation and curiosity about their own cultures, and often because of a high level of competence as members of their own cultures, were especially useful. Sidney Mintz, who wrote a biography of an informant and friend describes him thus:

He is very perceptive and possesses a great capacity for examining the things about him and reflecting on them. He is cautious in his explanations, and many times when I would ask him how something was done, or

³Informants in a government census are, similarly, at least as unreliable as any informant an anthropologist might encounter. In fact, there is the further disadvantage that a uniform nationwide census cannot possibly be designed to ask questions relevant to the particular communities, classes and subcultures within it.

what people thought about something, he would insist on telling me how he would do it, or how he thought about it. Early in our friendship I discovered after I left the field that I had forgotten to collect an important and fairly complicated body of data from a sample of sixty informants. I asked Taso in a letter if he would try to do the job for me, and he agreed. I have saved the sheets of data he sent me: they are a model of intelligent data collection.

(Mintz 1960: 9)

Similarly, Chagnon describes an important informant:

Kaobawa's . . . knowledge of details was almost encyclopedic. More than that, he was enthusiastic and encouraged me to learn details that I might otherwise have ignored. If there were things he did not know intimately, he would advise me to wait until he could check things out with someone in the village.

(Chagnon 1968: 13)

This curiosity about one's own culture, a curiosity which is likely to be further stimulated in the process of sharing opinions and observations with an anthropologist, is the most valued trait of Mintz' and Chagnon's informants.

Good novelists share this basic attribute. In addition, like good informants, they have an awareness of the social norms of their own society. Thackeray and Dickens share a sense of the ridiculous, and of the injustice of many social norms. Jane Austen has an unusual awareness of social norms and values, and a keen sense of the absurdity of them. At times, Gaskell uses

such an awareness to point out social injustice--as for example in Ruth, which is about an unmarried mother, and at other times for comic effect, for example the rigid adherence to etiquette in Cranford. Charlotte Brontë, certainly not much of a humorist, uses her awareness of social norms with an almost naive freshness which is often shocking. We see in all its rawness the injustice of individuals to one another because of their adherence to cultural norms, as when the young Jane Eyre is mistreated by her cousins because she is an orphan and is poor. In Brontë's novel, Shirley, the narrator openly rages against the social strictures placed on women in nineteenth-century middle class England.

All of these great novelists are able to conceive of the existence of alternative sets of cultural beliefs and values. For example, unlike many Victorian middle class women, Gaskell is able to conceptualize a social system in which unwed mothers are not necessarily branded as dangerous and perverse. In addition, all of these novelists are like the informant described by Mintz in that they are very perceptive and "possess a great capacity for examining the things around them and reflecting on them" (Mintz 1960: 9), social norms and social relationships included. They are ahead of their times, and in this sense able to step outside of their cultures, at least temporarily.

The ability to see social norms as cultural constructs and not as part of the natural order of things seems to be one of the attributes which is most valued in an informant by anthropologists in the field. "The way we do things" is not necessarily something which good informants rebel against or want to change--although they might--but it is something they are able to distance themselves from somewhat, to observe and reflect on. Such informants have cultivated an awareness of their cultures in themselves, so that, whether or not they believe in and adhere to the social norms, they can formulate an explanation of what the norms are and what they think about them. This formulation is usually at the prodding of anthropologists, who have their own reasons for asking their questions. Informants give what is considered to be primary data, and the observations made by anthropologists of informants and others in the society of study, are considered to be primary also. But try as anthropologists might to get at the cultural categories of the natives, they are formulating their questions in terms of their own cultural categories. Compared to ethnographic data then, novels as data are at least as "primary" as field notes and interviews. They are perhaps even more so, since novelists are asking questions in terms of their own cultural categories, setting up dramas in which social norms are questioned in the context of everyday life.

Novelists may thus be seen as both informants and ethnographers. Like ethnographers, they define the questions to be explored. Like informants, they answer from within the context of the cultural categories of the society that is being explored. Thus, the great importance of novels as an ethnographic source lies in the fact that good novelists are not only good informants in terms of their descriptions of many aspects of their society. They also systematize and interpret these data in cultural categories of significance within the culture itself. Novelists' descriptions and analyses are not only "actor-oriented" (Geertz 1973: 15), they are produced by "actors" in the culture described.

The Victorian Novel as a Source

In the 1840's a new style of publication developed which had an important impact on the novel as a form. This was serial publication, in which a novel would appear in monthly or weekly installments over a period ranging from several months to about a year and a half. Installments, appearing either in paperbound editions or in magazines, were cheap and available to a wide audience. Although some novels were written in their entirety before publication and then broken up for serialization, more often serial publication meant that a novelist kept writing the book as earlier chapters were published and

read. The relationship between novelists and audience was thus an actual, ongoing interaction which affected the writing of the novel. Writers had the reactions of their audience to work with, much as an actor doing structured improvisation works with the reactions of a live audience. Thus, if a new twist in the plot or introduction of a new character was not well received and sales dropped, the writer could adjust the story accordingly. Dickens was deluged with mail when Little Nell was dying, begging him to let her live.

While not all novelists published in this form, most did, at least occasionally. Dickens almost always did, and in fact, he edited two fiction magazines. Thackeray almost invariably published serially and also edited a magazine. Brontë published in volumes but not in monthly magazines. Gaskell often published serially in magazines, usually either in Dickens' Household Words or in his All the Year Round.

In the Victorian period, it was a widespread practice for a father to spend evenings reading to his family. This, combined with serial publication in which the writer was quickly aware of audience response, probably exacerbated informal censorship. Words had to be fit to fall from the lips of a Victorian patriarch in the presence of his wife and children. While blatant sexuality was taboo, crime and violence, romance, scandal, financial wheeling and dealing, religion and death were

all popular topics. Sensationalism, moralizing, sentimentality and satire were pervasive in the work of great novelists as well as mediocre ones. Thus, not only was the Victorian audience able to make its preferences known, but the custom of reading novels in family gatherings itself affected what it demanded of respectable novelists. The selection of details in these novels was a reflection both of the author's concerns and of the demands placed on them by their audience. Serialization and home reading were a very strong influence on Victorian novelists.

Serial publication no doubt influenced the convoluted form of Victorian novels. New twists were constantly being introduced into the intricate plots and subplots and networks of coincidence in which virtually all of the characters are somehow linked. Gaskell's North and South involves financial crises for two men, several deaths (two of which are violent), several marriages, the mutiny and exile of a beloved brother, a crisis of religious belief, mob violence and a passionate, although subdued love affair. This crowding of sensational events is not unusual. In skeleton form only, such plots seem farfetched and unlikely. In the hands of mediocre novelists they are unbelievable and often boring. Good Victorian novelists, however, create a very convincing

psychological atmosphere and intensely believable relationships.

The sense of realism in good Victorian novels comes from the fine textured richness of their description, not their plots. Gaskell, Thackeray, Brontë and Dickens all use detail to ground plots in worlds which feel very concrete. For example, in Gaskell's North and South, when the fugitive son has returned home to be with his dying mother, we are told:

Frederick had broken down. . . . He cried so violently when shut up alone in his little room at night, that Margaret and Dixon had to warn him to be quiet: for the house partitions were but thin, and the next-door neighbours might easily hear his youthful passionate sobs . . .

(North and South: 316)

When Mr. Thornton begins to become romantically interested in Margaret, he and Mr. and Mrs. Hale discuss factory air pollution while Margaret does her worsted work:

'At any rate, Mr Thornton,' said Mrs Hale, 'you will allow that Milton is a much more smoky, dirty town than you will ever meet with in the South.'

'. . . But I think you told me you had not altered your chimneys so as to consume the smoke had you not?' asked Mr Hale.

'Mine were altered by my own will, before Parliament meddled with the affair . . .'

'I only know it is impossible to keep the muslin blinds clean here above a week together. . . . And as for hands--Margaret, how many times did you say you had washed your hands this morning before twelve o'clock? Three times was it?'

'Yes, mamma.'

(Ibid.: 123)

In Ruth the heroine, abandoned by her seducer, is contemplating suicide and throws herself down upon the ground in despair.

"Yet afterwards, long afterwards, she remembered the exact motion of a bright green beetle busily meandering among the wild thyme near her . . ."
(Ruth: 93)

To a certain extent the kinds of detail which form the Victorian novel are different from those of other periods. John Reed, a scholar of Victorian literature, points out that "the realism of nineteenth-century literature was not a matter of journalistic realism" (1975: 5) but involved certain conventions which are a form of shorthand for certain cultural ideas, beliefs and interests. For example, it was a widespread Victorian belief that physiognomy revealed character traits. A low forehead bespoke low intelligence, full lips indicated a passionate nature and so on. This Victorian convention, which has since been replaced in Western thought by psychological notions, could be confidently expected to convey a great deal to the nineteenth-century audience. Dickens used this convention to delineate characters in very broad strokes in a way which often seems exaggerated and cartoon-like to the modern reader. Other Victorian writers, such as Gaskell, used it with a lighter hand. For example, her character Margaret Hale has the perfectly symmetrical features of a Greek statue, except for her round "massive" chin, indicating a strong will, and a long

full neck which seems to indicate arrogance.

The concern with physiognomy included not only facial features, but also the general physical aspect such as size and hair color. Even dress revealed character. The following quotation from North and South illustrates this:

Margaret's tall, finely made figure, in the black silk dress which she was wearing as mourning for some distant relative of her father's, set off the long beautiful folds of the gorgeous shawls that would have half smothered Edith. . . . Margaret stood, quite silent and passive, while her aunt adjusted the draperies. . . . Edith [who "had rolled herself up into a soft ball of muslin and ribbon, and silken curls, and gone off into a peaceful little after-dinner nap"] came in from the back drawing room, winking and blinking her eyes in the stronger light, shaking her slightly ruffled curls, and altogether looking like the Sleeping Beauty just startled from her dreams . . .

(North and South: 35-39)

As this passage shows, detail about women's clothing was also of great interest to the middle class Victorian novelist and audience. Conspicuous consumption in women's clothing and in household decoration as well were of major importance to the rising middle class, and details about such things as the style of furniture, the color of drapes, and so forth abound. Descriptions of such things are especially detailed in the writings of Gaskell and of Brontë, as might be expected, since they are more restricted to the domestic sphere, but they are also abundant in the works of Thackeray and Dickens.

Thackeray, Dickens and Brontë, more than Gaskell, openly moralize in their writing. This, together with the

use of satire, gives the modern reader the sense that the descriptive details may be invented rather than selected from observation. However, the intrusion of the narrator does nothing to undercut the usefulness of the descriptions as ethnographic data. For example, the following passage from Thackeray's Vanity Fair combines moralizing, satire and direct address to the reader, and yet contains abundant descriptive detail.

Good fortune now begins to smile upon Amelia. We are glad to get her out of that low sphere in which she has been creeping hitherto and introduce her into a polite circle . . . [her brother Joseph's] house was in the comfortable Anglo-Indian District of which Moira Street is the centre. Minto Square, Great Clive Street, Warren Street and Hastings Street, Ochterlony Place, Plassy Square, Assaye Terrace ("gardens" was a felicitous word not applied to stucco houses with asphalt terraces in front, so early as 1827)--who does not know these respectable abodes of the retired Indian aristocracy, and the quarter which Mr. Wenham calls the Black Hole, in a word? Jos's position in life was not grand enough to entitle him to a house in Moira Place, where none can live but retired Members of Council and partners of Indian firms (who break, after having settled a hundred thousand pounds on their wives, and retire into comparative penury to a country place and four thousand a year); he engaged a comfortable house of a second- or third-rate order in Gillespie Street, purchasing the carpets, costly mirrors, and handsome and appropriate planned furniture by Seddons . . .

(Thackeray 1962[1847]: 711-712)

Dickens also satirizes, moralizes, editorializes and caricatures a great deal, revealing the values and cultural beliefs of a wide range of the population, yet gives us descriptions that are extremely informative with regard to specific places, institutions, jobs and social relationships. Marcus says that,

Throughout his career as a writer, Dickens kept protesting that he was not exaggerating, that he was merely setting down what was happening around him, and indeed, that much of the time he was softening and playing down the things he observed. A document such as My Secret Life [a diary of a gentleman's sex life] tends very strongly to support such a claim.

(Marcus 1974:288)

Marcus uses David Copperfield as evidence supporting the description of an incident in My Secret Life, in which a working girl uses the shillings she gets in return for sexual favors to buy omnibus rides, and fruits and sweets which she eats until she gets sick from them.

One may feel entitled to holding a certain skepticism about some of the details of this incident. I confess to having entertained a number of reservations about it myself until I came upon another one of those astonishing passages in Dickens which tend so persuasively to authenticate the character of social observation in My Secret Life. The passage occurs in chapter 48 of David Copperfield, entitled "Domestic," which is largely an account of the tribulations of the early married life of David and Dora. They take into their employ an impossible page, but David finds that he cannot bring himself to fire or get rid of him. He then remarks: "I never expected anything less, than this unfortunate's manner of getting me out of my difficulty. He stole Dora's watch . . . and, converting it into money, spent the produce . . . in incessantly riding up and down between London and Uxbridge outside the coach. He was taken to Bow Street, as well as I remember, on the completion of his fifteenth journey; where four-and-sixpence, and a second-hand fife which he couldn't play, were found upon his person."

(Ibid.)

Marcus continues:

Not only does this passage from David Copperfield work upon the episode in My Secret Life. In this instance there is a reciprocal bearing, and the episode in My Secret Life alters our sense of what Dickens is doing in such a passage. At first glance it seems that here is only one further example of Dicken's comic exaggeration--who, after all, would spend his ill-gotten gains so pointlessly? But as it turns out

again and again, what often seem to be Dickensian impossibilities of behavior were the very stuff of daily existence in London.

(Ibid.)

The seemingly unlikely exaggerations and stereotypes of David Copperfield and My Secret Life, in the context of each other, both gain in credibility and take on new depth. As Marcus says, we are better able to see the narrow range of possibilities the girl has for spending money without arousing suspicion. We can also see the

emotional distance which the traditional situation of class tended to create. . . . The author is altogether unable to put himself in her place or to imagine what must be going on in her; and this restriction serves to remind us how the actualities of class could affect not merely one's moral view of the world but one's perception of reality itself. The workings of class here can be seen as penetrating virtually to one's organs of sense and as conditioning fundamental mental structures. It even seems possible, in the light of such passages, that one might construct different epistemological models following the lines of these distinctions.

(Ibid.: 145)

Not only does class affect the perception of reality, gender also informs one's view of the world. In David Copperfield Dickens reveals much about the duties of a housewife--managing servants, keeping a budget, supervising cooking, ordering food--and also about the frustration and limitation of middle class women's roles. This is revealed in the context of sentimental comedy, as the young wife, who has failed in all of these duties, tries to make herself useful:

"Will you mind if I say something very, very silly?--more than usual?" inquired Dora . . . "Please let me hold the pens. . . I want to have something to do with

all those many hours when you are so industrious. May I hold the pens?"

The remembrance of her pretty joy when I said yes, brings tears into my eyes . . . Her triumph in this connexion with my work, and her delight when I wanted a new pen, which I very often feigned to do-- suggested to me a new way of pleasing my child-wife. I occasionally made a pretense of wanting a page or two of manuscript copied. Then Dora was in her glory.

(Dickens 1966[1850]: 715)

The male view of Dora's unhappiness in her lack of meaningful work contrasts strikingly with Brontë's discussion of the same subject:

Look at the numerous families of girls in this neighborhood. . . . The brothers of these girls are every one in business or in professions; they have something to do: their sisters have no earthly employment . . . and no hope, in all their life to come of anything better. . . . Their minds and views shrink to wondrous narrowness. . . . They scheme, they plot, they dress to ensnare husbands. . . . The gentlemen turn them into ridicule. . . . Could men live so themselves?

(Brontë 1977[1849]: 377)

In both of these passages not only is the social detail informative, but the narrative voice is also telling. The oppressiveness of the Victorian definition of gender affects the male writer and the female writer differently, but each conveys this oppressiveness.

It is worth noting that by the early nineteenth century there were several successful, popular female novelists. This prominence of women in any literary field seems to have been a new phenomenon in England. Before the novel grew as a literary form, there were few well-known female poets, and virtually no female playwrights. Perhaps this had to do with the fact that

novels were read in the privacy of the home, while plays were public. The emergence of successful female novelists may also have had to do with the growth of the middle class and the growing number of literate women whose leisure was a status symbol. Leisure time gave them the opportunity to read and write. Perhaps it also had to do with the idealization of the home, which accompanied the separation of the workplace and the household. The concentration on mundane "domestic life" in journals such as Dickens' Household Words, and in the many novels with subtitles such as Gaskell's Wives and Daughters: A Domestic Tale, suggests this. On the one hand, novels were a vehicle for the idealization of the "home as a nest," a cultural institution which was restrictive for women. On the other hand, some female novelists used this art form to express protest against this very institution, as does Brontë in Shirley, quoted above.

Other Victorian novelists--George Eliot, Trollope and others from a slightly later period--are also interested in genteel middle class domestic life, and describe it in vivid detail. Hardy and Gissing describe the domestic life of lower strata of the middle class and of the working class. All of these novelists use the kind of detailed description which makes them useful sources for anthropology.

During the entire Victorian period there were also innumerable mediocre writers of "potboilers." These could be made use of for learning about popular values, beliefs and symbols, much as Marcus makes use of a lengthy diary mainly concerned with sex, in his study of Victorian sexual values and beliefs (Marcus 1974). Such novels would probably not, however, be as useful as sources on the details of social organization, since, as "inferior fiction," they are not composed out of as careful observation as are good novels.

Gaskell: A Biographical Sketch

In a photograph taken in 1864, a year before her death, Elizabeth Gaskell strikes one as looking at least ten years older than her fifty-four years. Her look is at once penetrating and rather amused. One hand holds closed the folds of the rich Kashmir shawl which sets off the simplicity of her dark silk dress and her hair, neatly parted in the middle and pulled back. There is a small cluster of flowers or a brooch at her throat, and what may be a watch, or a miniature, or a pair of spectacles hanging from a cord around her neck, hidden partly beneath her wide corseted bosom in the folds of the shawl. The knowing but humorous expression on her face communicates a sense of fun, which is somehow not incongruous with her otherwise matronly appearance. If one did not know that

she was ten years younger than she appears, and that she is to die one year later, one would not guess that she has been chronically ill for years and is in almost constant pain.

At the time this picture was taken, Gaskell was quite famous and had published her novels, short stories and other writings widely. Her husband, William Gaskell, a Unitarian minister, was also well-known in Manchester. Unitarians were a fairly prominent sect there, and he was the minister of the large Cross Street Chapel. He wrote and published scholarly articles, lectured widely and was a founder of the Manchester Statistical Society. Although it has been conjectured that their married life was not smooth and Mrs. Gaskell sometimes expressed irritation at her husband in letters, William Gaskell seems to have been an unusual Victorian husband in that "he did not play the heavy paterfamilias, but expected Gaskell to get on with her side of things . . ." (Easson 1979: 33). However, he, "as was legal right, took her earnings . . . though Gaskell kept a firmer hold later" (ibid.: 34).

The Gaskells' financial situation continuously improved during their marriage in part because of Mrs. Gaskell's success as a writer. As their family and income grew, they moved from a modest home in Chorlton-on-Medlock, a middle class suburb of Manchester, to a larger house not far away. A photograph of the living room of the Gaskells' last home shows it to be large and sunlit,

and fairly simply decorated compared to the crowding of ornament so common in middle class Victorian houses. By 1860, there were eleven members of the "family," including five servants (Letters of Mrs. Gaskell: 618). Despite the impressive sounding number of servants, she was by no means free of household chores and duties, nor were her daughters. In one letter replying to her eldest daughter, who has taken over the position of housekeeper while her mother is away, Mrs. Gaskell describes in detail the drainage system of the house, guesses at the cause of a leaking cesspool and explains how to fix it (ibid: 777). Although the Gaskells lived in a style appropriate to a prominent clergyman and his family, they were not wealthy and she managed the budget carefully. Their first house could not comfortably accommodate a guest, a difficult situation in this period before fast transportation and communication systems, when long visits between friends were common.

Gaskell was a great social success, both as the wife of a prominent minister and as a writer who was lionized from the time of the publication of her first novel, Mary Barton, until her death. It is clear from her letters that she took an active part in the literary and social circle of Manchester and had friendships lasting from childhood as well as new friends among the intellectual elite of England, the United States and Europe. Her cultivation of a friendship with Charlotte

Brontë reveals something of the importance she placed on relationships with other people. She had read Brontë's writing, and seems to have recognized her superiority as a writer, judging from the avid enthusiasm with which she undertook the project of arranging to meet the isolated and shy Miss Brontë. They became friends, and after Brontë's death, at Brontë's father's request, Gaskell wrote what is still widely regarded as her definitive biography. The value she placed on the intellectual stimulation and friendship she received from this relationship, rather than viewing Brontë as a literary rival, is striking.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson Gaskell had a rather unusual childhood but was of "good" family. Her father had been a Unitarian minister before her birth but left the profession because of his inability to reconcile charging fees for his work with his religious beliefs. He later tried farming, at which he attempted to be progressive and experimental, and finally, before Elizabeth's birth, accepted the post of Keeper of the Records of the Royal Treasury and settled in London. He was never well-to-do, but seems to have been fairly well paid and kept the job until his death. Elizabeth's mother died when she was only thirteen months old. While her elder brother remained at home, Elizabeth was sent at age fifteen months to live in a small town in Cheshire called

Knutsford with her maternal aunt, Mrs. Lumb, who had a crippled daughter much older than Elizabeth and a husband she had had committed to an insane asylum. Aunt Lumb, as Elizabeth called her, was part of a prominent Knutsford family, the Hollands, who were related to the proprietors of an aristocratic estate nearby.⁴ Aunt Lumb had a large old house, genteel social standing and prestigious relatives in the town, including a successful physician and a clergyman.

Elizabeth's father remarried when she was three or four-but she remained with Aunt Lumb, her "'more than mother'". (Easson 1979: 3). She sometimes visited her father and his family in London. She also had a great-uncle who had been the Royal Physician, and she occasionally visited his family in London and thus was exposed to an elite London circle. When she was fourteen she went to a boarding school in Stratford-on-Avon which was run by relatives of her stepmother. According to Coral Lansbury (1975), this was an excellent school where education for women was taken seriously. She kept a diary from at least that time. Her brother commended her on it,

⁴In 1926, Sydney Holland, Viscount Knutsford, then 71 years old, mentions in his autobiography that he is related to Elizabeth Gaskell. His great-great-uncle was Mrs. Gaskell's great-uncle, Peter Holland, a physician whom she used to accompany on his rounds, and whose two daughters are said to be the heroines of Gaskell's Cranford (Holland 1926:7; Shorter 1906:xxi).

asking her to send him "long extracts" (Sharps 1970: 17). This brother was lost at sea in 1827. After leaving school in 1829, she went to London to nurse her father who was dying. She is said to have been unhappy with her stepmother. After her father's death that year, Elizabeth spent two years living with friends of her father, a minister and his family in Newcastle, and travelled with them to Edinburgh and then to Manchester, where she met her future husband.

At the time they met in 1832, William Gaskell was assistant to the minister of the major Unitarian church in Manchester. His family was upper middle class, with money made in the manufacture of rope. William and Elizabeth were introduced, probably with the hope that they would marry--which they did, that same year.

Elizabeth Gaskell gave birth to six children-- five girls and a boy. The first, a girl, was stillborn, and the boy died when he was one year old. During 1835-36 Gaskell kept a diary of the early years of her first surviving child, Marianne. This work is remarkable for its thoughtfulness and its psychological insight. In her observations of her daughter's development and in the opinions she expresses about childrearing, Gaskell was formulating a surprisingly modern psychological approach:

I try always to let her look at anything which attracts her notice as long as she will, and when I see her looking very attentively at anything, I take her to it, and let her exercise all her senses upon it, even to tasting, if I am sure it can do her no harm. My object is to give her the habit of fixing her attention.

(My Diary: 6)

This extract gives a sense of Gaskell's curiosity and insight about child development, as well as her awareness of the importance of the socialization process.⁵

As the wife of a clergyman, she spent a great deal of time doing charitable work among the poor in Manchester. In 1837, in conjunction with her husband, she published a poem in Blackwood's magazine entitled "Sketches Among the Poor." In 1838 she submitted a sketch of an old hall to a periodical called Visits, and it was published in 1840. Nothing was published between 1840 and 1847 (when "Libbie Marsh's Three Eras" was published), and she seems to have done no writing between 1838 and 1847. Gaskell's last three children were born during this eight year period. She once remarked that, "When I had little children I do not think I could have written stories, because I should have become too much absorbed in my

⁵Gaskell's psychological insight is always evident in her writing. For example, she describes Ruth's seducer thus:

The unevenness of discipline to which only children are subjected; the thwarting, resulting from over-anxiety; the indiscreet indulgence, arising from a love centred all in one object -- had been exaggerated in his education, probably from the circumstance that his mother (his only surviving parent) had been similarly situated to himself...

fictitious people to attend to my real ones" (quoted in Lansbury 1975:24).

In 1845 Gaskell's one year old son died of scarlet fever. She had a daughter the following year but continued to be despondent over her son's death. Her husband encouraged her to write in order to help overcome her depression. In 1847 she published "Libbie Marsh's Three Eras" and in 1848, Mary Barton, a story set among the Manchester working class. Mary Barton clearly expressed Gaskell's political views and her sympathy for the working class and caused quite an uproar. She continued to write until her death, publishing six novels, a biography, many "nouvelles" and short stories and many more short pieces of various types, including travelogues and poems.

It is useful to take into account Gaskell's social position as a Unitarian in order to better understand her

Her income gave her the means of indulging or controlling him, after he had grown to man's estate, as her wayward disposition and love of power prompted her. . . . [His] boyish tricks annoyed and irritated her far more than the accounts which reached her of more serious misdoings at college and in town. Of these grave offences she never spoke; of the smaller misdeeds she hardly ever ceased speaking.

Still, at times she had the greatest influence over him, and nothing delighted her more than to exercise it.

(Ruth:30-32)

Gaskell goes beyond depicting action, she probes motivation and looks to childrearing to explain current behavior.

political position and her approach as a writer. Unitarians were an important sect in Manchester and Gaskell's view of the world was profoundly influenced by this religious philosophy.

Her works, like those of many Victorian writers, give voice to her religious beliefs. When Ruth gives birth to her illegitimate son, her rescuer, a Dissenting minister, says to his sister,

'Faith, do you know I rejoice in this child's advent?'

'May God forgive you, Thurstan!--if you know what you are saying. But surely it is a temptation, dear Thurstan.'

'I do not think it is a delusion. The sin appears to me to be quite distinct from its consequences. . . . In the eye of God, she is exactly the same as if the life she has led had left no trace behind . . .'

'Yes but not this disgrace--this badge of shame!'

'Faith, Faith! let me beg of you not to speak so of the little innocent babe who may be God's messenger to lead her back to him . . .'

(Ruth:118)

This passage conveys well the Unitarian belief that God "never ordains or permits evil but with a view to the production of greater good, which could not have existed without it" (Theophilus Lindsey, quoted in Lansbury 1975: 13).

Unitarians believed that some evil could exist temporarily in God's larger plan but that man was perfectable through the use of his power of reason. This was clearly an attractive doctrine to the middle class in Manchester, a city in the throes of the Industrial Revolution. It enabled members of this sect to be

optimistic and guilt-free amidst poverty and exploitation, since greater good might come out of the "temporary" evils which existed. It also encouraged some social reform.

Unitarianism stressed the importance of social involvement as the visible evidence of faith. At the same time it stressed the importance of the individual and of his perfectability. This was complemented by a belief that the "only safe path to follow in life was one of absolute truth. For a man to lie was to obscure God's design for a world of virtue and knowledge" (Lansbury:15). For some, social reform took the form of Utilitarianism,⁶ a doctrine obviously compatible with Unitarianism.

Others, however, like Gaskell, were influenced by Unitarianism to search out the truth of "God's design" and to try to work out real possibilities for change, within, of course, a middle class construct of what kind of change was desirable. Gaskell wrote about the injustices

⁶Utilitarianism was a doctrine which held that the good or evil of any particular action or situation could be judged by the ultimate outcome in terms of usefulness. This doctrine was well suited to the needs for legitimacy of the industrial bourgeoisie, since it provided a rationale for such things as child labor. Factory design, management of employees, interpersonal relationships, and religious beliefs were influenced by utilitarian doctrine in the mid-nineteenth century (E.P.Thompson 1966:passim; Williams 1976:275-277).

suffered by the working class as well as its political beliefs. Her interest in "truth," in revealing "God's design" compelled her to write about social problems.

Her religious beliefs and her social position as a middle class Unitarian clergyman's wife combined to make charitable work among the poor a necessary activity for her. Charitable work was however an important activity for many middle class women. Indeed, by the late nineteenth century the "Lady Bountiful" role was sometimes derided as a shallow fad (Pope 1977). No doubt many middle class women performed charitable work perfunctorily, as a necessary concession to fashion. Probably many, filled with repugnance at the poverty with which they thus came in contact, blinded themselves with stereotyped assumptions ranging in mood from cold contempt to condescending pity, in order to maintain distance.

As her writing about the working class indicates however, Gaskell differed from such "Lady Bountifuls" and also from most middle class writers who wrote about the working class. Lansbury notes that

For the middle class writer composing a novel of the working class, the desire for truth generally resulted in a tone of sympathetic patronage . . .

(1975:45)

One of the things which allows Gaskell to avoid this to the extent that she does is that more than most middle class writers, she does not shrink from the working class in anticipation of "everything that might affront the eye

nerves of the middle classes" (Engels 1973[1845]:86). In the "Hungry Forties"⁷, in Manchester, there was a great deal which might affront them.

That Gaskell engaged with the working class families she visited enables her to notice that life for them was not "unrelieved misery" (Lansbury: 43), but was in some way perhaps more satisfying than middle class life. For example, her novel Mary Barton demonstrates her ability to observe a wide range of detail about daily life among the working class, such as men's attitudes toward their wives' and daughters' working, women's attitudes about this, prestige items of the poor, recreational activities and relations between neighbors.

Her perception of working class culture is also reflected in the strong and resourceful Mary Barton who is contrasted to idle, bored middle class girls. The networks of mutual aid between working class households is contrasted to the isolation of middle class households. Lansbury remarks on Gaskell's portrayal of household

⁷Despite tremendous industrial growth, the 1840's were a period of extreme economic crisis. "Early industrial Britain passed through a crisis which reached its stage of greatest acuteness in the 1830's and early 1840's. That it was not in any sense a 'final' crisis, but merely one of growth, should not lead us to underestimate its seriousness . . ." (Hobsbawm 1969: 73). This period is often referred to as "The Hungry Forties" because of the shocking poverty in which much of the population lived.

organization:

In the city, families live in small units unless forced by extreme poverty to share dwelling-places. Alice Wilson lives alone until her brother dies; then she moves in with her sister-in-law, but even with young Jem Wilson, it is still only a family of three. Demographers would approve of Elizabeth Gaskell's representation of family size. The comparison is sharply drawn between the workers' homes and families, and the household of Carson with four adult daughters, a son, and a flock of servants living under the same roof. It is emphasized that in Manchester the working-class population was effectively regulated by disease and death. But families among the workers were not confined to near relations; there was no sense of alienation, rather a feeling of mateship, which binds John Barton to George Wilson and sends them both to Davenport, the Methodist millworker dying of typhus. 'The poor mun help the poor' is the creed of these men, and they can and do stand by each other.

(Ibid. :32)

Nonetheless, despite her brilliant treatment of the Manchester working class, there is a limitation stemming from her underlying social alignment with and political commitment to the middle class. This limitation is clear in the description of the conflict between workers and mill owners leading to a strike:

It was clearly in [the masters'] interest to buy cotton as cheaply, and to beat down wages as low as possible. And in the long run the interests of the workmen would have been thereby benefited. Distrust

each other as they may, the employers and the employed must rise or fall together. There may be some difference as to chronology, none as to fact.

But the masters did not chose to make these facts known. . . .

Now let us turn to the workmen's view of the question. The masters (of the tottering foundation of whose prosperity they were ignorant) seemed doing well, and like gentlemen, 'lived at their ease', while they were starving, gasping on from day to day Why were the masters offering such low wages . . . ? Shame on them! It was taking advantage of people already starved; but they would starve entirely rather than come into such terms. It was bad enough to be poor, while by the labour of their thin hands, the sweat of their brows, the masters were made rich; but they would not be utterly ground down to dust. No! they would fold their hands, and sit idle

So class distrusted class, and their want of mutual confidence wrought sorrow to both. The masters would not be bullied, and compelled to reveal why they felt it wisest and best to offer such low wages . . .

(Mary Barton: 221)⁸

⁸A similar statement of her political position comes from another source, North and South:

[Mr Thornton] reviewed his position as a Milton manufacturer . . . by-and-by, he lost all sense of resentment in wonder how it was, or could be, that two men like himself and Higgins [a worker in his factory], living by the same trade, working in their different ways at the same object, could look upon each other's position and duties in so strangely different a way. And thence rose that intercourse, which though it might not have the effect of preventing all future clash of opinion and action, when the occasion arose, would . . . enable both master and man to look upon each other with far more charity and sympathy, and bear with each other more kindly. Besides this improvement of feeling, both Mr Thornton and his workmen found out their ignorance as to positive matters of fact, known heretofore to one side, but not to the other.

(North and South: 512-513)

While Gaskell probably believed that she was presenting "objective truth" and helping to uncover "God's design," it is obvious to the modern reader that she was solidly in a middle class position, and while sympathetic to the working class, places the main burden of social blame on the fact that "they were ignorant," which she sees as partially due to the lack of humane guidance from the millowners.

Gaskell herself relates her political position to her religious beliefs, saying that she had "a great number of mes" (plural of me), one of which wants to spend a great deal of money on "so purely selfish a thing as a house," and "one of my mes is, I do believe, a true Christian--(only people call her socialist and communist)" (Letters of Mrs. Gaskell: 108). The very fact that she wrote about the working class at all and was able to put fairly sophisticated arguments into the mouths of the workers is a significant statement about her social awareness and about her political views, which were considered radical by many.⁹

⁹After the publication of Mary Barton she wrote in one letter to her publisher that she "had no idea it would have proved such a firebrand . . ." (Chapple and Pollard 1966: 68) and in another letter she says, "I have not troubled myself about the reviews . . . what I have felt was the angry feeling induced towards me personally among some of those I live amongst; and the expressions of belief from some of those whom in many ways I respect that the book would do harm" (ibid.:69).

No doubt her interest in social reform and her interest in revealing the "truth" were influenced by her religious background. Nonetheless, in some ways her political position is similar to other, non-Unitarian middle class reformers of the period. Dickens, for example, also seems to have believed that if only capitalists would be more Christian in their dealings with the workers, that the working class would respond in good faith. Capitalism could then proceed in social harmony, as his novel, Hard Times, or even "A Christmas Carol," indicate.

Gaskell's Technique

It has been noted with a certain amount of frustration by students of Gaskell, that she is "no theorist about her work" (Craik 1975: 226). Sharps comments,

The clearest indication of Mrs. Gaskell's critical theory (in so far as she consciously held one) may be gathered from what looks to be the draft of her reply to a certain 'Herbert Grey' . . . a would be philosophical novelist who seems to have asked for her views of his manuscript.

(1970: 9)

Easson notes the same letter, saying,

There is little evidence as to Gaskell's theory in writing and not much more, apart from the works themselves, on her practice. Her most extended theoretical statement answers a request for criticism.

(1979: 43)

In this letter, Gaskell comments that she has learned nothing from Grey's novel, about the "work and daily experience" of its characters. He has asked her for advice, and she explains her technique:

You must observe what is out of you, instead of examining what is in you. . . . Just read a few pages of DeFoe &c [sic]--and you will see the healthy way in which he sets objects not feelings before you. . . . Everyday your life brings you into contact with live men and women[for instance] . . . people working for their bread with head-labour . . . in London. Think if you cannot imagine a complication of events in their life which would form a good plot. . . . The plot is like the anatomical drawing of an artist; he must have an idea of his skeleton before he can clothe it in muscle and flesh, much more before he can drape it. . . . Then set to and imagine yourself a spectator and auditor at every scene and event! Work hard at this till it become a reality to you,--a thing you have to recollect and describe and report fully and accurately as it struck you, in order that your reader may have it equally before him. Don't intrude yourself into your description. If you but think eagerly of your story till you see it in action, words, good simple strong words will come,--just as if you saw an accident in the street that impressed you strongly you would describe it forcibly.

(Letters of Mrs. Gaskell: 541-542)¹⁰

¹⁰ Gaskell is here anticipating the great late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century novelists Joseph Conrad, Henry James and James Joyce. These novelists held that no authorial moralizing should interfere with the presentation of "reality--the moment of truth. The description must allow the reader to "see" a moment of reality, what Joyce calls an "epiphany." In this, she is somewhat different from Dickens, Thackeray and Brontë, for although she does moralize, the authorial voice is kept unobtrusive.

Craik states about Mrs. Gaskell's technique that

George Eliot and Thomas Hardy . . . both owe much to Elizabeth Gaskell's extension of the bounds of the novel, and [their] own philosophies, thus put down, express those which she--whose writings are all in the practice and never of the theory of her art--herself acknowledges in all her writing . . .

(Craik 1975: 267)

Gaskell's technique does illustrate Hardy's theory which holds that

a work of fiction should be a precise transcript of ordinary life: but,

The uncommon would be absent and the interest lost, Hence:

The writer's problem is, how to strike a balance between the uncommon and the ordinary so as on the one hand to give interest, on the other to give reality.

(Hardy, quoted in Craik)

Like Hardy, Gaskell's aim is to constitute "reality," a reality which she sees as "true." The moral messages which she aims to convey are built up out of the descriptive detail she selects, complications of plot and important themes. These are embedded in credible description which reads like a "precise transcript of ordinary life."

In this sense her approach to recording data is similar to that of most anthropologists and also of valued informants. Elizabeth Gaskell has many of the attributes of Mintz' informant: she is "very perceptive and possesses a great capacity for examining the things about [her] and reflecting on them" (1960: 9). Like Chagnon's

(1968) informant, she has a passion for detail in her observation. In addition to her fiction she has also written numerous travel pieces in which she shows great attention to detail. Her travelogue "French Life," for example, painstakingly describes the manners, material culture, values, marriage practices, kinship behavior, etc., of the Parisian bourgeoisie in 1862.

We are staying with a French family of the middle class; and I cannot help noticing the ways of daily life here, so different from those of England. . . . We live on the fourth floor, which is extensive enough to comprise the two sitting-rooms, the bedrooms, the kitchen, and the chamber for the two maids. I do not dislike this plan of living in a flat, especially as it is managed in Paris. I have seen the same mode adopted in Edinburgh and Rome, besides other continental towns; but, as in these towns there is no concierge, I have never liked it so much as in Paris. Here it seems to me to save one's servant's work . . . and besides this, there is the moral advantage of uniting mistress and maids in a more complete family bond.

("French Life": 609)¹¹

Another example is "Cumberland Sheepshearers" in which she describes, with ethnographic detail, the methods of sheepshearing, the social structure of the sheepshearers,

¹¹Or another example from the same source:

Tonight . . . the conversation turned upon English and French marriages; . . . the conversation was based on tolerably correct knowledge. Most of those present objected strongly to the English way of bringing up the daughters of wealthy houses in all the luxurious habits of their fathers' homes. . . . When if the question arose--say to a young man of equal birth and education, but who had to make his way in the world--the father of the young lady could rarely pay

gives information on courtship, describes work parties, which she says operate like "American bees," discusses methods for protecting the sheep against the flesh fly, and describes the seasonal round of the shepherds:

eleven famous shearers had come . . . all young men . . . they caught up the sheep from the attendant boys . . . and . . . began to shear the wool off the tail and under parts; then they tied the two hind legs and the two forelegs together, and laid it first on one side and then on the other, till the fleece came off in one whole piece; the art was to shear all the wool off and yet not to injure the sheep by any awkward cut; if such an accident did occur, a mixture of tar and butter was immediately applied; but every wound was a blemish on the shearer's fame . . . the women sieze the fleece, and . . . fold it up. This again is an art, simple as it may seem . . . the skill consists, not merely in doing this quickly and firmly, but in certain artistic pulls of the wool so as to display the finer parts, and not, by crushing up the fibre, to make it appear coarse to the buyer. Six comely women were thus employed . . . they laughed and talked, and sent shafts of merry satire at the grave and busy shearers . . .

("Cumberland Sheepshearers": 428-429)

After visiting Italy, she reports her observations of the "Camorra," a hierarchical system of graft

any money down. It was even doubtful if he could make her an annual allowance; hardly ever one commensurate with the style in which she had been accustomed to live. . . . This made both children and parents anxious and worldly in matters of wedlock. . . . Now, said our French friends, look at a household in our country; in every rank it is the custom to begin to put by a marriage portion for the girl as soon as she is born. . . . Our girls are brought up simply; luxury and extravagance with us belong to the married women. ("French Life":652)

in Italy in the early 1860's, what she learned from informants about it, and its political and economic function under three different governments. In "An Italian Institution" she describes

the existence of a system which no Bourbon government has ever yet dared to grapple with . . . [Under the Neapolitan Bourbons] grew up crops of secret societies, which ostensibly organized for self-protection, soon became agents of the most oppressive and cruel tyranny. Of these the Camorra was the chief. . . . Had the association contemplated nothing beyond the exaction of a tax, without assuming, or affecting to assume, some relative obligations, it is likely enough that it might have long since have been resisted. La Camorra was however, ingenious enough to pretend to a paternal care for its followers. . . . The society consisted of a number of distinct groups or knots, under the guidance of a chief . . . who treasured the revenues that were brought in and distributed the payments to the followers with an admirable fairness and regularity. These sums, collected in the most minute fractions from every fashion and form of human industry, and even by levying toll upon the gains of mendicancy, rose to very considerable amounts. . . . While the Bourbon government tolerated this gross abuse as exercised among the humbler classes of its subjects, it also availed itself of the Camorra as a means of intimidation or vengeance, and gave up the whole discipline of its prisons to this infamous sect. . . . The first demand [on "the newly admitted prisoner"] . . . was for a contribution to the lamp in honour of the Virgin . . . for the Camorra is strictly religious. . . . Though the Camorra . . . declared its protective care of all beneath its rules, it never vindicated the fate of those who defended themselves ill; nay, it took measures always to mark that courage was the first of gifts, and that he who was unequal to his own defence could not be relied upon to protect others . . .

("An Italian Institution": 532-533)

In "The Last Generation in England," Gaskell explicitly states her aim to preserve in writing the details of the social structure, social life, customs and values of a small country town, which she doesn't name,

but which is obviously Knutsford. In introducing this description she says that there is

a wish in me to put upon record some of the details of country or town life, either observed by myself, or handed down to me by older relations; for even in small towns, scarcely removed from villages, the phases of society are rapidly changing and much will appear strange, which yet occurred only in the generation immediately preceding ours. I must say however, before going on . . . every circumstance and occurrence which I shall relate is strictly and truthfully told without exaggeration.

("The Last Generation in England": 319)

The social structure of the town, for example, the predominance of elderly widows and spinsters in the genteel middle class, is the same as that described in Cranford:

I have made no mention of gentlemen at these parties because if ever there was an Amazonian town in England it was _____. Eleven widows of respectability at one time kept house there; besides spinsters innumerable. The doctor preferred his armchair and slippers to the forms of society, such as I have described, and so did the attorney, who was besides not insensible to the charms of a hot supper. Indeed, I suppose it was because of the small incomes of the more aristocratic portion of our little society not sufficing both for style and luxury, but it was a fact, that as gentility decreased good living increased in proportion.

(Ibid.: 322)

As Gaskell's non-fiction writings show, she was an ethnographer before ethnography developed as an academic medium. This is equally true of her fiction writing. In order to demonstrate this, the point of view of the narrator, the use of detail and Gaskell's relation to her audience will be considered.

Gaskell's position as narrator is an aspect of her technique which influences the ethnographic quality of her writing. As previously discussed, like fiction, ethnographic writing is the outcome of a dialectical process, a relationship between the anthropologist and one or more informants and between him and his audience. Unlike fiction, ethnography is usually written from the stance of a detached observer, recording that which goes on around him. In a novel an omniscient narrator may tell the story; the story may be told from the point of view of one or several of its characters; or a first person narrator may describe a world in which he is very much involved.

In her non-fiction writings, Gaskell deliberately maintains a certain amount of distance from the subject matter and presents herself as a participant observer. In the piece on Italian graft, perhaps the most distance is maintained. The first person is never used, and we are told about "the traveller's" observations, and then are given a description of this institution as a social and political phenomenon, in historical perspective. "The Last Generation in England" is almost as detached in its presentation as this. "French Life," however, and "Cumberland Sheepshearers" are in the first person and are presented as her experience as a participant observer.

Gaskell's authorial voice and the position of the narrator vary more in her fiction. Often stories are told in the first person, by a narrator. In all of the works to be used as data of quantitative sources for this study, there is a first person narrator, who is not a native of the small country town whose life he or she describes. However, there are variations among the narrators as to their degrees of detachment.

Mary Smith, the narrator of Cranford and "The Cage at Cranford," is the most detached of Gaskell's fictional narrators. She lives in the large "commercial town of Drumble [Manchester], distant only twenty miles on a railroad" (Cranford: 36). We only see her, however, on her lengthy and frequent visits to "Cranford." She is different from the people she describes in several other respects. For one, although she is very genteel in her manner and comes from a good family, perhaps even related to Miss Jenkyns,¹² the main protagonist of the book, her father has given up his genteel social identity becoming a merchant. As Mary Smith informs us in her dry, ironic tone,

[Miss Barker] had a little fear, lest, since my father had gone to live in Drumble, he might have engaged in 'that horrid cotton trade,' and so dragged his family down out of 'aristocratic society.'

(Ibid.: 106)

¹²Mary Smith's comment, "I am not sure if there was not some distant relationship" (Cranford: 170), is interesting in its uncertainty.

While the ladies of "Cranford" are not really aristocratic they, in their old fashioned country town, have not yet come into direct contact with the social forces which have indirectly affected their lives, social forces exemplified by the "'horrid cotton trade'" based on "Drumble." Mary Smith, however, has ties to the town of "Drumble," and this, even more than the fact that she cannot be thoroughly genteel if her father is a merchant, makes her different from the "Cranford" ladies. In addition to these differences in social position, Mary Smith is also much younger than most of the other characters in Cranford and in "The Cage at Cranford," the other work she narrates.

Mary Smith is very much a participant observer-- always watching, and socially involved up to a point with members of the community, but never really part of it. In both Cranford and "The Cage at Cranford" she maintains a tone of gentle irony. She is distant from and different from the people in the town, although she is fond of many of them and comes to their aid in crises. If she were truly part of the community, these crises would directly affect her, but they do not. Things do not happen to her; they happen to people around her. She seems devoid of anxiety about herself; for example, as she reaches her late twenties and early thirties, it never seems to enter her mind to worry about finding a husband, although marriage is one of the major themes of the book.

Mr. Harrison's Confessions is also told in the first person, by a young narrator from outside the town, which in this story is called "Duncombe." Mr. Harrison, like Mary Smith, is from a large city, in his case London. However, he is less a participant observer than is Mary Smith. He is not in the town merely on a visit, but to live there permanently and to work. He is a doctor, and in the course of beginning a practice in the community, he soon becomes involved in various crises, both humorous and serious. Unlike Mary Smith, things happen to Mr. Harrison, and his emotional tone changes according to circumstances; he does not keep an even keel. On the other hand, the story is told as a largely humorous reminiscence to an old friend, and there is a sense of the safe distance of a few years since the events recounted took place.

While Mr. Harrison is more involved in the life of the novel than is Mary Smith, Paul Manning, the narrator of Cousin Phillis, is even more involved as an actor in the story he tells. Paul Manning is first in love with his cousin, in his adolescent way, and then in an agony of confusion as to how to help her out of her miserable unrequited love for his boss, whom he had idolized. While Mary Smith is almost like a noiseless stage attendant changing the scenery as unobtrusively as possible (even her name is unobtrusive), and while Mr. Harrison is

telling an episode from his life over the distance of a few years' time, Paul Manning is very much an active presence in the novel Cousin Phillis. The reader has the sense that the emotional impact of Paul Manning's relationship with the two other main protagonists is still fresh and unresolved even as he tells the story.

Notwithstanding their variety in this respect, all of these novels contain a wealth of detailed observation on social and domestic organization. John Forster, a noted critic and friend of Charles Dickens, wrote favorably of Cranford, calling it "social painting" (quoted in Keating 1976: 9). It is true that painting a picture of Cranford with words is as important as any details of the plot. However, in other works by Gaskell, the description, the social painting, remains as detailed and the situations involved, while the crises that arise are much weightier. A perusal of Gaskell's work, from the densest, most serious books whose aim is social reform or the expression of deep emotional turmoil to her works of light comedy, shows that they are built on detail. The following excerpts from the four works supplying data for this study illustrate this.

'I think he is sure to like the view up the street from the window; he likes seeing people, I think.'

'It's but a bad look-out into the garden; nowt but dumb flowers,' said cook, touched by this allusion to the cheerfulness of the street, as contrasted with the view from her own kitchen window.

'It's a very good look-out for busy people,' said Miss Pole, severely. And then, feeling she was likely to get the worst of it in an encounter with her old servant, she withdrew with meek dignity, being deaf to some sharp reply; and of course I, being bound to keep order, was deaf too. If the truth must be told, we rather hastened our steps, until we had banged the street-door behind us.

("The Cage at Cranford": 333)

I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel walks; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish-pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us.

(Cousin Phillis: 258)

About the sale, my father was dubious. He said the old rectory furniture, however carefully used and reverently treated, would fetch very little; and that little would be but as a drop in the sea of the debt of the Town and Country Bank. But when I represented how Miss Matty's tender conscience would be soothed by feeling that she had done what she could, he gave way . . . I then alluded to my idea that she might add to her small income by selling tea; and to my surprise . . . my father grasped at it with all the energy of a tradesman. I think he reckoned his chickens before they were hatched, for he immediately ran up the profits of the sales that she could effect in Cranford to more than twenty pounds a year. The small dining-parlour was to be converted into a shop, without any of its degrading characteristics; a table was to be the counter; one window was to be retained unaltered, and the other changed into a glass door.

(Cranford:197)

Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in their details; but altogether they look well; they have not the flat unrelieved front, which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a bow window--every now and then a gable, cutting up against the sky--occasionally a projecting upper story--throws good effect of light and shadow along the street; and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the whitewash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tinge, more like the stone of which Mayence is made than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth of colouring. Then, here and there a dwelling house has a court in front, with a grass-plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two--limes or horse chestnuts--which send their great, projecting branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter on the pavement in the times of summer showers.

(Mr. Harrison's Confessions: 113)

While Cranford is as much a "social painting" as it is a story, it is not unique in its use of detailed description. All of Gaskell's fiction is filled with the kind of detail she lavishes on her travel writings.

Like most Victorian novelists, Gaskell's relation to her audience was influenced by the fact that she often published serially. She was never as facile with this as was, for example, the master of serial writing, Charles Dickens. Gaskell's dislike of this mode of publishing caused friction between her and Dickens, who was the editor of Household Words and All the Year Round, the magazines in which she most frequently published. She explains her discomfort with serial publication in the preface to the first edition of North and South:

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

(Preface, North and South 1976[1855 edition]: 33)

Around the time that the one volume edition of North and South was published, Gaskell began to avoid serial publication, although she occasionally published in that mode until her death. No doubt, as with other Victorian novelists, when she published serially her attunement to her audience was more conscious, and this affected the writing. For example, Dickens extended the length of Cranford after the first installment was published in Household Words because of a favorable audience response, so that Mrs. Gaskell said she "killed off" one of her favorite characters long before she would have, had she known she would be able to continue the story (Keating 1976: 8). We have no record of masses of people demanding this or that twist in the plot as they did with Dickens, because, while Gaskell was popular, neither she nor any other widely respected novelist of the time even approached him in popularity.

It seems likely that Dickens' immense and wide-ranged audience subsumed that of Gaskell's, which was comprised of a narrower and slightly higher social stratum than that of most of Dickens's.¹³ Dickens often describes the lower middle class in a way which is not at all condescending. Gaskell, however, except for Mary Barton and some less known, short works, concentrates on the families of professionals and genteel people who, although not always wealthy, possess a cultural identity which was prestigious relative to that of the up-and-coming lower middle class which was comprised mainly of former members of the working class. There are also members of the upper middle class in her novels. We know that such people formed part of her audience from her references to their reactions to some of her more controversial works, such as Mary Barton and Ruth (Letters of Mrs. Gaskell: 68, 220, 223-228). While lower middle class people might have read about genteel people in order to learn how to imitate them, the audience for whom Gaskell wrote was of higher social standing. In addition, judging from the minute detailing of domestic life and of things of particular interest to women, such as conspicuous consumption in the form of clothing and household effects, it seems likely that Gaskell's writing

¹³This inference is based on the content of the novels and on scattered comments in Gaskell's letters.

appealed to a female audience in particular. Dickens on the other hand gives somewhat less detailed descriptions of such things, but very detailed descriptions of the interiors of offices, shops, factories and public institutions. Gaskell thus wrote about the cultural sphere with which she was most familiar.

Gaskell's basic technique was to describe things with which she was familiar and to allow herself to become emotionally absorbed in the subject matter. The familiarity with the subject matter usually came from her own enculturation in the setting described. Sometimes however, she gained it through historical research, as for her historical novel, Sylvia's Lovers, or through fieldwork, as her work among the poor might be regarded, for her novel, Mary Barton.

Occasionally she attempted to describe things with which she was not familiar and with which she could not fully identify emotionally. When this happened her work was adversely affected. For example she writes convincingly of domestic life among the working class in Mary Barton. However, when she discusses working class politics the topic seems to be so threatening to her view of the world and that of her audience, that she is unable to explore it fully. Similarly, her fundamental adherence to the Victorian middle class sexual code affected her work. Gaskell was unusually aware of the hypocrisy and repressiveness of this code, as is indicated by the very

fact that she could write a novel, Ruth, in which the heroine is an unwed mother. Nonetheless, Ruth is not as satisfactory a character as another heroine of humble origin, Mary Barton. Ruth is too saintly in her renunciation of her former life. She is too extremely good, as if Gaskell were protesting too much. Furthermore, the moralistic ending, in which Ruth sacrifices her life tending the sick in a cholera epidemic, indicates that the idea that she could go unpunished in the end must have been inconceivable to Gaskell and her audience.¹⁴

The Victorian sexual code also interferes with Gaskell's rendering of Esther in Mary Barton, a novel in which other characters are very subtly and convincingly drawn.

Esther, a prostitute, tends to be melodramatic and ornate in her speech, unlike any of the other characters. Her hysterical self-flagellation is clearly necessary to Gaskell and her audience, for her to be allowable as a character at all.

Thus, it is only when Gaskell attempts to imagine particular violations of the most fundamental social norms, such as those embodied in the Victorian sexual

¹⁴Gaskell's ambivalence about the Victorian sexual code is also evidenced by the fact that although she wrote a daring book which scandalized middle class readers, she fundamentally agreed with a London librarian who withdrew Ruth from circulation "on account of its being 'unfit for family reading' . . ." (Letters of Mrs. Gaskell: 223); Gaskell forbade her own daughters to read the book.

code, or to imagine the real overthrow of the social system, that she runs up against her own cultural limitations. Nonetheless, the mere introduction of these topics to a middle class audience challenged their way of viewing the world as well as her own.

Gaskell's Fiction: Publishing Data, Plot Summaries, and Major Themes

Cranford, "The Cage at Cranford," Mr. Harrison's Confessions, and Cousin Phillis, are the works from which quantified data are taken, since all are based in Gaskell's childhood home town of Knutsford, and all take place within the time range of this study.

Cranford is perhaps the best known of Gaskell's novels. It was first published in serial form from 1851 through 1853, appearing in Dickens' magazine, Household Words. Gaskell had not expected Cranford to be a lengthy series but Dickens extended it, because of audience demand. The initial intent, to make Cranford a short sketch, and the lack of elaborate Victorian plot makes the book somewhat unusual in the genre of the novel. However, as Easson remarks,

Cranford, despite its sporadic production, is essentially fictive and might be called a novel; character and action are combined to produce climax.

(Easson 1979:100)

The plot consists of several "complications of events" leading to crises. Most of the action of the novel revolves around Miss Matty Jenkyns, showing the gradual changes in her personality and her gentle courage in defying social rules after the death of her older sister has removed a restrictive presence from her life.

The people on whom the book focuses are mostly genteel middle aged and elderly widows and spinsters. Their "daily work and experience," to use Gaskell's phrase, are very restricted and rigid. While most of them do not work for a living, they do some housework; for example, they trust no servants to care for their precious old lace, heirlooms from aristocratic ancestors. The care and quality of old lace is an important topic of conversation among these women. They also sew and embroider a little, and sometimes cook, especially dainty items. They do light work in their flower gardens, and minister to the poor, bringing them food, medical care and advice.

These women are each other's main source of company and of caring. They spend a great deal of time visiting each other--playing card games, drinking tea and eating dainty sandwiches. They are as informed as any Polynesian as to their own and each other's genealogies. These old ladies rigidly adhere to antiquated social customs, and are preoccupied with etiquette in a time of rapid change in this area. They are sometimes cruel to those who violate these rules. They know that wealthy shopkeepers eat

hearty dinners early in the evening, but themselves practice what Gaskell refers to as "elegant economy" because of their often slender means. They view the comfort of much of the non-genteel middle class as somewhat vulgar.

The major themes in this genteel little novel are marriage, sex and money. All of the major crises involve either marriage, the introduction of men into the community of unmarried or widowed old women or financial crises--sudden and dramatic or small and chronic.

The theme of money is a constant underlying problem for all of these genteel old women, none of whom ever has enough money to live really comfortably. For example, even the highest ranking "Cranford" lady gives a very economical tea in comparison to that of a retired milliner who succeeds in getting the "genteel Cranford society" to attend a tea party at her house. A more dramatic major crisis occurs, when the main protagonist, Miss Matty Jenkyns, loses her entire income when her bank fails. Several things become clear in this crisis. One is the narrow range of jobs open to genteel women; teacher or housekeeper are virtually the only ones which seem possible, until the young, innovative Mary Smith comes up with the idea of opening a tea shop. Another thing made clear by this crisis is the intensity of feeling among the genteel ladies of the town of a sense of community, and that to let their friend fall from their small circle because of her economic loss is destructive to the group

itself. Perhaps most interestingly, we see how the rule of hypergamy and its corollary that a woman took on her husband's rank of marriage are manipulated to assure the beloved Miss Matty Jenkyns membership in the genteel circle of Cranford. Mrs. Jamieson, the "oracle" who decrees all matters of etiquette,

"had taken a few days to consider whether [by opening a tea shop] . . . Miss Matty would forfeit her privileges of society in Cranford. . . . The decision she gave at last . . . was to this effect; that whereas a married woman takes her husband's rank by the strict laws of precedence, an unmarried woman retains the station her father occupied. So Cranford was allowed to visit Miss Matty. . . ."

(Cranford: 199)

The rule of hypergamy is the major problem which is dealt with in the theme of marriage. One marriage in the novel is extremely happy and fortunate. The relatively young (thirty-year-old) daughter of a poor retired Army Captain marries a well-to-do Major. This marriage is uneventful, and the couple leaves the town immediately after the marriage, so that the wife is only occasionally heard from by the characters in the novel. The main purpose this marriage serves is as a model of the perfect marriage. Another marriage in Cranford is one which never happens. This involves the meeting of Miss Matty Jenkyns with the now elderly man whom, thirty years earlier, she refused in marriage because of his inferior rank; she was afraid at that time to violate the rule of hypergamy. A rather subtle exposition of the regret the old women now feels is an important part of the novel. The most

dramatic crisis involving the rule of hypergamy is juxtaposed with the story of Miss Matty and her marriage that never was. In this case the rule of hypergamy is flagrantly violated when Lady Glenmire, the poor widow of a baronet, marries the wealthy doctor son of a yeoman farmer. The town is scandalized.

The theme of marriage is closely tied in with the theme of sex, which is a basic undercurrent in the novel and is most obvious in the crises that occur when men appear in the genteel female community. Virtually all of the men are a disturbing influence in the novel since they are not concerned with the forms of gentility. Several of them also appear at times of need to help the "Cranford" ladies. For example, Captain Brown the retired army captain, rather than maintaining a respectable reticence about his small income (as do the "Cranford" ladies), talks about it in public in a loud voice. He is not ashamed to prefer Dickens' Pickwick Papers to Johnson, and is not genteel in his general behavior. Nevertheless, he is chivalrous in a rather unaffected way, and is always there to put out fires in chimneys and come to the ladies' assistance in other such domestic emergencies.

Farmer Holbrook, the man whom Matty Jenkyns refused to marry long ago, is about seventy years old, but still is exuberant, loud and rather attractive. The old lady goes with Mary Smith to visit him at his farm:

I looked at my host: the peas were going wholesale into his capacious mouth, shovelled up by his large, round-ended knife. . . . After dinner a clay pipe was brought in, and a spittoon; and asking us to retire to another room, where he would soon join us, if we disliked tobacco-smoke, he presented his pipe to Miss Matty, and requested her to fill the bowl. This was a compliment to a lady in his youth; but it was rather inappropriate to propose it as an honour to Miss Matty. . . . But if it was a shock to her refinement, it was also a gratification to her feelings to be thus selected . . .

(Cranford: 75)

If Miss Matty had dared to defy the rule of hypergamy and marry Mr. Holbrook she would have led a very different life. For one, her concern with gentility might have fallen away. In addition, she might have had children. As it is, she does not really understand conception and childbirth; she remains ignorant of her former maid's (with whom she lives) pregnancy until she is told about it, just before the baby is born.

One of the major concerns of the "Cranford" ladies is to keep young men away from their unmarried household servants. This is quite difficult, since as Mary Smith notes

If gentlemen were scarce, and almost unheard of in the 'genteel society' of Cranford, they or their counterparts---handsome young men---abounded in the lower classes.

(Cranford: 1976:64)

Maidservants always had "followers." To the ladies of "Cranford," their servants are almost like healthy barnyard animals, and the fact that they get married and have children is rather vulgar. This makes it especially

shocking when Lady Glenmire marries Mr. Hoggins for love which obviously is in part sexual love.

Her face seemed to have almost something of the flush of youth in it; her lips looked redder and more trembling full than in their old compressed state, and her eyes dwelt on all things with a lingering light, as if she was learning to love Cranford and its belongings. Mr. Hoggins looked broad and radiant. . .

(Ibid.: 1 69)

The revulsion and fear about sex on the part of the "Cranford" ladies, and their self-appointed role as guardians of morality, is made the subject of light, genteel comedy in Cranford. Nevertheless, there is real psychological tension here, which has a social context and significance.

The theme of sex is also an undercurrent in the short story, "The Cage at Cranford," which appeared in Dickens' magazine All the Year Round in November, 1863. It was not included in any volumes of Gaskell's works until after her death. "The Cage at Cranford" is also told by Mary Smith, who is now "past thirty." Gaskell once remarked that Cranford was the only thing she had ever written which she never tired of re-reading. The aim of "The Cage at Cranford" seems to be to recapture the mood of Cranford and Mary Smith literally tells the story as if she were our old friend, taking us to visit old friends. The plot is rather trivial. There is a misunderstanding as to the purpose of a new ladies' fashion, and as in Cranford, a man, the happily married

Mr. Hoggins, comes to the rescue in this minor crisis. This sketch is nowhere near as successful as its predecessor, Cranford. The humor of the slightly racy situation, in which a large, robust and not perfectly genteel man is examining a ladies' undergarment in the presence of several women, is rather forced. Nonetheless, we do get updates on the people we met in the earlier work.

Mr. Harrison's Confessions (first published in a serial magazine, The Ladies' Companion, in February, March and April, 1851) is a love story ending in a happy marriage. A middle aged widow and a spinster both are convinced that the young doctor, Mr. Harrison, intends to marry them. Mr. Harrison, however, is in love with the vicar's daughter and becomes involved with her family through the death of her younger brother. He then sees her through a nearly fatal illness. The comedy enters in the form of mutual misunderstandings between Mr. Hoggins and other townspeople, regarding Mr. Hoggins' marriage plans. Through these misunderstandings Mr. Harrison becomes the center of a sexual scandal. Mr. Harrison's Confessions is one of Gaskell's minor works, but the writer nonetheless delights in description, and we become well acquainted with the details of town life.

Cousin Phillis, on the other hand, a short novel, or "nouvelle" is one of Gaskell's masterpieces. It is

one of her later works, "published originally as a four part serial . . . in the Cornhill Magazine, appearing monthly from November 1863 to February 1864"

(Keating: 31-32). It is a story of unrequited love, in which the beautiful, intelligent and rather unusual daughter of a farmer/parson (unusual partly because of her odd and isolated upbringing) falls in love with a young railway engineer who is bringing progress to their rustic district. Detailed description of the social and physical environment and of the protagonists (including the narrator, Phillis' cousin) are woven together in a rich fabric. The town of "Eltham" where the narrator lodges with two spinster sisters who run a pastry shop, is briefly described in this story and is obviously the same as the towns of "Cranford" and "Duncombe."

All four of these works, Cousin Phillis, Cranford, "The Cage at Cranford," and Mr. Harrison's Confessions, build a consistent and convincingly portrayed community in the fictional town referred to in this study as "Cranford." As will be shown, this description is largely corroborated by the census of the town of Knutsford in northwest England, where Gaskell spent her childhood. The major themes explored by Gaskell express important aspects of social structure and social change in this town.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS

A "census" of the middle class population of the fictional town of "Cranford" was taken, including only characters who live in the town. (See Appendix 4.) People who are known to the inhabitants of the town, but who do not live there are not included--for example, the Gordons in Cranford and "The Cage at Cranford"--nor are those who live on the outskirts of the town, such as farmers Holbrook and Holman, in Cranford and Cousin Phillis. Also not included are people who are only mentioned in passing (e.g. Mrs. Deacon at the Coach and Horses Inn in Cranford). Mr. Johnson, the general storekeeper in Cranford and "The Cage at Cranford" is included because he is mentioned several times. Although his household is not described in detail, a shopkeeper's wife, "Mrs. Johnson," is mentioned twice. No characters are counted twice for the same census year. The middle class households described in "Cranford" in an interval of approximately ten years are enumerated in order to validly compare the data from the novels with the Knutsford census enumerators' books. There are no available data from the

census enumerators' books for Knutsford for 1841. There are, however, for 1851 and 1861. For the fictional censuses of "Cranford" there are data for circa 1841 and 1851, but not for 1861. Therefore, data were compiled for the years available from each source, but statistically compared only for the one year the two sources have in common--1851.

Research Problem One

Two demographic facts are particularly striking about the middle class population focused on in Cranford, "The Cage at Cranford," Cousin Phillis, and Mr. Harrison's Confessions. One is that there are many elderly people in this social group. For example, in "The Cage at Cranford" the narrator, Mary Smith, remarks:

I was past thirty, but did not object to being called a girl; and indeed I generally felt like a girl at Cranford, where everybody was so much older than I was.

("The Cage at Cranford": 329)

In Mr. Harrison's Confessions, there is an early scene in which he imagines that the notes welcoming him to town are from a lovely young widow, and two pretty young unmarried girls. He is disappointed when he meets them to find Mrs. Munton, a sixty-five-year-old invalid, and the Misses Tompkinson, one of whom is around fifty, and is what Mr. Harrison considers to be intimidatingly masculine, and the other of whom is thirty-five and desperate to get married. In Cranford, the majority of the main characters are

middle-aged or elderly.

The second demographic fact is that the population of "Cranford" contains an unusually large proportion of women, many of whom are unmarried or widowed. The doctor, Mr. Morgan, remarks to Mr. Harrison,

You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five sixths of the householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are the only gentlemen in the place . . .

(Mr. Harrison's Confessions: 413)

Lansbury (1975) who otherwise strongly emphasizes the point that Gaskell describes social "reality," refers to Cranford as a "fairy tale," a "utopia," and the most caricatured of Gaskell's works. As Lansbury sees it, this mythical town of old unmarried ladies is a fantasy which allays the fear of old age, and asserts the possible self-sufficiency of women.

Age has always held more terrors for women than for men, and for the single woman it still looms with bleak uncertainty and social isolation. Not in Cranford . . . [It is therefore] necessary to see Cranford as Utopian fiction.

(Lansbury: 84-85)

Lansbury's assessment of Cranford, and implicitly of Mr. Harrison's Confessions and "The Cage at Cranford," which take place in the same setting, at first seems plausible. However, one could argue that in these works the women are not contented and self-sufficient, and that the stories are tragi-comic rather than utopian. On another level, as

in the present study, one can address the demographic structure of the town, which strikes Lansbury as fantasy, using census data. As we will see, comparison with the census encourages us to take Gaskell's description of "Cranford" as a more or less realistic description of a specific time and place, although only after census categories have been broken down in ways suggested by her novels.

Research Question 1A: Ratio of Male to Female Middle Class Household Heads in Knutsford and in "Cranford"

The "census" charts of the fictional town "Cranford" (See Appendix 4) were compared to the Knutsford census enumerators' books, checking the ratio of male to female middle class heads of household in the censuses of 1851 and 1861, to see if the two sources agreed. The main criterion for distinguishing middle class households in the two sources is their keeping at least one servant. Table I presents the population in the Knutsford census enumerators' books and in the novels by sex of the head of household:

Table I: Middle Class Male and Female Household Heads in Knutsford and "Cranford"

	<u>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>HEADED BY MEN</u>		<u>HEADED BY WOMEN</u>	
		<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
		1841			
"Cranford" novels	11	5	(45%)	6	(55%)
(no data from census)					
1851					
Knutsford census	69	51	(74%)	18	(26%)
"Cranford" novels	12	6	(50%)	6	(50%)
1861					
Knutsford census	81	66	(81%)	15	(19%)
(no data from novels)					

As the above table indicates, the ratio of male to female household heads in Knutsford, 1851, seventy-four male to twenty-six percent female, does not even approach the ratio depicted in "Cranford," where fifty percent of the middle class households are headed by women. Using the "goodness of fit" model, when χ^2 is not significant, Gaskell's novels show significant agreement with the census population values. Here, $\chi^2 = 4.00$.

Checking the 1851 "Cranford" population described by the character, Mr. Morgan, in which "five sixths [83%] of the householders above a certain rank are women" against the census, again the difference between the two sources is statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 128.56, p < .001$).

Nonetheless, the percentage of middle class female household heads in the Knutsford census enumerators' books (twenty-six percent in 1851 and nineteen percent in 1861) is high in comparison to the percentage in the middle class suburb of Manchester, Moss Side and Hulme. Table II presents the Manchester suburb data.

Table II: Middle Class Male and Female Household Heads in Manchester Suburb (Moss Side and Hulme)

1841:	Total middle class households	74
	Total headed by men	65 (88%)
	Total headed by women	9 (12%)
1851:	Total middle class households	238
	Total headed by men	209 (88%)
	Total headed by women	29 (12%)
1861:	Total middle class households	321
	Total headed by men	278 (87%)
	Total headed by women	43 (13%)

Table III compares the two areas, Knutsford and the Manchester suburb, and shows that there was a much higher proportion of female heads of household in Knutsford than in Manchester:

Table III: Middle Class Female Heads of Household in Knutsford and Manchester Suburb (Moss Side and Hulme)--Census

	<u>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>HEADED BY WOMEN</u>		<u>HEADED BY MEN</u>	
		<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
1841					
Knutsford (no data)					
Manchester (Moss Side and Hulme)	74	9	(12%)	65	(88%)
1851					
Knutsford	69	18	(26%)	51	(74%)
Manchester	238	29	(12%)	209	(88%)
1861					
Knutsford	81	15	(19%)	66	(81%)
Manchester (Moss Side and Hulme)	321	43	(13%)	278	(87%)

There is thus a highly significant difference between the two areas for 1851 as represented in the census enumerators' books ($\chi^2 = 10.2$, $p < .01$).

The discrepancy between Knutsford and Manchester, indicates that there may perhaps be some validity in Gaskell's description since there were in fact great social and economic differences between the two locales. Manchester was an industrial city and Knutsford was a small country town based on agriculture and to a lesser extent, trade. It seems likely that the discrepancy in the percentages of female heads of household in the two locales may be related to these basic differences. Nonetheless this discrepancy does not explain Gaskell's very consistent and convincing portrayal of a community in which fifty percent of the heads of household are female. If she is accurate, then the economic criterion of keeping a servant is not sufficient to define the community dealt with by Gaskell in her novels of "Cranford." It is therefore necessary to look beyond this criterion and to use the cultural definitions of class provided by Gaskell through her characters and in her editorial comments. In fact, Mrs. Gaskell does not simply say that there is a disproportionately large number of women in the middle class in "Cranford." Rather, she refers to a particular segment of the middle class--the segment which she refers to as "genteel."

In her fictitious town many of these people are not particularly wealthy. Many employ only one servant.² Very few members of the non-genteel middle class (that is, people who employ at least one servant per household, but who are not culturally defined as genteel) are included in the population described by Gaskell for "Cranford." There are yeoman farmers living on the outskirts of town, who employ agricultural laborers and agricultural servants as well as one or two house servants. Shopkeepers who employ more than one servant and have many shop assistants are mentioned but rarely described. The 1841 "census" of the town of "Cranford" shows only two non-genteel households (one headed by Mr. Johnson, a storekeeper, and one headed by Miss Barker, a retired milliner, see Appendix 4). For the year 1851, all of the households are genteel, with six male and six female heads of household. It is clear that Mrs. Gaskell's focus is the genteel middle class.

²As previously noted, keeping servants is a standard methodological criterion for ascertaining middle class status (Flandrin 1979:70; McLeod 1977: 63). It is also assumed that the more servants are kept by a household the higher is its economic status. There are, however, exceptions to this. For example, an innkeeper is likely to employ many servants who serve the innkeeper's clients, not his family. Nonetheless, in general it is a valid criterion for getting an approximation of economic status.

Therefore, it is this segment of the population presented in the Knutsford census enumerators' books to which her work should be compared.

The Knutsford census enumerators' description of the middle class can also be divided into the same two major groups--genteel and non-genteel. These groups are listed according to rank or occupation in Appendix 5.³

The genteel group is listed as: "Independent," "Annuitant," "Fundholder," "Lady," "Gentlewoman," "Landed Proprietor," and "Proprietor of Houses." There are also clergymen, lawyers, doctors and teachers. The only genteel occupation listed for women is "teacher" or "schoolmistress." The census enumerators' books contain many more of the non-genteel middle class than do the novels. The non-genteel middle class is divided into three sub-categories: "tradesmen," "farmers," and "miscellaneous" which includes a variety of other occupations.

The "tradesman" sub-category includes all shopkeepers and people who make "their fortunes in trade"

³For 1861 the census has simply been divided into genteel and non-genteel populations.

(North and South: 50).⁴ In addition to shopkeepers and merchants, this category includes an apothecary, a chemist and a druggist, since they were probably perceived by genteel people more as proprietors of stores than as trained professionals.

The second sub-category is "farmers." The Knutsford census for both 1851 and 1861 shows a few farmers who live in town.

The "miscellaneous" sub-category includes skilled workers who do not sell what they produce in shops or trade--e.g., surveyors, bookbinders, printers, builders of houses, etc. It also includes a "retired banker."⁵

An individual who was difficult to categorize in the 1851 Knutsford census was an "Agent." He was included in the "miscellaneous" category, although his occupation has to do with land, because he is not a proprietor of land. A land agent in Wives and Daughters has a genteel lifestyle because his occupation keeps him

⁴In Knutsford, 1851, a well-to-do tanner, with four servants, is considered non-genteel and categorized as tradesman on the grounds that Gaskell's genteel characters would have categorized him as such.

⁵Since the "retired banker" has only one servant, it seems unlikely that he owned a bank, but rather, that he worked in one.

in constant contact with the gentry and the aristocracy, but he is regarded as an upstart. The surveyor was difficult to classify for similar reasons. Innkeepers have also been included in the "miscellaneous" category.

Table IV compares the percentage of female heads of household in the genteel and non-genteel segments of the middle class:

Table IV: Female Heads of Genteel and Non-Genteel Middle Class Households in Knutsford Census

	<u>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>HEADED BY WOMEN</u>		<u>HEADED BY MEN</u>	
		<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
1851					
Genteel	26	13	(50%)	13	(50%)
Non-Genteel	43	5	(12%)	38	(88%)

1861					
Genteel	22	8	(36%)	14	(74%)
Non-Genteel	59	7	(12%)	52	(88%)

As Table IV shows, in Knutsford both in 1851 and 1861, there is a much higher percentage of genteel than non-genteel households headed by women. $\chi^2 = 22.1$, $p < .001$ for 1851. This is strikingly different from

Tables I and III, where the middle class population as a whole (ignoring the cultural categorization of genteel and non-genteel) has only twenty-six percent of the households headed by women in 1851 and only nineteen percent in 1861.

Having divided the middle class population into culturally defined groups, it is possible to compare the population represented in the census to that of the novels in terms of ratio of genteel male to genteel female household heads. All of the households described in the novels for 1851 are genteel. Table V presents the breakdown for 1851, the one year for which there are comparable data from both sources.

Table V: Male and Female Genteel Household Heads in "Cranford" and in Knutsford, 1851

	<u>TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS</u>	<u>HEADED BY MEN</u>		<u>HEADED BY WOMEN</u>	
		<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
Knutsford census	26	13	(50%)	13	(50%)
"Cranford" novels	12	6	(50%)	6	(50%)

There is no statistically significant difference between the two populations in terms of the ratio of male to female heads of household ($\chi^2 = 0$ n.s.). In fact, they agree perfectly.

While Gaskell's characters such as Mr. Morgan, and Mary Smith, the narrator of Cranford, are aware of an unusually large number of female heads of households in their town, they exaggerate and err in their descriptions to a certain extent. For example, Mr. Morgan leaves out Mr. Hutton, the vicar, in his statement about the number of gentlemen in the town. He exaggerates in his statement that "five sixths" of the householders above a certain rank are women. Gaskell, the novelist, however, has a clearer perspective than do her characters. She clarifies their observations in her actual descriptions of the town.

Gaskell's statement that a large proportion of householders of "a certain rank" (i.e. genteel) in "Cranford" are women agrees with the Knutsford census. The hypothesis of this study is thus supported. Gaskell's usefulness as a social observer is clear. Her novels not only describe "reality" similarly to the census, they are reliable sources of social data and can serve as tools to help us understand other sources which are in some ways less rich. In this case, the novels pointed out an important fact which would otherwise have been overlooked in the Knutsford census.

Research Question 1B: Marital Status and Eligibility among the Genteel Segment of the Middle Class in "Cranford" and in Knutsford

Gaskell's discussion of the lack of men in "Cranford" enables us to see that this lack is culturally perceived. There are eligible men in town, but they are not part of the genteel marriage market. As Mary Smith observes:

If gentlemen were scarce, and almost unheard of in the 'genteel society' of Cranford, they or their counterparts--handsome young men--abounded in the lower classes.

(Cranford: 64)

Gaskell makes it clear that even wealthy shopkeepers, tradesmen and industrialists are not considered appropriate mates for genteel women. In North and South Margaret Hale, for example, scorns to become acquainted with a handsome young man in the Gorman family who "made their fortunes in trade" (50). Later she is prejudiced against Mr. Thornton, a wealthy, self-made industrialist whom her father tutors. Despite her relative poverty and his wealth, he is beneath her from her genteel point of view.

That "Cranford" also adheres to this value system is made clear. For example, the town is scandalized when the genteel Caroline Tompkinson marries the son of a wealthy tallow chandler (Mr. Harrison's Confessions). The

ladies are horrified when the visiting widow of a baronet marries a well-to-do doctor (Cranford). Even though his profession puts him in the genteel category, he has achieved this position through his own efforts. He does not come from a "good" family and is therefore only a marginally acceptable member of the genteel community. Lady Glenmire is at the top of the genteel hierarchy of the community, even though she is poor compared to Mr. Hoggins, the doctor. This marriage violates the rule of hypergamy.

The plots of Cranford and Mr. Harrison's Confessions hinge on the lack of eligible genteel men. This lack was statistically investigated by comparing the populations of the novels to the Knutsford genteel and non-genteel middle class populations. Data were compiled from both sources on the age, sex, economic stratum (based on number of servants) and marital status of adults in both novels (circa 1841 and 1851) and the Knutsford census enumerators' books for 1851 and 1861. All adults were included, not only household heads, but everyone over eighteen years of age in all middle class households. This included visitors and lodgers, but excluded servants.⁷ Tables VI, VII and VIII summarize these data.

⁷See Appendices 6a-e for charts of raw census data.

TABLE VI: Summary of Eligibility in Novels of 1841 and 1851

Marital Status	x 1841 Genteel/Non-Genteel					y 1851 Genteel	
	M	F	M	F		M	F
m	2	2	1	1	m	2	2
u	1	6	0	1	u	3	8
w	1	3	0	0	w	1	4
Total eligible	M 2	F 9	M 0	F 1		M 4	F 12
percent of total eligible	M 18%	F 82%	M 0%	F 100%*		M 25%	F 75%

*The non-genteel population in the 1841 novels is so small it should be disregarded

TABLE VII: Summary of Eligibility in 1851 Census

Marital Status	x Genteel		y Non-Genteel		z Combined Middle-Class	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
m	11	8	37	36	48	44
u	3	25	29	13	32	38
w	3	4	3	5	6	9
Total eligible	M 6	F 29	M 32	F 18	M 38	F 47
percent of total eligible	M 17%	F 83%	M 64%	F 36%	M 45%	F 55%

Key: m = married, u = unmarried, w = widowed,
E = total eligible for marriage.

TABLE VIII: Summary of Eligibility in 1861 Census

Marital Status	x Genteel		y Non-Genteel		z Combined Middle Class	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
m	11	13	47	52	58	65
u	3	23	12	18	15	31
w	3	5	6	14	9	17
Total eligible	6	28	18	32	24	48
percent of total eligible	18%	82%	36%	64%	33%	66%

Key: m = married, u = unmarried, w = widowed,
E = total eligible for marriage.

As Table VIIz shows, the "combined middle class" population of Knutsford in 1851 has only nine more eligible women than eligible men. This is far different from the vast preponderance of women described by Gaskell for the genteel segment of the middle class. However, in the context of the culturally defined social categories genteel and non-genteel, another picture emerges. In 1851 in Knutsford, there are thirty-two eligible non-genteel men and eighteen eligible non-genteel women (Table VIIy). Sixty-four percent of the eligible non-genteel population are men and thirty-six percent are women. Thus, for the non-genteel population Gaskell's description of the marriage market does not apply although her statement that eligible young men "abounded in the lower classes" (op. cit.) is strikingly supported. In the genteel middle

class (Table VIIx) the ratio of eligible females to eligible males agrees remarkably well with Gaskell's vivid descriptions of this social situation. There are six eligible genteel men and twenty-nine eligible genteel women. Men are seventeen percent of the genteel marriage market, while women are eighty-three percent. As Gaskell shows, the contrast between the two segments of the middle class population is extreme. Comparing the genteel and non-genteel populations for 1851 there is a statistically highly significant difference between the two populations ($\chi^2 = 18.28$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$). Gaskell's description of the genteel marriage market in "Cranford," 1851, can also be compared to that represented in the census enumerators' books for Knutsford, 1851. In "Cranford" there are four eligible genteel men and twelve eligible genteel women (Table VIy). In the Knutsford census (Table VIIy) there are six eligible genteel men and twenty-nine eligible genteel women. There is no statistically significant difference between the genteel marriage market depicted in the two sources ($\chi^2 = 3.75$, $df = 4$, n.s.). Gaskell's work and the census agree.

RESEARCH QUESTION 1C: Age of Middle Class Population in "Cranford" and in Knutsford

Several characters in the novels comment on the unusually large proportion of older people in "Cranford." Mary Smith says, "I was past thirty, but . . . generally

felt like a girl at Cranford, where everybody was so much older than I was" ("The Cage at Cranford": 329). "So much older" has been interpreted to mean twenty or more years older than Mary Smith, or over fifty years of age. Even going by this conservative interpretation, we find far more people over fifty in the genteel population than in the non-genteel population. In the 1841 novels, there are eight genteel people under fifty and seven over fifty in the novels. In 1851, there are eight genteel people under fifty and twelve who are fifty or over (See Table IX). While it is not true that "everybody was so much older," still, a very high proportion of the population is over age fifty.

TABLE IX: Age of the Genteel Population of "Cranford" and Knutsford 1841-1861

	Age range < 50				Age range > 50			
	M		F		M		F	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
NOVELS: 1841								
Genteel:	2	(13%)	6	(40%)	2	(13%)	5	(33%)
Non-Genteel:	1	(33%)	1	(33%)	0	(0%)	1	(33%)
NOVELS: 1851								
Genteel:	1	(5%)	7	(35%)	5	(25%)	7	(35%)
CENSUS: 1851								
Genteel:	9	(16%)	21	(38%)	8	(15%)	17	(31%)
Non-Genteel:	57	(47%)	40	(33%)	12	(10%)	13	(11%)
CENSUS: 1861								
Genteel:	8	(14%)	28	(49%)	9	(16%)	12	(21%)
Non-Genteel:	48	(32%)	60	(40%)	17	(11%)	24	(16%)

Looking specifically at 1851 (see Table X) and comparing the age structure described in the novels circa 1851 to the age structure of the genteel population in the Knutsford census of 1851 we find no statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 7.15$, $df = 3$, n.s.). A comparison of the age structure of the genteel to the non-genteel population of Knutsford, 1851, however, shows that there is a striking difference between the two groups which reaches statistical significance. In the genteel population, forty-seven percent are over age fifty, while

TABLE X: Age of Genteel Population of "Cranford" and Knutsford (all adults), 1851

	TOTAL ADULT POP.	Age range < 50		Age range > 50	
		Male		Female	
		#	%	#	%
Knutsford census	54	9(17%)	20(37%)	8(15%)	17(32%)
"Cranford" novels	20	1(5%)	7(35%)	5(25%)	7(35%)

TABLE Xa: Age of Non-Genteel Middle Class of Knutsford

	TOTAL ADULT POP.	Age range < 50		Age range > 50	
		Male		Female	
		#	%	#	%
Knutsford	123	57(46%)	40(33%)	12(10%)	14(11%)

in the non-genteel population, only twenty percent are over fifty. A much greater proportion of the non-genteel population (eighty percent, as compared to fifty-four percent) is under fifty years of age ($\chi^2 = 11.57$, $df = 1$, $p < .001$) as Table Xa shows.

Age and Marital Status

While the large proportion of elderly genteel women is interesting in itself, it is of particular interest in the context in which Gaskell points out this demographic situation. She emphasizes that most of the elderly women are not married. They are either widows or spinsters. Of the two married women in the "Cranford" novels for 1851, one is over age fifty and one is under fifty. Of the unmarried women, five are under age fifty and three are over. Of the widows, one is under fifty and three are over. In all, there are six eligible women over fifty, and six under fifty. These data, together with data from the Knutsford 1851 census, are presented in Table XI. In the 1851 Knutsford census, there are fourteen unmarried genteel women under and eleven over age fifty. There are no widows under age fifty, and four over fifty.

TABLE XI: Age and Marital Status of Genteel Middle Class in Knutsford and in "Cranford" in 1851

	TOTAL ADULT POP.	Age range < 50 Years Old		Age range > 50 Years Old		Both sexes
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
<u>CRANFORD</u>						
<u>NOVELS</u>						
Genteel	20					
Unmarried		1	5	2	3	
Widowed		0	1	1	3	
Married		0	1	2	1	
(Total eligible)		1	6	3	6	
Percent of total population eligible)		5%	30%	15%	30%	80%
<u>KNUTSFORD</u>						
<u>CENSUS</u>						
Genteel	54					
Unmarried		2	14	1	11	
Widowed		0	0	3	4	
Married		7	6	4	2	
(Total eligible)		2	14	4	15	
Percent of total population eligible)		4%	26%	7%	28%	65%

TABLE XIa: Age and Marital Status of Non-Genteel Middle Class of Knutsford

	TOTAL ADULT POP.	Age range < 50 Years Old		Age range > 50 Years Old		Both sexes
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
<u>Non-Genteel</u> 122						
Unmarried		28	13	1	0	
Widowed		2	1	1	4	
Married		27	26	10	10	
(Total eligible)		30	14	2	4	
Percent of total population eligible)		25%	11%	2%	3%	41%

In all there are fourteen eligible genteel women under fifty and there are fifteen over fifty in Knutsford in 1851. Comparing "Cranford" 1851 to Knutsford 1851 there is no statistically significant difference ($\chi^2 = 4.17$, $df = 8$, n.s.). On the other hand, a comparison of the genteel and non-genteel populations in Knutsford 1851 shows a much higher proportion of eligible non-genteel women under age fifty, reaching statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 4.01$, $df = 1$, $p < .05$). Furthermore, as Table XIa shows, all of the non-genteel women over fifty either are married or have been married. Thus both in terms of the age structure of the genteel middle class and of the large proportion of unmarried women, the census supports Gaskell's description. In fact, Gaskell's description is slightly understated in comparison to the census.

Problem Two

Research Question 2: Occupations and Sources of Income of Middle Class Women in "Cranford" and Knutsford, 1841 and 1851

The following discussion of middle class women's work deliberately ignores the sub-categories of the middle class, genteel and non-genteel. There is very little variety in the occupations of genteel middle class women, but the non-genteel middle class includes wider variety. By combining both the genteel and the non-

genteel middle class into one larger group we attain a wider range of middle class women's occupations and sources of income. All households headed by women in which there were one or more servants are included for Research Question 2. In a similar effort to get as inclusive a range of middle class women's occupations as possible from the "Cranford" novels, both "census" years 1841 and 1851 are combined in order to make the sample larger. Table XII shows the distribution of middle class women by occupation in the "Cranford" novels for 1841 and 1851.

TABLE XII: Distribution of Middle Class Women by Occupation in "Cranford" for 1841 and 1851

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Independent ⁸	7	58%
Teacher	2	17%
Milliner	1	8%
Provision Dealer ⁹	1	8%
Housekeeper	1	8%
	<u>12</u>	<u>99%</u>

The Knutsford census for the year 1851 gives a total of six occupations for middle class female heads of

⁸ "Independent" is here defined as a person who lives on inherited wealth, in the form of landed wealth, invested money, annuities, etc.

⁹ This total includes Miss Matty Jenkyns during her short stint as a tea dealer.

household. Table XIII presents these data.

TABLE XIII: Distribution of Middle Class Female Heads of Household by Occupation in Knutsford, 1851

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Independent	10	59%
Teacher	3	18%
Provision Dealer	2	12%
Milliner	1	6%
Upholsterer	1	6%
	<u>17</u>	<u>101%</u>

Comparing the data to these two tables (XII and XIII) on middle class women's work as presented in the novels and in the census, we find a strong agreement ($\chi^2 = 2.35$, n.s.).

If we count only the heads of household in the fictional town of "Cranford" rather than all middle class women, as we do for the Knutsford census, the agreement between the two sources is also good ($\chi^2 = 5.3$, n.s.), as shown in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV: Distribution of Middle Class Women Heads of Household by Occupation in "Cranford" for 1841 and 1851

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Total</u>
Independent	7	64%
Schoolmistress	2	18%
Milliner	1	9%
Provision Dealer	1	9%
	<u>11</u>	<u>100%</u>

Women's occupations and the source of their income are not a major theme in Gaskell's novels. These data are of far less central concern to the plots and characters she depicts than is marital status, for example. These data are, however, contained in the novels and were thus available for statistical comparison to similar data from the 1851 Knutsford census enumerators' books. The highly statistically significant agreement of the two sources is further support for this study's hypothesis. This agreement of collateral data, which are not part of a major theme, strengthens the assertion that the novel is a reliable ethnographic source.

Summary of Results

The hypothesis of this study, that Elizabeth Gaskell's description of a specific population in her "Cranford" novels will agree statistically in terms of specific variables with the same social segment reflected in figures from the Knutsford 1851 census enumerators' books, is strongly supported. Gaskell's portrayal of a demographically unusual social situation in which there was a large proportion of middle-aged and elderly unmarried women is consistent with the census enumerators' books. Her description of middle class women's work in that fictional town of "Cranford" is also consistent with that represented in the census.

Gaskell's reliability as a source is a result of her selection of details about a specific population with which she is familiar--the middle class in the town of Knutsford. Her immersion in this town, which she fictionalizes as "Cranford," enables her to give a rich, detailed description of the social life of a particular social segment in it. Not only does she give the same information about this social segment as do the census enumerators, she also records data which would be regarded as trivial by most official record keepers. Such phenomena, for example the horrified reaction of a group of middle-aged and elderly ladies to a particular marriage, enable us to ask questions from a vantage point closer to that of actors in this society, and may reveal aspects of social change.

Thus, the novels alert us to the existence of a distinct group of people, the genteel segment of the middle class, which, while numerically small, was culturally significant. Without the aid of Gaskell's novels, which point out its cultural significance, this group is embedded in the census data and seems to be part of a homogeneous middle class, and would hence remain unnoticed.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION

The use of a source like Gaskell's novels makes it possible to see how large scale social phenomena affected and were affected by people marginal to official record keeping and policy making, in this case, the genteel middle class women of a small country town. Furthermore, in their focus on a particular community which is specific in terms of time, place, class, cultural identity and sex they make possible an analysis which links micro- and macro-level phenomena. Gaskell's novels reveal connections between the levels of individual psychology, family, cultural beliefs and values, and large scale political and economic phenomena--connections which are not readily seen using other sources. While the census tends to erase rather than to express the interests and experience of groups marginal to official policy making and record keeping, the novel tends to detail them. Because the data contained in the novel are imbued with cultural meaning, and because they are presented from a viewpoint other than that of the conventional record keepers and policy makers in the society, novels are a

valuable and reliable tool, which aids in understanding other sources.

The themes of all of Gaskell's fiction in "Cranford" show the diminishing importance or the changing significance of the cultural values to which the genteel middle class still clung--values such as the supreme importance of landed wealth and good family.

The plots in all of the novels set in "Cranford" show the obsolescence of such values in the context of a structure of social relationships, including marriage. In showing the social relationships of the genteel population of a country town, important aspects of how the changing class structure affected men and women differently are revealed. This is evidenced by the peculiar demographic situation which Gaskell describes for the genteel middle class in "Cranford." It has been shown that this is real social observation and not merely invention for the purpose of staging the poignant comedy at which Gaskell is so adept. There must be something important to be learned here about social change, class and sexuality.

Gaskell's description, when taken as social observation, generates questions which are pertinent to social processes as experienced by the natives of the culture themselves, questions which are not generated by the census. Gaskell's novels encourage us to ask questions from a vantage point closer to the point of view

of actors in the culture. It may hence be asked, what social forces made these women take the course in life they took, remaining single or never remarrying, and remaining so faithful to the fading rules of gentility?

The following explanation is suggested. We know that by Gaskell's time, the mid-nineteenth century, the economic strength of the aristocracy and gentry which had been based on land, had diminished greatly, as the mercantile and industrial middle class rose in importance. These two classes formed a political and economic alliance whereby the aristocracy and gentry on the one hand stayed financially solvent, and the middle class on the other hand benefited from the political privileges which still were firmly in the hands of the aristocracy and gentry (Engels 1973[1892]: 111). This political alliance was often effected through intermarriage (F.M.L. Thompson 1963: 19-20).

Gaskell's novels make clear how this tremendously important social alliance affected men and women differently. A major theme in these novels is that of marriage. Gaskell shows how strongly felt was the rule of hypergamy, which held that women should marry a man of higher social status than themselves. Along with this went the belief that a woman's social status was conferred by a man, first by her father, then if she married, by her husband. This belief pervades and shapes the thematic structure of the novels, and also is expressed outright,

as for example by "the oracle," Mrs. Jamieson who says "that whereas a married woman takes her husband's rank by the strict laws of precedence, an unmarried woman retains the station her father occupied" (Cranford: 199).

If the son of a gentry or noble family in financial straits were to marry a middle class heiress, he would have aided his family in maintaining an elite lifestyle.¹ Younger sons in particular were encouraged to make such matches, as Jane Austen, writing in an earlier phase of this change in the class structure, explains through Fitzwilliam Darcy:

I may suffer from the want of money. Younger sons cannot marry where they like . . . our habits of expense make us too dependant and there are not many of my rank who can afford to marry without some attention to money.

(Austen 1961[1813]:156)

¹F.M.L. Thompson gives a specific illustration: "Lord Sefton's adviser, canvassing ways of clearing off a debt of some £40,000 . . . came to the possibility of the heir, Lord Molyneux, marrying. 'To marry a fine brought up Lady with little or no fortune would be to hurt the Estate. By the estate . . . he has a right to expect a large sum with a Lady . . . many a great and rich banker would be glad of the offer to give his daughter that fortune for her advancement and dignity . . .'"(1963:19). This quote from Lord Sefton's adviser supports the comment made by Gaskell in her article "French Life" in which she unfavorably compares English to French financial practices concerning monetary arrangements for the bride. While French girls are brought up simply, money is set aside for them at birth for their dowries. English girls on the other hand are brought up extravagantly, but may have "little or no fortune" as Lord Sefton's advisor puts it. This makes "both parents and children anxious and worldly in matters of wedlock" ("French Life": 652). Furthermore, in a period of financial pressure on the "landed interest" this pattern would inevitably lead to a large population of unmarried women from this social segment.

In other words, money (increasingly, as the socio-economic situation changed, mercantile and industrial middle class, money) was needed to maintain the aristocracy's and gentry's "habits of expense," their lifestyle. At the same time the middle class heiress would take on her husband's social rank² and her family would gain access to important political positions.

Because of the strongly felt rule of hypergamy, however, if the daughter of an aristocrat or member of the gentry wanted to marry, she was unlikely to marry a member of the middle class because to do so would be a deeply felt loss of social status and a source of perpetual humiliation and probably of ostracism by her community, that is, her social circle and family, since she would lose her social status and take on that of her husband. At the same time, such a woman, unless she was wealthy in her own right, or exceptionally "well-connected," would not be seen as a good choice of mate by anyone above her or equal to her in rank, because she had nothing practical to offer.

A closer look at the history of the period seems to support this explanation. There was a sharp drop in agricultural prices after the end of the Napoleonic Wars,

²For example, Squire Hamley's wife, the daughter of a wealthy import merchant, seems even more aristocratic than her husband (Wives and Daughters).

following a boom period which had lasted approximately twenty years.³ While the drop in prices was not catastrophic, since the prices had previously been so high, it nevertheless engendered what came close to panic among the landed interests. Hobsbawm and Rudé comment that during the wartime boom "luxury articles accumulated in the parlours of farmers who saw themselves as potential gentlemen, and on the backs of their wives and daughters who saw themselves even more passionately as ladies" (1968: 30). Similarly, the gentry must have entertained grand visions of their ever increasing wealth and of luxury approaching that of the aristocracy, and the aristocracy must have been confident in the continued economic strength of the "landed interest."

³ The following table (extracted from Hobsbawm and Rudé (1968:30) illustrates this.

Annual average wheat prices
in England and Wales, 1771-1850

<u>Period</u>	<u>Average for period</u>
1771-75	51.5s
1776-80	40.2
1781-85	48.6
1786-90	47.2
1791-95	53.6
1796-1800	73.7)
1801-05	80.0) boom
1806-10	88.0) period
1811-15	97.2)
1816-20	80.8
1821-25	57.3
1826-30	61.6
1831-35	52.6
1836-40	61.2
1841-45	54.8
1846-50	51.9

The fall in prices after the Napoleonic Wars was a shock to the landed interest, and as Hobsbawm and Rudé say, "there can be no question that in the years from 1815-1850 the British farming community saw itself under extreme pressure" (ibid). Thus, in the period after 1815, sons of landed families would have been even more likely to seek wealthy brides from the middle class, and the daughters even less likely to get large inheritances. The women of "Cranford" in the 1840's and 1850's would have just reached marriage age, when the agricultural price slump hit. Perhaps we may view these women as the losers in the genteel marriage market described by Jane Austen, for a period of thirty to forty years earlier. Eliza Bennet's sister Mary in Pride and Prejudice for example, fits this pattern: she would have been an "old maid" in the 1840's.

The fall in agricultural prices was directly followed by the passage of the Corn Law of 1815, which greatly restricted the import of foreign grain and hence protected the landed interests. The Corn Law was bitterly opposed by mercantile and industrial interests who wanted cheap grain, a low cost of living and low wages in order to keep production costs down and to keep up profits from the sale of industrial goods at home and abroad. By the 1830's a strong Anti-Corn Law movement had formed, which finally succeeded, in 1846, in winning the repeal of the

Corn Law.

[B]etween 1830 and 1850 the structure of deference seemed to be on the verge of disintegration, perhaps more seriously threatened by the Corn Law controversy than by the struggle for the Reform Bill, for the persistence of purposeful businessmen in challenging the aristocratic monopoly seemed more deeply revolutionary than the violence of window-smashers in 1831 and 1832.

(F.M.L. Thompson 1963: 185-186)

F.M.L. Thompson lays great stress on the alliance which had formerly been maintained between the new capitalists and the old aristocracy and gentry, which he says had "strengthen[ed] the bonds of deference, as new capitalists looked to traditional authority as the only reliable guardian of order and property in a sea of unrest" (ibid: 185). The structure of deference to traditional authority was thus on shaky ground during this twenty year period, the period described by Gaskell. Nonetheless, this period of questioning traditional authority on the part of the middle classes ultimately ended in a renewal of allegiance to the aristocracy. As Thompson puts it,

In spite of the great advance which democratic insubordination was felt to have made in 1846, however, there followed a further twenty years of renewed social stability and revived deference...a complacent acceptance of aristocratic leadership.

(Ibid: 186)

In addressing this potentially revolutionary issue in her gentle satire of the rules of deference and gentility,

Gaskell is expressing the ambivalence felt by the middle class toward their traditional social superiors.

Furthermore, within this context she demonstrates one mechanism by which the British aristocracy and gentry were transmuted and survived, that is, through intermarriage between the landed interests and the industrial and mercantile bourgeoisie.

In addition to the interpretation put forth here, that landed wealth was not sufficient to maintain all the members of genteel families and that the rule of hypergamy played an important part in this situation, other explanations of the lack of eligible genteel men in Knutsford and in "Cranford" have been considered. For one, perhaps the Napoleonic Wars had different effects on different segments of the middle class. Perhaps the men of the genteel stratum, who might have volunteered to go to war, as officers, were killed off, while the non-genteel middle class might have been uninvolved in the hierarchical prestige system of the armed forces, not wanted to go to war for a variety of reasons, and perhaps were able to buy their way out. Or, perhaps men, particularly younger sons, of the genteel stratum went into the foreign services, while the men in the non-genteel middle class did not migrate. Still more hypotheses are possible-- perhaps the men of the genteel stratum migrated to cities such as London or Manchester in order to pursue genteel

careers, such as lawyer, doctor, etc., while their sisters, who, as this study has shown were unable to pursue careers (or who had a very narrow range open to them), remained at home. This latter explanation is really a variation on the main one suggested above--landed wealth was not sufficient to maintain all the members of genteel families. Men were able to turn elsewhere for money, either through their careers or through marriage, while women either had to marry within their stratum (increasingly difficult) or remain dependent on their annuities. In contrast, for the non-genteel middle class, comprised largely of upwardly mobile former members of the working class, the inheritance of property and the maintenance of a genteel lifestyle were not major issues and younger sons stayed in town, rather than leaving to seek their fortune in cities or abroad. What makes the explanation presented above, regarding the critical importance of hypergamy, most compelling is that it is suggested by the novels themselves.

If this suggested explanation is correct, it also enables us to better understand the rigid adherence to the rules of gentility by the ladies of "Cranford." According to the values of the society as a whole, in which tremendous value is placed on women's status as wives and mothers, these women have sacrificed, or have been forced to sacrifice, an important source of general social

esteem, and possibly of personal satisfaction to a cardinal rule of gentility--hypergamy. The rule of hypergamy is bound up in a web of meaning involving other rules of behavior. The violation of any one of these rules would threaten the whole structure, and thus imply that acts such as Matty Jenkyn's decision not to marry a yeoman farmer were all for nothing. Hence the jealous maintenance on the part of the "Cranford" women of the very rules which limit them. As Siskind has expressed it:

The most ardently held cultural beliefs are likely to be those that are most contradictory since they are continually challenged by perceptions and experiences that invalidate them.

(Siskind 1973: 22)

In a period of rapid social change, these genteel single women are bastions of tradition, serving as constant reminders of the values which have justified the existence of the ruling class--landed wealth, good family, inborn breeding and nobility. Even as landed wealth and family were diminishing in actual economic importance, the genteel values maintained by these women continued to disguise the newly hybridized ruling class as traditional aristocracy. Thus they assisted in maintaining the cultural hegemony of the transmogrifying ruling class, even as they themselves were betrayed by it.

Marx comments:

How have Dickens and Thackeray, Miss Brontë and Mrs. Gaskell painted [the middle class]? . . . As full of presumption, affectation, petty tyranny and ignorance

. . .

(Marx 1975[1854]: 216)

Seemingly quoting one of the above authors, he adds that the middle class are "'servile to those above, and tyrannical to those beneath them'" (ibid.). Gaskell shows how the genteel middle class was regarded as socially superior by other segments of the middle class and imitated by them. Just as the genteel middle class was servile to the aristocracy and gentry tried to live in the lifestyle which they considered to be that of the ruling class, so other segments of the middle class strove to imitate the genteel middle class. Gaskell shows for example, how a retired milliner imitates the "Cranford" ladies. Since most people do not think of themselves in terms of basic class distinctions but rather in terms of several of the narrower groups to which they belong, these nuances are important in understanding behavior.

This explanation suggests another point regarding the different effect of changing class structure on men and women. England's aristocracy and its gentry have been noted for their permeability, the relative ease with which people from outside joined their ranks. Men sometimes joined through their achievements, such as acquiring large fortunes, or sometimes through honorable deeds in war (F.M.L. Thompson 1963: 22). Women however, only entered from outside through intermarriage (or if their fathers entered through their own achievements). It was not easy

for a man born into this social rank to lose it; even if he married out of his rank, his wife simply assumed his position. F.M.L. Thompson (*ibid.*) uses this fact as the grounds for the statement that the English aristocracy and gentry were not castes, since he defines castes as being endogamous, and men often married out of the aristocracy and gentry. However, looked at from the point of view of women in the aristocracy and gentry, they were castes, since for a woman to marry beneath her station was to make herself subject to strong negative sanctions and probable ostracism.

Thus, this analysis leads to the suggestion that the widely accepted view of the English aristocracy and gentry as permeable and flexible, while not wholly inaccurate, reflects the point of view of the men in these social strata, and ignores the experience of women. However, history is written by the powerful in any society, and present day researchers are left with the difficulty of trying to avoid superimposing interpretations and cultural categories which never were or no longer are relevant to the group being studied.

In this case, we have suggested that the interpretations and cultural categories used to analyze the British elite of the nineteenth century have been subject to male bias. They do not lead us to an

understanding of the experience of social change of the "losers" within this elite--the daughters of the gentry and the aristocracy. A close-up analysis of a particular, rather small population using assumptions basic to anthropology, and using a source which aids the researcher in understanding the cultural categories of importance to actors in the society, the novel, has given a somewhat different slant to the widely accepted view of the British aristocracy and gentry.

It also makes clearer how the actors' self identification with one or another social group does not necessarily logically follow socio-economic factors. If the women of "Cranford" had recognized that they were not part of the aristocracy or gentry, but in socio-economic terms (for example, their incomes), had more in common with the non-genteel middle class, they might have chosen to live very different lives. Anthropologists have continually been interested in the contradictions between the "ideal" and the "real," and in the fact that cultural beliefs do not always accurately express social phenomena nor do they always lead to "rational" social action. This study has suggested in fact, that the cultural beliefs which shaped the lives of these women, and to which they clung so tenaciously were a source of oppression to the very people who held them strongly, and to the middle class as a whole, insofar as they helped maintain

the cultural hegemony of the ruling class.

It is not the purpose of this study to try to confirm or disprove the interpretation suggested here. Of central importance, however is that by taking Elizabeth Gaskell's novels as social observation and using them as an ethnographic source, we have arrived at both the initial question--what social forces made these women remain single or never remarry--and the possible answer. As we have suggested, standard interpretations of British class structure (in particular the elite) have been from a male viewpoint.⁴ In contrast, an extremely rich source of information on the women as well as men of middle class and elite groups exists in the work of Gaskell, the Brontës, Austen, and other female and male novelists of the Victorian period.

Suggestions for Further Study

In the present study Elizabeth Gaskell's novels proved to be a rich and viable source of ethnographic data, establishing the existence of a population of unmarried women of a particular social stratum in a

⁴Alexander, Davin and Hostettler (1979) point out that this is also the case with the working class.

specific community in mid-nineteenth century England. The novels also suggest that a particular marriage rule--hypergamy--was a major cause of the high proportion of unmarried women in this community.

The novels lend themselves to additional levels of analysis of this social situation. They show the effects of this marriage pattern on individual experience and psychological makeup in the unmarried genteel female population. They also illustrate the impact of such women on community and national levels in their social roles as charity workers, informal enforcers of traditional values, and as cultural role models of somewhat ambiguous prestige, as will be discussed below. The linkages the novels provide between the individual psychology and the overall socio-economic system could be studied further by using novels to explore this marriage pattern among the genteel middle class in nineteenth-century England. The following discussion suggests additional aspects of the problem of marriage and spinsterhood for which the Victorian novel is a rich ethnographic source.

In the nineteenth century marriages in the upper classes were not formally arranged, as they had been in the early eighteenth century. By the mid-eighteenth century and through the mid-nineteenth, a high value was placed on romantic love. One was supposed to

spontaneously fall in love with one's future husband or wife (Flandrin 1979: 135). Then, with the approval of parents, one could become engaged and marry. Obviously in such a hierarchical society, in which great value was placed on rank and income, it was crucial that one "fall in love" with an appropriate person. This was partly because parental approval was needed. More importantly however, it was motivated by the parties to the marriage themselves, in whom accepted social values were thoroughly inculcated, and who, as Gaskell puts it, were "anxious and worldly in matters of wedlock" ("French Life": 652).

From the mid-eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries among the gentry, aristocracy and segments of the middle class, mate selection went on during "the season" in London, at watering places such as Bath, as well as at social events such as balls and dinner parties where unmarried people would be introduced to each other. The social context of mate selection forms a major theme in Victorian novels, where the cultural value placed on beauty and romance in courtship is described in great detail. Women had to be pretty, well dressed, and "accomplished" in such genteel arts as singing, playing an instrument, social dancing and drawing. They were supposed to be charming yet docile, sweet yet witty and entertaining. Of course it was also to their advantage to have good incomes from annuities, or to have inheritances coming to them.

It should be noted that the rule of hypergamy is particularly disadvantageous to women relatively high on the pyramidal social hierarchy. Whereas it was acceptable for men to marry women on the same or lower level, including members of the non-genteel middle class, women were only supposed to marry men from the same or higher levels. This made for increasingly stiff competition among women relatively high up in the pyramidal structure, who had available to them a diminishing pool of eligible men.

In this competitive marriage market, women who did not marry were considered failures. Since marriages were not formally arranged, but at least in theory and popular belief, depended on the mutual attraction of the couple, women who did not succeed in attracting mates had to be ugly, dull, unpleasant, and so on. Thus, not only were these women denied the prestige of being wives and mothers and left no choice but to live on small fixed incomes or as guests for life in the homes of relatives, they were also actually denigrated for their "failure." They could not fulfill what were virtually the only roles considered appropriate for women, and for which they had been socialized--the roles of wife and mother. There was a vacuum in their lives which, in Victorian England, could not be filled by becoming involved in other meaningful work. Their only claim to social prestige lay in their genteel backgrounds, the identity which they had preserved

by not marrying beneath their rank. It is no wonder that they clung so strongly to this identity and exaggerated the cultural rules with which they had been socialized.⁵

These women were the bastions of tradition and the guardians of morality of their community. One of the manifestations of this was in their enforcement of the Victorian sexual code for themselves and others. In Cranford, the ladies consider it their duty to keep male "followers" away from their female servants. Genteel spinsters themselves were, of course, supposed to be virgins.⁶ Genteel widows were not supposed to have affairs. Yet they must have had some sexual feelings, however dissociated. Gaskell strongly suggests this in

⁵According to Gaskell there were so many genteel unmarried women in the town of "Cranford" that they constituted a community which was almost separate from the larger community of men and women. Within this social group the women were relatively insulated from the social stigma attached to spinsterhood and were able to get some satisfaction out of their relationships with each other. Nonetheless, the book's tragi-comic description and tone makes it clear that this is not, as Lansbury claims, a female "utopia." For one, the women of the community were socialized with an awareness of the values of the larger society, including the importance of marrying well or not at all. It is clear that they continue to firmly believe in these values.

⁶The commitment to gentility gives the middle class Victorian emphasis on virginity a character distinguishing it from other cultures which also emphasize virginity. In Victorian England there was a denial that women had any sexual feelings at all. The woman was "pure" and "above" such things. Because of her supposed blank disinterest in sex, the Victorian woman ideally remained unconcerned with it even after she had experi-

her portrayal of the undercurrent of sexual frustration, fear of men, revulsion at the sexuality of the lower orders and the petty jealousies among these genteel women. Prohibited by the rules of gentility to have sexual relationships, their moralistic stance was a form of psychological armor shielding them from their own desire, frustration and envy. Envy played a large part in their motivation to enforce, in the community, the rules which restricted them. Novels suggest that gossip gave them leverage to accomplish this.

These women's membership in the genteel segment of the middle class and their quasi-elite social standing gave them influence in the community. For one, they were part of the social circle customarily included at the sort of gatherings such as dinner parties and balls at which mate selection took place (Mr. Harrison's Confessions: 130), and their opinions no doubt had some impact. More generally they served as models for other

enced sexual intercourse. By contrast, in several Mediterranean cultures which also place great importance on women's virginity, there is a different slant. There, women's sexuality is not denied. Rather it is emphasized, and the restrictions placed upon women are not so much to "protect" them as to prevent them from "running wild" (e.g. Friedl: 1962 69). The virgin is considered to be "pure" and madonna-like, but once she has had sexual intercourse is likely to develop a voracious sexual appetite. Campbell says that among the Sarakatsani of Greece, the belief that women are more sexually aggressive than men is associated with the perception of women as in some way embodying the devil (Campbell 1964). In Victorian England, on the other hand, the image of the middle class married woman was of "the angel in the house".

members of the middle class and even for members of the lower classes.⁷ It seems likely that their extreme repression of sexuality was emulated by the middle class in general, along with the entire constellation of their genteel values and behavior. Others may not have adhered as rigidly to these codes of behavior as did the unmarried genteel middle class woman. However, by claiming to behave like them, they legitimized their code of values and reinforced their social standing.⁸

Genteel "old maids" on the one hand, were respected, emulated and feared, and on the other hand, were the object of horror and ridicule among the rest of

⁷For example, a member of an agricultural proletariat family tells how servant girls returning to their villages and getting married commonly imitated their former employers in home decoration (Flora Thompson, 1978[1939]: 97-103).

⁸The increasing limitation of the middle class woman's social world, as the home became separated from the workplace, contributed to the increasing limitation of her sexuality in the Victorian period. The idealization of the nuclear family home and of the leisured wife who tended to the spiritual upkeep of this hallowed refuge in a hostile world, was growing in this period. This ideological reaction was probably particularly strong among those who had entered the middle class not long before, from below. These people may have felt themselves threatened with the possibility of downward mobility as well as with cultural identification with the working class. The idle virtuous woman as household ornament, consumer of luxury goods, and bearer of children was especially prestigious if she was able to fulfill these roles with an air of gentility. This included a genteel disinterest in sex.

the middle class. Perhaps they were especially horrifying to younger unmarried women who were afraid of ending up like them. Their moralistic stance, which made them less personally vulnerable, also made them intimidating. Their emphasis of genteel behavior was a form of self-defense, marking them as the social superiors of the rest of the middle class community and of the working class and also claiming allies among their own rank.⁹

Not only did the genteel old ladies of "Cranford" strive to legitimize themselves by strenuously asserting themselves as socially superior, that is, genteel. They also strove for social legitimacy through charitable work. Charitable work may have been a major source of personal fulfillment to many Victorian middle class women, especially it would seem to unmarried women who had no other legitimizing social roles and few opportunities for meaningful work. This is usually the view presented by Gaskell.

⁹This fear of "old maids" is akin to that which led to witchcraft accusations in many European societies, including parts of England in other time periods. Many of those accused of witchcraft in one region of England in the seventeenth century were old widows and possibly spinsters (MacFarlane 1970: 166). The most common case against witches, not just in England but in other societies is that out of envy and meanness of spirit they interfere with reproduction of people, farm animals and crops (MacFarlane: 214,215). If witchcraft accusations had been common social behavior in nineteenth-century "Cranford", such persecution might well have been directed at the genteel "old maids" of the community. It seems likely however that their quasi-elite social rank would have protected them from this. It should be noted, however, that there is a striking similarity between the English cultural stereotypes, "old maid" and "witch".

Another novelist, Charlotte Brontë, reveals ambivalence about charitable work in a chapter entitled "Old Maids" in her novel Shirley. "Old Maids" examines the fate of unmarried genteel women in an industrial district in northern England. In this chapter, the heroine, Caroline Helstone, is trying to resign herself to her fate:

'I shall never have a husband to love, nor little children to take care of . . . Where is my place in the world? . . . Ah! I see; . . . that is the question which most old maids are puzzled to solve; other people solve it for them by saying, 'Your place is to do good to others, be helpful wherever help is wanted.' That is right in some measure, and a very convenient doctrine for the people that hold it; but I perceive that certain sets of human beings are very apt to maintain that other sets should give up their lives to them and their service, and then they requite them by praise: they call them devoted and virtuous . . .'

(Brontë 1977[1849]: 191)

In order to steel herself for what lies ahead, she decides to visit the old maids in the community and see how they live.

First she visits the "formidable" Miss Mann (note the last name) whom Caroline and the man she had hoped to marry have ridiculed for her "peculiarities."

Miss Mann's goblin-grimness scarcely went deeper than the angel-sweetness of a thousand beauties. She was a perfectly honest, conscientious woman, who had performed duties in her day from whose severe anguish many . . . would have shrunk. . . she had passed alone through protracted scenes of suffering, exercised rigid self-denial, made large sacrifices in time, money, health, for those who had repaid her only by ingratitude,

and now her main--almost her sole--fault was, that she was censorious.

Censorious she certainly was . . . [she] began flaying alive certain families of the neighbourhood. She went to work at this business in a singularly cool, deliberate manner, like some surgeon practising with his scalpel on a lifeless subject . . . Still, though thus pitiless in moral anatomy, she was no scandal-monger . . .

(195)

Caroline visits another old maid the next day.

This lady was in narrower circumstances than Miss Mann and her dwelling was more humble . . . the decayed gentlewoman could not afford to keep a servant, but waited on herself, and had only the occasional assistance of a little girl who lived in a cottage near . . . She was prim in dress and manner: she looked, spoke, and moved the complete old maid . . . Caroline . . . knew something about the benevolence of the heart which beat under the starched kerchief; all the neighborhood--at least the female neighborhood--knew something of it: no one spoke against Miss Ainley except lively young gentlemen, and inconsiderate old ones, who declared her hideous.

(196-97)

Both of these descriptions of "old maids" support and summarize the conclusions one draws from Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford" novels. They are failures; they are peculiar; they are asexual or even "mannish"; they are genteel; and they are "censorious." Most important, their "rigid self-denial" and repression of their own needs, material, social and sexual, make them useful to the community.

The genteel unmarried women in the novels exemplify two major traits of the Victorian middle class in general. One is the maintenance of vestigial genteel social values borrowed from the traditional aristocracy and gentry. The other is "rigid self-denial." Both of these traits were in the interest of the ruling class. The emulation of the

traditional aristocracy through genteel behavior masked the fact that the new ruling class was not traditional, but a hybrid of aristocracy, gentry and the mercantile and industrial upper middle class. It also obscured the socio-economic and political position of the middle class by culturally aligning it with the ruling class. "Rigid self-denial" was the underlying characteristic of the prevalent Victorian attitude to virtually all aspects of life, and was expressed in Utilitarianism as well as in the harsh and restrictive sexual code. On a very fundamental level this was in the interest of the ruling class. There is a link between the repression of spontaneity, pleasure and excitement on an individual level and the repression of the desire and the ability to conceive of changing an oppressive social order.

Conclusion

Gaskell's as well as other Victorian novels provide rare insight into the personal psychology and social relationships of the time. They enable us to understand how the interconnected themes of hypergamy and sex implicate a particular group of women in a specific community in large scale social change.

Novels, in their detailed characterizations and descriptions of material culture, political and economic phenomena, beliefs and values, reveal the intersection

of the individual, the family, community, gender and class. Such holistic description is available in virtually no other source. The novelist functions as both an ethnographer in the field who structures questions and areas of investigation, and as an informant who provides information from within the context of the culture. Because the novelist does not claim to be "objective," but frankly takes on the project of expressing the results of a relationship with the world he is describing, the novel serves a primary source of ethnographic data.

APPENDIX 1

CENSUS ENUMERATOR'S BOOK, KNUTSFORD, 1851:

SAMPLE PAGE

Parish, Precinct, or other Division	Name and Address of each Householder who claims the Right of the Franchise, 1841	Manner in which he claims the Right of the Franchise, 1841	Qualification	Registered		Remarks
				April 1851	October 1851	
St. Andrew's	John Smith, Esq. No. 10, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Doe, Esq. No. 12, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 14, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 16, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 18, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 20, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 22, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 24, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 26, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 28, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 30, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 32, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 34, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 36, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 38, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 40, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 42, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 44, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 46, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 48, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 50, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 52, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 54, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 56, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 58, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 60, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 62, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 64, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 66, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 68, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 70, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 72, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 74, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 76, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 78, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 80, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 82, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 84, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 86, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 88, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 90, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Grey, Esq. No. 92, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John White, Esq. No. 94, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Black, Esq. No. 96, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Green, Esq. No. 98, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold
	John Brown, Esq. No. 100, St. Andrew's	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold	Freehold

APPENDIX 2

INCOME OF GENTEEL MIDDLE CLASS: EXAMPLES FROM NOVELS

In some of her novels Gaskell actually gives data about the sources and amounts of income of genteel people. For example we learn about the Bensons in Ruth:

Mr. Benson received about eighty pounds a year for his salary as [a Dissenting] minister. Of this, he knew that twenty pounds came from Mr. Bradshaw. Mr. and Mrs. Benson had about thirty or forty pounds coming in annually from a sum which, in happier days, Mr. Bradshaw had invested in Canal shares for them. Altogether their income did not fall much short of a hundred a year and they lived in the Chapel-house free of rent.

(Ruth: 364-365)

Adding thirty pounds for their rent-free house and forty pounds a year contributed by Ruth from her earnings as a governess, the Benson's yearly income was about one hundred and seventy pounds per year. This seems to be a bare minimum for a genteel middle class household of three adults and one small child and a housemaid. It should also be taken into account that as a minister in a small town, Mr. Benson received gifts of food and other goods, such as cloth, from his parishioners.

The income of Mr. and Mrs. Hale in North and South is also given in some detail. Mr. Hale has just resigned

from the ministry in the Church of England and is discussing his plans with his daughter:

'You and mamma have some money, independent of the income from the living, have not you? . . .'

'Yes, I suppose we have about a hundred and seventy pounds a year of our own.'

(North and South: 364-365)

The Hales move to Milton-Northern, where they rent a house for thirty pounds a year, and Mr. Hale augments the hundred and seventy pounds per year with his earning as a private tutor. If Mr. Hale had received, like Mr. Benson who was a Dissenting minister, eighty pounds a year as a clergyman, his income would have been two hundred and fifty pounds per year. Hammond (1977:32) however says that two hundred pounds per year was a small but not uncommon sum for a small country minister of the Established Church in this period. If Mr. Hale had earned this much, his combined income would have been three hundred and seventy pounds per year. In fact, as a former vicar Mr. Hale probably earned a good deal more than two hundred pounds per year. Thus his resignation marked a very substantial drop in the family's standard of living.

When Matty Jenkyn's bank fails, very exact information is given as to her income.

At last she said, with forced composure in her voice, 'If that bank goes wrong, I shall lose one hundred and forty-nine pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence a year; I shall only have thirteen pounds a year left.'

(Cranford: 179)

Thus, before the bank failure from her annuity is about one hundred and sixty-two pounds per year.

APPENDIX 3
DIRECTIONS TO ENUMERATORS AND OFFICIAL SAMPLES PAGES:
1841, 1851, 1861

1841 (Directions): DIRECTIONS

Respecting the manner in which Entries may be made in the Enumeration Schedule.

After "City or Borough of" write the name, if the District is in a City or Borough; if not, draw a line through those words, or through whichever of the two the District does not belong to. After "Parish or Township of" write the name; if there is no Township in the Parish draw a line through "Township"; if it is a Township, write the name of the Township, and draw a line through "Parish." If it is Extra-Parochial, draw a line through "Parish or Township of," and write "Extra-Parochial" over those words, and after it the name.

In the column headed "Place," write the name of the house (if it has a name), or of the street or other part of the town, or of the village, hamlet, or extra-parochial place in which it stands, opposite to the mark denoting each house, at the first house in the street, &c., and write "do." opposite to every other in the same street, &c.

"Houses."—Insert houses uninhabited or buildings in the tenures shown in the Example, writing "10" or "1 B," as the case may be, in the proper column, opposite to the inhabited houses to which such tenures nearest. Every house which is unoccupied at the time of your visit and is believed not to have been slept in the night before, may be inserted as uninhabited. New houses, not yet inhabited, may be inserted as "Building." Where there is a row of such houses the total number may be inserted before the letter S, instead of the separate insertion of each.

By "House" is meant Dwelling-House; and every building in which any person habitually sleeps must be considered as a dwelling-house; but buildings, such as churches or workhouses, or any others, which were never used or intended to be used as dwelling-houses, must not be inserted.

"Names of each Person who sleeps therein the preceding night."—Insert, without distinction or omission every living person who sleeps or slept in each house. Leave no blank spaces between the names, but enter each immediately after the one preceding it, so that each page may contain 24. Set down one after the other those who have the same surname, beginning with the heads of the family, and put no others between them. As long as the surname in the same do not repeat it, but write "do." Where there are more surnames name them one, as "John Williams," or "Maria Louisa," write down only the first.

When the person is a Peer or Peeress, the title may be written instead of the name. The words "Lord," "Lady," "Sir," "Rt. Hon.," "Hon." may be put before the names of those to whom they belong.

If no abstractive name has been given to an infant write "s. p." for not known, as in the Example.

If, as may happen in a lodging-house or inn, a person who slept there the night before, has gone away early and the name is not known, write "s. p." where the name should have been.

At the end of the names of each family draw a line thus / as in the Example. At the end of the names of the families in each house draw a double line thus //

"Age and Sex."—Write the age of each person opposite to the name in one of the two columns headed "Males" and "Females," according to the sex.

Write the age of every person under 16 years of age as it is stated to you. For persons aged 16 years and upwards, write the lowest of the terms of 6 years within which the age lies.

Thus—for Persons aged 16 years and under 20 write 16 | 25 years and under 40 write 25 | 66 years and under 60 write 66
 30 years and under 25 write 30 | 40 years and under 45 write 40 | 60 years and under 65 write 60
 26 years and under 20 write 26 | 45 years and under 50 write 45 | 66 years and under 70 write 66
 30 years and under 35 write 30 | 60 years and under 65 write 60 | 70 years and under 75 write 70
 and so on up to the greatest ages.

If no more can be ascertained respecting the age of any person than that the person is a child or is grown up, write "under 50," or "above 50," as the case may be.

"Professions, Trade, Employment, or of Independent Means."—Men, or widows, or single women, having no profession or calling, but living on their means, may be inserted as independent, which may be written shortly thus "Ind."

The profession, &c., of wives, or of sons or daughters living with their husbands or parents, and assisting them, but not separated or receiving wages, need not be set down.

All persons serving in Her Majesty's Land service as officers or privates in the Line, Cavalry, Engineers, or Artillery, may be entered as "Army," without any statement of their rank, adding "M.P." for Half-Pay, and "P." for Pensioner.

All persons belonging to Her Majesty's Sea service, including Masters may be entered as "Navy," adding "H.P." for Half-Pay, and "P." for Pensioner.

All domestic servants may be entered as "H.S." for Male Servant, or "F.S." for Female Servant, without statement of their particular duties, as whether butler, groom, gardener, housekeeper, cook, &c., &c.

Insert all other professions, trades, or employments, as they are described by the parties, or by others on their behalf, writing "A." for Artisan, "Ap." for Apprentice, and "B." for Shopman, when the statement of the trade of those who are such. "Master" need not be inserted; every one will be so considered who is not entered as journeyman or apprentice.

Thus may be saved by writing the following words, shortly thus, "M." for Manufacturer, "M." for Master, as "Sturton" for Shoemaker, "Cl." for Clerk, "Ap. Ind." for Apprenticed Labourer, which may include all farming servants and labourers in husbandry. Use no other terms or abbreviations but those herein allowed.

Rank, or any such term as "Esq." or "Gentleman," must not be entered in this column.

"Where born."—Write in the same County.—Write opposite to each name (except those of Irish, Scotch or Foreigners) "I." or "N." for Ire or No, as the case may be.

Write in Scotland, Ireland, or Foreign Parts.—Write in this column, "S." for those who were born in Scotland; "I." for those born in Ireland; and "F." for Foreigners. This latter mark is to be used only for those who are subjects of some Foreign State, and not for British subjects who happen to have been born abroad.

Enter the Totals at the bottom of each page as in the Example, and enter and add up all the Totals in the summary in the last page. This may be done as here, and must be written with ink.

The entries in the pages of the Enumeration Schedule (except the Totals) may be written with a pencil, which will be furnished for that purpose. All that is written in the 2 pages following these must be with ink.

APPENDIX 3 (continued)

1841 (Official Sample Page):

City or Borough of Southwark
 Parish or Township of S. Saviour

(Example of Enumeration Schedule,
 showing how Entries may be made.)

PLACE.	HOUSES		NAMES of each Person who abode therein the preceding Night.	AGE and SEX.		PROFESSION, TRADE, EMPLOYMENT, or of INDEPENDENT MEANS.	Where Born	
	Un- inhabited or Building	Inhabited.		Male.	Female.		Within Borough or County.	Within Borough, County, or Foreign Part.
George Street		1	James Johnson	40		Chemist	✓	
			James do.		35		✓	
			William do.	18		Shew. Sep.	✓	
			James do.		13		✓	
			Edwards Smith	30		Chemist's Sh.	✓	
			Frank Perkins		45	F. S.		✓
do.	126	1	John Cox	60		Ballian.	✓	
do.	128		Mary do.		45		✓	
do.	130		Eden do.		20		✓	
			James Ampherson	28		M. S.		✓
			Henry Wilson	35		Servy.	✓	
			do. do.	30				
East Greenhit		1	William Jones	50		Farmer	✓	
Place, named The Eden.			Elizabeth do.		40		✓	
			William do.	13		Booy	✓	
			Charlotte do.		8		✓	
			do. do.		5		✓	
			Richard Clark	20		Sp. Lab.	✓	
do.	126	1	Robert Hall	45		Tailor	✓	
			Martha do.		30		✓	
			John Butler	25		Tailor F.		✓
			Ann Williams		20	F. S.	✓	
Chapel Green.		1	Edward Jackson	35		Ind.	✓	
			Charles do.	30		Cl.	✓	
			James Long	20		M. S.		✓
TOTAL in		125						
Page		125		15	10			

DIRECTIONS.

Respecting the manner in which Entries should be made in this Book,

The process of entering the Householder's Schedules in this Book should be as follows:—

The Enumerator should first insert, in the spaces at the top of the page, the name of the Parish or Township, Ecclesiastical District, City or Borough, Town or Village, to which the contents of that page will apply, drawing his pen through all the headings which are inappropriate. If the place be extra parochial, he should draw his pen through the words "Parish or Township," in the first column, and write "Extra Parochial" after the name of the place.

He should then, in the first column write the No. of the Schedule he is about to copy, and in the second column the name of the Street, Square, &c. where the house is situate, and the No. of the house, if it has a No., or, if the house be situate in the country, any distinctive Name by which it may be known.

He should then copy from the Schedule into the other columns, all the other particulars concerning the members of the family (making use if he please of any of the authorised contractions); and proceed to deal in the same manner with the next Schedule.

Under the last name in any house he should draw a line across the page as far as the fifth column. Where there is more than one Occupier in the same house, he should draw a similar line under the last name of the family of each Occupier; making the line, however, in this case, commence a little on the left hand side of the third column, as in the example on page vi.

Where he has to insert an uninhabited house, or a house building, this may be done, as in the example, by writing in the second column on the line under the last name of the last house

inserted, "One house uninhabited," "Three houses building," as the case may be; drawing a line underneath, as in the example.

At the bottom of each page, on the line for that purpose, he must enter the total number of HOUSES in that page, separating those uninhabited from those *uninhabited or building*. If the statement regarding any inhabited house is continued from one page to another, that house must be reckoned in the total of the page on which the *first* name is entered. He must also enter on the same line the total number of males and of females included in that page.

When he has completely entered all the Schedules belonging to any one Parish or Township, he should make no more entries on the LEAF on which the last name is written, but should write across the page, "End of the Parish [or Township] of ———;" beginning the entry of the next Schedule on the next subsequent LEAF of his book. The same course must be adopted with respect to any isolated or detached portion of a distant parish; which portion, for the sake of convenience, may have been included in his District. When he has entered all the Schedules belonging to any Borough, Ward, Tything, Hamlet, Village, Ecclesiastical District, &c., he should make no more entries on that PAGE, but write underneath the line after the last name, "End of the Borough, [or Ecclesiastical District Hamlet, Tything, Ward, Village, &c.] of ———;" making his next entry on the first line of the following PAGE.

In this way he will proceed until all his Householders' Schedules are correctly copied into his Book; and he must then make up the statement of totals, at page ii of his Book, in the form there specified. He must also, on page iii, make up the summaries there mentioned, in the form and according to the instructions there given.

APPENDIX 3 (continued)

1851 (Official Sample Pages):

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[Examples of the manner in which Entries should be made in the Schedule Book.]

Particular Township of No. 1	Name and Number of each Person who slept in the house on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Relation Used of Family	Condition	Age of		Rank, Profession, or Occupation	When Born	Place of Birth	
				Male	Female				
Municipal Year	William Jackson	Head	Mar.	1		Blacksmith's Station	Mar. 1847	St. John's, N. B.	
	John D.	Wife	Mar.		20				
	Elizabeth D.	Daughter	W.		11				
	William D.	Son			11	Blacksmith	Mar. 1848	St. John's, N. B.	
	Francis D.	Daughter			9				
	The Farm belonging to the Township of St. John's								
	John D.	Head	Mar.	Mar.	27		Spencer's Station	Mar. 1824	St. John's, N. B.
	Mary D.	Wife		Mar.		27			
	John D.	Son		Mar.		10			
	The Farm belonging to the Township of St. John's								
James D.	Head	Mar.	Mar.	29		Blacksmith	Mar. 1822	St. John's, N. B.	
Elizabeth D.	Wife		Mar.		27				
John D.	Son		W.		21	Blacksmith	Mar. 1830	St. John's, N. B.	
Francis D.	Daughter		W.		19				
The Farm belonging to the Township of St. John's									
John D.	Head of the C.		Mar.		27	Blacksmith's Station	Mar. 1824	St. John's, N. B.	
Total of Males and Females.								10	10

5

GENERAL INSTRUCTION TO THE ENUMERATOR.

As soon as possible after the completion of the Enumeration—

- (1.) Arrange the *Householders' Schedules* in order so that all those relating to one Parish or Township, Hamlet, Ecclesiastical District, &c., are together.
Note.—This order will be indicated by the Schedule Numbers entered in your "Memorandum Book," prepared in conformity with the instructions.
- (2.) COPY VERY CAREFULLY IN THE *Householders' Schedules* into this Enumeration Book, in accordance with the following directions:—

Directions respecting the manner of entering the *Householders' Schedules*.

1. Insert first, in the spaces at the top of the page, the name of the Parish or Township, City or Municipal Borough, Ward (if in a City or Municipal Borough), Parliamentary Borough, Town, Hamlet, &c., or Ecclesiastical District, in which the houses of that page are situate, drawing your pen through each of the words as are inappropriate.
 2. In the first column, write the No. of the *Householder's Schedule* you are about to copy, commencing with No. 1; in the second column the name of the Road, Street, Square, &c., where the house is situate, and the No. of the house, or any distinctive Name by which it is known; then insert in the third column the figure 1 for an Inhabited House, and Copy from the Schedule into the other columns all the particulars concerning the persons mentioned therein, making use of any of the authorised contractions (see below), and taking especial care to class the ages of MALES and FEMALES under their PROPER COLUMNS.
- Proceed to enter in the same manner the other Schedules, up to the last, in strict numerical order.
3. Under the name of the last entered person in each *House*, draw a DOUBLE line, as in the example on the opposite page, to separate the inmates from those of the house next following; and where there is more than one Occupier in the same house, draw a single line to distinguish each Family, as in the example. [*NOTE.*—A Lodger, with or without a family, is to be considered an Occupier].
 4. Where you have to insert an uninhabited house, or a house building, do this by writing in the fourth column, "1 U," or "1 B," on a distinct line, following the order in which the houses occur in the Road, Street, &c. When two or more houses, uninhabited or building, occur together, insert the total number, thus:—"3 U," "3 B," as the case may be.

5. At the bottom of each page, on the line for that purpose, enter the total number of houses in that page, as in the example. If the statement respecting any inhabited house is continued from one page to another, that house will be reckoned in the total of the houses in the page on which the first name is entered. Enter also, on the line at the foot of the page, the total number of MALES and FEMALES in that page.

6. When all the Schedules belonging to any one Parish or Township, Borough, Ward, Town, Hamlet, &c., or Ecclesiastical District, have been entered, write across the page, "End of the Parish [or Township] of—," "End of the Borough, Ward, Town, Hamlet, &c., or Ecclesiastical District, of—," following this order of preference where the boundaries are conflicting. Make the next entry on the first line of the following page.

Persons not in Houses; and Completion of the Enumeration Book.

After having completed the entry of all the *HOUSEHOLDERS' SCHEDULES*, according to the above directions, commence a fresh page, and writing over the top "List of Persons not in Houses," proceed to copy from your "Memorandum Book" the particulars contained in the List of Persons who slept in Barns, Sheds, &c.; but in making up the totals at the foot of that page, the columns headed "Houses" must be left blank, as Barns, Sheds, &c., are not to be reckoned as Houses. Then, having satisfied yourself of the correctness of your book, fill up the tables on pages iv. and v., and sign the Declaration on page vi.

CONTRACTIONS TO BE USED BY THE ENUMERATOR.

ROAD, STREET, &c.—Write "Rd." for Road; "St." for Street; "Pl." for Place; "Sq." for Square; "Terr." for Terrace.

NAME.—Write the First Christian Name in full; initials or first letters of the other Christian names of a person who has more than one, may be inserted. When the same surnames occur several times in succession, write "do." for all such surnames except the first, which should be written in full. Where the name or any particular is not known, "n. k." should be entered in its place.

In the column "RELATION TO HEAD OF FAMILY," write "Head," for head of family; "Dowr." for daughter; "Serr." for servant.

In the column "CONDITION," write "Mar." for married; "Un." for unmarried; "Wid." for widow.

In the columns for AGE write the number of years carefully and distinctly in the proper column for "Males" or "Females," as the case may be; in the case of Children under One Year of age, as the age is expressed in months, write "M^o." distinctly after the figures.

In the column for "NAME, PROFESSION, OR OCCUPATION," the following contractions may be used: "Ag. Lab." for agricultural labourer; "Ap." for apprentice; "Cl." for clerk; "Serr." for servant.

APPENDIX 4

FICTIONAL CENSUS
"CRANFORD" 1841

SOURCE	NAME	RELATION TO HEAD/HSHOLD	MARITAL STATUS	AGE		RANK OR OCCUPATION
				M	F	
CR*	Mr. Hoggins	Head	M	45		Physician
	Mrs. Hoggins	wife	M		40	Lady
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
CR	Deborah Jenkyns	Head	U		58	Independent
	Matilda Jenkyns	sister	U		51	Independent
	Mary Smith	Visitor	U		25	
	no name	servant	U		"young"	servant
CR	Mrs. FitzAdam	Head	W		40?	Independent
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
CR	Mrs. Forrester	Head	W		60	Independent
	no name	servant	U		"young"	
CR	Miss Barker	Head	U		55	retired Milliner
	Peggy	servant				
	no name	servant				
CR	Mrs. Jamieson	Head	W		60	Independent
	Mr. Mulliner	Servant	U	50		Butler
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
CR	Miss Pole	Head	U		55	Independent
	"Cook"	servant				cook
	no name	servant				servant
CP	Peters	Head	M	40		Dissenting Minister
	Mrs. Peters	wife	M		40	
	no name	servant				

* Abbreviations: CR = Cranford, CC = "The Cage at Cranford",
Mr. H. = Mr. Harrison's Confessions, CP = Cousin Phillis

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

"Cranford" 1841 and 1851

SOURCE	NAME	RELATION TO HEAD/HSHOLD	MARITAL STATUS	AGE		RANK OR OCCUPATION
				M	F	
CR	Mr. Johnson	Head	M	45?		General storekeeper
	Mrs. Johnson	wife	M		45?	
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
CR	Mr. Hayter	Head	U	60		clergyman
	no name	servant				servant
CR	Captain Brown	Head	W	65		retired Army Cptn.
	Miss Brown	Da.	U		41	
	Jessie Brown	Da.	U		31	
	no name	servant				servant

"Cranford", 1851

CC	Peter Jenkyns	Head	U	58		Independent
	Matilda Jenkyns	sister	U		60	Independent
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
CC	Miss Pole	Head	U		65	Independent
	Mary Smith	Visitor	U		35	Independent
	"Cook"	servant	?		"old"	Cook
	Fanny	servant	U		"young"	General
CC	Mr. Hoggins	Head	M	55		Physician
	Mrs. Hoggins	wife	M		50	Lady
	no name	servant				
	no name	servant				
CC	Mrs. FitzAdam	Head	W		50	Independent
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
Mr. H.	Mr. Morgan	Head	U	60		Physician
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

"Cranford" 1851

SOURCE	NAME	RELATION TO HEAD/HSHOLD	MARITAL STATUS	AGE		RANK OR OCCUPATION
				M	F	
Mr. H.	Mr. Harrison	Head	U	30		Physician
	Mrs. Rose	housekeeper	W		45	Housekeeper
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
Mr. H.	Mr. Hutton	Head	W	55		Vicar
	Sophia do.	Da.	U		18-22	
	Helen do.	Da.			15?	
	Lizzie do.	Da.			11	
	Walter do.	Son		6?		
	Bessie	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
Mr. H.	Mr. Bullock	Head	M	50?		Attorney
	Mrs. Bullock	Wife	M		45?	
	Jemima Bullock	Da.	U		18-22	
	no name	CHILD			minor	
	no name	CHILD			minor	
	no name	CHILD			minor	
	no name	CHILD			minor	
	no name	servant				
	no name	servant				
	no name	servant				
Mr. H.	Miss Tompkinson	Head	U		55	School-mistress
	Caroline do.	sister	U		35	Teacher
	no name	scholar	U		young	
	no name	scholar			young	
	no name	several scholars			young	
	no name	servant				
	no name	servant				
CC	Mrs. Jamieson	Head	W		70?	Independent
	Mr. Mulliner	servant		60		butler
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant
	no name	servant				servant

APPENDIX 4 (continued)

"Cranford" 1851

SOURCE	NAME	RELATION TO HEAD/HSHOLD	MARITAL STATUS	AGE		RANK OR OCCUPATION
				M	F	
Mr. H.	Mrs. Munton	Head	W		65	Independent
	no name	servant			old	servant
Mr. H.	Miss Horsman	Head	U		40?	Independent
	no name	servant				servant

APPENDIX 5
 BREAKDOWN OF KNUTSFORD, 1851, MIDDLE CLASS BY CULTURAL
 CATEGORY PERTAINING TO RANK OR OCCUPATION

# servants per house hold	GENTEEL	TRADESMEN	FARMERS	MISCELLANEOUS
1	Curate (Mn)* Proprietr(FW) Minister (Mw) Indep. (Fu) Officer (Mw) Annuitant(Fw) Indep. (Fu) Schlmstr (Mn) Schlmstr (Mn) Prof.Musc(Mn) Surgeon (Mn) Captain (Mu) Annuitant(Fu) Schoolmst(Fu) Teacher (Fu)	Tailor (Mn) Pig Dealer (Mn) EarthenwreDlr(Mn) Cooper (Mn) Prov. Dlr (Fw) Butcher (Fw) Cordwainer (Mn) Grocer (Fw) Confectioner (Mw) Brewer (Mw) Storekeeper (Mn) Corndealer (Mw) Grocer (Mn) Milliner (Fu) Draper (Mw) Ironmonger (Mn) Upholsterer (F?) Apothecary (Mu) Chemist (Mw) Druggist (Mn)	Farmer (Mn) Farmer (Mn) Farmer (Mn) Farmer (Mn) Farmer (Mn)	Builder (Mn) Surveyor (Mn) Currier (Mn) Joiner/Builder (Mn) Printer (Mn) Banker (Mn) Land Agent (Mn)
2	Land.Prop(Fw) Surgeon (Mw) Gntlwmn (Fw) Gntlwmn (Fw) Lawyer (Mn) Annuitant(Fu)	Draper (Mn) Butcher(Mn)	Farmer (Mn)	Innkeeper (Mn) Innkeeper (Mn) Bookbinder (Mn)
3	Attorney (Mn) Doctor (Mn)	EarthenwreDlr(Mn)		Innkeeper (Mn)
4	Schlmist (Fw)	Tanner (Mn) Draper (Mn)		
> 4	Ret.Med.Pract (Mw) Lady (Fw)			Innkeeper (Mn)

	GENTEEL	TRADESMEN	FARMERS	MISCELLANEOUS
Total HH's:	26	25	6	12
per category:	13 F 13 M	5 F 20 M	0 F 6 M	0 F 12 M

* Key: M = Male m = married
 F - Female w = widowed
 u = unmarried

	Age		18-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		65-69		70-74		75-79		80-84		85-89		
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1 Servant	u																														
	w																														
	m																														
2 Servants	u																														
	w																														
	m																														
3 Servants	u																														
	w																														
	m																														
4 Servants	u																														
	w																														
	m																														
5 Servants	u																														
	w																														
	m																														
Total		19	10	10	9	8	6	8	6	3	7	9	2	2	6	4	2	1	2	2	2	2				1				1	1

KEY	M - Male	F - Female	u - unmarried	w - widowed	m - married	u	w	m	Eligible	Total
Total F						13	5	36	18	54
Total M						29	3	37	32	69

APPENDIX SIX: AGE AND MARITAL STATUS
6a: Total Non-Genteel Population of Knutsford, 1851

NUMBER OF SERVANTS PER HOUSEHOLD

	Age 18-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		65-69		70-74		75-79		80-84		85-89		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
1 Servant	u																												
	w																												
	m																												
2 Servants	u																												
	w																												
	m																												
3 Servants	u																												
	w																												
	m																												
4 Servants	u																												
	w																												
	m																												
5 Servants	u																												
	w																												
	m																												
Total	3	1	5	4	5	2	1		1	2	5		3	4	3	2	2	1	5		2		1	1	1				

KEY H - Male u - unmarried
 F - Female w - widowed
 | - Male m - married
 o - Female

	u	w	m	Eligible	Total
Total F	25	4	8	29	37
Total M	3	3	11	6	17

APPENDIX SIX: AGE AND MARITAL STATUS
 6b: Total Genteel Population of Knutsford, 1851

NUMBER OF SERVANTS PER HOUSEHOLD

Age	18-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		65-69		70-74		75-79		80-84		85-89	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1 Servant		•••••		••		•••••		•••••		••	•••••	••	•••••	••	•••••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••	••
2 Servants		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••
3 Servants				••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••
4 Servants										••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••
>4 Servants		••								••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••		••
Total	10	12	11	14	1	1	7	1	8	11	7	2	9	8	5	3	2	3	7	2	2		2	1	1		1	

KEY M = Male U = unmarried
 F = Female W = widowed
 | = Male m = married
 • = Female

	u	w	m	Eligible	Total
Total F	38	9	44	47	88
Total M	32	6	48	38	86

APPENDIX SIX: AGE AND MARITAL STATUS

6c: Total Middle Class Population of Knutsford, 1851

	Age		18-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		65-69		70-74		75-79		80-84		85-89		
	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F	H	F			
1 Servant	u			ooo		o		oo		oo																					
	w																														
	m			oo		ooo		ooo		ooo		ooo		o		ooo		o		oo											
2 Servants	u			oo		o																									
	w									ooo																					
	m			o		oo		oo			ooo						oo														
3 Servants	u																														
	w																														
	m									oo																					
4 Servants	u			o		o																									
	w																														
	m			o		o			oo																						
5 Servants	u																														
	w																														
	m																														
Total	6	10	10	9	7	10	11	18	8	9	6	4	5	9	4	4	2	3	2	3	2	4	2	1							

KEY H = Male u = unmarried
 F = Female w = widowed
 | = Male m = married
 o = Female

	u	w	m	Eligible	Total
Total F	18	14	52	32	84
Total M	12	6	47	18	65

APPENDIX SIX: AGE AND MARITAL STATUS
 6d: Total Non-Genteel Population of Knutsford, 1861

Age	18-24		25-29		30-34		35-39		40-44		45-49		50-54		55-59		60-64		65-69		70-74		75-79		80-84		85-89	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1 Servant	u			o										o														
	w																										o	o
	m																											
2 Servants	u	o	o																									
	w																											
	m		o																									
3 Servants	u																											
	w																											
	m																											
4 Servants	u		o																									
	w																											
	m																											
>4 Servants	u		o																									
	w																											
	m																											
Total	2	9		6	2	5	1	3	2	4	1	11	3	4	1	3	1	3	1	1	2			1			2	

KEY	M = Male	u = unmarried		
	F = Female	w = widowed		
	l = Male	m = married		
	o = Female			

Total F	u	w	m	Eligible	Total
Total M	3	3	11	6	17

APPENDIX SIX: AGE AND MARITAL STATUS
6e: Total Genteel Population of Knutsford, 1861

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