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Dissent women in Anthony Trollope's fiction: A sympathetic portrayal

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DISSENT WOMEN IN ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S FICTION: A SYMPATHETIC PORTRAYAL

by

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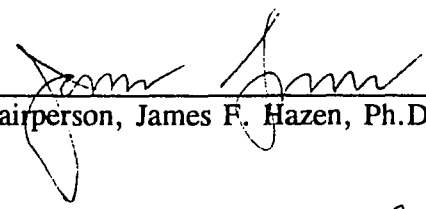

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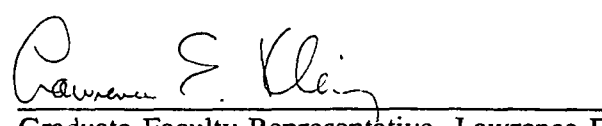

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Abstract

This study examines Anthony Trollope's depiction of women, specifically dissent women who, for one reason or another, did not conform to the expectations of their society. His treatment of these women reveals an author who grew more sympathetic to the position of women as he grew older. I have divided his writing career into three periods, and from each period, I have representative women who clearly indicate Trollope changing viewpoint.

In Chapter One, the Introduction, I explain Trollope's development as a writer, how he is viewed by modern critics, and his position in nineteenth-century England.

Chapter Two, "Single Women" deals with three representative women from the three periods of his life, clearly demonstrating his changing attitude towards women traditionally viewed as insignificant and unimportant.

Chapter Three, "Fallen Women" looks at the woman whose sexual misconduct places her outside the bounds of conventional society. Trollope, by the third period of his career, places the blame squarely on the man and sees the woman as more sinned against than sinning.

Chapter Four, "Unwitting Adultery" examines sexual misconduct within the confines of marriage. Although these

women were condemned by their society, Trollope blames societal conventions rather than the women who find themselves in this situation.

Chapter Five, "Unhappy Marriages" traces life after the wedding, following four very different women who struggled to find an identity within a male-dominated institution. Trollope moves from presenting these women as stereotypic shrews (Mrs. Proudie) to recognizing the pressures which exist in difficult relationships. Perhaps his finest study is Lady Glencora who, more than any other character, reflects her creator's evolving sympathy and compassion towards dissent women in an unhappy marriage.

Chapter Six, The Conclusion briefly summarizes Trollope's evolution through his writing career and concludes that "essential Victorian" indeed reflected his times, which were marked more by change than by stasis.

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CHAPTER ONE

A MAN IN AND OUT OF HIS TIME

Anthony Trollope was identified, in his own time as well as in the present, as a quintessential Victorian, in habits, pleasures, and temperament. James Boyce, a nineteenth century contemporary of Trollope, writes,

> Personally, Anthony Trollope was a bluff, genial, hearty, vigorous man, typically English in his face, his talk, his ideas, his tastes. His large eyes, which looked larger behind his large spectacles, were full of good-humoured life and force; and though he was neither witty nor brilliant in conversation, he was what is called very good company, having traveled widely, known all sorts of people, and formed views, usually positive views, on all the subjects of the day, views which he was prompt to declare and maintain. Though boisterous and insistent in his talk, he was free from assumption or conceit, and gave the impression of liking the world he lived in, and being satisfied with his own place in it (Boyce 118-9).

Michael Sadleir, writing in the twentieth century, agrees,

> When Anthony Trollope died, there passed not only the mid-Victorian novel but a social epoch also. This dual significance of Trollope - at once literary and social - sets him apart from the other novelists of his time and makes him lists who, at any time, have expressed alike a period and an individual psychology (Sadleir 13).

However, associating a writer solely with a particular time period usually does him an injustice as it assumes he reinforces the accepted conventions of that time or merely acts as a reflection of its perceived beliefs. Certainly the era during which Trollope wrote was in an almost constant state of change, thus making it difficult for critics to pin down with any degree of accuracy what constituted Victorian beliefs or conventions. Trollope presents an excellent example of a writer whose philosophy matched his era in his ability to recognize change and incorporate it into his writings. A prominent modern critic, Bill Overton, explains the dichotomy between what he calls the official Trollope and the unofficial Trollope. His critical study explores how the two overlap and explains how the author must be seen in context of his time for the modern reader to appreciate fully his accomplishments.

Specifically, in terms of Overton's explanation, Trollope had the imaginative sympathy for women that enlarged his understanding and allowed him to transcend the limitations and stereotypic approach of so many male Victorian writers. His novels reveal a subtlety and sophistication in regards to the psychology of women and the problems they faced in a male-dominated society. His treatment of women tends to set him apart from such writers as Charles Dickens or William Thackeray. Lansbury explains this difference in greater detail:

> Trollope never failed to sympathize with the plight of women in society. From his own experience he knew how society could give freedom to some and crush and restrict others. It is his women who speak out with most

> vehemence against a society that made marriage the only acceptable career for a woman. Without money a woman had to find a husband in Trollope's world or become the appendage to the nearest relation prepared to support her. It is not men but women who complain about the social order, and their criticism comes from the heart (Lansbury 45).

Praz agrees, commenting that: "In him alone can we see the soul of the Victorian woman, distorted in Dickens, and in Thackeray eclipsed by the shadow of the moralist-commentator" (Praz 308). But Trollope goes even further; his depiction of women, even those who step outside the lines of conventionally accepted behavior, is surprisingly free of censure and refreshingly positive. Barickman expands on Praz's evaluation when he explains that

> Trollope challenges one of its (Victorian sexual orthodoxy) most significant creeds: that the virtuous woman has a nearly sacred social power. By placing "bad" or even criminal characters like...Madeline Neroni...in positions of power, they imply - however circumspectly- the radical idea that the "good" woman has little independence or power. And by presenting the "bad" woman as a victim of a cruelly oppressive sexual system, they undermine the orthodox position still further (9).

Francoise Basch elaborates upon this distorted conception of women and their roles:

> The idealization of the wife as inspirer of humanity belonged with the Victorian

> conception of the Home and its meaning within the contemporary system of values. The home, a feminine attribute, as it were, the 'outermost garment of her soul', which surrounds the wife worthy of the name wherever she may be found, is like a temple of purity, a haven in a hostile and impure world (Basch 7).

Popular fiction of the time underscored this belief; many of the novels, including those of Austen, Dickens, Gaskell, and to some extent, George Eliot, presupposed marriage as the happiest state in life, implying that most marriages were successful, save only those where an obvious vice upset domestic order.

The women Trollope portrays are extremely vivid, with a force of personality and often, character, that captures the reader's attention and, in many cases, his admiration. Mrs. Peacocke, Mrs. Askerton, Lady Laura, Lady Fitzgerald, Lizzie Eustace, Lady Glencora, Emily Trevalyan and, of course, his 'fallen women' are but a few of the very different women whose deviance from the norm, is not only mentioned but highlighted in their respective novels. His frank portrayals did not affect the popularity of his works, a fact indicating the works were acceptable to a society perhaps more divergent in its views on strong-minded and independent women than is traditionally assumed.

> It is true that he granted his heroines far more freedom in their virgin state than under the marriage yoke. But, practically without exception, they take with them into marriage intelligence, self-sufficiency and a certain proud

> consciousness of their own value which makes them reluctant to demand that which should be theirs by right (Thompson 111).

Rajiva Wijesinha compares the portraits done by Trollope with those by George Eliot and says "Trollope gives a fair amount of attention, from the beginning, to the situation of the women, and conveys equal concern for both (partners)" (Wijesinha 293). She goes on to explain:

> Trollope, in approaching the subject of motivations towards marriage without prejudices or preconceptions, presents a more realistic as well as a more sympathetic portrayals of the women of the day (Wijesinha 21).

This view parallels that of Jane Nardin, one of the most prominent Trollopian critics, who also believes that "Trollope ceased to organize his novels around the conventional Victorian notions of male and female nature and began to subvert those notions earlier than most critics have realized: the shift from acceptance to dissidence was, in fact, completed between the writing of Barchester Towers in 1855 and that of The Belton Estate in 1865" (Nardin xvii).

His later novels are darker and psychologically more complex; choices made often turn out badly, and women struggle for happiness, often settling for compromises, situations which simply do not occur in his early novels. One can compare the ending of The MacDermots of Ballycloran with a similar story told in An Eye for An Eye to appreciate the drastic changes which marked his developing novels. Emily Trevelyan, wife of the protagonist in He Knew He Was Right, presents the portrait of a woman who, although happily married, refuses to

compromise upon an issue over which she and her husband disagree. She is represented as independent, of course, and considerably less than likable but Trollope presents her with a deeper understanding and 'realism' which had developed over the course of his career of writing novels.

In spite of his rather conventional background, Trollope possessed the ability to see situations clearly, without necessarily judging the participants. A. L Rowse describes some of the conventions which governed the society in which Trollope lived when he writes, "The Victorian age was extraordinary moralistic, censorious and inhibiting - middle-class standards largely prevailed, as against the upper-class standards of the eighteenth century" (138). Mario Praz points out, "He (Trollope) accepted, without discussion, the main cornerstones of the Victorian social structure, but was able to preserve the crystalline purity of his lens of observation" (Praz 290). This evaluation of Trollope falls short, I believe, in doing complete justice to the author. As his novels, especially those of his later period clearly indicate, he did not accept "the main cornerstones" of his society, at least not in his fiction, which often was critical of these beliefs.

While the facade of Victorian society appeared smooth and unruffled to the casual observer, forces for change had been gathering for many years. In late 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft had written A Vindication of the Rights of Women calling for a change in the educational process for women. In 1869, John Stuart Mill wrote The Subjection of Women, in which he pointed out the dangers to women caused by the repression of their talents and by their enforced

confinement to the home. Although the bill to grant suffrage to women in 1867 did not pass the House of Commons, following the passage of the second Reform Bill, the nascent women's movement did not die. Instead, the issue (and the movement) gained popularity. After years of futility, women were finally given the right to a higher education: in 1869, Girton College was opened for women under the leadership of Emily Davies. Cambridge University admitted women students in that same year, though Oxford University would not follow suit until 1884.

Progress, however, remained distressingly slow. In 1856, the first Married Women's Property Act was defeated. Instead, Parliament passed, in 1857, a far more conservative bill, The Marriage and Divorce Law, hoping this would defuse women's anger, thereby forestalling further outcry. Finally, in 1882, a serious and effective Married Women's Property Act became the law, and 1886 saw the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts.

No change, especially as widespread as was happening in Victorian England, occurs quietly, nor does it move easily. Violent debates in Parliament addressed the issue of women's place in society and their proper roles. As interested as Trollope was in politics, he must have been familiar with the passage of laws through Parliament dealing with the very difficult issue of women's rights within the confines of the institution he was coming to distrust.

Support for women's issues was mixed, even among women themselves. The concerns of the middle and upper class women were not of general interest

to the working or lower class women. Gradually this feeling would change and women would cross the social boundaries in support of one another. Patricia Thompson explains,

> In the years that followed (the passage of The Married Women's Property Act) it very gradually became possible for others to take an interest in the welfare of outcasts, under whose fair, fluttering banner the respectable could march. Women were slowly realizing, not only that there were such destitute in the world, but also that it would not be considered unwomanly were they to admit to such a knowledge (Thompson 136).

John Hall attempts to place Trollope in the context of these changing times, believing that the author leaned more toward the past than toward the future, arguing that

> his views on women's rights can be represented as the ordinary conservatism common in his day, especially if quoted selectively; and, at the bottom, at least in theory, he believed that a woman's first purpose in life was to 'fall in love, marry the man, have two children, and live happily ever afterwards' (Hall 339).

However, the operative words in that quote from Trollope's Autobiography are "in theory" and Hall's comment, "when quoted selectively". The words, "quoted selectively", allow for a very wide range of differing opinions as to what the author was attempting to say. Hall does agree that "When writing fiction, (Trollope) seems to be able to detach himself from his opinions" (Hall 340). Ross Murfin

attempts to sort out Trollope's voiced opinions from those which occur in his fiction, especially in his later novels.

> But what if one were to believe that both the "right" and the "real" are ephemeral and subjective? One would surely be prone to suspect and suggest, that every political and aesthetic representation is only one of the many possible ones, based on assumptions that seem true - for the moment- from the perspective of the mirror holder. In the fiction of Trollope, that suspicion is nothing less that a singular conviction (43).

One only has to look at The Way We Live Now, written in 1872-73, a biting, brutal satire on his society and its conventions to realize that, beneath the facade of acceptance, was a man who was very aware of and did not hesitate to comment on its imperfections and faults. This awareness included women; despite his natural conservatism, Trollope remained sympathetic in his reaction to the currents of change painfully making their way through Victorian society. Through his female characters, he shows himself sympathetic to the plight of women in Victorian England. Richard Barickman expands upon this idea when he writes, revealingly,

> Trollope's analogous stories of women's marriages make clear his awareness of the limited and oppressive options the social structure permitted women. Though an occasional Glencora or Violet emerges with exuberance from her difficulties, the condition of most of his female characters is not so fortunate (Barickman 222).

His sympathy towards women and their existing situation did not, however, extend to those who made loud and overt public displays of their unhappiness, i.e. the self-proclaimed feminists of the time. He presents them as single-dimensional, often comic in their understanding of the world, and usually ridiculous in their attempts to live a life which did not involve men. Suterland explains the author's feelings when he writes in the Appendix to Is He Popenjoy? "Trollope was in every sense a decent man, but the reactionary prejudices which obstructed reform in the 1870's are representatively evident in his depiction of the 'Disabilities' (Jay 310). Halperin notes that to Trollope, the term 'emancipation' seem to conjure up images of women "associated with self-proclamation, theft, hypocrisy, perspiration, grunting, and a mustache" (381). Certainly the "emancipated" women in Is He Popenjoy? fit this description.

In his lecture entitled "On the Higher Education of Women" (1868), Trollope pointed out that he advocated their education, not so women might become productive citizens but rather that their boredom and restlessness might find some constructive outlet. Halperin points out, dryly, in his article, "Trollope and Feminism" that social historian J.A. Banks is certainly right when he suggests that Trollope may be read less for information about the feminist movement than 'for deep insights into the nature of the opposition which it had to face'. Into the sixties and seventies, Trollope's barren feminists and vulgar meddling female careerists betray only his contempt for the feminist movement" (Halperin 186)

Unfortunately, modified caricatures of other feminists, some of them Americans, seem to be tainted by the xenophobia which occasionally marred Trollope's portraits of non-English characters. Two such women appear in The Way We Live Now and He Knew He Was Right. While critical opinion rates He Knew He Was Right very highly, as an accurate in-depth picture of the psychological states of two very difficult and stubborn people, his portrait of Wallachia Petrie "the wild-eyed, self advertising feminist" (xx) in the novel contains no sympathy or understanding. Sutherland writes that "Trollope evidently liked to think of feminism as a foreign aberration imported into his country. 'We in England, he complacently observes, 'are not usually favourably disposed to women who take a pride in a certain antagonism to men in general'" (xx). And certainly Wallachia has antagonism, which she generously shares with her friend Caroline Spalding. A self-proclaimed poetess, Wallachia explains to Caroline that "the English title, which was but the clatter of a sounding brass, should be regarded as a drawback rather than as an advantage" (He 514). She so annoys Mr. Glascock by informing him that "You English have no sympathy with a people who claim to be at least your equal. He shall be cut down together with the withered grass and thrown into the oven, and there shall be an end of him" (He 530) that he almost reconsiders his desire to propose to Caroline. She also explains her feelings to Caroline, "If you have not sold yourself for British gold, and for British acres, and for British rank, I have nothing to say against it" (He 717).

Trollope interjects a note at this point in the story, making his opinion of this type of woman even clearer than it has been. He writes, in a pseudo-sympathetic tone,

> The hope in regard to all such women - the hope entertained not by themselves, but by those who are solicitous for them,- is that they will be cured at last by a husband and half-a-dozen children. In regard to Wallachia Petrie there was not, perhaps, much ground for such hope. She was so positively wedded to women's rights in general, and to her own rights in particular, that it was improbable that she should ever succumb to any man;- and where would be the man brave enough to make the effort? (He 717)

Unsuccessful in her attempts to block Caroline's marriage, she eventually flees back to America, following the wedding, warning her friend before she departs of the animal nature of men and to beware their violent characters.

Winifred Hurtle, another American treated by Trollope in a critical manner, appears in The Way We Live Now, considered by modern critics to be one of Trollope's finest works. Booth points out that,

> Today among Trollope students there are no dissenters from the thesis that The Way We Live Now is of almost overwhelming power. In fact, it is the only Trollope novel on which there is almost complete unanimity of critical opinion" (Booth 121).

Winifred Hurtle has arrived in England in pursuit of Paul Montague, who has promised to marry her while he was in America, but has since reneged on his word. From the beginning, the reader is made aware that Mrs. Hurtle is different from English women, and therefore is suspect. Certainly no doubt exists in anyone's mind but hers as to the inadvisability of the proposed marriage between her and Paul. Roger Carbury warns Paul that her past is too disorganized and too suspect for him to contemplate an alliance with her, "her antecedents had been such as to cause all his friends to warn him against such a marriage" (The Way 1, 441).

Robert Tracy describes her as "an admirer of both Napoleon and Mr. Melmotte because they are above the law" (Tracy 170). As he points out, Trollope specifically condemns "the man who declares himself free from traditional moral restraints" (170). Men such as Melmotte can only cause the downfall of civilization, and given Mrs. Hurtle's admiration for this type of man, the reader is made to understand that this is but one of many examples as to why she would not be the proper wife for Paul. Not only does she not fit into English society, but Trollope presents her as being a danger to it as well, in the same manner of Melmotte, albeit somewhat modified. Trollope adds the fact that she had shot a man who threatened her, and she thinks of shooting Paul as he attempts to break their engagement. "My last word to you is, that you are - a liar. Now for the present you can go. Ten minutes since, had I had a weapon in my hand I should have shot another man" (Way 1, 448). She also threatens to horsewhip Paul in

a very revealing letter which causes the modern reader to wonder about Paul and his ambiguous value system. Clearly, here is a woman who would do anything for him, and more importantly, is capable of doing anything for him. Proof of her love lies in the fact she crossed the Atlantic Ocean alone to confront him while he, not daring to face her, ended their engagement via a letter. Winifred is also the victim of an unclear marriage situation; Paul believes her husband dead and she divorced before his death. This, however, proves not to be the case; her husband, brute that he is, is alive and well, and the divorce never occurred. Precisely what she was planning to do if Paul should have agreed to marry her is unclear; Trollope merely adds this information to serve as another form of condemnation to her character. Winifred returns to America; she has no place in England, and certainly England has no understanding of the type of woman she is. She is much more understandable and sympathetic to modern readers than is the colorless Hettie who waffles around, looking sorrowful and attempting to console her mother. Nardin is sympathetic to Winifred's problem, "Mrs. Hurtle's experiences suggest that when life forces a woman to deviate from the ideal of sheltered, passive femininity, society punishes her savagely for her deviation" (Nardin xvi). With this character, Trollope does shift his emphasis toward the end of this story when he attempts to make her more sympathetic, or rather, more feminine when, realizing Paul's reaction, Mrs. Hurtle wonders if "it would have been better for her to have turned the muzzle against her own bosom" (Way 1, 450).

The novel, Is He Popenjoy?, published in 1877-78 is one of the many which highlights the conflict between his spoken opinion of the women's rights issue and the viewpoint which emerges from his novels. He writes sympathetically of Mary's struggle in her marriage, of the false accusation made by her husband, and of the difficulty she has in subverting her wishes to those of her husband. The story is reminiscent of He Knew He Was Right, although without its complexity and strength. However, in the same novel is a section dealing with women's rights entitled "The Rights of Women Institute Established for the Relief of Disabilities of Females" commonly referred to as "Female Disabilities". The broad caricature of the Institute and of the participating women easily reaches the point of satire.

Mary, the heroine of the story, searches for alternatives to her joyless marriage and humorless husband. Accompanied by her friend Adelaide, she attends a meeting at the Rights of Women Institute, Established for the Relief of the Disabilities of Females Institute, also known as the 'Disabilities'. This is a feminist group in London who believes in women's rights, including suffrage, higher education, and the right for women to practice the art of architecture. They are brutally portrayed by Trollope as clowns and caricatures including the American Miss Dr. Olivia Q. Fleabody and the Bavarian Baroness Banmann. Their descriptions by Trollope do not border on the burlesque; instead, they plunge deeply into it. At no point are the descriptions believable nor do the characters emerge as recognizable human beings. That they are ridiculous

cartoons is made even more clear when this novel is contrasted, as it must be, with Henry James' The Bostonians, published approximately the same time, which discusses, with both humor and intelligence, the issue of American female rights and emancipation.

Booth is one of the modern critics who attempts to explain the reasoning of Trollope which lay behind such satirical treatment of the feminists,

> He was convinced that nothing is better calculated to defeat God's purposes than spinsterhood, which frustrates woman by channeling her energies out of their natural course, and also antagonizes man, with whom she enters into competition for gainful employment. She loses the softness, the tenderness, the spiritual qualities of mind and heart which are chief among the graces with which she has been endowed. She becomes brash and noisy, opinionated and assertive (Booth 126).

The women in many of his novels certainly can hold their own with their male counterparts, but they are in no way emancipated. In fact, Lady Laura, one of Trollope's finest creations and a sternly independent woman, states clearly she has no interest in getting the right to vote and suspects that most women of her association have the same attitude. The multifaceted ending of Is He Popenjoy also includes the marriage of Olivia P. Fleabody, who, in Trollope's words, "settled down into a good mother of a family" (Popenjoy 11, 311). As well she should; no other options were available to women in the novel, and she probably could consider herself fortunate to have achieved this goal.

While Trollope portrayed these particular women as ridiculous, he also made others of their type pathetic as well as ridiculous. Kept in the Dark features Francesca Altifiorla, a malicious busybody, who, in principle, opposes marriage. A long-time friend of Cecilia Weston, she becomes attracted to Sir Francis as they plot to destroy Cecilia's happiness. Trollope describes her as having "good looks of her own, though they were thin and a little pinched. She was in truth thirty-five years old, but she did not quite look it" (Kept 79). Her present life is depressing, both to her and to the reader:

> when she thought of the chill of her present life, of its want of interest, of its insipid loneliness, and then told herself what might be in store for her should she live to become Lady Geraldine, she declared to herself that even though the chance might be very small, the greatness of the reward if gained would justify the effort" (Kept 120).

The adjectives Trollope uses in this description have nothing of any feeling; instead, Francesca regards marriage as a financial gain, a reward for the hard work of snaring a man about whom she knows little and cares less. Unfortunately for the newly developed dreams of Miss Altifiorla, her inability to keep quiet ruins her chances with Sir Francis, who, it must be admitted, had no strong feelings for the lady from the beginning. She, as did Wallechia Petrie, goes to America, to "lecture at Chicago, at Saint Paul's, and Omaha, on the distinctive duties of the female sex. She thought that in one of those large Western Halls,

full of gas and intelligence, she could rise to the height of her subject with tremendous eloquence" (Kept 185).

Fortunately for his novels and for his future readers, his sympathy for women and his understanding of their often untenable situation comes forth in his later novels with several moving portraits of unforgettable women who defied stereotypes and conventional ideas. One reason for this attitude can certainly be attributed to his relationship with Kate Fields. In 1876 he wrote in his Autobiography, which he did not intend to publish during his lifetime, the following paragraph,

> There is an American woman, of whom not to speak in a work purporting to be a memoir of my own life would be to omit all allusion to one of the chief pleasures which has graced my later years. In the last fifteen years she has been, out of my family, my most chosen friend. She is a ray of light to me, from which I can always strike a spark by thinking of her. I do not know that I should please her or do any good by naming her. But not to allude to her in these pages would amount almost to a falsehood (Autobiography 124).

"The limited and oppressive options" women faced also included the restrictive Divorce laws. In many of his novels, Trollope entangles his fictional characters in legal situations based upon current English law. The result is a group of books which attempt to reflect the changing legal and social situation in

England, with a sympathetic emphasis on the plight of the women living in a society structured for the benefit of men.

One strong indication that Trollope was not always in tune with his times comes with the review of his Barchester Towers series, immensely popular today as well as in Trollope's time, but subject to some criticism when they first appeared. Glendinning quotes a critic for Longman's who wrote that "the chief defect of the work (Barchester Towers) was the 'vulgarity' of the chief characters. There is hardly a 'lady' or 'gentleman' among them. As for the Signora Neroni, 'a most repulsive, exaggerated and unnatural character', she was 'a great blot on the work'" (Glendinning 218).

She goes to make the point that,

> these strictures belie any conventional supposition that Anthony Trollope was always in tune with his times, or that he deliberately tailored his work to the acceptable standard. His off-key, or off-colour, sense of humour reflects how little opportunity he had to become conditioned by the assumptions of the 'polite' English world - which in artistic terms, was to his advantage and ours (Glendinning 219).

Jane Nardin emphasizes Trollope's sometimes contradictory view of women. She claims that the influence of his mother, his wife, and his long-time, (probably) platonic friend, Kate Fields, encouraged him to take a position on women which was at odds with the one accepted by most of his society. His mother turned to writing at the rather advanced age of fifty to support her

household when his father proved ineffective. Had she maintained the accepted role of an Angel in the House, probably no house would have existed. While not much is known about his wife Rose (he remains curiously silent about her in his Autobiography) she was the only person permitted to read his rough drafts and one of the few people from whom he accepted suggestions. His American friend, Kate, differed greatly from the conventional Victorian female. Her various careers included those of journalist, lecturer, actress, and writer; she held his interest and his love until his death.

The strength of his writing lies in his ability to create believable characters - flawed heroes and heroines as well as sympathetic villains, with an understanding of the psychology of his characters. In fact, they were so important to him that he differentiated the difference between the realistic and the sensational novel in terms of character. Robicheau explains, "The great distinction which Trollope identifies in the contemporary novel is that between the realistic novel which concentrates on 'the elucidation of character' and the sensational novel which depends upon 'the continuation and gradual development of plot'" (Robicheau 87).

J. Hillis Miller believes that Trollope's primary aim was "to make the characters in his novels a medium of social communication affirming and maintaining the values of that society" (Miller 87). Gertrude Himmelfarb agrees with Miller when she attempts to explain the focus of Victorian society.

> Manners were sanctified and moralized, so to speak, while morals were secularized and domesticated. When Thackeray earlier in the century, or Trollope later, protested that manners were taking precedence over morals, that "the way we live now" (in the memorable title of one of Trollope's last novels) encouraged the cultivation of manners at the expense of morals, it was because they themselves attached so much importance not only to morals but to the continuum of manners and morals (Himmelfarb 275)

While this is certainly true, I believe Trollope shows more sympathy with certain female characters, and thus performs a more subtle undermining of societal conventions than either Himmelfarb or Miller give him credit. Rarely is anyone punished completely or shown to be without any redeeming qualities. His novels lack the didacticism of Dickens. Trollope does, however, stress

> that the audience must be an essential consideration in any theory or practice of fiction. The moral or didactic purpose of art requires that the artist adapt his material to the audience which he wants to instruct, and Trollope the novelist is particularly careful to present what will be acceptable to his own audience (Robicheau 90).

In his Autobiography, Trollope explains that the novelist must live with his characters

> in the full reality of established intimacy. They must be with him as he lies down to sleep, and as he wakes from his dreams. He must learn to hate them and to love them. He must argue with them, quarrel with them,

> forgive them, and even submit to them...And as, here, in our outer world, we know that men and women change,- become worse or better as temptation or conscience may guide them - so should these creations of his change, and every change should be noted by him. On the last day of each month recorded, every person in his novel should be a month older than on the first (Autobiography 43).

Miller further elucidates the importance of character in Trollope's novels, "his fiction concentrates with admirable consistency on the question of what constitutes authentic selfhood" (Fiction 123). "Authentic selfhood" is, of course, not limited to his female characters; instead, this was the goal Trollope attempted to reach in the development of all his characters.

The struggle to maintain authentic selfhood presented the novelist with problems and conflicts that, as apRoberts explains, he managed to solve on two distinctively different levels: one in keeping with the rules and conventions of the society in which the individual lives and the other, more significantly, in keeping with the moral center of the individual himself. Often this causes problems which are not neatly resolved at the end of the story. One particularly effective example occurs in Orley Farm. Sir Peregrine is in love with Mrs. Mason, accused of forging her late husband's will. When she confesses to him that she is, indeed, guilty, he calls off the marriage, fearing her disgrace would adversely affect his daughter-in-law's reputation. However, he never recovers from the loss of Mrs.

Mason, and the closing lines of the book see him sitting in his library: "he was waiting patiently, as he said, till death should come for him" (Orly Farm 414).

Gindin discusses the significance of such endings in Trollope's novels by explaining that "the sense of acceptance at the conclusion of Trollope's novels does not always involve perfect happiness or complete moral justice; acceptance is a recognition of the way things are in world where individual and social considerations must be carefully balanced" (Gindin 33). Praz explains in greater detail reasons for Trollope's views, "His anti-heroic point of view led him, as it did Thackeray, to see the other side of every situation, to prick every bladder he saw with a sharp pin" (Praz 316). Murfin makes a perceptive comment regarding Trollope's realism,

> Trollope's ultimate vision of the world is one in which all identities are unstable, all truths relative - and a matter of perspective. Thus, all representations are at best true for the moment, or true from the vantage point chosen by their representative, who cannot be among those truths and attempts to represent them at the same time (48).

The criticism leveled at Trollope by some of his contemporaries, notably Henry James, was based upon his perceived lack of theory, confirming, it seems to James that: "Trollope has as little form as possible; he never troubled his head or clogged his pen with theories about the nature of his business" (Smalley 526-27). Kincaid differs with this opinion, as does Joan Margaret Robicheau. Kincaid believes that "his Autobiography is the clearest, most comprehensive

statement of the theory that realism itself has ever produced" (Kincaid 3). Robicheau, in her thesis writes, "Trollope's long-standing reputation as the least reflective of the major Victorian novelists has been, admittedly, abetted if not actually nurtured by Trollope himself, with his overtly modest assessment of his own accomplishments and his extremely casual attitude towards serious questions concerning art" (Robicheau 76). But, she argues, "Trollope is consistently and pre-eminently concerned with the practical in criticism, with the fundamental principles and techniques which make literature effective. His criticism is, therefore, fundamentally reader-oriented" (Robicheau 72).

His famous analogy compares his craft with that of a shoemaker. The realistic novelist, according to Trollope, is a machine for the production of novels. It is easy to understand why such a statement so outraged Henry James, and indeed, generations of readers and writers. The dichotomy in the novelist's life becomes easier to understand after reading his Autobiography. "The more thoroughly he keeps life and writing separate, giving one precedence over the other, the better realist he is" (Kincaid 5). Nathaniel Hawthorne describes his technique in a passage which so impressed Trollope that he included it in his Autobiography.

> Have you ever read the novels of Anthony Trollope? They precisely suit my taste, - solid and substantial, written on the strength of beef and through the inspiration of ale, and just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case, with all its inhabitants

going about their daily business, and not suspecting that they were being made a show of (Trollope 144).

Ruth apRoberts defines Trollope's use of realism by explaining that it is so subtle the reader literally does not recognize its existence. She describes Trollope's "precise descriptive analysis, verbal, plain, and unequivocally clear" (17), going on to point out that in his novels "virtually no atmospheric descriptions and no pathetic fallacies exist. He gives you a bald circumstantial description of a country house or a village because you have to know the geography to understand the action" (18). Trollope eschews symbolism, using verbal explanations; he avoids nature imagery to set up a scene, and, most telling of all, his multilayered plots seem to spill out from the covers of the novels, providing a contrast to one another as well as "enlarging and diversifying his novels" (Garrett 180). He goes on to explain that "Trollope's use of multiple narration (plot) also works toward a differentiation...becomes a means of giving greater emphasis to discrepancies of character, situation, and tone" (Garrett 185). "But Trollope will not sacrifice his realism to a tight plot or a pat ending" (apRoberts 28).

Trollope explains himself in his Autobiography, when he comments on the works of Wilkie Collins, "The novelist has other aims than the elucidation of his plot" (194). While he admires the careful construction of Collins' novels, he himself had no desire to emulate him, "I can never lose the taste of the construction" (214). "Rather, he obtained his results through a slow accumulation of little

pictures of ordinary life, with nothing spectacular about them - often, in fact, varied by only slight alterations" (214).

Most, if not all, of Trollope's novels center on tangled relationships between a man and a woman, "an almost obsessive preoccupation with depiction of the torment of frustrated courtships and of unions between men and women that are anything but the stuff of which fairy tales are made" (Swingle 116). These relationships give him an opportunity to insert opinions and criticisms regarding matters important to him. "Trollope's novels tend to weave intricate patternings of complex affinities between public and private affairs" (Swingle 54). Gindin agrees, saying that "Trollope's lessons were often involved with preserving order both in individual lives and in society, although he understood and charted both disruptive personal passion and disruptive public change" (Gindin 32).

The aspect of Trollope's novels which cause him to differ from his contemporaries is his changing and developing attitude toward his female characters. Gindin makes a strong case for the idea that

> Trollope maintains a great deal of sympathy for displaced women, who comprise some of his most memorable portraits. They are highly intelligent, sensitive women who attempt to arrange their lives too consciously, who are slightly too aggressive and aware of themselves to be comfortable in the role of the conventional female that prevailed in Victorian society, the role of the passive and devoted servant (Gindin 38).

J. Hillis Miller further develops the role of the novel when he explains his belief that Trollope's novels had "constructive social function, namely to reinforce the ethical values of the middle-class readers for whom they are intended" (Miller 85). While this interpretation of Trollope's work is valid for his early novels, Miller neglects or ignores the implications present in the novelist's later novels, in which controversial social ideas are introduced, and women not conforming to middle class values find themselves as either heroines or protagonists of their stories.

Trollope's accurate and sympathetic psychological portraits of his women characters who, through their ambition, their marriages, their pride, or their aberrant sexual behavior step outside the boundaries of conventional behavior, reflect not only a developed but an increasing understanding of female psychology. Irving Howe expands on this view when he writes,

> ...Trollope has placed, with very warm sympathy, a number of women who display strong appetites and aptitudes for politics but, hemmed in by traditional expectations, must suffer the thwarting of their ambitions. Lady Laura Standish, Madame Max Goesler, Lady Glencora Palliser all have to accept the frustration of pretending to be docile while working behind the scenes. They love the skirmishing of political life and they spur their men to polemical sharpness, at a later historical moment they would be M.P.s or Cabinet members. In his opinions about "the women question" Trollope was a blunt

philistine, but in his imaginative writings he transcended his opinions (Howe 36-37)

Trollopian criticism has altered greatly over the decades of the twentieth century. We can easily trace the significance of these changes by comparing the writings of Sadleir in the 1920's with those of Jane Nardin, writing in the early 1990's. Sadleir praises the women in Trollope's novels, "little brown girls" who represent the highest fulfillment of feminine ideals - they marry and have children. Nardin, on the other hand, entitles her book on Trollope's women, He Knew She Was Right, explaining that the keynote to many of Trollope's women was their independent nature and their need to carve an identity for themselves.

Sadleir believes that Trollope's novels are filled with universal men and women, (with the emphasis on men) and he makes the point that "There is hardly a sinner in his books who is not in some way also a claimant on our sympathy" (Sadleir 343). He describes Trollope as

> at once the mouthpiece and the unconscious advocate. In the face of his simplicity, his courage and his humour, it is impossible to deny to mid-Victorian England qualities none the less admirable for being unspectacular. Trollope's England is neither portentous nor rococo; Trollope himself was neither prig nor moralist (Sadleir 36).

Booth agrees, for the most part, with the critiques of Sadlier, saying,

> Manliness, indeed, is the key concept in his theory of values. This cornerstone of his personal ethics is prominent in the philosophy of his heroes,

> who must measure up to his definition of manliness. The study of all his characters from this point of view may perhaps serve to interpret his "Victorianism" (10).

Booth, for example, follows the conventional wisdom of his day and criticizes the women in Can You Forgive Her? in terms of their failure to adhere to the masculine view of the proper behavior by women. He writes of Glencora and Alice that

> love of power is their ruling passion, and it invariably brings by its exercise a fearful retribution. Both Lady Glencora and Alice are led by their willfulness and self-assurance to the very edge of tragedy before persuasion and good fortune re-establish a durable situation (84).

Modern readers would have difficulty accepting such a dismissive analysis of women, especially Glencora, as her story progresses over several novels and her struggle to form a life of independence forms the dominant theme not only in her life but in her husband's life as well. Booth also comments that this novel would come as a surprise to Trollope readers because of the female characters; "accustomed to the soft sentimentalities of a Katie Woodward or even the quiet stubbornness of a Lily Dale...must be surprised by the heroines of Can You Forgive Her? Glencora is no wide-eyed innocent but a married woman whose roving eyes are attracted by the charms of an accomplished philanderer" (Booth 84).

Changes in critical approaches to Trollope began to occur in the 1970's, when two prominent critics, Ruth apRoberts and P.D. Edwards published studies

on his novels. Edwards explained "two streams run through Trollope's work. One is the stream of common life, of Meredith's 'bread and butter people'; the other the more 'sensational' stream of 'great and glowing incidents'" (Edwards 6). apRoberts concentrated her study on the psychological development of his characters and the idea of situational ethics, believing that Trollope created people faced with difficulties about which no rigid solution was possible; instead, each situation was judged and resolved on its own basis - no rigid rules or general solutions existed for all (or any) problems. "All we can do," she says, paraphrasing Trollope's philosophy of situational ethics, "is extend our understanding to each case, and work out an ethical decision with the most humanitas available to us, always bending principle to pity" (apRoberts 123). When she commented, about An Eye For An Eye, that Trollope again emphasizes the disproportionate punishment which falls on the woman "while the man, whose guilt is generally the greater, gets off very lightly" (apRoberts 122), her remarks signaled the beginning of an increased interest and emphasis by critics on Trollope's more unconventional women, those women whose behavior did not conform to the standards of their society. Trollope himself speculates in the novel that this disproportionate punishment occurs because "the world could not afford to ostracize the men - though happily it might condemn the women" (apRoberts 122). She does not spend much time analyzing particular women, as does Nardin several years later, but she begins to move criticism away from the male-centered position it previously held.

Edwards also discusses the 'women question' in more detail than had previous critics. His critique of The Vicar of Bullhampton recognizes that the "was in some respects a conscious contribution to the debate over the woman question" (Edwards 99). Trollope had definite ideas concerning the place of women in society, and he worried about the end result of the growing movement for increased freedom for them. However, his novels reflected a growing consciousness of the plight of women, and his female characters in his later novels wrestled with many of the problems modern readers would easily and quickly recognize. He points out, for example, that the character of Carrie Brattle has many weaknesses. However, her mere presence represents a landmark, a shift in the sympathies of Trollope who would become increasingly more understanding of and realistic toward women and their problems in his later novels.

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, a new interest in Anthony Trollope began to develop, sparked by such critics as Bill Overton, James Kincaid, Robert Tracy, and especially, Jane Nardin. These people, taking a new look at old views of Trollope, instituted some dramatic changes. They focused their concentration on the psychology of his characters, especially, as in the case of Nardin, on his female characters, and they applied new theories of criticism to his novels.

The idea of sexual frustration, absent in the analysis of earlier critics, clearly underscores the changes in criticism and in the understanding of Trollope. Nardin re-emphasizes this idea in her book, in which she devotes several pages

to Margaret MacKenzie, describing her as "a representative Victorian woman...a very mild rebel indeed, but many Victorians would have thought her interest in sex and pleasure unsuitable to a maiden lady of such advanced age" (Nardin 149). Miss MacKenzie understands very clearly that when women "move beyond their roles, they risk both censure and self-reproach. Safety is to be found only in the acceptance of severe restriction, the kind of relationship Margaret accepts when she marries the decent but limited John Bell" (Nardin 151).

Kincaid, foreshadowing a more in-depth analysis by Nardin, places at the center of his books the question he believed Trollope struggled with in most of his later novels - "What should a woman do with her life?" No easy answer was available - either to the author or to his female characters. A key point in this attempt to answer the almost unanswerable question, according to Kincaid, is freedom. "Alice, like Isobel Archer, is out to test the conditions and extent of her freedom" (Kincaid 183). Unfortunately, "the assertion of independence, she feels, is an assertion of isolation" (Kincaid 183). This would be a recurring motif in Trollope's later novels; pushing the edges of acceptable behavior would almost invariably isolate woman, causing terrible loneliness. One only has to think of Emily Trevelyan or Mrs. Askerton or Feemy MacDermott to recognize the price that was often paid for independent or unconventional thinking and action.

Jane Nardin argues that Trollope's view of women does not alter significantly through the cycle of his novels. She believes that both his sympathy toward them and his clear depiction of their independence began early in his

writing career, "Trollope ceased to organize his novels around conventional Victorian notions of male and female nature and began to subvert those notions earlier than most critics have realized" (Nardin). She states the change in his depiction of women came about between the years 1855 and 1865, specially between the completion of Barchester Towers and The Belton Estate.

Her book, He Knew She Was Right, attempts to refute the conventional view which has claimed, over the years, that a specific change in his writing does occurs during the years 1865-67 by explaining that the evolution in his writing occurs earlier and is less drastic than previously recognized. Nardin's ideas have succeeded in forcing scholars to view Trollope and his women characters in a different and much more sympathetic light. She expands the conventional analysis adopted by other critics by pointing out that Trollope succeeds in showing the code of masculinity causes as many problems as does the "destructive repression Victorian society visits on women" (Nardin 131), and that he ends by condemning both standards as ruinous to successful relationships between men and women.

She further explains that Trollope, "by keeping two interpretative options open, but gradually shifting the balance between them, minimizes the risk of offense while moving conventional readers toward greater sympathy with such initially unappealing women as Alice the jilt, Glencora the would-be adulteress, Kate Vavasor the confirmed spinster, and Mrs. Greenow the sex-starved widow" (Nardin 130). By using such stereotypic definitions of these women and then by

undercutting them, Nardin demonstrates clearly the changes which have occurred in Trollopian criticism, changes which she has been in large measure responsible. Certainly modern readers would have difficulty using such descriptions to summarize and thus dismiss the troubled women in this novel who are striving to achieve some form of balance in their lives, as well as happiness.

I shall, however, argue against Nardin's view that the change occurred early in his writing. Certainly the majority of women in his novels are presented in a positive light; but, I believe a gradual but definite change occurs as he develops his middle and later women characters, based in part upon his increasing realization that happiness for a woman did not always include marriage, the previously conventional ending to any situation. The portraits of his women characters become stronger, more positive as well as increasingly three-dimensional in nature. I have divided his work into three periods: 1850's, 1860's, and 1870's. Each of these periods mark a definitive change in Trollope's writing and in his personal life. The increasing complexity of his novels, as explained by Garrett, supports the idea that Trollope was well aware of his fragmented society and, as a necessary and perhaps unfortunate result, the layered and often lonely existence of its female members. The direction in which Trollope was moving was increasingly away from the conventional idea of a plot-directed novel in which the characters serve only to move the action forward to a predictable, usually happy ending, towards modern character studies in which his women,

placed in difficult situations, search for identity and selfhood in a fragmented world.

The following chapters will discuss women in Trollope's novels. Obviously, the sheer number of his books prevents any one paper from doing justice to either the number or to the complexity of all his female characters, so I have been forced to limit the scope of the discussion by focusing on particular novels and certain women who, I believe, give the reader a clear view of the nature of the author and his evolving beliefs throughout his writing career. Each chapter discusses a woman (sometimes two) from each of the author's three periods. In this way, the change both in Trollope's sympathetic perspective and viewpoint becomes clearer for the reader.

I shall begin with single women. Representing his earliest period, the 1850, I have chosen Madeline Stanhope from Barchester Towers, published in 1857. She married once but now appears barred, either from personal inclination or physical deformity, from the institution. She is a one-note character, a seductress who attracts men but who does not permit relationships to develop. Trollope presents her almost as a stereotype; certainly he is not sympathetic to her nor to her position. Margaret MacKenzie illustrates his second period, with her story being told in Miss MacKenzie, written in 1865. This novel is unusual as it revolves completely around a woman who is single. Margaret reveals herself through the novel as a more forceful character than she appears in the opening chapters, and Trollope, attempting a new approach with this book, succeeds in

making her not only likable but also admirable. In his final period, two single women stand out as representative of the author's changing and increasingly sympathetic attitude towards women. Lizzie Eustace, from The Eustace Diamonds, 1874, and Madame Max, who appears in both Phineas Finn, 1869 and Phineas Redux, 1874, demonstrate a new dimension not only in Trollope's writing, but in his approach to women. Certainly Lizzie has many similarities to Madeline Stanhope, but her portrait is not as negative as that of Madeline. In Madame Max, Trollope has created one of his most successful characters, with the possible exception of Glencora Palliser. Madame Max is strong-minded, independent, and self-sufficient, qualities which many women wish to possess but do not.

The next two chapters will deal with fallen women. Feemy MacDermot, who features in The MacDermots of Ballycloran published in 1847, is strongly representative of his early period. Swayed by her strong emotions, Feemy becomes the stereotype of a fallen woman, even to the point of dying the time-honored and conventional death in childbirth. Caroline Brattle, whose story, The Vicar of Bullhampton appeared in 1870, demonstrates the author's changing sensibilities toward these women. Forgiven by her family, she is allowed to return home. Trollope did not write her story with the idea of moralizing or punishing a young woman's error in judgment; instead, he reveals her as a person who made a series of poor choices and who suffered greatly from the consequences. By the time An Eye For An Eye appeared in 1879, which had a very similar plot to The

MacDermots of Ballycloran, Trollope's attitude toward his young heroine, Katherine O'Brien, had undergone a dramatic shift. In this story, the blame falls almost entirely upon her seducer, Fred who eventually dies while Katherine leaves England to spend her life with her father.

In the third chapter, the idea of sexual misconduct becomes more complex, as the women involved, Lady Fitzgerald, Mrs. Askerton, and Mrs. Peacocke, were all married. Lady Fitzgerald's story, in Castle Richmond, published at the end of the first period in 1860, differs significantly from that of Mrs. Askerton, in The Belton Estate, which, published in 1866, places it in Trollope's second period. Mrs. Askerton's situation is very similar to Lady Richmond's, where a first husband is presumed, erroneously, to be dead. However, the increased sympathy Trollope shows for Mrs. Askerton, who is eventually permitted to return to the society which had censored her, stands in marked contrast to the role Lady Richmond plays - that of a woman who appears helpless in the face of events which she believes she cannot control. Lady Richmond represents the stereotypic wife in an untenable situation. Dr. Wortle's School, published shortly before Trollope's death in 1881, focuses on the reactions of people surrounding the "guilty" woman, Mrs. Peacocke. Even more clearly in this novel, in keeping with his increasing compassion and understanding for women, Mrs. Peacocke is not merely an erring wife but rather becomes a fully recognized individual with whom the reader finds it impossible not to sympathize.

The final chapter features women who are married but who have discovered marriage often is a trap or, at best, a confining institution in which a woman may easily lose both her identity and herself. Trollope begins with Mrs. Proudie, from Barchester Towers, 1857, for whom he has little or no sympathy. She, as was Madeline Stanhope, becomes a one-note character, a shew who alternatingly browbeats or henpecks her husband. Her attempts to have a successful marriage fail because of her overweening attitude and her firm beliefs in her own superiority. The second period, which demonstrates Trollope's developing sympathy for his female characters, brings to the fore Lady Laura of Phineas Finn, 1869 who is, many critics believe, one of his most successful creations. Certainly her story is told with gentleness and restraint as well as sympathy, even though much of what ultimately happens to her occurs as the result of her own actions and choices. Emily Trevelyan, the difficult heroine of He Knew He Was Right, also written in 1869, illustrates another side of married life. She refuses to accept her husband's dictum that she was wrong and must apologize. Despite the fact she often appears unlikable in the novel, Trollope succeeds admirably in building sympathy among his readers for her position and ultimately for her. She is more complex and much more developed than Mrs. Proudie and her creator's attitude toward her reflects his growing sympathy with the restrictions that marriage placed upon intelligent and strong-minded women.

No study of Trollope's women would be complete without the inclusion of Lady Glencora Palliser. Her story ranges over Trollope's second and third

periods beginning early in the second with the publication of Can You Forgive Her in 1864. More than any other of his women, her story illustrates clearly the changing attitude of Trollope towards women and his increasingly sympathetic attitude toward their place in society. Glencora first appears as a rather empty-headed young woman with a great deal of money and a fondness for unsuitable men. Her increasing sympathetic development and psychological alterations do more than any single character to illustrate the changes her creator underwent in the course of his writing career.

CHAPTER TWO

SINGLE WOMEN

Several of Trollope's novels tell the story of diverse single women and their relationships. To be single and a woman in nineteenth century England was often to lead a life without clear definition. Yet, with courage and determination, a single woman could carve out a place for herself in society which would allow her a life with dignity. By tracing Trollope's single women through his career, the reader can clearly see the changing attitudes of their creator. Not only does he portray the women in his later periods more sympathetically, he also deepens their psychological development. His stories dealing with single women approach the subject from a variety of perspectives, which depend heavily upon the period in which he was writing.

Madeline Stanhope, who appears in Barchester Towers, written in 1857, placing it in the author's earliest period, is an anomaly in her society, a sexual siren whose development does not go further than her sex appeal and the often adverse affect she had on men in her immediate vicinity. She is by the standards established in Barchester a rebel, rebelling against the conventions of her time. However, Trollope is not sympathetic to her; in fact, her depiction is often cruel as she is given very few redeeming characteristics. Madeline once married but now single, does not have marriage as a possibility. Trollope carefully excluded romantic entanglements from her life by making her crippled; thus

avoiding the question he was later to deal with - the function of a single middle-class woman in her society.

The most important woman in his second period, Margaret MacKenzie, provides an interesting contrast to Madeline Stanhope. She does not have the overt sex appeal of Madeline; Trollope, instead, focuses on several aspects of her personality, thus ensuring she does not become a one-note character as was Madeline Stanhope. The mere fact that Trollope would use a single woman as the focus of a novel underscores both his developing interest and sympathy to women. Her story, told in the novel, Miss MacKenzie, published in 1865, was in the nature of an experience for the author. He was determined to write a story with no romance, but he failed. Margaret MacKenzie does marry at the end of her novel, but Trollope deliberately leaves the reader wondering if perhaps she might have been happier had she remained single, as clearly, even her chosen husband does not seem to be worthy of her. The reader is privy to most of her thoughts and feelings as she reacts to the circumstances and people who surround her. As a result, the novel, which does not contain either striking action or an innovative plot, becomes an interesting and perceptive portrayal of a developing middle-aged woman handling her own life for the first time.

The women in the final period of the author's writing career, Lizzie Eustace and Madame Max Goesler, clearly demonstrate the distance traveled by Trollope since the beginning of his writing career. Lizzie Eustace, the central character in The Eustace Diamonds, published in 1873, in the author's third period,

shows some of the same characteristics of Madeline Stanhope. However, Trollope carefully does not judge her; instead, the reader must form his own opinion of Lizzie's actions and weigh the reasons behind her sometimes almost incomprehensible behavior. She has several strong allies, among them Lady Glencora Palliser which, among other considerations, tends to shift the reader's sympathy towards Lizzie. Trollope makes her a complex woman, in contrast to Madeline, and her life certainly re-enforces the author's belief that single woman must struggle for survival in ways that men of that time would have found difficult to understand.

I have placed Madame Max Goesler in his third period because, while she appears in Phineas Finn, published in 1869, her story dominates Phineas Redux, which appeared in 1874. In Madame Max, Trollope had succeeded in creating the perfect single woman: independent, strong-minded, intelligent who made choices as to how she would spend her life. She had found a comfortable place in society without the benefit of a husband, and if she chooses to change her status, she does so with careful deliberation and a strong sense of love. Madame Max is not only part of her society, she also proves to be one of its strongest members. Unwilling to believe Phineas' guilt, she single-handedly demonstrates his innocence and manages to crack the almost impenetrable barrier of the upper-class. Trollope presents her not merely on the surface, as he had done with Madeline, but with keen psychological insight, giving the reader an understanding of her thoughts and feelings, thus creating not only a more

realistic portrayal, but a more sympathetic one, which reflects the author's changing feelings towards single, independent, and strong-minded woman. She also stands in strong contrast to Phineas' first wife, Mary Flood Jones, whose outstanding characteristic seems to be her "sweet, clinging feminine softness" (PF 235).. Madame Max does marry Phineas at the conclusion of Phineas Redux, but the author makes clear this is a marriage of equals.

The Signora, as Madeline liked to be called, is crippled. The story she created to veil the situation has an air of fantasy about it, even as her name is greatly fantasized and exaggerated. She claims to have fallen when viewing the Roman ruins, injuring her knee so badly she could never walk again, injuring her knee so badly she could never walk again, thus hiding the fact her husband beat her, causing severe injuries. She literally bursts upon the scene, carried by footmen into the Proudies' reception.

> Dressed as she was and looking as she did, so beautiful and yet so motionless, with the pure brilliancy of her white dress brought out and strengthened by the colour beneath it, with that lovely head, and those large, bold, bright, staring eyes, it was impossible that either man or woman should do other than look at her. Neither man nor woman for some minutes did do other (BT 96).

Madeline appears to fit perfectly the stereotype of the "good" woman, literally helpless, but beautiful; no threat, merely dependent.

She does, however, use the stereotypes to flaunt her power. Her dress, strikingly beautiful as it is, stands outside the conventional female wear. No woman at the party is dressed as she is. Rowbotham explains the importance of the convention she is spurning while ostensibly conforming to the rules.

> Outward appearance was the first key to judging character. For a woman to stand out from the crowd by means of dress was thus vulgar and an indication of the lack of instinctive refinement which was considered to be part of the modest damsel of good class (Rowbotham 40).

She may have been inappropriately dressed, but the ridiculous convention of judging women solely through their appearance certainly does not prove true in Madeline's case. Nobody can deny she is from a good family; her father, Dr. Stanhope, is a minister with a prebendal stall in the diocese and two large rectories of Crabtree Canonicorum and Stogpingum. As a result, Madeline is not, and indeed, cannot, be either dismissed or ignored.

Her conflict with Mrs. Proudie proves to be one of the more humorous episodes in the novel. Clearly Trollope does not take either of these two women with much seriousness. Polhemus gives one interpretation of the meeting between the two women when he writes,

> Madeline cracks the rigid facade of Barchester's moral propriety, and Mrs. Proudie, the voice of codified prudery, immediately sees her as a deadly enemy: 'Mrs. Proudie looked on the signora as one of the lost- one of those beyond the reach of Christian charity, and was therefore able to enjoy the

> luxury of hating her, without the drawback of wishing her eventually well out of her sins (Polhemus 41).

However, the character of Madeline does not progress much beyond her ability to shock the community by her outrageous speeches and actions. "She inadvertently, but effectively, humiliates Mrs. Proudie by ripping off her train" (Nardin 43). Mrs. Proudie, in turn, makes clear her opinion of Madeline at their first meeting,

> Was she not an intriguing Italian woman, half wife and half not, full of affectations, airs, and impudence? Was she not horribly bedizened with velvet and pearls, with velvet and pearls, too, which had not been torn off her back? Above all, did she not pretend to be more beautiful than her neighbors? (BT 106).

But it all appears to the reader as much sound and effort about really very little.

Madeline's relationships with other people follow the same pattern as the one she had with Mrs. Proudie; she takes joy in humiliation and succeeds with Slope and the Bishop himself, as well as with Mr. Arabin. Her malice is not directed toward any specific target; rather, she attacks, in one form or another, any who move within her vicinity. Her self-absorption leaves little room for anybody else to assume any importance in her life. Indeed, Trollope's characterization of her as a spider, "the signora was a powerful spider that made wondrous webs and could in no way live without catching flies" (BT 259), is brutally effective. She is also a bohemian, with all the good and bad qualities such a

characterization suggests: "She is neither moral or immoral but amoral, standing apart from the conventional middle class morality and idealism of the age" (Polhemus 39). Madeline has two ambitions in life - to be comfortable and to be amused.

No friendship or even respect develops between Madeline and Eleanor. Her characterization of Eleanor remains unchanged: "that vapid creature in the widow's cap, who looked as though her clothes had been stuck on her back with a pitchfork" (BT 410). This harsh characterization springs from sexual jealousy; "her time for love was gone. She had lived out her heart, such heart as she had ever had, in her early years...It was necessary to her to have some man at her feet" (BT 259). Eleanor has a second chance for happiness while Madeline is condemned to live only with herself, "Nurtured in the dark experience brought by rebellion and disaster, Madeline's intelligence is a mixed blessing at best - for all her vitality, she is very unhappy" (Nardin 42).

Unlike Miss MacKenzie or even Lizzie Eustace, Madeline's portrayal is largely on the surface; as a result, not unlike Mrs. Proudie, only one note sounds through her life. She lacks subtlety and is at all times overbearing. She presents the comic aspect of unbridled sex appeal and gives only small indication of the potential damage that can occur._Swingle gives an explanation for Trollope's lack of moralizing, "Mediation upon shades of guilt or innocence and upon sufficient grounds for condemnation or forgiveness of sins is an activity Trollope invites us to engage in through his art" (Swingle 125). However, this comment

overstates Trollope, especially in the period of writing Barchester Towers. The reader has no doubt of the author's opinion of Madeline nor, for that matter, of Mrs. Proudie. As his sympathy increased in his later periods, he was able to present unlikeable women with understanding and compassion, but in the early period, his characterizations remained slanted.

The novel Miss MacKenzie was published in 1865, which placed it within the author's second period. It tells the story of Margaret MacKenzie, who differs from Madeline in almost every conceivable way. Wall describes her as "hovering on the border between the shabby and the genteel; emotionally speaking, she seems to bear little resemblance to the conventional heroine, but they have more in common than might be supposed" (Wall 242). Margaret has money, therefore, she has a variety of options, although some time must elapse before she fully understands or appreciates her alternatives. Already thirty-eight and painfully aware that her chance for life outside the sickroom is rapidly diminishing, she resolves that "she would not content herself with a lifeless life, such as those few who knew anything of her evidently expected from her" (MM 4).

According to Trollope's Autobiography, he attempted something different with this story:

> Miss MacKenzie was written with the desire to prove that a novel may be produced without any love; but even this attempt breaks down before the conclusion...I took for my heroine a very unattractive old maid, who was

> overwhelmed with money troubles; but even she was in love before the end of the book (Autobiography 157-8).

Cohen expands upon Trollope's explanation of the purpose of this novel when, attempting to describe the realism present in Miss MacKenzie, she writes, "In this novel he combines certain elements of the fairytale mode with realism and romantic comedy so that the modes not only co-exist but exist in a dynamic relationship with one another" (Cohen 96).

When Margaret receives a legacy from the brother she had nursed for the several years prior to his death, she resolves to make a new start in life by moving away from her old home and taking up residence in another town, specifically Littlebath. The reader finds it easy to underestimate Miss MacKenzie or to suffer from an inability to appreciate her strength and courage. She is, after all, a middle-aged woman who lacks any experience in the world or with dealing with people, yet she wants something more from life than what conventionally she can expect. "During those fifteen years, her life had been very weary" (MM 5).

She was determined "to give the world a trial, and, feeling that London was too big for her, had resolved upon Littlebath" (MM 25), described by Kincaid as "a miserable substitute for genuine life" (Kincaid 87). Here she meets a variety of small-minded, provincial individuals with much the same outlook on life as can be found in The Vicar of Bullhampton. She becomes, unknowingly, caught in the middle of an ongoing feud between Mrs. Stumfold, the minister's wife and her allies and the independents, of which her next-door neighbor, Miss Todd, is one.

Her personal life becomes increasingly chaotic as her other brother resents the money left to her, believing that since he has a large family, he is more entitled to it than she is.

Due, in part, to the moderate income she receives from the bequest, she has, despite her age, her share of suitors. However, none of them are particularly exciting and certainly none of them prove worthy of her. The first one to propose to her is her cousin John, a widower with nine children, one at Oxford University. The prevailing concern in his life is his lack of money but, to give him credit, he is attracted to Margaret. However, the proposal hardly causes the earth to move; "'I want you to be my wife, and to be mother to those children. I like you better than any woman I've seen since I lost Rachel, but I shouldn't dare to make you such an offer if you had not money of your own'" (MM 83). Her refusal of him causes his mother to point to her that "'It is not as if you two were young people, and wanted to be billing and cooing'" (MM 108). But Margaret has established in her own mind that she does want "billing and cooing" having had none of it thus far in her life. Trollope successfully conveys to his reader the desires, hardly articulated but nevertheless real, of a middle-aged woman who understands little of herself and of the world, but who is determined to learn, no matter at what cost.

Another unprepossessing suitor, Mr. Samuel Rubb is a partner in her brother's firm, to whom Margaret has lend a considerable sum of money. She carefully ponders his situation, wondering if he could be classified as a gentleman

since "she would have broken her heart rather than marry a man who was not a gentleman" (MM 113). But other considerations make her consider him seriously as a suitor:

> ...here was a lover who was not old and careworn, who was personally agreeable to her, with whom something of the customary romance of the world might be possible. She knew well that there were drawbacks. Her perceptions had not missed to notice the man's imperfections, his vulgarities, his false promises, his little pushing ways. But why was she to expect him to be perfect, seeing, as she so plainly did, her own imperfections? As for her money, of course he wanted her money. What man on earth could have wished to marry her unless she had money? It was thus that she thought of herself (MM 133).

To give Mr. Rubb the small credit he deserves, he does not desert Margaret when he realizes the money was not hers. He persists in his attempt to marry her; only by firm action on her part does she finally make him understand such was not to be.

Her third suitor, Mr. Maguire, a clergyman, described by Edwards as "monstrous" (Edwards 64), has a grotesque physical deformity in the form of a squint, but she realizes that, unlike Mr. Rubb, no questions exist as to his position as a gentleman. "And, moreover, her was a gentleman, not only by Act of Parliament, but in outward manners" (MM 134). When he proposes to her she realizes she does not love him, but, being uncertain as to what exactly constitutes love, she

asks for two weeks in which to think over his proposal and to make her decision. Determined to marry her, even after he discovers her money actually belongs to her cousin John Bell, he causes an unpleasant scene in front of her aunt, reminding her, falsely, of promising to become engaged to him. Her problems with Mr. Maguire do not end with her refusal to marry him; to her horror, he writes an account of the entire affair, highly colored in his favor, which appears in The Christian Examiner. Since she has accepted the second proposal from her cousin John who is now in line to become a baronet, her lawyer urges her to take legal action against Mr. Maguire. During this entire affair, John does not behave particularly well. He and Margaret are engaged, but he cannot make up his mind to forgive her for Mr.Maguire, so long months pass when the two lovers do not see one another.

The people in her world tended to underestimate Margaret MacKenzie, believing, as did her aunt, Lady Ball, that she was

> ...unobtrusive, gentle, and unselfish...must therefore be weak and compliant, certainly nobody could overestimate the men with whom she becomes involved. As to many things she was compliant, and as to some things she was weak; but there was in her composition a power of resistance and self-sustenance on which people had not counted. When conscious of absolute ill-usage, she could fight well... (MM 205).

Her growing strength and realization of the ways of the world make her understand that she is entitled to more to life than being the wife of someone who

merely desires her income. Trollope expands her consciousness and increases her self-esteem, moving her slowly but definitely in the direction of an individual who recognizes herself to be worth more than merely someone's wife because she happens to have a little money. "...and as she spoke, a gleam of anger flashed from her eyes for was not in all respects a Griselda such as she of old" (MM 285). Because of John's obstinate refusal to forgive, if, indeed, she had anything for which to be forgiven, she considers breaking off the engagement.

> Margaret declared to herself that she could not live and bear it. Let the people around her say what they would, it would not be that he would treat her in this way if he intended to make her his wife. It would be better for her to make up her mind that it was not to be so, and to insist on leaving the Mackensies' house (MM 337).

John proves himself to be a less than romantic lover, echoing his proposal which emphasized, heavily, his need for money. Even in their reconciliation scene, which Margaret brought about, he can only think of the injury done to his reputation by Mr. Maguire's false stories. "He knew that this was not the kind of conversation which he had desired to commence, and that it must be changed before anything could be settled" (MM 378). But he cannot avoid dwelling on his perceived unhappiness and cannot refrain from telling how injured he felt by the entire affair. When he receives the congratulations of Mrs. Mackenzie on his engagement to Margaret, the author describes him as "looking foolish" (MM 385). That certainly is as good a description of the man as he deserves. When a date

for the wedding is suggested to him, his reaction is considerably less than passionate.

> Sir John showed by his countenance that he was somewhat taken aback. The 10th of August, and here they were far advanced into June! When he had left home this morning, he had not fully made up his mind whether he meant to marry his cousin or not; and now within a few hours, he was being confined to weeks and days! (MM 386)

Margaret believes she loves him and will be happy married to him, caring for his nine children. She, as Cohen points out, "gets the only thing she ever wanted, marriage for love" (Cohen 96). Trollope ends the novel optimistically, as the couple are leaving the church, "...and what was better, all the happiness that came in her way, Lady Ball accepted thankfully, quietly, and with an enduring satisfaction, as it became such a woman to do" (MM 388).

Another single woman, very different from Margaret, is Lizzie Eustace, the main character in The Eustace Diamonds, written during Trollope's last period. This novel is part of the Palliser series, generally considered by many critics to contain some of his most outstanding novels. Modern critics, among them Edwards, believe that

> The Eustace Diamonds has always been recognized as among the most exciting and carefully plotted of all Trollope's novels. Trollope creates a novel that is at once sensational in itself and highly critical of sensationalism - both

in fiction and in real life. He also creates a social satire that is not only one of his funniest but perhaps his sharpest and most telling (Edwards 169).

In Lizzie's story, none of the comic overtones or elements of farce which made the character of Madeline less than completely believable are present. On the contrary, Trollope who describes her as believing, "the guiding motive of her conduct was the desire to make things seem to be other than they were. To be always acting a part rather than living her own life was to be everything" (Diamonds 47). Her author does not sentimentalize her or ennoble her. She is a survivor and, as such, does what she believes necessary to ensure that survival. Her life is a performance for the benefit of others; Lizzie herself appears incapable of true emotions or of any form of introspection; instead, she reacts to any situation according to the way she perceives it should be, " preferring lies and dramatic display to truth" (MacDonald 55). She has little sense of morality; in fact, Wall characterizes her as "living permanently in a climate of lies" (Wall 264). Trollope knew what he was doing, and he did not overtly condemn her. Instead, "Trollope reveals in his creation of Lizzie an awareness of the real human personality beneath the mask demanded by society and life itself" (Stephen Gill 25-6). There is, perhaps, some justification for her character. Wijesinha explains, "Lizzie's (heartlessness) on the contrary, is attributed to the deprivations of her early life...provides an explanation that marks it as not being gratuitous and therefore unnecessarily cruel to her victims" (Wijesinha 103).

The theme of artifice in this novel is augmented by the concept of women as commodities, "to be priced and traded with little sentimentality" (Nardin 208). She goes on to explain, "Their value depends upon the externals of rank, wealth, and beauty, and not upon character" and "dishonest Lizzie Eustace is the embodiment of this phenomenon" (Nardin 208). She begins her career by lying her way into a marriage with the dying Sir Florian Eustace, who, unaware of her ulterior motives, believes she loves him. His disillusionment, upon the learning the truth, that she married him, with a lack of any feeling for him, to pay off her debts, darkens the remaining days of his life. Trollope leaves to the reader to decide what, if any, guilt Lizzie felt. "There must have been some pang when she reflected that the cruel wrong which she had inflicted on him had probably hurried him to his grave. As a widow, in the first solemnity of her widowhood, she was wretched and would see no one" (Diamonds 46). Patricia Vernon goes even further when she writes,

> The persistently intrusive fictional narrator neither can nor would tell all the truth, for the reader's participation in the imaginative creation of the fictional world is just that skill which enables him to read the characters and events in his own world (Vernon 8).

The plot of this novel is convoluted and multistructured. The diamonds, claimed by Lizzie to have been left her by her husband, are the source of contention among several family members who are attempting to preserve the family heritage for her son. When she claims they have been stolen, it is unclear

whether she really believes what she is saying, so caught is she in the web of lies. "She believed thoroughly that the diamonds had been locked by her in the box" (Diamonds 475). She remains silent regarding the fact the diamonds were in safekeeping under her pillow, thus enabling her to keep the necklace. She does not perceive the difficulties that will ensue as a result of this deception; indeed, "There would be a mystery in all this, and a cunning cleverness, the idea of which had in itself a certain charm for Lizzie Eustace" (Diamonds 444), especially when the diamonds are really stolen by her jeweler, Mr. Benjamin. She convinces herself of her innocence; they are, after all, her property and nobody's business as to what she does with it. "She had stolen nothing. She had taken no person's property. She had, indeed, been wickedly robbed.." (Diamonds 515). Indeed, Lizzie creates and recreates the world in order to suit herself. In the courtroom, she produces such effects that "from that moment the magistrate was altogether on her side - and so were the public" (Diamonds 716). As Trollope explains, "But, with Lizzie Eustace, when she could not do a thing which it was desirable that she should be known to have done, the next consideration was whether she could not so arrange as to seem to have done it" (Diamonds 703). Unfortunately, she is forced to confront the reality as perceived by other people; and, in this reality, she is a thief and a liar which, paradoxically, makes her very interesting to the general public. "The general belief which often seizes upon the world in regard to some special falsehood is very surprising...the lie had been set on foot and had thriven" (Diamonds 151). A biting, but not a

completely unexpected comment from the author, and a reflection on the world which produced Lizzie.

As she is young, rich, attractive, it is not surprising she attracts the attention of four different men. Trollope underscores Lizzie's sense of the dramatic by having her read, or pretend to read, the Romantic poets, Byron especially. She views herself as a Byronic heroine, looking for her 'Corsair'. The image of Byron has occurred in previous Trollope novels, leading Donald Stone to speculate that, "The specter of Byron haunts Trollope's characters with such frequency as to remind us of the great Romantic's enormous appeal to the youth of Trollope's generation, had to turn upon their childhood idol with savage force" (Stone 179). He goes on to explain that, in Trollope's novels, the author often uses an over-responsiveness to Byronic or Shakespearean literature to qualify a character's behavior or personality (Stone 198). Such is the case with Lizzie who, having no definitive personality of her own, takes on the coloring of the poems she pretends to read. "Trollope wished to show that...romantic feeling is debased by Lizzie into Byronic posturing" (Stone 198). Her inability to separate life from art is evidenced by her constant searching for her 'Corsair', "possessing that utter indifference to all conventions and laws which is the great prerogative of Corsairs" (Diamonds 437).

She attempts to cast the men in her life in this role without much success. James Kincaid explains, "Faced with an utterly materialistic world, she conceives 'a grand idea of surrendering herself and all her possessions to a great passion'"

(Kincaid 206). These men include her cousin Franklin Greystock, supposedly engaged to Lucy; Lord George, unconventional and most closely akin to the 'Corsair' her romantic reading has led her to idealize; Lord Fawn, dim, "stuffy and cowardly" (MacDonald 55) and constantly on the outlook for money to augment the small income he receives as an undersecretary in the India Office. In keeping with the theme of the novel that much, if not everything, is ultimately for sale if the proper price can be found, he decides to propose to her. However, he backs off when the Diamond affair becomes public knowledge.

Lord George, another less than appealing character, also has a problem with the truth. As Juliet McMaster points out, "He makes no mystique about the truth...being quite relaxed and even cynical about his word and other people's" (McMaster 89). He, indeed, is closest to resembling the Byronic Corsair for whom Lizzie believes she is searching, but he also backs away from her at the last moment. Eventually, all of them, even Frank, bound to her as he is by the bonds of cousinhood, become disillusioned with her dishonesty and inability to perceive the value of honor or of love.

The only exception is Mr. Emilius greasy, mercenary, foreign and a clergyman. By the time he makes his appearance, Lizzie is rapidly running out of friends and supporters. Mr. Emilius is Jewish and foreign, with a manner which had its roots in Mr. Slope of Barchester Chronicles. "He coveted fish, but was aware that his position did not justify him in expecting the best fish in the market" (Diamonds 637). Lizzie listens to his proposal because, as Trollope reminds his

readers, "she liked lies, thinking them to be more beautiful than truth" (Diamonds 762). The result, as Wijesinha points out, is to "indicate further both how hollow her previous romanticism had been and also how desperate she is to be married by this stage. The effect is to enhance the pathetic nature of all her efforts throughout the book" (Wijesinha 106).

Lizzie does accept his proposal and they do marry, a ceremony which is later annulled as indeed, the rumors concerning Mr. Emilius and his hidden wife are, unfortunately, true. Lizzie learns from this experience; in The Prime Minister, she meets Mr. Lopez who is enchanted by her and her money. Despite his resemblance to her longed-for Corsair, his proposal meets with blank incredulity and the biting question, "Mr. Lopez, I think you must be a fool" (Prime 141).

Michael Sadleir has written that she is a "masterpiece of subtlety" (417). The reader is left to form his own impressions as to the moral status of Lizzie; is she a bad woman, an evil, conniving person bent on the destruction of those around her or an adventuress, seeking power and advancement for herself, regardless the cost to those around her? Obvious comparisons have been made between her and Rebecca Sharp of Vanity Fair by Bradford Booth who believes that, "Lizzie is a schemer, always planning some cunning little maneuver that will extend her power. Becky is a schemer too, but she must plot in order to survive" (Booth 92). Trollope does not condemn Lizzie; in fact, she is very well off at the end of this novel and remains so in her subsequent appearances. Her inability to distinguish between what is true and what is false forces her to assume everybody

else thinks the same way. In this belief, she is not totally mistaken. She is not such an anomaly as to stand out or to be shunned by the members of the society in which she lives. As Trollope has tried to make clear, she is a product of thinking which holds money to be the ultimate symbol of success, no matter what the cost to individuals, "in part a victim herself, being in a state of desperation as to her circumstantial situation despite her advantages" (Wijesinha 106).

It is fitting that Lady Glencora, who exhibited perhaps the best understanding of Lizzie, and who, herself, has had more than a little experience in the struggle regarding husbands, lovers, and marriage, should have the final word regarding the center of the attraction in The Eustace Diamonds. She says, without a trace of either irony or sarcasm, "That woman, as you are pleased to call her, is my particular friend" (Diamonds 769). She goes on to explain, "What should we have done without her?" (Diamonds 770).

Standing in strong contrast to Lizzie, a woman in the Palliser novels, Madame Max, probably one of the most complex and difficult women in the series, serves to indicate Trollope's increasing understanding of the plight of women and his "disquiet with the ideals for Victorian womanhood" (Morse 40). John Sutherland argues that Trollope was curiously ambivalent to Madame Max when he first introduces her in Phineas Finn, claiming "there is something sinister and predatory in the way she consciously trades on her charms...in captivating the Duke her techniques are those of a seductress" (Intro. 31). Whether Trollope was ambivalent about Marie Goesler in the beginning, he nevertheless

presented a character who was unambiguously independent and strong from the moment she appeared in Phineas Finn.

He emphasizes her dress and physical appearance, in much the same way he described La Signora when she first arrived in Barchester. Trollope initially presents her in an external manner, explaining her in terms of the reactions of those around her. Lady Glencora, afraid the Duke will succumb to her charms, exclaims

> ...a thin, black-browed, yellow visaged woman with ringlets and devil's eyes and a beard on her upper lip,- a Jewess,- a creature of whose habits of life and manners of thought they all were absolutely ignorant; who drank, possibly; who might have been a forger, for what any one knew; an adventuress who had found her way into society by her art and perseverance,- and who did not even pretend to have a relation in the world! (PF 585)

Considering the rebellion present in Glencora's earlier life and her desire to flee her marriage with another man, her horrified response to the perceived threat of Madame Max indicates either an ingrained xenophobic English attitude towards foreigners or an unfortunate personality change in the direction of rigid and conventional morality.

Not much is really known about her, other than what speculation provided. That she is rich, spends six or seven thousand pounds a year, is a widow, and has a German Jew as a father is common knowledge. When questioned by Phineas, Lady Laura admits that "she has a small house in Park Lane, where she

receives people so exclusively that it has come to be thought an honour to be invited by Madame Max Goesler" (PF 407). The reader is not privy to her thoughts or feelings other than those she clearly expresses. Wall believes that "Trollope seems to spend much of the second half of the book (Phineas Finn) wondering what, exactly, Madame Max was like, and finding this out experimentally" (Wall 145). She is similar to Lizzie Eustace in her ambitions but she does not suffer the artifice and the self-deception that kept Lizzie from recognizing the truth, both about herself and about the people around her. The reader also understands Madame Max through the detailed analysis Trollope provides, not only of her actions, but also of her psychology.

> That she is ambitious Trollope makes clear in the beginning when he writes, ...but she was highly ambitious, and she played her game with great skill and great caution. Her doors were not open to all callers, - were shut even to some who find but a few doors closed against them,- were shut occasionally to those whom she most specially wished to see within them. She knew how to allure by denying, and to make the gift rich by delaying it (PF 11,209).

Her goal appears to be the Duke of Omnium. "Should the Duke give her any opportunity she would take a very short time in letting him know what was the extent of her ambition" (PF 520). Certainly Glencora's concern is understandable. She is worried about the possibility of the Duke producing an heir, thus eliminating her as the next Duchess of Ominum.

> Nardin defends both her and her creator by pointing out that at this time in his writing, Trollope was changing his concepts of ideal Victorian womanhood and Madame Max was the happy result. Trollope's conception of womanhood has expanded; now a 'masculine' woman is no longer monstrous, but tremendously attractive. The facility with which Madame Max evades convention...proves how privileged she is. Her liberty tells us of new possibilities for women, not of existing realities...By allowing Madame Max freedoms that, as a narrator of novels intended for family reading, he feels unable to claim, Trollope protests the restrictions to which society subjects both respectable women and respectable fiction (Nardin 194-5)

By the time he wrote Phineas Redux, Trollope clearly no longer has ambivalent feelings about the lady; he writes admiringly that "She was a lady who could ride to hounds,- and who, indeed could do nearly anything to which she set her mind" (PR 123).

At the initial meeting between her and Phineas Finn, their conversation revolved around politics, about which Madame Max, although not English, shows herself to be very knowledgeable. Phineas is impressed and more than a little attracted to the lady, who merely regards him as a friend, as her concentration is focused on the Duke which, despite an initial setback, she seems to achieving her goals.

> The Duke refused two dishes, one after another, and then she glided into conversation. By the time that he had his roast mutton before him she was in

> full play, and as she eat her peach, the Duke was bending over her with his most gracious smile (PF 460).

Her larger ambition was to conquer English society, a feat rarely accomplished by an outsider such as herself. "And yet she would not have cared to succeed elsewhere than among the English" (PF 508). By her careful prudence and her infinite patience, in addition to her outstanding dinner parties, she had brought herself to the edge of success. "When Lady Glencora Palliser had once dined at the cottage in Park Lane, Madame Max Goesler had told herself that henceforth she did not care what the suspicious people said. If she could only entertain the Duke of Omnium she would have done everything" (PF 508). She is successful and Duke arrives at her home, not once but several times.

She is torn between her social ambition, "But to be Duchess of Omnium! After all, success in this world is everything; - is at any rate the only thing the pleasure of which will endure" (PF 573) and her clear understanding of what, precisely, life with an aging man would consist.

> That prospect of a life on the Italian lakes with an old man tied to her side was not so charming in her eyes as it was in those of the Duke. Were she to succeed, and be blazoned forth to the world as Duchess of Omnium, what would she have gained? (PF 572)

Her knowledge, both of herself and of her adopted society, prevents her from accepting the marriage proposal from the Duke; her reward is not only a close friendship with Lady Glencora, final entre into a society which, paradoxically,

would have been closed to her should she had married its most socially prominent member, but also an opportunity to form closer ties with Phineas Finn. "She would still be free,- Marie Max Goesler,- unless in abandoning her freedom she would obtain something she might in truth prefer to it." (PF 589). Morse explains she refuses the Duke from a strong sense "of self-respect, not unworldiness. She doesn't despise the jewels, but she cares more for the high opinion of the Duke's family, of Society - and of herself" (Morse 70).

Trollope slowly develops the relationship between Madame Max and Phineas ; he had been frequently at her house on Park Lane for dinner and had confided in her regarding his various political and personal problems. In one of her very few lapses in judgment, she proposes marriage to him, partially in an attempt to help him regain his lost seat in Parliament and largely because she has fallen in love with him. Unfortunately, she makes the proposal when he arrives to inform her he is returning to Ireland, giving up politics, and marrying Mary Flood Jones. For one of the few times in her life, Madame Max is completely disconcerted. "'Cannot be!' she exclaimed. 'Then I have betrayed myself'...If you will allow me I will leave you. You will, I know, excuse me if I am abrupt to you.'" (PF 684) Although she does not appear again in Phineas Finn, this most interesting and intriguing woman is the heroine in Phineas Redux, in which she plays a major role in determining Phineas's innocence of the murder charges leveled against him.

In Phineas Redux, written several years after the publication of Phineas Finn, Madame Max has established herself within the inner circle, and Lady Glencora is one of her closest friends. She had spent the intervening three years devoting herself to the aging Duke, and finally, attending him at Matching as he lay dying. Again, her strong sense of propriety comes into play when his will is read and the family discovers he had left all his jewels as well as twenty thousand pounds to Madame Max. She refuses to accept the bequests, explaining to Glencora,

> 'As it is, I shall have pleasant memories of his Grace. According to my ability, I have endeavored to be good to him, and I have no stain on my conscience because of his friendship. If I took his money and his jewels,- or rather your money and your jewels,- do you think I could say as much?'(PR 232).

As a result of her generosity, the family jewels go to Adelaide Palliser, and she solidifies her friendship with Glencora.

Following the death of the Duke, Trollope begins a more in-depth and sympathetic analysis of Madame Max. Presented strictly in external terms when she was first introduced, she now reveals herself in intimate detail.

> Some persons, high in repute and fashion, had known her before, but everybody knew her now. Any yet what had all this done for her? Dukes and duchesses, dinner-parties and drawing-rooms, -- what did they all amount to? What was it that she wanted? (PR 266)

Part of the reason for her intensive self-examination lies in her realization that the Duke lived a useless life. He had everything - money, power, position, but in the end, as Trollope vividly describes, "...yet, perhaps, no man who had lived during the same period, or any portion of the period, had done less, or had devoted himself more entirely to the consumption of good things without the slightest idea of producing anything in return!" (PR 215). Without necessarily articulating her beliefs, Madame Max believes that she possesses more nobility of spirit than did the Duke. "She had tried to believe in the Duke of Omnium, but there she had failed" (PR 1, 267). When contrasted to Lady Glencora, who firmly believes she would be a very successful prime minister, much better than her husband, Madame Max appears to be without political ambition, although she also appears to be quite suited to it. Her statement regarding women's rights is classic Trollope -

> Knowing our inferiority, I submit without a grumble; but I am not sure that I care to go and listen to the squabbles of my masters. You may arrange it all among you, and I will accept what you do, whether it be good or bad,- as I must; but I cannot take so much interest in the proceedings as to spend my time in listening where I cannot speak, and in looking when I cannot be seen (PR 1,288).

While at the same time he forces Madame Max to utter such deprecatory words, he presents her as easily one of the most accomplished individuals, male or female, in the series. As she is extremely wealthy (even without the Duke's jewels

or his money) and very attractive, other suitors soon appear in her life. She describes one of them (Mr. Maule) to Phineas as a "battered old beau about London, selfish and civil, pleasant and penniless, and I should think utterly without a principle" (PR 271).

She finds herself increasingly in love with Phineas as he struggles to regain his Parliament seat and to rediscover the passion for politics which had lured him from Ireland several years earlier. Unfortunately, the realities of the situation make him increasingly cynical, as he sees qualified, good men go down in defeat before those who are selfish, corrupt fools. The final blow occurs when Mr. Emilius (husband to Lizzie Eustace) murders Mr. Bonteen, for very complicated reasons, and Phineas is accused of the crime. Trollope does not try to make the situation mysterious; the reader knows who the murderer is as soon as the crime has been committed. Instead, he uses more subtle means to underscore the reasons why Phineas is accused, a reflection on the political society of which he has become increasingly disenchanted. Phineas himself writes of his feelings in a letter to Lady Laura, saying,

> 'This re-election,- and I believe I shall be re-elected tomorrow,- would be altogether distasteful to me were it not that I feel that I should not allow myself to be cut to pieces by what has occurred. I shall hate to go back to the House and have somehow learned to dislike and distrust all those things that used to be so fine and lively to me. I don't think that I believe any more in the party;- or rather in the men who lead it' (PR 11, 277).

In the situations which develop following the death of Mr. Bonteen, only Madame Max understands, through her knowledge of Phineas's character, that he could not possibly be guilty of such a crime. "It would not be sufficient for her that Phineas Finn should be acquitted. She desired that the real murderer should be hung for the murder, so that all the world might be sure,- as she was sure,- that her hero had been wrongfully accused" (PR 11, 150). Further indications of her strong feelings for Phineas, which may have come as a surprise to the lady herself, as it did to Lady Glencora are found in her passionate outburst following the discovery that Phineas had been accused of the murder.

> Few of those who knew Madame Max Goesler well, as she lived in town and in country, would have believed that such could have been the effect upon her of the news which she had heard....But now she was prostrate because this man was in trouble, and because she had been told that his trouble was more than another woman could bear! (PR 70)

Determined to prove his innocence, she travels to Prague, where she discovers the place where Mr. Emilius had made a copy of the key to Mr. Bonteen's house. Armed with this evidence, she returns to London, and Phineas is acquitted of all charges. She marries Phineas at the end of Phineas Redux, and the reader is left to presume both these intelligent, strong-minded individuals have finally found the happiness for which they had been searching.

Madeline Stanhope, in the author's first period, seems, in comparison to his later characters, to be undeveloped. Her creator showed no particular sympathy

towards her, and she appears as a sexual stereotype. His changing sympathy leads to the creation of Margaret MacKenzie, a difficult character around which to construct a novel, yet Trollope succeeded. He presents a middle-aged spinster determined to manage her own life without a trace of irony or sarcasm. His most completely realized women, Lizzie Eustace and Madame Max Goseler, appearing in the author's final period, succeed in emphasizing to what extent Trollope's sympathies had changed towards women. He portrays these final two women, so unlike, with both compassion and understanding, aware of their failings, but not critical of them as he tended to be in the earlier periods.

The single life presented many problems for women; while some managed to carve out a life for themselves, others, unfortunately, behaved in a manner which their society condemned and from which it was very difficult, if not impossible, to return.

CHAPTER THREE

FALLEN WOMEN

Trollope's portraits of women included single women seduced by their lovers and abandoned to face alone the consequences of their behavior, i.e. "fallen women". If we examine his novels dealing with this subject in chronological order, the increasing sympathy of his portraits of such women is clear. His first novel, The MacDermots of Ballycloran (1847) deals with Euphemia MacDermot, the pregnant sister of the protagonist, Thad, who dies the conventional and time-honored death in childbirth. By 1869, in The Vicar of Bullhampton, Carrie Brattle, a prostitute, not only does not die, but she ultimately finds her way back into her community and into family life. Katherine O'Hara, the abandoned girl in An Eye For An Eye (1879) moves to France while her seducer, Fred, dies at the hands of her vengeful mother.

In these books we can trace very clearly the increasing understanding and empathy the author feels toward women who find themselves caught in pregnancy without the saving grace of marriage. Polhemus believes that

> Trollope seems to have felt that conventional semireligious assumptions of female virtue were strangling part of his culture in dogmatic ignorance so that it could not face its problems - such as prostitution - realistically. A couple of his novels, including An Eye for An Eye, in this period show how prevalent

seduction and the keeping of mistresses were among the better-class Victorians. England lacks flexible intelligence and charity partly because of what he devastatingly call 'the tawdry sentimentality of an age in which the mawkish of insipidity of women was the reaction from the vice of the age preceding it' (Polhemus 168).

His later novels tend to concentrate on prevailing social conditions, of which he becomes more critical as he grew older. His expanded character studies demonstrates how women, often out of phase with their environment, are forced into hopeless situations simply because of a lack of an acceptable alternative. Trollope himself believed the only suitable occupation for a woman was marriage, but even he began to realize, later in the century, that perhaps marriage was not the solution to all problems, and in some cases, to any problems.

However justified the situation may have been, very few novelists showed any sympathy for the 'fallen woman'. John Reed points out a distinction, "The prostitute and the fallen woman were not necessarily one and the same, though most popular literature tended to equate loss of virtue with moral corruption" (Reed 59). In this viewpoint they were reflecting widely held beliefs that "society expressed little open sympathy for the fallen woman" (Reed 59). While the subject of seduction certainly occurs in many Victorian novels, it usually forms the backdrop to a story. It is hard to find the English equivalent to The Scarlet Letter, which focused squarely on this subject.

Jane Austen, in the beginning of the century, does address the issues of pre-marital seduction, although in none of her books do these subjects take center stage. She also does not leave her reader in any doubt as to her stand on the subject. Only the minor characters are involved in such behavior and, without exception, they are severely punished by the author in an unmistakable statement of moral rectitude. Maria Bertram, who leaves her husband and runs away with Henry Crawford, is banished to a foreign country by her family when he abandons her. Mrs. Clay, the companion to Elizabeth Eliot, leaves with Mr. Eliot at the conclusion of Persuasion, where it is presumed she will be his mistress, if, indeed, she was not already, and will face of life of censure, implied by their leaving England where she is no longer received. No sense of tragedy exists in her downfall; she merely demonstrated the weakness of women who possess neither moral strength nor beliefs.

Adam Bede, by George Eliot, who knew something about living outside conventional forms, was published in 1859. The author presents a sympathetic portrayal of a seduction. Hetty Sorel is a weak, childish creature who is easily seduced by the flattery and the good looks of Arthur Donnithorne. Panicked by the knowledge she is pregnant and literally cast aside by her lover, she temporarily goes insane and murders her baby. She does not understand the gravity of her offenses - either the sexual one or the murder. Eliot manages to keep the reader's sympathy with Hetty, even in the light of her sins, but the focus of the novel remains on the morality of one's actions, and the necessity for assuming

responsibility for those actions. Hetty is punished, not by death, her original sentence, but rather by exile. She is clearly a victim of circumstances over which she has little or no understanding. The mitigation of her sentence from death to exile represents an easing of the traditional view, which, as explained by Colton, meant simply that sinning women must be punished by death.

Later in the century, Thomas Hardy depicts the long-range and far-reaching effects of a seduction in his novel Tess of the d'Ubervilles (1891). Modern critics, including Fraisse and Perrot, have argued these novels act as a justification for the status quo.

> What were the obstacles against which the proud righteousness of Tess of the d'Ubervilles and the noble independence of Sue Bridehead came to grief? In the view of the characters themselves, they succumbed to a fate inscribed in their ancestry, or simply to the way things are. They are too sensitive, too far in advance of their time in their desire to live in accordance with an inner law defiant of the conventions, not to fall into traps laid for those who would assert their freedom, against whom all the rest conspire (Fraisse 139).

Tess is seduced by Alex, then abandoned by him. When she marries Angel Clare, her mistake lies in confiding the truth to him. Angel's rejection is particularly painful as he himself has not led a pure, upright life prior to his marriage. One of the points being made by Hardy was the condemnation of a lingering double standard which condemns women but not men for the same behavior.

When she stabs Alex, she does so out of a profound sense of despair and a belief she was cruelly deceived. Tess is subsequently punished for her actions. Hardy may have been condemning the double standard, but Tess still is executed at the end of the story.

Trollope, who falls in the time period between Austen and Hardy, published his first novel, The Macdermots of Ballycloran in 1847 which deals with Irish life in the form of the Macdermot family who are eventually destroyed by history, their own improvidence, and political hysteria. It is a view of Irish life before the famine, a circumstance with which Trollope, thanks to his Post Office job in Ireland, was intimately familiar. The circumstances in Ireland distressed him greatly as he had become very fond of his new home. Bradford Booth points out that,

> ...he had a philosophical confidence that the world was getting to be a better place in which to live and that England was the place where further improvement might soonest be expected; but when he looked at particular institutions around him, he saw much that made him unhappy (Booth 20).

He was also very cognizant of the fact that, as Lansbury explains, he had found prosperity in a country that "gave the majority of its people no choice between adversity and emigration" (Lansbury 114).

A source of the strength of Trollope's Irish novels lies in the fact that he was writing as an outsider. As a result, he was able to see beneath the surface and more fully examine the institutions which were taken for granted in his adapted country. Also, he was writing from the perspective of a sympathetic Englishman,

not a common occurrence in that country in those days. Ironically, as Robert Tracy points out, "Ireland succeeded in making him an English writer" ("Unnatural Ruin" 381), as he was able to bring the same outsider's approach to his native country when he returned, making him aware of "both the stability and the changes with which they (English institutions), in an age of change, were threatened" (Gilmour 117). Trollope developed the facility of being an outsider in both societies, with the result that his books appear authentic to modern readers.

The book is particularly interesting in view of Trollope's subsequent career as many of the darker themes, explored in depth during the latter part of his life, are introduced in his first foray into literature; "this is a tragedy which traces the decay of the old gentlemanly code in a new and chaotic world" (Kincaid 70). The key words are "new and chaotic world" which the writer would chronicle in his latter novels, not necessarily approving of the decaying moral standards, but recognizing that change in any society is inevitable and can be neither ignored nor challenged. "From our vantage point of years, we can see how Trollope anticipated the current concepts of nineteenth-century ethics, particularly in the breakdown of the moral fiber" (Booth 120).

Polhemus believes The MacDermots of Ballycloran is significant because it "began to develop the conflict between his emotional conservatism and his intellectual, pragmatic liberalism, which animates so much of his writing" (Polhemus 11). It was Trollope's first experiment in the anti-romantic novel he was later to

write quite often. The theme which permeates many of his later novels is laid out very clearly in this first attempt: "it is impossible for a virtuous man to succeed in a society where poverty is the common lot and survival depends on deceit" (Lansbury 126). While the main focus in the novel is on Thady, the sub-plot concerning his younger sister Feemy and her British lover, highlights the traditional novel conventions from which Trollope, during the course of his writing career, was to move. While the basic plot seems to be simple, Trollope lifts the story beyond the ordinary by both the strength of his characters and the realism in his depiction of the events. Thaddeus MacDermot is struggling desperately to keep his family afloat by attempting to collect the necessary rents from his impoverished tenants. He receives no help from his father, a drunk bordering on insanity, nor from his sister, Euphemia, a young, beautiful, headstrong Irish girl seduced by the caddish, British, Protestant neighborhood police captain who, in his free time, hunts down renegade Irish patriots. Trollope describes the girl,

> Euphemia, or Feemy, was about twenty; she was a tall, dark girl, with that bold, upright, well-poised figure, which is so particularly Irish. She walked as if all the blood of the old Irish Princes was in her veins: her step, at any rate, was princely. (Macdermots 11).

Feemy anticipates the later story of both Caroline Brattle and Katherine O'Hara; all three women believe in the men they love and thus, are tempted beyond the

boundaries of what was considered proper behavior for young women at that time.

Trollope demonstrates an ongoing love affair in The Macdermots. Feemy has been involved with Captain Ussher for several months and is feeling uneasy about his intentions towards her. Her name is being bandied about by some of the men in the town, "It's little he's making of Miss Feemy's name with the young gauger and young James Fitzsimmons, when they're over there at Ballinamore together - and great nights they have of it too" (Macdermots 23). This information sends her brother Thady into a rage and helps precipitate the tragic actions which unfold later in the novel.

While Feemy is not a strong or dynamic woman, as are some of Trollope's other female characters, she, nevertheless, steps outside conventionally accepted behavior with her affair with Ussher. In the first place, he is an outsider, representative of all her brother is fighting against. Also, her sexual misconduct, motivated though it may be by love, violates the way in which she was raised both at home and in the Church, facts of which she is very well aware. She tends, however, reacts to circumstances, usually by hoping that something will happen to relieve of her of the responsibility of deciding for herself. While passionately in love with Captain Ussher,

> ...and she certainly did love him dearly; he had all the chief ornaments of her novel heroes - he was handsome, he carried arms, was a man of danger, and talked of deeds of courage; he wore a uniform; he rode more gracefully,

> talked more fluently, and seemed a more mighty personage, than any other one whom Feemy usually met (Mac 29).

she is, nevertheless, afraid of him and his violent temper. She also fears the consequences of her actions; having committed herself to him, she will be abandoned, in several senses, if he leaves her. Trollope builds sympathy for the girl by describing her circumstances - motherless at an early age, she was left to the care of her brother and her father, both of whom are, in the beginning, struggling to survive. That her father loved her is clear but, "though he certainly loved her better than anything, excepting Ballycloran and his own name, it will be owned that he was no guide for a girl like Feemy, possessed of strong natural powers, stronger passions, and but very indifferent education" (Mac 66). She is unable to gain control over any aspect of her life, guided, as she is by her passions and her desires instead of her intellect. Wijesinha, however, defends both Trollope and Feemy,

> It is true that the force of her love might have more feelingly conveyed, but this is clearly to do with Trollope's own novitiate, and must be associated with the relative remoteness of all the characters in the book; there is really no conceptual doubt as to Feemy's love, and this is the more remarkable in that Trollope presents her as aware throughout of the moral and social considerations that militate against any expression of it (Wijesinha 163).

As a result of her perceived lack of control, Feemy actively participates in her own downfall, believing all the while in the devotion of her lover. While she

realizes what she is doing is wrong, she becomes almost powerless to stop herself or the events, "she feared to neglect the warnings she had received, and she felt that things could not go on as they were; but she trembled at the idea of telling this to Ussher" (Mac 182). Polheumus believes that Trollope carefully avoids any moral judgments regarding the girl, "because he conceives of these people as prisoners of history without the freedom of moral choice" (Polhemus 14). However, his evaluation is too strong for the circumstances which have been developed in the story. Feemy is judged by her author; she dies a conventional death in childbirth. She made her moral choices, and Trollope, at this point in his career, saw no alternative for her than a death in childbirth.

Feemy's weakness and powerlessness finally precipitate the ultimate tragedy. Unable to respond quickly, or finally, at all, when she hears her brother's footsteps, she then cannot even utter words, inadequate though they may be, to convince him that what she is doing is right, if not strictly legal. She does, after all, believe Ussher is planning to marry her, and given her condition, which would make her an instant outcast should it be discovered, she has no choice but to believe. Rendered speechless by the events and the ensuing emotions, she can only stand helplessly as her brother kills her lover. Becoming speechless or lapsing into hysteria was not an uncommon way men perceived that women handled affairs over which they had lost control. Laurie Langbauer understands

> ...that to have hysterics reflects a story that emphasizes the woman's position makes a difference and undoes claims of power, because the tale it tells is about the impossibility of power. If this familar story is rejected, then we can continue to try to take even as we can't describe it - in which we don't attempt to elude or control power, but recognize our implication in it, and go on (Langbauer 187)

The hysteria she demonstrates on the witness stand has its echoes in Caroline Brattle's in a similar circumstance. Her death in childbirth is highly symbolic for several reasons. At this point in the century, the only real option for women, at least in fiction, who sinned in the fashion that Feemy had sinned was literally to die. Even Trollope, realistic novelist as he was, saw no other alternative in his first novel than the conventional punishment, death in childbirth for the erring and unfortunate girl.

This conventional attitude was to undergo a drastic change, gradually, as Trollope developed as an author. The Vicar of Bullhampton, published in 1869, "was written chiefly with the object of exciting not only pity but sympathy for a fallen woman, and of raising a feeling of forgiveness for such in the minds of other women" (Autobiography 16). The words "pity" and "sympathy" denote a change in Trollope's view of erring women. Kincaid explains the dangers of pity without sympathy, "Anyone can pity a whore, but the Vicar can see how useless pity is, how it can be transformed into punishment. Carrie doesn't need pity, but imaginative understanding and love" (Kincaid 157-8). Sympathy supposes that

his readers could understand why and how such a fate might occur to a young woman, and, with understanding comes forgiveness. This forgiveness was hard to come by in Carrie's society. Walkowitz discusses this dilemma, "For men as well as for women, the prostitute occupied a deeply symbolic and equivocal position in an imaginary urban landscape. Middle-class women organized their own identity around the figure of the "fallen woman," a fantasy they reshaped and manipulated to explore their own subjectivity" (380).

Trollope took, for him, the unprecedented step of explaining his views in the Introduction to the novel where he writes, "It may also at last be felt that this misery is worthy of alleviation, as is every misery to which humanity is subject" (Vicar vii). The key word in this discourse is 'misery' as opposed to the usual terminology of 'evil' or 'wrong'. Written in 1869, the novel is one of his later works, both chronologically and in temperament as well as tone. The essential comic undercurrents of earlier novels, found so classically in the Barchester series, had vanished, and the author, capable of creating The Way We Live Now, was in ascendancy.

The various relationships of Mary Fenwick, who engages herself to one man, Mr. Gilmore, when loving another, Captain Marrable, are the ostensible subject of this novel; "the love triangle among these three is, however, only background for the real story of the book" (Hauerwas 37). The real story is that of Caroline Brattle. According to his Autobiography, Trollope did not "venture to make Carrie Brattle the heroine of his story (18). Instead, as Nardin explains,

> He felt constrained to add a conventional love plot that he found desperately dull. By the time he wrote An Autobiography he had forgotten everything 'the romantic heroine does or says -- except that she tumbles into a ditch' (Nardin 25).

The reason for his reluctance is obvious. Although Caroline Brattle's story begins in a deliberately vague manner, the reader understands the girl's situation although he has no idea of the reason behind her actions, whether they are a "callous rebellion against family and society" (Gindin 152) or a symptom of the society in which she lives. Her home is in Bullhampton, a small English town outside London, but she has vanished from the place several months earlier. Polhemus explains that Bullhampton is representative of England, and "it is a claustrophobic little community ruled by closed-minded public prejudice" (Polhemus 167). This community is obsessed with religion, an obsession which twists minds and distorts viewpoints. In this Puddlehamite evangelical community, conformity is the keynote of life, and the members are united in their hatred and disgust for the unfortunate Carrie.

Carrie has been deceived by the man she expected to marry and in the words of the District Attorney who confronts her later in the book, she has been "indiscreet". Contemporary readers of Trollope's novels would have understood instantly what was meant by that word; Carrie no longer was a virtuous woman. Instead, in the lexicon of the time, she had fallen and was considered to be a

prostitute. She is, however, as Gerald Brace writes, "the first 'fallen woman' in Victorian fiction to be restored to ordinary social decency" (Brace 108).

Letwin goes further in her analysis of this novel. She believes that,

> Trollope firmly rejects the notion that women have a natural obligation to be more chaste than men. In the story of the miller's daughter who, when seduced by a ruffian, found that she liked it, Trollope roundly denounces the injustice of blaming the girl but not the man, and he regularly dismisses the notion that a man who trifles with a girl's affections may be excused because 'men are not like women' (Letwin 158).

The two young women in this novel are placed in juxtaposition to each other. Each comes from a respectable home, and each, as detailed by Richard Barickman,

"have been disobedient to men's ideas of what they should do and have followed their own impulses instead" (Barickman 227). He follows this idea with the illustration of the sexual nature of their offenses; Carrie's, of course, speaks for itself, but Mr. Gilmore interprets Mary's refusal of him as a sexual insult, "If you were my sister, my ears would tingle with shame when your name was mentioned in my presence" (Vicar).

Trollope was attempting to deal with more than characters, their intertwining relationships, and their moral dilemmas. Instead, he had broadened the scope of work to indict "the kind of inhumanity man gets away with everyday" (Gindin 153). Critics have varied in their responses to this novel; some believe the

pathos of Carrie's situation blurs an otherwise strong novel. In the words of Edwards, "it places too much emphasis on the pathetic accessories of her situation, not enough on its intrinsic causes or indeed, on her present private situation - as opposed to public response to it" (Edwards 100). Others praise the novel; according to Kincaid, "The Vicar of Bullhampton is far and away Trollope's most democratic statement" (Kincaid 159). Booth defends the book by saying "It is easy to overdo the pathos inherent in the story of the penitent Magdalene, but Trollope, if he never reaches the sublime, stays well this side the ridiculous. His social philosophy is strictly Victorian, but it does not spill over into the bathetic" (Booth 214). The book obviously has some weaknesses; a stronger portrayal of Carrie as a private individual rather than as a symbol around which are collected a variety of opinions and responses would make her story less symbolic. By using Carrie as a symbol, Trollope is able to mount an attack on her society. As apRoberts points out, "Again and again, he (Frank Fenwick) and then Trollope, insist on how disproportionate is society's punishment, for 'so small a crime'. Carrie has been seduced, and now her society makes it almost impossible for her to do anything but compound the crime and turn to prostitution" (apRoberts 120).

She actually does not make an appearance until Chapter XXV, although she is mentioned by the Vicar several times. By the time she does appear, the reader is well acquainted with her unfortunate position, although the actual circumstances regarding her downfall remain unclear. The Vicar himself and her

brother, Sam, are her only champions. Sam argues with his father over Carrie's banishment from home, which he explains to the Vicar,

> I said as how she ought to be let come home again, and that if I was to stay there at the mill, I'd fetch her. Then he struck at me with one of the mill-bolts...I wouldn't stay till I did find her, if the old man would take her back again. She's bad enough, no doubt, but there's other worse nor her (Vicar 254).

Even the Vicar's wife, supposedly versed as she is in Christian charity, including the concept of forgiveness, speaks to her husband in amazement when he attempts to help the erring girl, "It is permitted...not to forgive that sin" (Vicar chapter 34,276).

The major unifying theme in the novel is that of the need for forgiveness. Underscoring this idea is the recurring image of Mary Magdalene, the sinner forgiven by Christ for her adultery. This imagery would be familiar to Victorian society, accustomed as they were to Magdalene homes, "refuges for prostitutes, the Magdalene's Friend, an evangelical reformer periodical, and finally, an 1840 study of Edinburgh prostitution entitled Magdalenism" (Reed 59). The Vicar himself, when defending Carry against the self-righteous evangelical minister, Mr. Puddleham, uses the idea of Christian forgiveness as practiced by Christ. " 'It is possible, of course. Though as for that, - when a young woman has once gone astray -" Mr. Fenwick responds, "As did Mary Magdalene, for instance!" The minister protests, "Mr. Fenwick, it was a very bad case'" (Vicar 113-114).

Most of the other characters have much for which to be forgiven, from the Marquis, who is incensed by the Vicar's attempt to help Carrie, to her elder brother and his wife who are horrified by the suggestion they might offer the girl a refuge. "I never didn't speak a word to such a one in my life, and I certainly won't begin under my own roof" (Vicar 290). In contrast to the cruelty and inhumanity demonstrated by her neighbors and some members of her family, Trollope persuades the reader that the actual sin committed by Carrie is less of an evil and more of a weakness. With this weakness, the author is sympathetic and understanding to a degree not common in the literature of this period.

Unfortunately, the character of Carrie is presented in an almost completely external manner. The reader is not privy to her thoughts or feelings other than how they are outwardly demonstrated. As a result, the reader tends to view her as an object lesson instead of a living human being. Wall points to the problem with this approach, "Trollope treats his character so externally that deprives himself of his best means of achieving his intention of what the Autobiography calls exciting 'not only pity but sympathy for a fallen woman'" (Wall 368).

The scene in which Carrie throws herself at her father's feet and embraces his knees while imploring his forgiveness is exactly that - a carefully constructed scene which does not engage the reader's total sympathy. We are reminded of a similar episode in Orly Farm when Lady Mason performs the same action with Sir Peregrine when confessing she was, indeed, guilty of the charges leveled at her. The difference between the two scenes lies in the fact the reader has been

inside Mrs. Mason's mind since the beginning and believes her actions are the natural reaction to both the guilt she is experiencing as a result of her deception and love she has for Sir Peregrine. There is nothing artificial about the episode; the pain Mrs. Mason is experiencing is felt and understood by the reader. Unfortunately, the same is not as true for Carrie and, even less, for her father. They seem, at this point, to be more stock figures in a melodrama than living, suffering human beings; although Mr. Brattle's "portrait has its integrity as Trollope finds his emotions easier to deal with than Carrie's" (Wall 368). Carrie's actions, although sincerely meant, do not have the same impact upon the reader as did Mrs. Mason's. Nor, indeed, does the ending. Carrie returns home to her family, forgiven by them, if not by society. She has nothing to anticipate; living is behind her. What lies ahead is a quiet repentance and a life of good deeds. Victorian readers may have considered she was fortunate; modern readers would quail at the severity of her punishment. Yet Trollope was breaking new ground in this novel; redemption of a fallen woman indicated a moral generosity and a largesse of spirit at odds with the conventional view of Victorian morality.

The third novel dealing with the seduction theme was actually written in 1870 but was not published until 1879. The book, An Eye for An Eye, is the most explicit account of a young girl's seduction he had written, and John Sutherland, who edited the Oxford edition of the novel believes the reason for the delay had more to do with the subject matter than the arguments Trollope was having with

the editors who usually published his works in their various magazines. He writes,

> I believe the main reason Trollope held An Eye For An Eye back all those years was its frankly sexual plot, and the blush it might bring to the young maiden's cheek. In October 1869, reviewing Dion Boucicault's play, Formosa, Trollope made some interesting comments on the censoriousness of his age where depiction of sex in art were concerned. In a very long letter to the Times, he remarked 'Much the same thing may be said of all other reading--of the reading of poetry, plays, novels, and what not. Thirty years ago expurgated Shakespeares were used, books of poetry, were selected by mammas, and the novels in most families of middle life were allowed with a sparing hand, and after strict censorship. All this has now been changed. We think all this is for the better; but whether it be for the better or worse, so it is, and the freedom of which are speaking is on the increase. In a few years, all our bookshelves will be as open to our daughters as to our sons.' (Sutherland xx).

Sutherland suspects that, having made such a bold statement several months before actually writing a 'sexually explicit' novel, when it came time to publish it, Trollope may have had second thoughts. "Why not keep it those 'few years' which still remained until there were no inhibitions? By 1879, the ice had been well and truly broken. Now there was no reason not to market it" (Sutherland xx). The chronology regarding this novel is interesting; although it was

published in 879, Trollope actually wrote it approximately one year after he finished The Vicar of Bullhampton. Yet his depiction of Katherine O'Hara differs greatly from that of Carrie. The rightness or wrongness of Katherine's actions does not figure into her story; as a result, An Eye For An Eye concentrates on more on character and the actions resulting from an individual's moral center and less on the externals of plot. Katherine is the center of her story in a way Trollope could not do for either Feemy or Caroline Brattle.

The plot of An Eye For An Eye is simple, and timeless. Booth claims that, "a simple but well contrived plot, however, develops characteristically into melodrama so absurd as to negate the reality of a touching and ingratiating heroine" (Booth 216). A young Irish girl, Katherine O'Hara, falls in love with a young English officer who promises her marriage. Unfortunately for Kate, her lover is not merely an English officer, he is also heir to an earldom. While in the beginning of the story, Fred appears to reject the constraints placed upon him by such an inheritance, he, nevertheless, does not lose sight of the fact he will inherit his uncle's title and estate. The idea becomes more attractive to him as he grows older and, despite his involvement with Kate, he has no serious ideas of abandoning his future. Kate and her mother are not in the same social class as Fred and even in his most love-abandoned moments, he is fully aware of this distinction.

After conducting herself in a manner not considered to be suitable for young Victorian girls, Kate is disillusioned to discover the young man is no longer

interested in marriage. "Kate has cheapened herself by giving Fred what he implored her to give him. It is the perennial unfairness of the sexual game" (Sutherland ix). The similarity between Kate, Carrie, and Feemy are obvious; young, trusting, and in love, they recklessly believe the words of their lovers. Trollope gives his readers a picture of the seducers of Feemy and Kate. In both cases, the girls are Irish and their lovers are English, English soldiers who are temporarily on foreign soil. There is more than a hint that the behavior exhibited by these men is not what would have been demonstrated had they been on their own home ground. As Sutherland explains, "Bastardy was all too common in rural Ireland - rural anywhere. Occupying soldiers are rarely great respectors of local women's virtue" (Sutherland xvi). The idea of foreign invasion, with the resulting destruction of the land and the people is the subtheme of several of Trollope's Irish novels.

In keeping with the increasing sympathy Trollope demonstrates toward his wayward women, the focus of blame lies not on Kate, but rather on Fred. Kate's mother, Mrs. O'Hara, should, however, have been more protective of her daughter. In fact, her actions, at times, are puzzling. It is clear that, while she lives only for her daughter, she has grave doubts about Fred,

> And yet she did fear; and though her face was never clouded when her girl spoke of the newcomer, though she always mentioned Lieutenant Neville's name as though she herself liked the man, though she even was gracious to him when he showed himself near the cottage - still there was a deep dread

> upon her when her eyes rested upon him, when her thoughts flew to him. Men are wolves to women and utterly merciless when feeding high their lust (Eye 47).

but she accepts him because of her daughter's love for the young man. However, she is constantly on guard for anything which may harm Kate, she offers Fred a distinct warning, "'By the living God,' she said, 'if you injure my child I will have the very blood from your heart'" (Eye 65).

The author's portrait of Fred, paradoxically, is hardly that of a monster consumed with blind lust who destroys everything in his path while achieving his ends. Instead, Trollope presents Fred, who is heir to a large estate in England and will be an Earl when his uncle dies, as " almost as innocent in the matter as was the girl" (Eye 48). The author further explains that, "It is true, indeed, that men are merciless as wolves to women - that they become so, taught by circumstances and trained by years; but the young man who begins by meaning to be a wolf must be bad indeed. Fred Neville had no such meaning" (Eye 48). Good-hearted, well-meaning, but weak and easily swayed by circumstances and by the people around him, Fred quickly finds himself, "through weakness in a dilemma which gradually but remorselessly tightens its grip" (Wall 16). Kincaid points out that the situation is not one of high tragedy, "which isolates and magnifies the hero, but this low-mimetic 'ordinary' tragedy trivializes him and makes him common" (Kincaid 248). It is simply, but ruinously, to Kate, and ultimately, to Fred, a case of a young man who created romantic fantasies and the young woman,

who, unfortunately, believed them. Robert Tracy writes that the theme of An Eye For An Eye is similar to The Eustace Diamonds, which is a comic treatment of romanticism, a romantic hero, and "the romantic wish to live a life that is out of the ordinary" (Tracy 130). However, in the Irish novel, these romantic fantasies lead to disaster and tragedy.

To give Fred credit, he does, in his way, love Kate. And he is, despite his faults, a gentleman, unlike Captain Ussher in The Macdermots of Ballycloran. This term is not to be lightly dismissed in the world of Trollope. Trollope tests his gentlemen in his novels by placing them in situations which, as James Kincaid explains in his article, "Anthony Trollope and the Unmannerly Novel", "severely isolate him from the social group and culture he thought was supporting him. Through this isolation and the problems it causes, raise questions about the values, the behavior, the manners not only of the individual but also of the culture as a whole" (Kincaid 96). The questions which are raised in this novel are not as concerned with the moral values which have developed in Ireland, but rather those which predominate in England. The values of the Irish culture are accepted by the English as being "romantic, semi-barbarous, and perhaps more than semi-lawless" (Tracy 378).

Fred promises his uncle and his aunt he will engage in no marriage which they may consider unsuitable. This promise places him in an untenable situation as he has given his word to Kate that they will be married.

> But he wished to have Kate, as a thing apart. If he could have given six months of each year to his Kate, living that yacht-life of which he had spoken, visiting those strange sunny places which his imagination had pictured to him, unshackled by conventionalities, beyond the sound of church bells, unimpeded by any considerations of family -and then have migrated for the other six months to his earldom...leaving Kate behind him, that would have been perfect (Eye 95).

He begins to believe he is sacrificing a great deal for her, and she is benefiting from his magnanimity. The differences in class are beginning to weigh heavily on his inexperienced shoulders. The conversation he has with the old Earl is revealing,

> He was not strong to defend his Kate. Such defense would have been in opposition to his own ideas, in antagonism with the scheme which he had made for himself. He understood, almost as well as did his uncle, that Kate O'Hara ought not to be made Countess of Scroope. He too thought that were she to be presented to the world as the Countess of Scroope, she would disgrace the title (Eye 99).

The novel, at this point, starts to dissolve into a class struggle, personified in the person of Fred Neville, who is not one of the strongest character created by Trollope. In fact, Booth describes him as "the weak, vacillating, rationalizing young villain" (Booth 188). He is one upon whom such responsibilities rest uneasily and by Kate's mother, who refuses to admit her daughter is not worthy of

marrying an Earl. It was an attempt by the author to "concentrate his attention on the two crucial psychological states - that of the mother... and of the hero" (Wall 16). As with his other novels dealing with either adultery or extramarital sex, the focus is shifted deliberately away from the woman. But, interestingly enough, in this later novel, there are no other plots or subplots to lessen the impact of Kate's story. She definitely is, as Booth writes, "a touching and ingratiating heroine" (Booth 216) who becomes the catalyst for the events which ultimately drive her mother insane and cause the death of her lover. She even manages to evoke sympathy, though sight unseen, in Fred's aunt who places the blame for the situation squarely on the shoulders of her feckless nephew,

> A young girl, innocent herself up to that moment, had been enticed to her ruin by words of love which had been hallowed in her ears by vows of marriage. The cruelty to her would be damnable, devilish -surely worthy of hell if any sin of man can be so called (Eye 164).

A bleak sense of inevitability begins to permeates An Eye for An Eye, which becomes almost operatic in its intensity, especially when the reader is informed, very indirectly, that Kate is pregnant. "What can I say to her now? She regards him as her husband before God" (Eye 107). It is a measure of the self-absorption of the young man that he thinks only of himself, of his prospects being destroyed by this unsuitable action. Fred believes that the conventions which rule his life in England somehow do not apply in Ireland, and he thought "that this priest, if only the matter could be properly introduced, might be persuaded to do for him

something romantic, something marvelous, perhaps something almost lawless" (Eye 14:187)

> Certain ideas occurred to him which his friends in England would have called wild, democratic, revolutionary, and damnable, but which, owing perhaps to the Irish air and the Irish whiskey and the spirit of adventure fostered by the vicinity of rocks and ocean, appeared to him at the moment to be not only charming but reasonable also (Eye 62).

Immobilized by his situation and paralyzed by indecision, Fred still clings to the ridiculous hope that somehow, Kate will agree not to marry him but will continue her role as his mistress. At one point he begins to fantasize,

> An idea floated across his mind that very many men who stand in their natural manhood high in the world's esteem, have in their early youth formed ties such as that which now bound him to Kate O'Hara - that they had been silly as he had been and then escaped from the effects of their folly without grievous damage (Eye 146).

This passage could be read as a foreshadowing of the way events probably would have unfolded if Mrs. O'Hara had not so violently intervened.

The ending of the novel is sheer melodrama. Increasingly resentful of the position in which he finds himself, Fred is amenable to neither reason nor to love. He conveniently forgets that the "glories of his station" once oppressed him by their darkness and weight of custom that he seriously considered renouncing them. Maddened by his steadfast refusal to marry her daughter

properly and make her Countess of Scroope, she loses control of herself and pushes the young man over the cliffs to his death. And promptly goes insane. Kate loses her child, but in keeping with the deep love she had for Fred, although he was not the man she had believed him to be, she not only does not hate him, she also refuses to see her mother, believing that the woman who loved her better than life itself, had destroyed her life and her happiness.

> But the poor girl, though she was meek, silent, and almost apathetic in her tranquillity, could not even bear the mention of her mother's name. Her mother had destroyed the father of the child that was to be born to her, her lover, her hero, her god; she learned to execrate the mother who had sacrificed everything - her very reason - in avenging the wrongs of her child (Eye 199).

The reader's attention is focused, not on Kate, but on the battle between Fred and Mrs. O'Hara. The fact that Trollope is presenting an antiromantic novel with a heroine who, in classic Victorian parlance, is a 'fallen woman', without apology and without rationalizations or excuses, is easily overlooked by readers sympathetic to Kate's sufferings and believing the duplicity of Fred.

The Victorian middle-class society to which Trollope aimed his novels showed little overt tolerance for irregular sexual situations. Condemnation was quick and harsh for women in situations such as Feemy, Caroline, and Katherine. By twentieth century standards, the fate meted out to Caroline Brattle seems harsh beyond acceptance; yet, for the time, Trollope demonstrates a

developing tolerance, quite at odds with the traditional punishment handed out to women in Carrie's situation. She returns home, and while she is not "rehabilitated" she still finds acceptance among her family members, and quite possibly, among some her less judgmental neighbors.

Kate loses her child and goes abroad to live with her father - a form of exile welcomed by her as the memories of her home were too painful for her to stay. She and her father live off the generosity of Fred's brother. Trollope's depiction of her contains no censure to the end, she is presented as an innocent woman deceived by the true love she felt for a man obviously unworthy of her. The author believes that, through the loss of both her lover and her child, she has been punished enough. The censure falls completely upon the weak and foolish young man who believed he could deceive and still escape the consequences of his folly and deception.

The author, confronting his own changing viewpoint as well as his increasing understanding and sympathy regarding the lives of women, recognizes the struggles his female characters to reconcile themselves with their society and to come to terms with their lives. This development is also noticeable in his series of novels which revolve around women who are happily married but who find themselves unwittingly committing adultery and/or bigamy due to a variety of complicated reasons.

CHAPTER FOUR

UNWITTING ADULTERY

It is hard, in English literature, to find novels equivalent to Anna Karenina or Madame Bovary, novels which focused squarely on this subject of adultery. One theory which attempts to explain this apparent anomaly is based upon the workings of the English marriage system. Unlike their counterparts on the Continent, middle and upper class English women had more freedom to choose their future mates; arranged marriages, while they did exist, were not the standard means of contracting alliances. Judith Armstrong, in her book, The Novel of Adultery explains "this (apparent lack of adultery) would appear to be largely because the young were allowed a much greater degree of freedom in their choice of marriage partners" (Armstrong 30). This does not mean, however, that adultery was lacking in the English life; it merely means that, as a subject of discussion, most English novelists preferred to avoid it. Kitson Clark, in The Making of Victorian England, writes,

> The uneasy Victorian snobbery was probably the result of the impact of new classes who wanted to secure their position in a traditional hierarchy, Victorian hypocrisy the result of the attempt to lay claim to new standards of conduct which proved to be too hard to maintain consistently, Victorian prudery the result of the struggle for order and decency on the part of people just

> emerging from the animalism and brutality of primitive society. These are the probable signs of the pressures and strains in a community undergoing process of growth and change (Clark).

Armstrong goes on to say, "Even before the mantle of Victorian prudery descended over the public literature of the nineteenth century, adultery was not an important theme; and afterwards it became simply unmentionable" (Armstrong 30).

'Unmentionable' is a rather strong adjective; the subject was neither completely avoided nor ignored. Several authors used the issue in their novels. One of the problems in dealing with this issue is explained by A. O. J. Cockshut,

> The confusion between decorum and morals on the 'respectable' side of the argument seemed at times so strong that some people appeared to be saying: 'The moral law is that you may do anything provided you do not employ to describe it words which every boy of twelve knows but which should not appear in print. The confusion on the 'progressive' side (which was on the whole more inexcusable since it contained more people who claimed to be intelligent students of literature) was so extreme that the difference between marriage and adultery was being concealed under a smoke screen of words...(Cockshut 31).

William Thackeray, in 1847, wrote Vanity Fair, which he subtitled "A Novel Without a Hero". The story presents a detailed character study of one of the most interesting women in English literature, Rebecca Sharp. A social climbing,

manipulative, "resourceful, attractive and amoral character", Becky survives almost indescribable difficulties and succeeds in being recognized as a lady in a middle-class world where she is and remains, despite her success, a perennial outsider.

Suspected adultery was merely one of Becky Sharp's activities in her constant search for fame and position. While her creator never states directly the precise relationship between Becky and Lord Steyne, the innuendo seems to be clear from their first meeting. "He taxed Becky upon the point on the very first occasion when he met her alone, and he complimented her, good-humouredly, on her cleverness in getting more than the money she required" (Thackeray 664). The climactic scene, when Rawdon Crawley unexpectedly returns home from prison to discover Becky and Lord Steyne together, is presented with artful ambiguity by Thackeray.

> Steyne was hanging over the sofa on which Becky sat. The wretched woman was in a brilliant full toilette, her arms and all her fingers sparkling with bracelets and rings; and the brilliants on her breast which Steyne had given her. He had her hand in his, and was bowing over it to kiss it when Becky started up with a faint scream as she caught sight of Rawdon's white face. There was that in Rawdon's face which caused Becky to fling herself before him. 'I am innocent, Rawdon,' she said; 'before God, I am innocent. She clung hold of his coat; her own were covered with serpents and rings and baubles (Thackeray 675).

Thackeray leaves the reader to make his own determination regarding Becky's character and moral scruples in the closing words of the chapter:

> What had happened? Was she guilty or not? She said not; but who could tell what was truth which came from those lips; or it that corrupt heart was in this case pure? All her lies and her schemes, all her selfishness and her wiles, all her wit and genius had come to this bankruptcy (Thackeray 677).

Robert Colby argues that if she, indeed, were guilty, "we have on our hands an extraordinary Victorian novel. English fiction of this period was ruled by canons of poetic justice, quite Mosaic in their severity. There is no adulteress I can think of who escapes capital punishment in the pages of mid-Victorian fiction..." (Vanity xxxii). xxii).

However, the significance of Thackeray's writings lies not so much in his depiction of Becky Sharp but rather in the ambiguous way with which he deals with "unmentionable" subject of adultery. She certainly appears guilty, but she does not face the punishment traditionally meted out to fallen women. By using the idea of a transparent reality which is actually shaded by human perceptions, Thackery is opening the door to fiction which presents a less judgmental view of the traditional sin and those who are wittingly or unwittingly caught in its trap.

In Jude the Obscure, Hardy portrays Sue Bridehead as neurotic and unstable; unable to abide her husband, she leaves with Jude, but she can never shake the sense of sin from her soul nor is she ever able to live comfortably in a relationship upon which society so overtly frowns. As Fraisse points out, "The

waste implicit in the failure of Tess and the renunciations of Sue (whom society forces to return to the falseness she had hoped to flee) leaves a bitter taste: what promise was sacrificed to a moribund social order!" (Fraisse 140).

Trollope's changing attitude towards women included a group of women who are happily married but find themselves unwittingly committing adultery and/or bigamy due, in part, to the complex technical laws governing divorce, separation and abandonment. Three novels, Castle Richmond, The Belton Estate, and Dr. Wortle's School which are representative of the early, middle and latter years of the author, reveal his increasingly sympathetic attitude toward women suspected of committing adultery. The Belton Estate, written in 1866, approaches the subject of adultery more directly than does Castle Richmond, published in 1860. In all three cases, a first marriage, ambiguous, mysterious, lies at the center of the women's lives. These relationships have poisoned the lives of involved women, creating serious problems not only for themselves but for those people around them. However, the approach used by Trollope in each novel is significantly different, representing the evolution of the author as he matured and delved more deeply into the psychology of his characters. By the time he wrote The Belton Estate, his views were more clearly liberal than those expressed in his earlier novels.

They reveal a wider range of attitudes towards this subject, and one which changes as he grew older. Written in 1860, The Castle Richmond is one of his earliest attempts at dealing with a complicated marriage situation. The reactions

of modern critics have been mixed. Mary Hamer, writing in the Introduction to Castle Richmond, makes the arguable and probably unnecessary point that,

> These issues are not confronted but they haunt the conventional tale of mystery and romance that is at first sight what Castle Richmond offers. They haunt it in disguise, transposed into questions that it is permissible to ask: most obviously, for instance, Trollope never questions England's right to be governing Ireland. Instead he composes a somewhat sensationalized tale about an English family who nearly lose their Irish estate. The public political question is disguised as a private, properly averted threat (Hamer xiii)

James Kincaid agrees with Hamer, saying that "the book seemed interested in testing the seriousness of opposition that can be erected and still overcome in comedy; it searches for the deepest wounds that may still be healed, the grimmest effects that can be counterbalanced or smoothed over" (Kincaid 74). He goes on to explain that the scenes of death and suffering among the Irish people fit oddly in a conventional English novel of manners. As a result, "Trollope is forced to heighten the major plot to the point of ludicrous sensationalism in order to avoid making it appear trivial" (Kincaid 78). Wall elucidates these points when he writes,

> Castle Richmond, for instance, contains Trollope's reflections on the Irish famine which he had seen at first hand. Such widespread and undeserved distress was likely to prompt unease about God's purposes and justice in a man of Trollope's generation, and the question is openly rehearsed by him in

> Chapter 7. Nevertheless, Castle Richmond is not a dramatized debate about how and why God works through history or a fictionalized defense of the Government's relief measures (Wall 13).

In defense of the novelist and in opposition to the views of Hamer, one must remember that Trollope always puts the particular life of the individual before public concerns. The backdrop of the story may deal with the famine in Ireland, and the story has been classified by Nardin as a "retrospective sociological novel, not really comparable to the other novels of this period, all of which deal with middle-class characters in contemporary England" (Nardin 218), but the focus of the novel lies in its exploration of difficult and complex relationships in which people find themselves enmeshed. Caserio goes so far as to argue that Trollope can be said to "oppose plot" (Caserio 289), an idea which J. Hillis Miller explains in more detail:

> Each individual, for Trollope, is like a word in a text, the locus of a meaning which arises from its differential interplay with the other words in that text. Or, it would be more accurate to say, each man or woman, in his or her bodily existence and in his or her consciousness, the presence of the self to itself, is like the momentary incarnation of the meaning of this or that word in one or another example of it (Miller Victorian Subjects 258).

The major conflict in this novel appears not to be the adultery committed by the unwitting and innocent Lady Fitzgerald, but rather, the rather odd quadrangle formed by Clara Desmond, her mother, her cousin Owen with whom both women

are in love, and Clara's younger brother, Patrick, Earl of Desmond who, less obviously, is also in love with Owen. Trollope introduced Lady Fitzgerald's adultery to form a counterpoint to the other relationships in the novel, realizing that he had developed a continuum of unfortunate and injurious relationships both in the lives and love affairs of the Desmonds whose poverty did not prevent them from forming very strong attachments, usually to unsuitable individuals and, less obviously, in the early marriage of Lady Fitzgerald. These Desmond relationships included a covert homosexual affair as well as the struggle of an older woman for a younger man, who happens to be both her daughter's cousin and professed lover._ There is also mention of orgies, left undescribed for the benefit of the more sensitive reader. Polhemus writes, "Lonely people whose need for affection had been denied will react in twisted and desperate ways. Time ineluctably brings home the consequences of past actions, and perverted morality produces perverted behavior" (Polhemus 65). The phrase "perverted morality" in the sense that it applies to other characters in the novel, does not apply at all to Lady Fitzgerald.

However, it can be argued that she indeed was guilty of a sin - adultery and bigamy, no matter how innocent were her intentions or the circumstances in which she found herself. This knowledge of her sin, and more importantly, the knowledge of how her narrow society would react to that sin, forms the basis of her blackmail by her former husband. apRoberts explains one of the guiding principles behind Trollope's art,

> The ethical ends of Trollope's art appear to be best served by his situation-structure. His concern is always moral, and he is always recommending, by means of his cases, a more flexible morality. His stance is that of what we now call Situation Ethics (apRoberts 52).

However, to ignore the story of Lady Fitzgerald for the more sensational elements, which the modern reader is unlikely to do, does Trollope a disservice and underestimates the subtlety with which he is able to deal with a situation which, in its own way, was just as sensational and more important to the social fabric of the time than were the clandestine love affairs of the other characters.

The secrecy in the novel which surrounds the circumstances of Lady Fitzgerald's previous relationship was a clear reflection of the time during which the novel was written. The laws governing divorce at the time this novel was written had not yet begun their trend toward liberalization. Lady Fitzgerald finds herself in a particularly vulnerable position as she was deserted by a man she believed subsequently died. She now has reason to suspect he is very much alive. Women did not usually discuss private matters outside their immediate family, especially when they were as painful as was Lady Fitzgerald's, a factor which leaves her open to blackmail and possible scandal.

While this early book is similar in theme to his other novels discussed in this chapter, a woman involved in an unfortunate first marriage, the details of Lady Fitzgerald's indiscreet marriage are deliberately kept vague, in keeping with her desire, over the years, to forget that such an event ever occurred. The author

himself seems a bit tentative in this first attempt at dealing with technical adultery. Certainly Lady Fitzgerald is a very retiring subject, unlike Mrs. Askerton who plays a prominent role in The Belton Estate. Trollope does not spend much time discussing the first marriage; it occurred with the consent of the girl's parents, and the man to whom she was married, Mr. Talbot, seemed respectable with a small income. When he deserts his wife, leaving outstanding debts and the discovery that Talbot was not his real name, the reader can easily imagine the abandoned wife's feelings of shame, remorse, and horror at finding herself in circumstances so far removed from the way in which she had been raised.

The villain in the story, Matthew Mollett, Lady Fitzgerald's first husband, and his equally distasteful son, Abraham Mollet, have been blackmailing the Fitzgeralds for the past two years.

> Old Mollet in discussing the matter with this victim had done so by hints and innuendoes, through long windings, by signs and the dropping of a few dark words. He had never mentioned the name of Lady Fitzgerald; had never absolutely stated that he did possess or ever had possessed a wife. It had been sufficient for him to imbue Sir Thomas with the knowledge that his son Herbert as in great danger as to his heritage (Castle 173)

The effect upon Sir Thomas of this news could hardly have been more severe;

> Thomas Fitzgerald...a silent, melancholy man, confining himself for the last year or two almost entirely to his own study; never going to the houses of his

> friends, and rarely welcoming them to his; rarely as it was, and never as it would have been (Castle 46).

The ostensible problem under discussion is one of property and heritage which, of course, cannot be separated from the idea of marriage. A disastrous marriage often had far-reaching consequences, not only for the people immediately involved but also for their descendants and heirs. No doubt exists that Lady Fitzgerald was indeed married before, but the question arising now revolves around the legality of her second marriage. If her first husband is alive, then she is committing adultery and bigamy and, Owen, not his cousin Herbert, would be in line for the entailed estate following Sir Thomas's death. Sir Thomas and Lady Fitzgerald, believing her first husband was dead, married in the church after waiting two years. Thus she finds herself in the position of having committed adultery as well as bigamy, and facing the prospect that her son will lose his inheritance. Trollope reveals her as a caring wife who is deeply distressed by her husband's unhappiness. "For Lady Fitzgerald, though she was gentle and silent, was not a sorrowful woman - otherwise than she was made so by seeing her husband's sorrow" (Castle 51). Her unfortunate previous marriage is never far from her mind, and the implication is strong that she understands the source of his unhappiness.

> She could not bring herself to believe that all this would end in nothing; that Mr. Pendergast would put everything right, and that after his departure they would go on as happily as ever. Lady Fitzgerald had always at her heart the

> memory of her early marriage troubles, and she feared greatly, though she feared she knew not what (Castle 214).

Caught up as the reader is in the complexities of the other stories, the deus ex machina device Trollope uses to resolve the Fitzgerald situation comes as a surprise, and as a bit of a disappointment. Lady Fitzgerald's first marriage is discovered to be illegal, as Mallet already had a wife and daughter at the time he married her.

> You knew, I say, that you were committing bigamy; that the child whom you were professing to marry would not become your wife through that ceremony. I say you knew all this at the time (Castle 451).

Thus, no adultery was committed, but this discovery comes too late to save Lord Fitzgerald who, burdened for many years by the strain of being blackmailed, expired halfway through the novel.

> It is an axiom of old that the stage curtain should be drawn before the inexorable one enters in upon his final work. Doctor Finucane did come, but his coming was all in vain. Sir Thomas had known it was in vain, and so also had his patient wife. There was that mind diseased, towards the cure of which no Doctor Finucane could make any possible approach. The only crying sin which we can lay to the charge of the dying man is that of which we have spoken; he had endeavoured by pensioning falsehood and fraud to preserve for his wife her name, and for his son that son's inheritance (Castle 343).

Trollope presents Lady Fitzgerald sympathetically and through her reticence, captures the horror of her situation more clearly than if she had been more articulate. Her position is a nightmare, and her creator succeeds, by deliberately not clarifying her every thought and feeling for his audience, in making the modern critic understand why the average middle or upper class woman would recoil from making public her situation, even when facing blackmail. Lady Fitzgerald sees no way out of the horror in which she innocently became entangled through her inexperience and youth.

> Lady Fitzgerald had become a stricken woman from the first moment that she had heard that man had returned to her life, who in her early girlhood had come to her as a suitor. Nay, this had been so from the first moment that she had expected his return. And these misfortunes had come upon her so quickly that, though they had not shattered her in body and mind as they had shattered her husband, nevertheless they had told terribly on her heart. The coming of those men, the agony of Sir Thomas, the telling of the story as it had been told to her by Mr. Prendergast, the resolve to abandon everything -- even a name by which she might be called, as far as she herself was concerned, the death of her husband, and then the departure of her ruined son, had, one might say, been enough to destroy the spirit of any woman" (Castle 47).

Mr. Pendergast does not publicly prosecute Mr. Mollett and his son for their crimes, largely out of concern for Lady Fitzgerald's feelings and reputation.

> Mr. Pendergast's object in sparing them was of course that of saving Lady Fitzgerald from the terrible pain of having her name brought forward at any trial. She never spoke of this, even to Herbert, allowing those in whom she trusted to manage those things for her without an expression of anxiety of her own part; but she was not the less thankful when she found that no public notice was to be taken of the matter (Castle 475).

Thus she is spared the public humiliation which proves to be the lot of both Mrs. Askerton and Mrs. Peacocke, whose stories are brought out into the open and worse, publicly discussed.

The Belton Estate approaches the subject of adultery more directly. The novel is readily understandable to twentieth century readers who can easily identify with both Clara, as she wrestles with her lack of freedom, and with Mrs. Askerton who, because of a youthful mistake, faces a condemning and unforgiving society. Nardin believes that Trollope's purposes in this novel were multiple: "In telling Mrs. Askerton's story, he attacks the double standard of sexual morality directly; in telling Clara's, he attacks the views of male and female nature on which that standard is ultimately based" (Nardin 162). Kappeli explains a larger view when she writes, "The difference in the interpretation of equality led to two distinct views of women, as 'female citizens' and as 'wives and mothers'...whereas the dualist conception had greater potential as cultural critique but masked conflicts of interest between men and women in a patriarchal society" (484).

Trollope was uncertain about the quality of The Belton Estate. In his Autobiography, he admitted agreeing with his contemporaries that, "it had no particular merits and will add nothing to my reputation as a novelist. I have not looked at it since it was published, and now, turning back to it in my memory, I seem to remember almost less of it than of any book that I have written" (Autobiography 54). John Halperin believes such criticism is overly harsh and unfair to an otherwise good novel which has "yet to be properly and sufficiently reviewed" (Halperin xii). Sadleir considers it to be one of Trollope's five best novels. While this statement may tend toward the hyperbolic, certainly readers today will find the novel modern both in its subject and in the author's approach, which also includes some very distinct overtones of feminism.

Mrs. Askerton, whose story forms the subplot of The Belton Estate, also finds herself at the center of a morally ambiguous situation. Trollope places the emphasis on the people around her, explaining how outsiders react to her situation. While she does, with her husband, lead an isolated life, she has support in the form of Clara to whom she acts as an advisor in matters of love. Clara, who is not always certain she wants to hear anything from a woman who has admitted living with her husband for a prolonged period of time without the benefit of marriage, nevertheless feels increasingly closer to Mrs. Askerton emotionally as the novel progresses.

Mrs. Askerton has multiple roles in the novel; according to Christopher Herbert, "her main function in the novel is to serve as Clara's comic tormentor,

referring plainly to aspects of her courtship situation that good manners forbid mentioning and poking fun at her strong tendency toward strait-lacedness" (Herbert 69). The shadow of her adultery hangs over her causing outrage and anger among the other characters. Clara herself initially has reservations about her continuing friendship with the woman, wondering if, indeed, Mrs. Askerton is worthy of her association. "She liked Mrs. Askerton, and saw her almost daily; but she could hardly tell herself that she loved her neighbor" (Belton 22).

Trollope is doing more in this novel than merely recounting a rather conventional love story or even setting up a moral dilemma which must be resolved by the various characters. He is also questioning the conventional of women caught in this situation in Victorian middle-class society. Exactly what his opinion was on this complex subject can partially be determined by the fact that, as Cohen so succinctly writes, "this same Mrs. Askerton, a 'fallen woman', continues to interact with the spotless Clara Amedroz instead of dying a lonely death in the time-honored way after giving birth to an illegitimate child" (Cohen 37). Echoes of The MacDermots of Ballcloran are fading away as the century progresses. Trollope no longer adopts simple solutions to morally complex issues. While the conventional happy endings are still occurring, they are shadowed by an increasing realization on the part of both the reader and the author that the complications in life cannot straightened out quite so easily and often; destroyed lives are not quickly rebuilt.

Clara herself stands in opposition to some of the behaviors acceptable by young single woman. She, somewhat unwillingly, does become engaged to Frederick Alymer. Through the actions and words of his mother, one of Mrs. Askerton's chief contemners, the reader is able to form an accurate and very unflattering view of her son, Lord Aylmer. "At first she was so comfortably horror-stricken by the iniquity she had unraveled, - so delightfully shocked and astounded, - as to believe that the facts as they then stood would suffice to annul the match" (Belton 218). Desirous as she is of breaking off the match between Clara and Frederick, she sees Clara's continuing friendship with this woman as the means for ending the engagement.

> But she had quite succeeded in inspiring her son with a feeling of horror against the iniquity of the Askertons. He was prepared to be indignantly moral; and perhaps - perhaps, -the misguided Clara might be silly enough to say a word for her lost friend! Such being the present position of affairs, there was certainly ground for hope (Belton 219).

Indeed, one of the enduring mysteries of the novel continues to be the reason why Clara ever agrees to marry this cold, distant man who, when he kisses her for the first time, "his kiss was as cold and proper as though they had been man and wife for years" (Belton 128). He is a lord and very rich, but he lacks the passion and the warmth found in Will Belton; he even doubts if Clara, whom, he believes, yielded too soon to his proposal of marriage, will be the proper wife for him. Trollope may well have used Lord Alymer and the improbable engagement

between him and Clara to strengthen in his readers' minds an appreciation for the streak of rebellion he developed in Clara. The girl shows no hesitation in standing up to his dominating mother, due in part to her strong feeling regarding Mrs. Askerton. Indeed, she becomes so annoyed with his mother's belief that she can dictate Clara's behavior, that she breaks off her engagement. "I mean that our engagement shall be at an end...you shall again be free" (Belton 382). This is a very precipitous action from a young, penniless girl with only a feckless father who provides no guidance, evoking memories of Feemy in an earlier novel, who dares to reject "security, position, and the authority of elders for what seems to be much less tangible goods of conscience" (Cohen 42).

But Clara goes even further; not only is she not willing to give up her friendship with Mrs. Askerton, she also questions the role of women in society. At one point, annoyed and frustrated by her seemingly intolerable situation, she passionately declares, "Women, women, that is, of my age, are such slaves! We are forced to give an obedience for which we can see no cause, and for which can understand no necessity. The truth of a woman's lot is that we are dependent" (Belton 85) Will attempts to argue with her, "'Dependence is a disagreeable word,' he said; 'and one never quite knows what is means'", she answers simply, "'If you were a woman you'd know'" (Belton 85). Unfortunately, this idea is not pursued more completely in the novel; apparently it was sufficient for Trollope merely to begin to explore this territory which, in latter novels, such as He Knew He Was Right, he examines in more detail.

Clara's involuntary ally is, of course, Mrs. Askerton, who stands in apparent opposition to one of the most sacred mores of Victorian society, that of marriage. While her status has been regularized, the stigma of corruptness still lingers in her life. She does not appear remorseful or guilt-ridden; the only indication that her life is the least irregular is her and Mr. Askerton's voluntary social isolation. Largely thanks to Clara, their social ostracism ends by the end of the novel; her friendship with them, uncertain as it may have been at times, has made them socially acceptable, and "their aid to her with her love problems makes them virtuous" (Cohen 43); thus permitting their return to a society which accepted them back only after a fitting punishment had been delivered, in this case, social isolation.

Wall explains how Trollope used Mrs. Askerton to level some criticisms at his society,

> Mrs. Askerton's real importance in the book lies in the way in which the moral ambiguity of her situation is exploited by the other characters rather than by the novelist. Although Trollope goes through the motions of deploring Mrs. Askerton's 'sin', he is more interested in reaching a properly balanced assessment of her general character. Any theoretical questions raised by the morality or otherwise of Mrs. Askerton's situation are thus shelved in favour of the tactical exploration of it by her friends and enemies (Wall 247).

Swingle attempts to elucidate the difference between Trollope as conventional moralist, as some critics have attempted to portray him, and what she believes he was accomplishing.

> It indicates, rather, that Trollope's interest is in exploring what dramatic conflict can reveal about human beings, not in enforcing claims of particular moral propositions. Trollope's primary concern is to dramatize how situations of moral crisis reveal what he takes to be fundamental characteristics of human thought (Swingle 24).

Mrs. Askerton's character is gradually revealed as she reacts to Clara's defense of her against the criticisms of her future in-laws. Trollope describes Mrs. Askerton "if not unfeminine, still she was feminine in an inferior degree, with womanly feelings of a lower order" (Belton 274). He goes on, however, to defend her by saying,

> so also was she not ungenerous; and now, as she began to understand that Clara was sacrificing herself because of that promise which had been given when they two had stood together at the window in the cottage drawing-room, she was capable of feeling more for her friend than for herself. 'The world is hard, and harsh, and unjust,' she said, still speaking to herself. 'But that is not her fault; I will not injure her because I have been injured myself' (Belton 275).

When Clara decides to end her engagement with Lord Aylmer, she is aided by Mrs. Askerton, who explains to her, based on the depth of most painful

experience, that "if you allow him to talk you over you will be a wretched woman all your life" (Belton 372). The depth of her feelings cannot be ignored; perhaps dying, as Feemy was allowed to do was, in some respects, an easier option than the constant censure of a virtuous and emphatically moral society.

The novel ends happily; Will does marry Clara, and the Askertons are re-united with the society which had previously isolated them. Trollope makes it clear he does not condemn them for their actions, especially not the woman, who was forced into a situation where few choices were available to her. To be separated from her husband would require a judicial decree as would a divorce. For Mrs. Askerton to obtain a divorce meant she would have to prove her husband committed not only adultery but was guilty of another crime as well such as physical brutality, alcoholism, or desertion. Most women shrank from the adverse publicity such actions would generate. The other difficulty was obtaining proof of their husbands' misconduct - witnesses needed to be subpoenaed, and the entire ugly story would be made public. Given these circumstances, the modern reader finds Mrs. Askerton's desire simply to disappear and hope all would work out very understandable. The sympathetic attitude toward this woman that Trollope adopts is most remarkable for his era, and more interestingly, for a man who has been considered by critics to be one of the pillars upholding the standards of conventional middle class society in his novels.

In Dr. Wortle's School, published in 1881, Trollope takes an even more sophisticated view of the "unmentionable" subject, adultery. Robert Tracy believes

the book "is one more variation on Trollope's favorite subject, the man somehow at odds with his society" (Tracy 262). Mrs. Peacocke is also at odds with her society, but her withdrawal from the frontlines precludes her from being a catalyst for a variety of opinions and actions as is Dr. Wortle. Booth agrees, saying that, "nothing much is made of the Peacockes, who though bracingly honest are otherwise colorless and uninteresting" (Booth 72).

Mr. Peacocke is employed at a preparatory school run by Dr. Wortle. He lives quietly with his wife, Ella Peacocke; the couple does not socialize; indeed, they consistently refuse invitations to the simplest of social functions. In his usual direct manner, Trollope explains to the reader the secret the Peacocks share - they are not really married even though they refer to themselves as husband and wife. The complicated reasons behind such behavior in otherwise morally upright and religious people are made clear. Ella's husband, a drunken brute, was reported dead by his brother, another disreputable man. In good faith, the Peacockes wed, only to discover that Ferdinand Lefroy was all too alive. He reappears briefly in St. Louis, then vanishes. Faced with an insurmountable problem, the fact Mrs. Peacocke had committed bigamy, although unwittingly, and could be prosecuted for criminal action, the couple react by leaving the United States and returning to England, where Mr. Peacocke finds employment with Dr. Wortle. They resolve to keep their secret -that they are actually living in adultery. This secrecy is threatened by Robert Lefroy, who arrives in England with the intention of blackmailing Mr. Peacocke with the information that his brother,

Ferdinand, is actually alive and well. When the secret is finally revealed, people at the school are immediately divided over the issue of what constitutes proper behavior in such a situation.

Although she is at the center of the mystery and the subsequent upheaval at the school and in the lives of those around her, Trollope deliberately focuses the action in the novel away from Ella Peacocke in the same manner he did with Lady Fitzgerald. As he explains in a letter to his publisher, William Blackwood in 1880, "I think I have managed the question as to the marriage so as to give no offense" (Letters 254). This is an interesting comment on the part of the author who is, after all, dealing with a subject that was guaranteed to cause a great deal of comment in Victorian England. Trollope was willing to discuss the issue, but he remained conscious of his readers' sensibilities. Also, his desire to sell his books obviously remained one of his priorities so, while he was capable of raising, and writing about controversial matters, he never lost sight of the beliefs and strictures of his reading audience.

Nevertheless, he succeeded in writing a story which "gives scope to the author's great knowledge and understanding of the simultaneous cruelties and justifications of conventions, and at the same time offers opportunities for delicate delineation of motive and dilemma" (Sadlier 394). Kincaid argues that, contrary to the beliefs of Polhemus, Trollope is not defending social rebellion, nor, despite the opinion of Cockshut, neither is he condemning it. Instead, "he simply portrays the consequences of a disregard for convention" (Kincaid 267). However,

in this portrayal, the author is markedly more sympathetic to the people involved, especially the woman, than he was at the beginning of his career. To say that he condones 'social revolution' does Trollope an injustice, but, as has been pointed out earlier, he does manage subtly to undermine some of the rigid conventions of his time.

The psychological center is Dr. Wortle who refuses to fire Mr. Peacocke and, indeed, defends his behavior. Robert Tracey explains,

> We are not asked to speculate whether adultery can, under certain circumstances, be right, but to speculate instead whether it can ever be right to defend publicly a confessed and unrepentant adulterer against society's judgment (Tracy 265).

As a result of his defense of the unfortunate couple, Dr. Wortle finds himself at the center of a firestorm; his opponents, including his wife, think his behavior is incomprehensible. She even goes so far as to explain to her erring husband, "'A woman should not live with a man unless she be his wife'. Mrs. Wortle said this with more of obstinacy than he had expected" (Wortle 96). Macdonald thinks Trollope deliberately muddied the waters,

> The moral questions raised by their living together, when the facts become known, are treated with enough ambiguity that Trollope readers are still not in agreement about whether Trollope applies a fixed standard of morality to the situation or whether he condones their living together and thereby

> advocates a situational ethics in which each case is judged on its own merits (Macdonald 90).

Edwards agrees, saying "its moral significance is blurred in the same way by Trollope's obvious partisanship, which leads him to overlook the inconsistencies in Wortle's attitudes while losing no opportunity to emphasis those in his enemies'" (Edwards 220).

Even though he favors Dr. Wortle and his sympathetic actions towards the unfortunate couple, Trollope's skill as a novelist allows him to develop a multitude of viewpoints, thus showing concretely how divided a society can be over what appeared to be a simple moral issue. Booth praises his undoubted ability when he explains, "he has been most ingenious and quite modern. The characters are developed almost wholly in terms of their relationship to an event which does not immediately concern them" (Booth 72).

Trollope does undercut certain positions; for example, when Mrs. Wortle says so definitively that Mrs. Peacocke should have left her husband, Trollope adds the following commentary, "'Gone' said the wife, who had no doubt as to the comfort, the beauty, the perfect security of her own position" (Wortle 95). Mr. Puddicombe, another critic of both the Peacockes and Dr. Wortle's position, is described as a

> dry, thin, apparently unsympathetic man, but just withal, and by no means given to harshness. He could pardon whenever he could bring himself to believe that pardon would have good results; but he would not be driven by

> impulses and softness of heart to save the faulty one from the effects of his fault, merely because that effect would be painful (Wortle 97).

Morally correct, but spiritually rigid with a personality to match. Clearly, their position of either supporting Dr. Wortle or opposing him is the way by which Trollope indicates that character's moral nature.

Mrs. Peacocke proves to be one of Trollope's weakest characters in terms of the development or flowering of her personality. She remains a symbol throughout the novel, a symbol of the unexpected complexity of life which can lead otherwise morally upright people into untenable positions. She does nothing to resolve her situation; the matter is taken out of her hands by both her husband and Dr. Wortle. She is even, at one point, reduced to living alone in her house, waiting for her husband to return from America. Her only visitor is Dr. Wortle, who finally convinces his wife to accompany him. A victory of sorts occurs for Mrs. Peacocke when Mrs. Wortle not only accepts what has happened, but also admits to herself that

> she had been made to doubt whether, after all, the sin had been so very sinful. She did endeavour to ask herself whether she would not have done the same in the same circumstances. The woman, she thought, must have been right to have married the man whom she loved, when she heard that first horrid husband was dead. There could, at any rate, have been no sin in that. It was terrible to think of, - so terrible that she could not quite think of it; but in

> struggling to think of it her heart was softened towards this other woman. After that day she never spoke further of the woman's sin (Wortle 212).

The implication is very strong by the end of the novel that Mrs. Peacocke and her husband have been accepted back into society, and the stigma under which they lived for so long has been forgotten, or rather, forgiven, by their segment of society, which tended to be merciless toward women caught in untenable positions as were Lady Fitzgerald, Mrs. Peacocke and Mrs. Askerton. The isolation in which these latter women led their lives indicates their complete awareness of society's censure and the lack of understanding their situations evoked in the majority of their fellow-citizens. The portrayal of Mrs. Wortle, as she struggles to understand a situation outside her range of comprehension, is an interesting depiction of conventional intolerance giving way to reluctant understanding because of her personal knowledge of the victim. But the modern reader cannot suppose that Mrs. Wortle's new-found tolerance would automatically extend to other woman in such a position. She is an example of what critics, specifically apRoberts and MacDonald, have referred to as Trollope's situational ethics; every situation is judged according to its particular circumstances; no absolute criteria for blanket moral judgments exist. Thus each woman must prove the validity of her case before forgiveness is granted. Mrs. Wortle, forced to recognize the existence of Mrs. Peacocke, is also forced to recognize the role of circumstances in creating her particular situation, circumstances which could happen in any life, no matter how well regulated.

These three novels point out very clearly Trollope's evolution as a novelist. As his art developed, the focus of his books centered increasingly on the individual in situations often ambiguous and usually difficult. Lady Fitzgerald perhaps suffers less publicly than the other two women only because her sin was never revealed. Her private suffering, of course, equals or even exceeds, that of Mrs. Askerton or Mrs. Peacocke. Her story is resolved more conventionally than are the others; her current husband dies and her former husband was discovered to be married previous to her entanglement with him, so legally no marriage existed.

In The Belton Estate, Clara does marry Will, and while critics are divided over the happiness of that union, based on the last pages of the novel, certainly her cry from the heart earlier in the story regarding the enforced dependency of women, is not easily forgotten by the reader. Mrs. Askerton and her husband may rejoin society, but it is a brittle welcome they receive and give; too much has happened to Mrs. Askerton to forgive completely or to pretend that all is well. A strong note of self-pity exists in her words, spoken near the end of the novel, understandably as she also had trusted in absolutes, in the conventions of society, including marriage, and had been badly deceived.

> I suppose it is meant as kindness. It is not very complimentary to me. It presumes that such a one as I may by treated without the slightest consideration. And so I may. It is only fit that I should be so treated (Belton 362).

However, the fact that she is now a functioning member of society, despite her own personal opinions as to the depth of her suffering clearly demonstrate the degree of change in Trollope from his first novel dealing with this subject.

Mrs. Peacocke and her husband, thanks to the efforts of Dr. Wortle, also find themselves accepted members of the academic community in which they live. It is more his triumphant than theirs; they are properly grateful, but while their re-union with society lacks the bittersweet feelings of Mrs. Askerton, who had openly thrown herself against the conventions of her society and had lost, they are more fully accepted than is she, in keeping with the increased tolerance and sympathy of the author for these women. No hint of censure mars the Peacocks' return; they have achieved a status undreamed of for the unfortunate Lady Fitzgerald.

Trollope himself did not forget Clara's passionate words, as his later novels dealing with strong-willed women living within the confines of marriage so clearly indicate.

CHAPTER FIVE

UNHAPPY MARRIAGES

We can trace Trollope's increasingly sympathetic view of women who find themselves rebels in an unhappy marriage through a progression of novels which deal directly with the subject of marriage. Placed in chronological order, these novels include Barchester Towers (1857), with Mrs. Proudie, He Knew He Was Right (1868), with Emily Trevelyan, Phineas Finn (1869), and Phineas Redux (1872) which together detail the story of Lady Laura, and finally the Palliser novels which focus on the development of Lady Glencora.

Trollope ended many of his earlier novels with the conventional happy wedding which presupposed all would go happily and joyfully for the couple for the rest of their lives. His later novels, written during his second and third period, demonstrate how women, often at odds with societal expectations, are in situations where they find neither hope nor happiness simply because they were unable to conceive of an acceptable alternative. While Trollope himself, according to his Autobiography, continued to believe the only suitable occupation for a woman was marriage, he realized that marriage did not necessarily mean happiness for the involved woman. Fraisse explains the root of the problem, "Beyond the institution of marriage, the issue was male-female relations: the ideal of love seemed impossible to achieve in conditions of inequality, inferiority, and

dependence of one sex on the other" (Fraisse 439). John Sutherland, in his introduction to Phineas Finn, supports the idea that Trollope was changing, at least in his fiction, his long-held perceptions of marriage and its benefits for women when he writes,

Evidence suggests that in the late sixties, Trollope was coming to distrust the 'doglike' ideal he had so confidently propagated. More than this, that he was coming to distrust marriage, the social destiny of women. Like Dickens, Trollope in middle age analyses unhappy marriages in his fiction (23). Deborah Morse agrees, saying,

> Trollope's sympathetic depiction of these untraditional female characters (including Arabella Greennow, Adelaide Palliser, Emily Wharton, Isabel Boncassen, Lady Mabel Grex, and Mary Palliser) is only one form his disquiet with Victorian society's core myths about womanhood takes. Another central manifestation of his critique is the alteration of narrative conventions that embody the conventional view that feminine fulfillment lies only in love and marriage. The structure of the conventional romantic courtship plot is broken in every novel...Trollope never allows us to feel that all is well for Victorian womanhood (Morse 3).

Rarely did Victorian novelists explore the details of life following the wedding as does Anthony Trollope in his novels dealing with marriage. His changing view toward marriage and women is exemplified by the words of Hugh Stanbury in He Knew He Was Right when he says to Louis, "If I were married...I

fancy I shouldn't look after my wife at all. It seems to me that women hate to be told of their duties" (He 183-4). Bill Overton demonstrates how Trollope's later works meld two seemingly contradictory ideas into a seamless whole:

Trollope's insight into the stress of social pressure helps explain why, though among Victorian novelists he is the strongest champion of individuality, he also possesses most confidence that the individual may be fulfilled in society. More than Dickens, George Eliot, or Meredith, he believes that self and social role may correspond" (Overton 99).

Trollope spends more time attempting to understand why women did not always seem to fit happily into their assigned place, places which were conceived and developed largely by men. Lukacs writes that

> ...the (19th. century) style developed out of a need to adapt fiction to provide an adequate representation of new social phenomena. The relationship of the individual to his class had become more complicated than it had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Lukacs 69).

In his later novels, the reader is no longer presented with the idea that marriage is the sole cure or the solution for the struggle which women are waging as they attempt to come to terms with their society and its expectations. "The couple became one of the central problems of Western society in the nineteenth century, a problem which affected all classes of society and spilled beyond the boundaries of private life" (Fraisse 366).

Few of his characters demonstrate this change more clearly than Mrs. Proudie who first appears in Barchester Towers and who makes her final appearance in The Last Chronicle of Barset. She is initially presented by the author with very little sympathy; the details of her struggle, not all that dissimilar to the one waged by Glencora, lack the sadness and the understanding which underlines Trollope's depiction of the Duchess. He Knew He Was Right, Phineas Finn, and Phineas Redux develop two particularly interesting women, Lady Laura and Emily Trevelyan, both of whom attempt to deal with marriages which are falling apart, largely through no fault of their own. Emily Trevelyan may not be an appealing character, but we understand and sympathize, as did her creator, with her desire for autonomy in her marriage, and with her strong refusal to ask for forgiveness for a non-existent sin. Lady Laura, in Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux, may, indeed, have betrayed herself by her loveless marriage, but her struggle in that marriage is poignant and ultimately, the reader's sympathy lies with her, not with her unbearably moral husband.

Trollope adapted an essentially humorous tone towards both his characters and his story in the novel Barchester Towers. Although presented as a sexual stereotype, primarily as a source of horrified humor among the other members of the community, Mrs. Proudie represents a humorous, less sympathetic side of Emily Trevelyan; both are woman determined to have their own way, and both cause chaos in the otherwise well ordered and careful structure of the typical middle class Victorian marriage. The Last Chronicle of Barset,

published in 1867, reveals the portrait of Mrs. Proudie as much more sympathetic and complex, less of a caricature. By this time, of course, Trollope's view of marriage and the position of women within the institution had undergone a significant change. Trollope tells her story beginning with Barchester Towers, continuing in Framley Parsonage (1861) and ending with The Last Chronicle of Barset where, not too surprising, in view of his developed sympathy for struggling women, he attempts to rectify, at least partially, an individual too easily dismissed by readers and by her creator, as a stereotype of the interfering, bossy wife who caused havoc and destruction through her attempts to manage affairs better left to men.

Mrs. Proudie is the wife of the new Bishop of Barchester, characterized as "an insignificant little man" (Hardwick 34). Trollope details her character for the reader in a series of subtle statements which, taken individually do not appear to be all that damning. Yet, when read as a whole, they present a daunting picture of the Bishop's wife,

> ... still I cannot think that with all her virtues she adds much to her husband's happiness. The truth is that in matters domestic she rules supreme over her titular lord, and rules with a rod of iron. But Mrs. Proudie is not satisfied with such home dominion, and stretches her power over all his movements, and will not even abstain from things spiritual. In fact, the bishop is hen-pecked (BT 31).

Yet it would be a mistake to consider her only a stereotype. Polhemus describes her "with her sense of moral duty, her reforming obsession, her Grundyism, her earnest rectitude, and her utter lack of humor, she can rise to heights of moral indignation, but she has kinetic force - she wants to change things" (Polhemus 38). Kincaid goes further with his evaluation of Trollope's purpose for inserting her in the novel,

> Mrs. Proudie is subject to some basic sexual humour and is a prototype of the big-bosomed, jewel-bedecked, pompous, and castrating females who are eternally attacked in literature. She reflects the novel's quiet but distinct anti-feminism...The dominant joke against her is that she is simply a man; she is ranked with men rather than women, the narrator says with a nudge and a wink, because of 'her great strength of mind' (Kincaid 105).

However, Trollope ensures that Mrs. Proudie is not a complete caricature; she is, rather, a strong-minded woman and an evangelical zealot who sees her role as strengthening her weak husband, "He was a puppet to be played by others; a mere wax doll, done up in an apron and a shovel hat, to be struck on a throne or elsewhere and pulled about by wires as others chose" (BT 51).

She may be, as Booth argues, more interested in the pursuit of power than in the welfare of the church, although her religious zeal certainly lies at the center of her quest for power. This failing causes her tragedy and finally, in The Last Chronicle of Barset, her unmourned death. However, there is more to Mrs.

Proudie than merely stereotype. Trollope himself gives hints as to what lies below the surface when he writes in The Last Chronicle of Barset,

> She did regard the dignity of her husband, and she felt at the present moment that she had almost compromised it. She did regard the welfare of the clergymen around her, thinking of course in a general way that certain of them who agreed with her were the clergymen whose welfare should be studied, and that certain of them who disagreed with her were the clergymen whose welfare should be postponed. (LC 493).

He describes her in his Autobiography with an emphasis on her religious zeal which carries her into areas with which she is not capable of dealing.

> but that at the same time she was conscientious, by no means a hypocrite, really believing in the brimstone which she threatened, and anxious to save the souls around her from its horrors. And as her tyranny increased so did the bitterness of the moments of her repentance, in that she knew herself to be a tyrant, -till that bitterness killed her (LC 276).

Mrs. Proudie governs through the force of her personality and demanding manner, although the implication of sexual domination is present in her relationship with the Bishop.

> He came down the following morning a sad and thoughtful man. He was attenuated in appearance - one might say almost emaciated. I doubt whether his now grizzled locks had not palpably become more gray than

on the preceding evening. At any rate he had aged materially (Towers 315).

Trollope, as Lerner explains, seems to fall naturally into images of war when describing the lady. Endless battles exist between the Grantly faction and the Proudie faction. When Mrs. Proudie meets her final defeat in the Bishop's study, the reader can almost hear the trumpets. "'Dr. Tempest, what is your objection?' said Mrs. Proudie, rising from her chair and coming also to the table, so that from thence she might confront her opponent; and as she stood opposite to Dr. Tempest she also put both her hands upon the table" (LC 488). Trollope does not regard her as a soldier in the army, rather, she is the entire army, going out to do battle against the enemies of her husband, real or perceived.

Mrs. Proudie's weakness lies in the fact she is incapable of perceiving the damage she is unwittingly doing to her husband and his position. It is not until The Last Chronicle of Barset, when the Bishop has withdrawn from life and even from the prodding of his wife as a result of the embarrassment she caused him with Dr. Tempest, does Mrs. Proudie reflect in ways which would have been equally impossible for her, or her creator, in the earlier books. The concept of self-doubt had been forcibly introduced into Mrs. Proudie's mind and heart by circumstances; a dawning realization of the error of her ways was beginning to occur to her.

...and she loved him still; but she knew how, - at this moment she felt absolutely sure, - that by him she was hated...At the bottom of her heart she

> knew that she had been a bad wife. And yet she had meant to be a pattern wife! She had meant to be a good Christian; but she had so exercised her Christianity that not a soul in the world loved her, or would endure her presence if it could be avoided! (LC 706).

In his later novels dealing with the intricacies of married life, Trollope presents us with a group of men who are nearly as strong as the women to whom they are married, and certainly better capable of dealing with the complexities of life than was the Bishop. In this early novel, however, one note sounds throughout the story - that of the henpecked husband dominated by a shrew who attempts to control not only his life but also his profession. Even the impact of her death, which occurs in The Last Chronicle of Barset, is significantly diminished by the reactions of those who she leaves behind.

> He did not doubt that she was now on her way to heaven. He took his hands from his head, and clasping them together, said a little prayer. It may be doubted whether he quite knew for what he was praying. The idea of praying for her soul, now that she was dead, would have scandalized him. He certainly was not praying for his own soul. I think he was praying that God might save him from being glad that his wife was dead (LC 710).

The subject of women struggling in their marriages is explored by Trollope in more depth and without the comic overtones in his Palliser novels, whose publication dates stretched from 1864 to 1880, through the development of Lady

Laura and more particularly, through the evolution of Lady Glencora Palliser, probably one of Trollope's finest and most carefully developed characters. James Kincaid shows the changing emphasis of Trollope as he moves from the Barsetshire novels to the Palliser novels,

> The problems still are social ones, as they were in the Barsetshire series, but now the dominant perspective is the individuals' upon society, not the reverse. In the Barsetshire series, we were urged to identify with a community and its values, seeking to incorporate the strays and the eccentrics; here we are asked to identify with a single character looking for some union somewhere (Kincaid 178).

Trollope did not, during that time period, concentrate all his energies on the Palliser novels; interspersed in these years were other stories, including He Knew He Was Right, a complex novel dealing with various relationships between men and women, whose central characters, Louis and Emily, battle not only each other but also their differing views of roles within a marriage. It uses the breakdown of a seemingly stable marriage as its central theme. Emily married for love with no ambitions beyond being a wife and mother. Her flaw is stubbornness, a factor about which her mother mentions just prior to her marriage to Louis. "'But Emily likes her way too,' said Lady Rowley" (He 3). She also is "truculent and provocative" (Wall 341), not to mention unlikable. She does not, however, betray herself, as did Laura who overtly married a man for whom she felt no love, although, at one point in the story, when her husband is far gone in

madness, she does apologize to him, not for betraying him, she makes clear, but rather for the unmitigated disaster their lives had become which, in part, was due to her own recalcitrance.

The journey was made first to Dover, and then to London. Once, as they were making their way through the Kentish hop-fields, he put out his hand feebly, and touched hers. They had the carriage to themselves, and she fell down on her knees before him instantly. 'Oh, Louis! Oh, Louis! say that you forgive me!' What could a woman do more than that in her mercy to a man? 'Yes; - yes; yes,' he said; but do not talk now; I am so tired' (He 884). The authorial comment is not without irony, "There is nothing that woman will not forgive a man, when he is weaker than she is herself" (He 884). She and Laura share more than an unhappy marriage; both women suffered unjustifiable abuse from their husbands, making their positions in untenable marriages more sympathetic to the reader.

That Emily's marriage was, in the beginning, happy, is made clear to the reader by the author himself who writes, "For nearly two years the little household in Curzon Street went on well...and there a baby, a boy, a young Louis, and a baby in such a household is apt to make things go sweetly" (He 3). Yet Emily is determined to mold``` events to her way of thinking. She is also a victim of what Tanner calls the unspoken dualities which exist in Victorian marriages. He explains that

> the nineteenth century bourgeois ideal of marriage, far from being, as commonly supposed, a monolithic system of 'male superiority and command', in fact amalgamates two distinct principles almost impossible fully to reconcile in practice, if not perhaps in principle: on one hand, the principle of male supremacy so deeply rooted in custom and in law and, on the other, the great cult of Home as, in Ruskin's rapt phrase, 'the place of peace' filled with kindness and warm, spontaneous affection. The ubiquitous problem in Victorian households must have been how to enforce the principle of essentially dictatorial male authority without doing violence to the ideal of companionate conjugal affection. Not to see the centrality of this dilemma is surely to misapprehend the realities of Victorian marital relations (Tanner 451).

The reason for the argument between Louis and his wife appears to be over nothing, although Louis, convinced he is in the right, continues his unwavering stand against his wife's visitor. As is pointed out to them very early, the whole affair is "a trumpery quarrel...sheer and simple nonsense" (He 153). He does not want her to see or to have any contact with an old family friend, Colonel Osborne, who has annoyed him by what Louis considers undue familiarity with Emily. He gives conflicting orders; she responds by telling him that, although she refuses to follow his wishes when they are injurious to her, she will, as the code of wifely duty demands, obey his commands.

> If he gives me a command I will obey it. Or if he had expressed his wish in any other words I would have complied. If you had seen his manner and heard his words, you would not have been surprised that I should feel it as I do. It was a gross insult,- and it was not the first (He 10).

She does obey them, but in a manner which makes a mockery of the situation and more importantly, of Louis himself. Aware of his untenable position, but feeling himself unable to back down without losing both his dignity and authority as husband and master of his household, Louis holds firm to his demands. Unfortunately, he also begins to become obsessed with the situation and with Colonel Osborne in particular. He actually contemplates the possibility that something is indeed happening between the two; with the implementation of this belief, the seeds are sown for the resulting tragedy. Yet, as Nardin points out, this novel, despite the references to Othello and King Lear, is not, by any means, a classical tragedy. Trevelyan is free, at any time, to change his mind; no sense of inevitability exists in the story; he is not doomed by forces stronger than he. Instead, he, almost willingly, chooses his destructive path, despite the efforts of his friends and wife to dissuade him. Trollope develops Trevelyan's idea of obsession carefully, with much more care than he devoted to Robert Kennedy's breakdown, although the two men share many of the same characteristics.

Only a thin line separates Louis's growing paranoia from his basic realization that, in fact, Emily is not and never has been unfaithful to him. Polhemus

praises Trollope for his ability "at getting down Trevelyan's schizophrenic thinking: at the same time he condemns his wife, he condemns the artificial puritanical code of feminine behavior which makes him condemn her" (Polhemus 165). Part of his obsession lies in the importance placed upon wifely chastity by the Victorian male. Their circumstances resulted from the creation of an ideal world by the middle-class male where, as part of the Puritan code, men desired to protect their wives, believing them to be innocent of evil and lacking the ability either to recognize or to defend themselves from compromising positions. Trollope is alive to the irony in such a belief:

> It is all very well for a man to talk about his name and honour; but it is the woman's honour and the woman's name that are, in truth, placed in jeopardy. Let the woman do what she will, the man can, in truth, show his face in the world...But the woman may be compelled to veil hers, either by her own fault, or by his (He 94).

Louis repeats several times his need to protect Emily, who simply does not understand the damage she is doing to her reputation when she permits the company of Colonel Osgood. However, under the facade of caring about his wife's reputation, Trevelyan actually is engaging in a power struggle; as MacDonald explains, "we soon see in Trevelyan's concern for Emily's purity a more selfish vein of concern for his own reputation" (MacDonald 70). He argues that "the slightest rumor on a woman's name is a load of infamy on her husband's shoulders. It was not enough for Caesar that his wife should be true; it was

necessary for Caesar that she should not even be suspected" (He 43). By the time his madness had taken hold of him, he was convinced Emily must be "crushed in spirit" and "penitent" before he could accept her return to him. The unmistakable image is one of sacrifice and redemption through suffering. Emily would be redeemed through his power. He actually says to her, after he has been tracked down to the miserable cottage at Willesden where he has been holed up, "Repent! Repent! Repent!" (He 732). The only flaw in the completion of this scene, as visualized by Louis, is his wife. She does not view herself as wrong nor does she see any need for her to redeem herself at the powerful alter of his masculine pride.

The inflammable situation between husband and wife escalates rapidly, with one ridiculous accusation following another. Louis not only wants his wife to obey him, he wants her to do so willingly and pleasantly. In other words, he wants her to keep not only the words of her marriage vow promising obedience, but to keep them in the spirit in which they were written. Emily, who feels her honor as a wife and a woman has been severely compromised by her husband's absurd demands, refuses to bend, believing herself and her integrity to be forever destroyed if she submits to Louis's orders and apologizes for her conduct, when, she is convinced, she has nothing for which to apologize or even to explain.

Although both husband and wife discuss their problems with others, as both husband and wife attempt to justify and solidify their respective positions,

conversations between Emily and Louis are far too infrequent. Each, of course, knows he/she is right and this stubbornly held belief prevents either from compromising or admitting the validity of the other's point of view. Neither, ironically, and finally, sadly, ever doubts the other's love. "'Do you doubt my love? said she. 'No; certainly not.' 'Nor I yours. Without love, Louis, you and I can not be happy'" (He 57). Unfortunately, these moments of rapport are few and far between; by the time Louis has turned his wife out of his house and fled to Italy, these moments have vanished entirely. What has replaced them is the brooding by Louis which produces the result that

> he came to believe everything; and though he prayed fervently that his wife might not be led astray, that she might be saved at any rate from utter vice, yet he almost came to hope that it might be otherwise; - not, indeed, with the hope of the sane man, who desires that which he tells himself to be for his advantage; but with the hope of the insane man, who loves to feed his grievance, even though the grief should be his death (He 364).

Tanner explains in his essay that Emily is not really seeking emancipation; rather she is attempting to have put into words the underlying principles of a typical middle class Victorian marriage. "What she doggedly demands, with such catastrophic results, is simply an explicit, unambiguous definition of the rules governing power relations in her marriage, and by extension in marriage in general. This is the point of her seemingly perverse insistence on the distinction

between "commands" and 'wishes' (Tanner 460). Epperly echoes this idea when he says,

> Perhaps Louis's story, and the novel as a whole, is designed to make us question what is comic and what is tragic as we question the nature of marriage, and the healthy relationship of man and wife. The arrangement of the subplots, the repetition of expressions and allusions, encourages the ironic assessment of relationships and self-concepts (Epperly 92).

A related idea here stresses the point that the quality of the husband in the marriage certainly greatly determines the definition of the rules and the resulting power structure. Mrs. Proudie, Emily, and Laura suffered untoward hardships because their husbands were, respectively, weak, or strong but insane.

A dominant theme in He Knew He Was Right is simply that couples, especially women, are happier if the boundaries of male domination are not so clearly defined. Caroline Spalding, the American girl presented as a foil to the objectionable Wallachia Petri, who falls in love with Mr. Glascock, clearly, if humorously, sums up her relationship, both present and future, following a disagreement with her fiancee as to whether their marriage should proceed as planned. She explains to Nora, "I promised to be a good girl and not ever to pretend to have any opinion of my own ever again. So we kissed, and were friends" (He 767). This deliberate blindness and ambiguity apply equally to both Dorothy and Nora, also married by the end of the novel. Neither of them question the boundaries beyond

which they are not permitted, and neither wonder about the outcome of any future disagreements with their respective husbands.

Most of the female characters in the novel share a common characteristic: support for Emily and her position, even if they themselves are not prepared to go to the lengths she does. This wide-spread sympathy indicates more than a superficial interest in the concerns of women and their position in society on the part of all the participants, especially women. Early in the story, when Emily is defending her position to her sister Nora, she exclaims, "It is a very poor thing to be a woman", and Nora's reply echoes her words, "It is perhaps better than being a dog, but, of course, we can't compare ourselves to men" (He 39). Nora and Priscilla Stanbury, a character who chooses to remain single to maintain her independence, also debate the issue, but in more telling terms than did Emily. '"Sometimes women despise men,' said Priscilla. 'Not so very often;--do they? And then women are so dependent on men. A woman can get nothing without a man.' 'I manage to get on somehow,' said Priscilla. 'No, you don't, Miss Stanbury, -- if you think of it. You want mutton. And who kills the sheep?"' (He 242).

Nora, one of the more perceptive characters in the story, spends time in self-reflection; unfortunately, most of her thoughts are not particularly optimistic concerning her future, whether married or unmarried.

> The lot of a woman, as she often told herself, was wretched, unfortunate, almost degrading. For a woman such as herself there was no path open

> to her energy, other than that of getting a husband. Nora Rowley thought of all this till she was almost sick of the prospect of her life (He 30).

Dorothy Stanbury, younger sister of Priscilla, and semi-adopted by her aunt, Jemima Stanbury, describes her status as a single woman, and by extension, the fate of single women in general.

> She is a nobody, and a nobody she must remain. She has her clothes and her food, but she isn't wanted anywhere. People put up with her, and that is about the best of her luck. I fear if she were to die somebody perhaps would be sorry for her, but nobody would be worse off. She doesn't earn anything or do any good. She is just there and that's all...(He 434).

In telling contrast to Emily, Trollope grants both Dorothy and Nora happiness in the form of reasonable men; however, he does not take the story beyond their marriage vows and certainly does not explore their first marital quarrel. Moreover, it is Priscilla, Dorothy's older sister who understands completely what a single life entails,

> Not to have a hole of my own would be intolerable to me. But, as I was saying, I shall not be unhappy. To enjoy life, as you do, is I suppose out of the question for me. But I have a satisfaction when I get to the end of the quarter and find that there is not half-crown due to any one. Things get dearer and dearer, but I have a comfort even in that. I wonder why it is that you two should be married, and so grandly, and that I shall never, never have any one to love. I know that I am quite unfit for any other kind

> of life than this. I should make any man wretched, and any man would make me wretched. But why is it so? (He 51)

Wall believes Trollope begs the larger question regarding woman's place in her society. Certainly the bleak future laid out by Priscilla appears to negate or, at least modify, the conventional happy endings found by Nora, Dorothy, and Caroline, but the author does not really address the complications raised by Priscilla. However, he addresses a problem many middle-class Victorians ignored or swept under the carpet. His own ambiguities on the subject are well-known; as Wall explains,

> It is not surprising therefore - and not seriously damaging that the novel should be so inconclusive about a matter on which the author clearly has no monopoly of wisdom. The novel is essentially open-minded, and the more characteristically Trollopian for that" (Wall 361).

Another woman who shares many of Emily's characteristics, Lady Laura, dominates the scene in Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux, which revolve around several strong, articulate women. Morse explains that "In Trollope's sympathetic depiction of these strong, articulate women as they decide for or against Phineas, Trollope discloses his uneasiness with the feminine ideals against which women are conventionally measured" (Morse 39).

Trollope "thought Laura was the best thing he had done in the novel" (Autobiography 165). Ramona Denton agrees with his assessment; in her article, "That Cage of Femininity: Trollope's Lady Laura" she writes,

> Beginning in the 1860's with the Palliser novels, Trollope does introduce a brand of "new woman" into his fiction. She is... a human being in search of a vocation, one who does not look solely to wifedom and motherhood for her satisfactions. As wife, daughter, sister, cousin or friend to Members of Parliament, she frequently plays a key role in the political life of her day. She frequently discovers, as well, that she is hard-pressed to reconcile her energy and ambition with the feminine behavior her society requires of her (Denton 2).

Nardin believes, correctly, that in Phineas Finn, Trollope "explores the tragic possibilities of Victorian marriage. Laura is destroyed by her belief that Victorian conventions offer women sufficient freedom" (Nardin 205). While she suffers from similar problems in her marriage as did Emily, Trollope developed her situation along different lines. Laura longed for life outside the conventional form, as her intense interest and active participation in politics indicated whereas Emily showed no interest in life outside her home and her family. With Laura and to a greater extent, Glencora, Trollope's increasing sympathy towards married women caught in a variety of circumstances becomes clearer.

The only daughter of a wealthy widowed lord, Laura has a great deal of freedom; in fact, she runs her father's house with little or no direction or restriction from him. "Lady Laura seemed to have perfect power of doing what she pleased. She was much more mistress of herself than is she had been the wife instead of the daughter of the Earl of Brentford" (Phineas 74). While this attitude

on the part of her father is initially seen by the reader as unusual and welcome tolerance in an age where fathers traditionally were viewed as more controlling, Trollope makes his point later in the story that such tolerance was actually only thinly disguised neglect, which would prove later to have disastrous consequences for his daughter.

Her physical description immediately sets her apart from the more conventional Trollope heroines; she is neither small nor brown. Instead,

> she was in fact about five feet seven in height, and she carried her height well. Her hair was in truth red, - of a deep thorough redness. Her face was very fair, though it lacked that softness which we all love in women...She would lean forward when sitting, as a man does, and would use her arms in talking, and would put her hand over her face, and pass her fingers through her hair, - after the fashion of men rather than women;- and she seemed to despise that soft quiescence of her sex in which are generally found so many charms. Her hands and feet were large - as was her whole frame. Such was Lady Laura Standish (Phineas 74).

This description varies so significantly from the descriptions of Trollope's other, more placid heroines that the reader may rightly suspect the outward manifestations indicate that life is not and will continue not to be easy for this self-willed and passionate woman who believes, wrongly, as events transpire, that she can control her own fate, grasping hold of events and molding them as she chooses. But she is betrayed, both by her love for her brother and by her inability to

understand the characters of either of her two lovers, Phineas Finn and Robert Kennedy. But, most importantly, her ultimate failure results from her inability or unwillingness to recognize the nature of the enforced dependency which prevent women from doing as they choose with their lives. The echoes of this complaint are heard in The Belton Estate and even more strongly from Lady Glencora in Can You Forgive Her?

Barred by tradition and law from holding any form of elected office herself, Laura directs her energies into sponsoring informal salons on Sundays in her father's house which many of the rising young stars in Parliament attend. Laura is knowledgeable about politics, intelligent as well as being an excellent hostess and resents her enforced inactivity, "though I feel that a woman's life is only half a life, as she cannot have a seat in Parliament" (Phineas 98). Paradoxically, at least to twentieth century readers, she also vehemently opposes women's right to vote, believing no real woman would be interested in such activity. Her statements reflect the contradictory views of her creator; women could not break the final barriers without lapsing into the caricatures of Female Emancipation so vividly depicted in Is He Popenjoy?, The Way We Live Now, and He Knew He Was Right.

Attracted to her personality and money, the opportunistic Phineas considers proposing marriage. Polhemus explains that, "for Phineas, being in love with Laura Standish offers the chance for power and advancement" (389). However, he is deflected by the presence of Mr. Kennedy, who "was an unmarried man,

with an immense fortune, a magnificent place, a seat in Parliament, and was not above perhaps above forty years of age" (Phineas 96), a man in whom Laura is obviously interested. "You don't quite know Mr. Kennedy yet. And you must remember that he will say more to me than he will to you" (Phineas 97).

She acts as a mentor to the novice Phineas as she has a deep interest in his budding career in Parliament. Her influence is such that she need only to ask one of her political friends to find Phineas a seat in Parliament. Unfortunately, as Nardin says, "Laura fails to see that because her independence and power depend on men, her position is highly precarious" (Nardin 205). Wall explains the danger of her position, which she appears unable to understand, "Lady Laura seems at this stage a figure of power and authority, partly because she is entrenched in the world of high Whiggism and partly because she has the air of a woman of action" (Wall 127). However, Laura is deceived by her apparent power, not recognizing her strength comes in part from her unusual circumstances. Once she attempts to regulate her life, through marriage, she loses her power and merely becomes another frustrated wife, subject to the will of her husband and to the conventions which governed middle-class marriages. She agrees to marry Mr. Kennedy, explaining to Phineas,

> I have accepted the owner of Loughlinter as my husband, because I verily believe that I shall thus best do my duty in that sphere of life to which it has pleased God to call me. I have always liked him, and I will love him (Phineas 175).

The sphere to which she is referring is clear; she believes her political influence will increase with the wealth of her husband, "who is considered a rising man in the Liberal party" (Wall 132) so that "she can reasonably hope to play the backstage part in high politics that she craves" (Wall 134) that it will be a marriage of "political convenience" (Wall 140) and, most importantly, she assumes she will continue to enjoy the same freedom she has taken for granted in her life. "Could not she, Laura Standish, who from her earliest years of girlish womanhood had resolved that she would use the world as men use it and not as women do" (Phineas 388).

Much to her distress, McMaster explains,

> Laura finds after marriage that she has entered a trap. She has disastrously misjudged her man. Kennedy's self-righteous Calvinism, which has the overtones of Mrs. Proudie's religious zeal, is simply not amenable to her influence (McMaster 44).

More importantly, she has married Robert Kennedy without the least feelings of love for the man. Trollope expands his analysis of this marriage to examine the destructive effect a Victorian marriage may have on the woman as the result of the unrelenting authority of the husband, which includes sexual domination. Although not overtly described by Trollope, the covert sexual implications of Laura's marriage are as disastrous as is the emotional compatibility she had hoped to establish when she so confidently informed Phineas that she would learn to love Mr. Kennedy.

> I have blundered as fools blunder, thinking I was clever enough to pick my footsteps aright without asking counsel form any one. I have blundered and stumbled and fallen, and now I am so bruised that I am not able to stand upon my feet (Phineas 329).

The scene during which her husband perseveres in an attempt to discover just what is causing her frequent headaches is as unrelenting as Mr. Kennedy himself. "Then what is it? You cannot think that I can be happy to hear you complaining of headache every day, - making it an excuse for absolute idleness" (Phineas 336). These headaches, as well as the lack of any children, McMaster explains, come to symbolize the dreariness of her married life and the end of her hopes for any happiness or sexual compatibility with her unbending husband.

Her father, Lord Brentford, is seriously concerned about Laura and the effect marriage is having on her. In a revealing speech to Phineas, he explains, "He is so hard and dry, and what I call exacting. That is just the word for it. Now Laura has never been used to that. With me she always had her own way in everything, and I always found her fit to have it" (Phineas 339). Morse elucidates on this conversation by writing,

> In the Kennedy marriage, Trollope shows the dark implications of patriarchal authority unrestrained by compassion. The destructiveness of male power when it is not tempered by both a sympathetic imagination and a high sense of principle is a major Trollopian concern (Morse 52).

The contrast between husband and father could not be more striking; this is a case of classic role reversal - Kennedy is acting in a manner which would be expected from an overprotective father while Laura's father grants her the independence she logically would expect from a loving husband. Both men seriously damage her; neither had any understanding of what she needed or wanted during important periods in her life. This failure would have serious consequences for the unfortunate woman.

Lady Laura is in a situation unusual for her time; she is under no pressure to marry, either by her father who is largely absent from her life or by the need to escape the often meaningless existence of so many of her contemporaries whose 'real' life did not begin until after their marriage. Part of the difficulty experienced by Laura comes as a result of an impoverished home life; she is without a mother and has only a remote father and a hell-raising brother. The impact of the absent father is developed by Morse when she points out that,

> the indictment that Trollope makes is closer to home than simply a critique of society's values...he specifically points to a failure in family relations. Laura has no mother, and Trollope seems to link this lack of maternal nurturing with the inability of his heroine fully to appreciate the power of love until it is too late (Morse 48).

The value system that Laura learns comes directly from her father, and disaster results when she chooses money over love, a deliberate flouting of the feminine code. She believes she has no choice; since she herself has no money, having

given it all to pay off her brother's debts, she is convinced she has no right to choose love over money, which, as Phineas is very poor, she would be doing if she permitted herself to fall in love with him. Unfortunately, Laura is unaware of the depth of emotion she has for the young man; she is still convinced, at this point in her life, that she will be able to exert control over it, and that events will fall out according to her plans. Phineas himself attempts to understand the motivations behind Laura's behavior,

> She loved politics, and could talk of social science, and had broad ideas of religion, and was devoted to certain educational views. Such a woman would feel that wealth was necessary to her, and would be willing, for the sake of wealth, to put up with a husband without romance (Phineas 157).

Her father's inadequacies as a parent become even more clear in Phineas Redux. Morse explains that "the damage to that public self and to the Standish respectability make him think that Laura should return to her husband, whatever the cost to her private self" (Morse 50). Yet he thinks that "now as ever he had done his duty by his family" (Redux I, 111).

Such a decision, choosing money instead of love, can only lead to tragedy; the importance of love in the Trollopian world cannot be overemphasized. Nardin writes that the word tragedy is not overstating the case; Trollope has "considered the tragic consequences that can result from attempts to destroy a woman's autonomy" (Nardin 208). Laura herself attempts, in a somewhat disjointed fashion, to get this point across to her husband when, after finding her in

tears, he demands to know the reason. She tells him heatedly that, "There are moments, Robert, when even a married woman must be herself rather than her husband's wife. It is so, though you cannot understand it" (Phineas 398). Of course, he does not understand either the words or the emotions behind the words that forcing her to speak to him in such an unwifely fashion. Kincaid explains "As he becomes more grimly conventional, insisting always on her 'duty', she naturally comes to associate marriage itself with imprisonment" (Kincaid 198). The consequences of her marriage and the mistaken beliefs which led her into this untenable situation

Not only Kennedy's conventional view of women, but Laura's as well, dooms him to madness and death, her to lasting unhappiness. Accepting the feminine code, she thinks she can find happiness by obeying it. But she discovers that the code is far more contradictory and unrealistic than she had imagined (Nardin 205). By the time she realizes her marriage to Robert Kennedy is a failure, ... had discovered that she had no love for her husband, that the kind of life which he intended to exact from her was insupportable to her" (Phineas 335) and that, actually, she is in love with Phineas Finn, it is far too late to change events or to alter circumstances. "How would it have been with her had she thrown all ideas of fortune to the winds, and linked her lot to that of the young Phoebes who was lying at her feet? If she had ever loved any one she had loved him" (Phineas 370). Her husband, increasingly puzzled at her seemingly

incomprehensible behavior, accuses her, indirectly, of being in love with Phineas saying,

> You are taking this young man up and putting him on a pedestal and worshipping him, just because he is well-looking, and rather clever and decently behaved. It's always the way with women who have nothing to do, and who cannot be made to understand that they should have duties. They cannot live without some kind of idolatry (Phineas 434).

As he has been the one who removed all her employment, forbidding her company on Sundays, refusing to permit her to run her salons, forcing her to live an isolated life, these accusations seem to Lady Laura more than a little unfair. Laura herself understands all too well what the situation is, "She had married a rich man in order that she might be able to do something in the world; and now that she was this rich man's wife she found that she could do nothing" (Phineas 330).

Unfortunately, her husband, without really understanding the truth of the matter, has come uncomfortably close to articulating it. The love scene in the mountains when she informed Phineas of her decision to marry Robert Kennedy, has assumed, her life, a turning point from which she developed and which she uses as the central event in her mature life, " which is gradually wrecked with a tragic distortion of her personality by her marriage" (Wall 134). Wijesinha writes that "her own acknowledgement of love for him therefore advances with her recognition of the uncongeniality of life with Kennedy; and even if it fuels that

recognition, it was a recognition that had an independent existence, and which could be acted upon because of her relation to Finn" (Wijesinha 168). As her other interests fade away or are crushed by her husband, the love she feels for Phineas grows in intensity; it becomes the reed upon which she leans. Unfortunately, these feelings are not reciprocated by Phineas, who feels only the emotions of friendship and gratitude towards her since her marriage.

Certainly Laura finds the code of conduct expected of her more difficult than she ever realized. Under the laws, she could not divorce Robert Kennedy, as insanity in one partner was not considered acceptable grounds for such an action. She does, indeed, leave him, and does return to her father's house. They live abroad, partially to escape Kennedy's constant badgering, as he is insistent that she return to him. She, of course, has no money, as she had given her estate away prior to her marriage to rescue her brother from his debtors. Under the existing law, Kennedy was under no obligation to support her, and of course, he does not. Laura is fortunate that her father is able to support her; many women in a similar situation had no recourse but to stay in or return to an intolerable marriage since their financial situation did not permit them any method of achieving independent living.

The final blow to her self esteem and to her hopes of any happiness occurs when she returns to England following the death of her husband, hoping to reestablish a relationship with Phineas. She discovers he is married, to Madame Max. This last revelation proves too much for even her resilient character; she

retires from the world, and, in the words of Trollope, "Of poor Lady Laura hardly a word need be said. She lives at Saulsby the life of a recluse, and the old Earl her father is still alive" (Redux 11, 360). The pathos and bitterness lying behind these ew words hardly seem a fitting end to one of Trollope's strongest and most interesting woman. She is condemned by a series of miscalculations on her part and by her failure to recognize her own errors. Trollope does not permit Laura any moral regeneration because she lacks the insight necessary for the transformation to occur. Denton explains this harsh sentence Trollope has given Laura, "Trollope does not suggest that she should return to Kennedy; he does suggest, however, that Laura failed in her development of what he might call a 'moral consciousness" (Denton 7). This term is defined in his Autobiography as being "the power of transcending one's ego-centeredness, and it is indeed a moral quality, for it entails both self-forgetfulness and compassion for states of mind foreign to one's own" (Auto. 80). Trollope further explains,

> She had encountered the jealousy of her husband with scorn, and had then deserted him because he was jealous. And all this she did with a consciousness of her own virtue which was almost sublime as it was ill-founded. She had been wrong. She confessed as much to herself with bitter tears. She had marred the happiness of three persons by the mistake she had made in early life. but it had not yet occurred to her that she had sinned (PR 11, 222).

Nobody, certainly not the society in which she lives, appears capable of or interested in helping her. As a result, Laura goes from being actively involved in a life in which she had some control over her own destiny, to that of being a non-entity, brooding over the past with a non-existent future in front of her. Modern readers can certainly see the injustice in her fate, but Trollope was attempting to deal with themes which do not lend themselves to easy solutions, among them "the more subtle betrayals of selfhood that may be occasioned by love" (Denton 9). However, the reader cannot, despite the ending to her story, overlook the importance of Lady Laura in Trollope's continued developing sympathy towards women. He presents her as a dominant figure in a novel overwise devoted to men, and he follows her throughout two books, delineating her character and her situation with respect and sympathy. Her portrayal is more positive than that of Mrs. Proudie.

The story of Lady Glencora covers all of the Palliser novels. Although she dies in the opening lines of The Duke's Children, her memory is so strong that her husband, the Duke, spends most of the book attempting to come to terms with their marriage and the relationship which existed between them, which began with her extreme reluctance to marry him, as she was passionately in love with another man.

> Jane Nardin explains Trollope's enduring interest in this character,
>
> In his own judgment, Glencora Palliser was among his three greatest creations; significantly, she never appears as the heroine of a romantic

> comedy. She interests Trollope because neither character or fate permits her to play the ingenue's predictable role. As the years pass, Trollope portrays Glencora's acceptance of her unromantic marriage and her attempts to widen her restricted life. One reason Trollope finds Glencora fascinating is that she does get older, for he was convinced that people grow more interesting as they age (Nardin 23).

With Glencora's story, Trollope succeeded in melding together into a coherent and sympathetic whole all the elements of his earlier marriage novels. In Glencora, the reader can see softened elements of Mrs. Proudie as well as a more sympathetic Lady Laura. The relationship between her and the Duke is faintly reminiscent of Emily and Louis, without the melodrama and high tragedy. Glencora, Emily, and Laura were all struggling to achieve the same goal; it was Glencora's fortune to be able to articulate more clearly what she wanted and to achieve, at least in some measure, a degree of control over her life which eluded Laura and Emily, as well as Mrs. Proudie, to the end.

In his Autobiography, Trollope explains his purpose, "It was my study that these people, as they grew in years, should encounter the changes which come upon us all" (Auto 57). Polhemeus expands upon this idea, "He wanted to get away from easy judgments and conventional attitudes toward marriage and to bring out the infinite complexity and the kinetic quality of the Pallisers' relationship" (Polhemus 102).

Glencora's life prior to her marriage is recounted in Can You Forgive Her? She is presented by her creator as a passionately independent-minded young woman who was persuaded, much against her will, to give up her true love, the infamous Burgo Fitzgerald,

> ...certainly among the handsomest of all God's creatures. No more handsome man than Burgo Fitzgerald lived in his days; and this merit at any rate was his, -- though he thought nothing of his own beauty. But he lived ever without conscience, without purpose...(Can 55).

As Glencora is a very wealthy heiress, her immediate family moves quickly to forestall such an unfortunate alliance and re-establish reason, which takes the form of Plantagenet Palliser, nephew and heir to the Duke of Omnium, and certainly one of the less interesting men in England at that time. Booth describes him, "He has the devotion of a dedicated civil servant, but he has no policy, no burning convictions, no disciples who will die for him" (Booth 99).

> And he was very dull... If he was dull as a statesman he was more dull in private life, and it may be imagined that such a woman as his wife would find some difficulty in making his society the source of her happiness (Can 247).

He certainly appears so to his wife who, after being forced to marry him, literally has no idea what to say to him, and he has equally little conversation for her. She describes him to her cousin Alice, who had not attended the wedding, "...for Mr. Palliser has plenty to say in the House, and they declare that he's one of the

few public men who've got lungs enough to make a financial statement without breaking down" (Can 224). There is more than a little irony in her words, for at this point, they have been married for several months, and she is learning to know, but not yet understand, her husband. The lack of any strong romantic feeling in her description of him is a clear indication the marriage, while on the surface appears to be successful, is not an emotional union of two sympathetic individuals. Nardin explains "this novel is an anatomy of women's options in a world controlled by men - a descriptive classification of unattractive possibilities, highlighting the economic, social, and emotional restrictions to which Victorian society subjects women" (Nardin 131).

Palliser's entire life and all his limited passion belongs to the House of Commons, and he is almost consumed by his desire to be named Chancellor of the Exchequer. Glencora finds his interests incomprehensible while he, although in love with her, is either unable or unwilling to bridge the intellectual and emotional gap between them.

> So he married Lady Glencora and was satisfied. The story of Burgo Fitzgerald was told to him, and he supposed that most girls had some such story to tell. He thought little about it, and by no means understood he when she said to him, with all the impressiveness which she could throw into the words, 'You must know that I have really loved him.' 'You must love me now,' he had replied with a smile and then, as regarded his mind, the thing was over (Can 249).

Her rebellion against her fate, explained as being the result of becoming involved in "one of the least romantic marriages in English fiction" (Hall 268), while temporarily stilled, is not forgotten, and her strong protests against her unjust treatment have a familar ring.

> We talk with such horror of the French people giving their daughters in marriage, just as they might sell a house or a field, but we do exactly the same thing ourselves (Can 230)

The emotional coldness and emptiness of her life is illustrated vividly the night she and Alice walk in the ruins of the old church at midnight.

> And there is a particular feeling of cold about the chill of the moon, different from any other cold. It makes you wrap yourself up tight, but it does not make your teeth chatter; and it seems to go into your senses rather than into your bones (Can 283).

It is during this night excursion, a typical romantic foray so frowned upon by her husband, that Glencora confesses to Alice her desire to flee with Burgo, away from the emotional wasteland that is her marriage, and into the passion she remembers that Burgo represents.

> I could have clung to the outside of a man's body, to his very trappings, and loved him ten times better than myself!-ay, even though he had ill-treated me,-if I had been allowed to choose a husband for myself. Burgo would have spent my money, - all that I would have been possible for me to give him. But there would have been something left, and I think that by

> that time I could have won even him to care for me. But with that man---! (Can 286)

At the same time she is confessing this desire, she is filled with self-loathing at the prospect of what she is proposes and the consequences which would rebound, not only on herself, but on her husband. "I loathe myself, and I loathe the thing that I am thinking of" (Can 286). She does not act upon her impulses, recognizing they, indeed, would be suicidal, despite direct pleas from Burgo to elope with him; instead, "she can do no more than vent her bitterness in a stream of angry witticisms" (Nardin 133). But, as Morse explains, her self esteem is shattered; she refers to her as herself as "tortured" by ogres. "Glencora clearly realizes that she has been used by her family and society as chattel" (Morse 13). The parallel which exists between Lady Glencora and the unhappy prostitute who visits Burgo is pointed out by Polhemeus as "illustrating the vulnerability and exploitation of all women in Victorian society, no matter what their social class" (Morse 13).

The emphasis Trollope places on Glencora's character and her internal reactions to her situation, which, after all, is not uncommon serves to indicate the importance he felt regarding the individual and the increasing sympathy he felt toward a particular individual, Lady Glencora. Overton explains this aspect of Trollope's novels when he writes,

> Trollope's view of identity begins, though it doesn't end, with the axiom: 'Every man to himself is the centre of the whole world' (Can 1, 376). The

> force and value of individuality is as important to him as to Mill in social science or Samuel Smiles in popular ethics. He stands with them rather than with the Evangelical belief that the self should be subdued, not accepted, and in this he differs from most Victorian novelists (Overton 86).

Her unhappiness is deepened by her husband's behavior towards her, who spends the evening explaining the finer points of politics to her. Such actions on the part of Palliser is certainly a partial explanation as to why, after several months of marriage, there is yet no prospect of a child. Glencora desperately wants a child, believing it would provide an unbreakable bond between her and her husband, ultimately preventing her from doing something she would later regret. She also believes that a child would, in some way, force Palliser to love her.

> I have never said a word to him that could make him love me. I have never done a thing for him that can make him love me. The mother of his child he might have loved, because of that. Why should he love me? We were told to marry each other and did it. When could he have learned to love me? But, Alice, he requires no loving, either to take it or to give it. I wish it were so with me (Can I, 238).

Her terrible loneliness and unhappiness behind these words is unnoticed by the rest of her family, including, unfortunately, her husband. Palliser, while he does love his wife, is literally incapable of communicating that fact to her in a way she could understand. He is more concerned about monitoring her behavior

-suppressing the "unladylike" slang which she uses and forcing her, with the aid of confederates, to behave in a seemly fashion.

The moment of crisis arrives at Mrs. Monk's party, when Glencora and Burgo have another meeting and Palliser is, at last, forced to recognize the fact his marriage is in serious trouble. When Glencora informs him of her desire to leave him or to die, "How I wish I could die! Plantagenet, I would kill myself if I dared. What is there left for me that I should wish to live?" (Can 11,190), he, with much regret but without hesitation, decides to leave politics and take his wife abroad for the season. While he loses his chance to become the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he and she gain in another, important way. Once he no longer stays in his study until three in the morning, Glencora quickly becomes pregnant, and, in the due course of time, delivers the long-awaited son and heir, despite her stated desire for a daughter. As Nardin points out, "Glencora gains some self-respect by bearing a male heir - who will help perpetuate the social order that has victimized her" (Nardin 141).

While this episode in their lives ends on a positive note, Trollope has not finished his analysis of the Pallisers' essentially ill-matched marriage. Although Palliser may believe that "Burgo Fitzgerald was a myth" (Can 11, 415), McMaster warns, "The myth, like other myths, has its own power, however, and it is to figure as a definitive component in Glencora's consciousness throughout her married life and beyond" (McMaster 34). Wall takes a more positive view of the marriage when he writes,

Glencora's pregnancy resolves the unspoken but apparent tension between them; superficially it gives rise to yet more bickering- Palliser's concern for Glencora's condition being positively old-womanish - but the tetchy idiom of their exchange begins to settle into a pattern that is at bottom relaxed and reassuring. Indeed, the whole style of their marriage is to rest on a kind of institutionalizing of their incompatibility. The absorbing feature of their relationship is that they constantly irritate each other because their temperaments are so opposed but they become ever more necessary to each other for that very reason (Wall 109).

Trollope, in his determination to explore territory beyond the conventional ending of marriage and children, continues Glencora's story in The Prime Minister, published in 1876. Morse points out that the novel is interesting for several reasons since "it focuses attention on the dynamics within the marital relation rather than on the courtship. Since both wives are discontented in their marriages, the idea of marriage as sufficient for feminine fulfillment is questioned" (Morse 86). The central issue in the novel is Glencora's pursuit, not of another man, but rather of a career, that of Mistress of the Robes; thus, "the ideal of feminine self-sacrifice versus Woman's self-realization becomes a crucial issue" (Morse 86). A strong element of competitiveness with her husband, who is also embarked upon his own career as Prime Minister also exists. Her rebellion is considerably less overt in this novel, as Glencora has learned as McMaster explains, "to use obedience as a weapon" (McMaster 105). "I'll obey him to the letter" (Prime 11,11).

An interesting shift in their relationship occurs momentarily when Palliser tells his wife he has been to the Queen to discuss forming his own Cabinet. Her response is instantaneous,

> 'You are going to be Prime Minister!' she exclaimed. As she spoke she threw her arms up, and then rushed into his embrace. Never since their first union had she been so demonstrative either of love or admiration. 'Oh, Plantagenet,' she said, 'if I can only do anything I will slave for you.' (Prime 123).

Unfortunately for Palliser, this adoration does not last long. Very quickly Glencora recognizes her husband's political weakness and realizes that she would have been a more successful Prime Minister than her husband is turning out to be. She is the one much better suited for politics than is he.

> They should have made me Prime Minister, and have let him be Chancellor of the Exchequer. I begin to see the ways of Government now. I could have done all the dirty work. (Prime 155).

In Glencora, as Morse points out, Trollope succeeded in presenting a woman who defied convention, whose nature was "at variance with the feminine ideals of Victorian culture" (Morse 90). Glencora does not face the loneliness and isolation of Lady Laura, nor does she see her marriage collapse as irrevocably as does Emily. Nevertheless, by no stretch of the imagination can the relationship between the Duke and his reluctant wife be considered happy or idyllic. In fact, despite the presence of their children, Julie McMaster comments,

"Trollope does not go into the details of the bedroom, but he gives us enough information to make it a fairly good guess that the Pallisers' sex life has more or less petered out" (McMaster 122).

Glencora was more successful than other Trollopian wives in carving out an identity which did not revolve totally around her husband, but she was not noticeably more successful than they in her attempt to find happiness for herself. She never forgot she had been thwarted in her first love, that pressure had been brought to bear on an inexperienced girl, forcing her to renounce Burgo. While her maturity did permit her to recognize the fact that indeed, Burgo was unsuitable and their union would have been a disaster, still, her resentment over her lack of control in her own life was an ongoing source of unhappiness for the Duchess. "And the Duchess referred to her own early days when she had loved, and to the great ruin which had come upon her heart when she had been severed from the man she had loved" (Duke 10). While she lay ill at Reading, she told her husband, 'She had never', she said, even tried to remember what arrangements had been made by lawyers, but she hoped that Mary might be so circumstance, that if her happiness depended on marrying a poor man, want of money need not prevent it'" (Duke 10). She was determined her daughter would never face the unhappiness she had been forced to endure, and, to that end, she left her considerable fortune to Mary, in the hopes that her daughter would be able to find the happiness which had eluded her.

Far from being a sanctuary, marriage, in many cases, turned into a battlefield where women struggled to assert themselves or attempted merely to maintain their individuality. Anthony Trollope's expanding consciousness upon this subject enabled him to write novels in which he demonstrated a growing awareness of the difficulties middle and upper class women faced in a male-governed institution which allowed little opportunity for growth and less chance to question its "rightness".

His depiction of marriage underwent some drastic revisions as he grew older; certainly the portrait of Mrs. Proudie differs significantly from that of Emily and Glencora. The central consciousness in his later novels lies with his female characters and the seriousness of their lives. The reader enjoys Mrs. Proudie primarily because she is such a recognizable character, or stereotype, but her struggle engages neither the reader's sympathy nor understanding. The reverse proves to be the case with Emily and Glencora, although Emily, much as Mrs. Proudie, does not prove to be a sympathetic character. However, the reader believes in her struggle and understands her intense desire to exert some control over her life, despite the fact she is married. Lady Glencora also struggles mightily but does succeed in finding a measure of happiness and peace. Her problems were not those of Emily and Laura; Palliser does finally recognize the selfhood of his wife and certainly no question of the abuse suffered by both Laura and Emily ever arises in their marriage.

ENDNOTE TO CHAPTER FIVE

Part of the problem faced by women in a disastrous marriage were the unyielding marriage laws which, prior to 1857, effectively forbade divorce or even, except in extreme circumstances, annulment, for either men or women. Under original laws, which had been in place since the 1600's, a married woman had very limited rights. Any property she might own automatically, upon marriage, belonged to her husband; the same was true for money she may have brought into the marriage in the form of a dowry. "...the law awarded to husbands nearly absolute powers over wives, and even more tremendous powers over children" (Best 302).

While divorce was not easily obtained by either party, certainly men found the justice system more sympathetic to their needs than did women. George Eliot Howard, writing about matrimonial instituns, explains that prior to 1857, a date at which laws began to change, notably with the passage of the Married Women's Property Laws,

> ...marriage, in theory, continued to be absolutely indissoluble. Only by giving bond not to marry again could a person secure even a judicial separation. No matter how grave the offense or how notorious the breach of nuptial laws, the parties in most legal respects were chained for life. At most they might be suffered to dwell apart (Howard 102)

Men did have the option of turning unsatisfactory wives out of the house or of sending them home to their parents; women, however, were forced to obtain a judicial separation. Kept in the Dark vividly depicts this state of affairs; Cecilia Western, happily married one day, finds herself back with her mother, turned out by her upset husband because she deliberately, after much soul-searching, had not informed him of an engagement occurring prior to their marriage, knowing this information would deeply upset him and possibly destroy their marriage.

After the passage of civil divorce laws, in the late 1850's either party could apply for a judicial separation on the grounds of adultery, cruelty, or desertion which continued for two or more years. Husbands could sue for divorce on the grounds of adultery by their wives; no proof or witnesses were needed to support this claim. The outraged husband merely had to establish the fact of mutual feelings between the parties, and that there had been an opportunity for the consummation for the relationship to have taken place. If the wife should deny the charge, the onus of proof rested entirely upon her. Even after the passage of the Marriage Laws in 1857, which made civil divorce possible, a woman had to prove her husband had committed adultery, cruelty, deserted her for two or more years, or had performed bigamy, rape or unnatural offenses before she could obtain a divorce. A curious note in this law disallows divorce on the grounds of insanity or criminal action. Drunkenness also was insufficient reason for a divorce unless the wife could prove that she was in grave physical danger as a result of her husband's intoxication. Another purpose of the 1857 bill was to

attempt to provide some relief and protection for an abandoned wife, allowing her to apply to the courts for an order protecting her property and her earnings; thus her status would be the same as if she had obtained a judicial separation.

In 1866, the Matrimonial Causes Act gave the courts the right to insist the husband pay his wife an allowance once the marriage was finally dissolved. Unfortunately, this allowance was adjusted only if the husband's income decreased; no provisions existed for an increase if his earnings should improve. A custom developed, known as the marriage settlement which, as Reed explains,

> ...much modified the operations of the law. The wedding or marriage settlement is as much a part of the business as the wedding breakfast or anything else connected with the transaction. In effect, the marriage settlement was designed to protect the women's rights, which the law denied (Reed 501)

The Married Women Property Acts of 1870 and 1882 mitigated, to a large extent, the unfairness of the existing law by stating "under its provisions a woman no longer surrendered all of her property rights. It was a crucial step in defining a fundamental freedom within as well as outside the state of matrimony" (Black 190). However, as Howard points out, "the protection order has been of little avail" (Howard 116). Accordingly, in 1886, another law calling for the maintenance of his family by the husband if the husband and wife are separated was finally passed. This law proved to be more effective than previous efforts had been since punishment in the form of a jail sentence could be given to the erring husband if he should neglect his weekly payments. A law passed in 1878 also

attempted to offer women more protection than they heretofore were given. If the courts felt the wife was at risk, she could legally leave her husband, taking the children with her, and he would continue to be responsible for their maintenance. As a result of the changes occurring, situations developed where the parties found themselves in a form of legal limbo. The legal status of some marriages was unclear, particularly if the women had been deserted by their husbands.

Of course a gap always exists between the law and what actually occurs. Trollope deals with some of the problems and the adverse psychological effects bad marriages had on the women involved. In these novels, he demonstrates clearly that separation and divorce were not common occurrences and that both parties, particularly the women, suffered emotional as well as social damage and distress when such an event actually occurred. As one critic wrote, "women, who are victims, actually seem guilty and lack the words to make themselves heard" (Fraisse 126). Guilty or innocent, divorced women faced a censorious, unforgiving society and frequently found themselves outcasts.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

"The quintessential Victorian" proved to be a good representative of a period characterized more by change than by stability. Trollope's novels are curiously modern in many of their themes, especially in his treatment of women. In an era where women were perceived by their society to be second-class citizens, Trollope succeeded in making heroines or major protagonists of a group of women whose individuality and personalities made them, not so much outcasts of their society, but rather representatives of the many diverse elements which compose any society. Several of his novels focused on single women, people who were usually ignored or considered merely in the context of novels dealing with married couples or with men. Many of these novels had as their titles the names of women, including Miss MacKenzie, Lady Anna, Rachel Ray, Nina Balatka, and Linda Tressel. His attitude towards single women underwent a change as his writing career progressed. His earlier works tended to use a single woman as a subplot to the major story - as can be seen in The MacDermots of Ballycloran. By the late 1860's and 1870's, single women dominated their stories. Miss MacKenzie is merely an outstanding representative of the author's changing sympathy toward this part of the population. While Margaret does marry at the end of her story, Trollope succeeded admirably in presenting, with sympathy and

compassion, the struggles of an individual who seemingly had no place in a male-dominated society. By the time he wrote Phineas Finn and Phineas Redux, he had created a strong-minded, independent woman, Madame Max, who held her own in her society and successfully managed not only her own life, but helped those around her.

The "fallen woman" traditionally faced censure as well as outrage from the more "respectable" members of her society and rarely was she forgiven or accepted by those around her. Trollope altered his perception of these women as his writing career continued. While Euphemia MacDermot dies, Caroline Brattle returns home. By the time An Eye For An Eye appeared, Katherine not only does not die, she moves to France while the blame for the situation falls squarely on Fred, her seducer. The man is responsible; the woman is no longer viewed as a sinner, but rather as a victim. Since the time period in which Trollope wrote tended to see these women as sinners, not victims, his viewpoint, while widely accepted today, casts new light on an author who could challenge conventional wisdom and present a situation in which the man was so clearly at fault.

Sexual misconduct did not occur only outside the confines of marriage; sometimes married women found themselves in an untenable situation, due in part to the complicated Marriage and Divorce laws in England at that time. Lady Fitzgerald's problem forms only the backdrop in a novel which deals with a series of relationships, usually between unsuitable individuals. The Belton Estate presents Mrs. Askerton more in the forefront of the novel, but, while she is

presented sympathetically, she still is the subplot to Clara's love affairs with two very different men. When Trollope wrote Dr. Wortle's School, the Peacocks' marital problems formed the basis for the story. No hint of censure attached itself to these women by their creator; he understood very clearly, as apRoberts wrote, the value of situational ethics, judging each situation upon its own merits rather than issuing blanket condemnation for apparent sins or falls from grace.

The women presented in his novels dealing with life following the wedding include the stereotypic Mrs. Proudie, a sexual shrew who badly managed her husband's life. Lady Laura, who was created during the novelist's second period, proves to be a striking indication of Trollope's increasing sympathy towards married women and a growing realization of his part that perhaps marriage was not the solution to all problems. Laura finds herself, through her own choice, married to a man for whom she feels no love and little respect. While she made her own decisions, her creator treats her gently, clearly outlining the reasons for her unhappiness. She is, of course, largely to blame, but certainly the ultimate failure of the marriage is partially the fault of her emotionally abusive husband. Emily Travalyn, unlikable as she is, shows another side of married life. She chose freely and willingly to marry Louis because she love him, but she found herself unable and/or unwilling to deal with his unrealistic demands and his apparent need for complete servitude on her part. Trollope uses a difficult situation as

the basis for He Knew He Was Right and succeeds in building not only sympathy but also admiration for Emily as she pursues what she firmly believes are her rights.

One of Trollope's most popular characters, Lady Glencora, whose story spans the second and third period of his writing career, demonstrates, perhaps more clearly than any other single person in his novels, his increasing sympathy towards rebellious women who find marriage not so much "happily ever after" but rather a series of complex problems which defy easy or pleasant solutions. Lady Glencora evolves from a young, inexperienced girl forcibly separated from the man she loves and pushed into a loveless marriage to a man she hardly knows to a strong-minded, independent woman who capably manages her own life despite the adverse circumstances.

The perception of Trollope as a conventional nineteenth-century author has altered in the latter part of the twentieth century, especially with such critics as Jane Nardin, Bill Overton, and James Kincaid. No longer concerned only with plot development, these critics, in keeping with the trends of modern criticism, focused on the psychology of Trollope's characters. Nardin, in particular, concentrated on his women, demonstrating that they were more than the traditionally perceived "little brown girls". His maturation as an author can be seen if his books (forty-seven novels in all) are read in chronological order. Character development stands as one of the significant changes which occurred as Trollope entered his second and especially his third period. Trollope himself was not

particularly interested in literary theory, or so his contemporaries accused him, notably Henry James. However, reading his Autobiography undercuts this belief, as it stands as a very straightforward account of what he was attempting to do as an author and what in the literary world was important to him. Modern critics have argued that this book is an excellent example of literary theory. The common perception, fostered, in part, by Trollope himself, is one of a man writing novels according to a timetable, so many words per quarter hour. Yet, to accuse him of being merely a "novel machine" obviously does him a severe injustice. A mere machine would not have been capable of creating the vast number of characters which populate his novels. While the plots may, at times, repeat themselves, the characters do not. Instead, he develops many diverse personalities within the pages of his books, realistically portrayed as they struggle with relationships and the challenges such involvement entail.

Changes in Trollopian criticism have occurred over the years. The early critics, writing in the 1920's, viewed him as a minor Victorian writer whose women fulfilled the standards of the feminine ideals - they married appropriate young men and produce children. If they were unhappy, it probably was their own fault. Male characters served as the focus for this criticism; women were largely ignored or treated as merely subservient to the important male characters. Ruth apRoberts, writing in the 1970's, analyzed Trollope's novels from a different perspective - concentrating on the psychological development of his characters with an emphasis on situational ethics. Critics no longer focused exclusively on the

plot - the idea of character-driven stories became an important element in critical thinking. This development gained increasing strength thanks to critics such as Jane Nardin, Bill Overton, James Kincaid, and Robert Tracy. Nardin especially, with her book, He Knew She Was Right, emphasized femine criticism, successfully pointing out that Trollope's women had been stronger and more developed than had been commonly thought. The question "What should a woman do with her life?" moved to the center of consideration when his novels were reviewed; certainly Trollope presents the problem in many forms and from several different perspectives in his novels dealing with women.

He, of course, had his prejudices also -- and one of the strongest were women who presented themselves as blatant feminists, seeking such radical measures as giving women the right to vote or advocating careers outside the home for both single and married women. Even his politically active female characters, such as Lady Laura and Madame Max, assure their listeners they have no interest in a political career or in having the right to vote. By the end of his career, however, Trollope does cause Lady Glencora, in sheer desperation at her husband's general ineptitude as Prime Minister, to exclaim that she wishes she could be Prime Minister as she knows she could do a much better job. And the reader, after viewing Palliser's struggles with the position, can only agree with her.

Trollope traveled a long way from Mrs. Proudie in Barchester Towers to Lady Glencora in the Palliser novels, from unsympathetic stereotypes to sympathetic

portrayals of troubled or unhappy women in difficult and challenging situations both within the confines of marriage or outside in an essentially male-dominated world. His novels reflect a growing awareness on the part of the author that all was not well in the women's world and his portrayals of struggling women only serve to underscore and to present critically the problems they faced.

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