MARRIAGE AND COURTSHIP IN ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S NOVELS

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2009

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A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

2009

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr Jane Baron Nardin, for her patient supervision and encouragement in the writing of this thesis. I am deeply indebted to her recommendations, comments and insight, as well as her willingness to read through my drafts even during her vacations.

I also wish to thank Dr Susan Ang, who lent me her copy of the BBC's *The Pallisers* and thus convinced me to work on the novels of Anthony Trollope.

I am also grateful to the staff of the NUS Library, who sourced for a number of obscure reference texts on my behalf.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my family for their support.

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Summary

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) wrote over forty novels during his lifetime, many of which are concerned with marriage and courtship, which in turn were heavily influenced by the Victorian ideologies of love and separate spheres. In this thesis, I examine how Trollope addresses three tenets of Victorian ideology in his novels: first, that marrying without love is immoral; second, that wives should submit to their husbands; third, that a successful marriage hinges on complete adherence to the ideologies of love and separate spheres.

This thesis examines a selection of Trollope's novels, written between 1855-1880. The first chapter focuses on Trollope's treatment of mercenary marriage. It aims to show that Trollope does not, in fact, condemn his characters for marrying without love, but rather, criticises the love ideal for demeaning such unions. The second chapter examines the inherent flaws of gender ideology through Trollope's depiction of marital strife. While he does not attack gender ideology outright, he reveals the ironical truth that wifely submission is actually dependent on a husband's rationality, sanity and morality. The third chapter focuses on how Trollope questions the relevance of ideology to marriage through his depiction of ideologically-incorrect yet successful marriages. The final chapter examines the unconventional marriage of the Pallisers, whose marriage flouts conventional beliefs but is yet regarded as a success.

Unlike Robert Polhemus who argues that Trollope tries to affirm the values of his society (*Changing World* 91), I contend that Trollope challenges Victorian beliefs about romantic love and the ideology of separate spheres by revealing their inherent inconsistencies as well as the tensions between reality and ideology. While appearing

to affirm the conventional beliefs of his day, Trollope in fact implies that neither conformity nor non-conformity to gender ideology and society's beliefs about love guarantees marital success. Rather than offering any easy solutions to marital problems, he appears to suggest that marriage is a essentially a private relationship which must be worked out by the individuals involved, instead of relying on an arbitrary set of rules imposed by society.

Introduction

In the past fifty years, increasing attention has been given to the tensions within Anthony Trollope's works. John Hagen makes a case for what he calls "The Divided Mind of Anthony Trollope", saying that the author's "instinctive or emotional conservatism continually clashes with . . . the more rational, utilitarian, and liberal bent of his temperament" (2). While Hagan regards the resulting contradictions as a flaw, others consider them key aspects of the author's novels. Robert Polhemus writes that it is "the conflict between his emotional conservatism and his intellectual, pragmatic liberalism, which animates so much of his writing" (*Changing World* 11), while Bill Overton argues "for the importance and value" of Trollope's "complexity of presentation" (2). James Kincaid notes the central importance of elusiveness and ambiguity, saying that "equivocal heroism and equivocal balance . . . make up the world of the Trollope novel" (28).

Oftentimes, the tensions in Trollope's novels are reflective of the discrepancies between ideology and reality, particularly in the areas of marriage and courtship. In *The Changing World of Anthony Trollope*, Polhemus writes that Trollope "expresses the Victorian wish to make marriage a part of ideal love, but in every marriage that he imagines he proves the vanity of that wish" (120). In his chapter 'Love and the Victorians', he draws upon *The Small House at Allington* (1862), *Rachel Ray* (1863), *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864), *Miss Mackenzie* (1865), and *The Claverings* (1866) to illustrate how Trollope's novels are shaped by the "tension between the love ideal and the real love behaviour of people" (91), focusing on how each novel functions as a critique of the Victorian obsession with romantic love.

This thesis intends to extend Polhemus' single-chapter study on love, courtship and marriage by analysing the ways in which Trollope deals with the tensions between reality and the Victorian ideologies of love and gender roles. While Polhemus believes that Trollope tries (unsuccessfully) to affirm the values of his society (*Changing World* 91), other critics propose that Trollope instead exposes the flaws of Victorian beliefs in a manner that will not directly offend their adherents "by seeming to endorse the ideology of the readership he wrote for, and then quietly allowing its shortcomings to appear" (Overton 163). Trollope's critiques are evident to those who are alert to them, but they are rarely obtrusive. Kincaid notes that the "major action [which supports conventional beliefs] is usually itself undisturbed; the complications come from the rhetorical directions given by the narrator and the often subversive or at least critical subplots" (24). Hence, a reader who focuses on the main plot alone is likely to believe that ideology is affirmed, while one who consciously looks for patterns and links between the main plot and subplots will discover otherwise. The tensions between ideology and reality in Trollope's novels are often evident only if the reader is looking for them.

Trollope's novels often explore a variety of scenarios involving marriage and courtship in Victorian society. There is the question of mercenary or 'prudent' marriages and their outcomes; the ideal of marrying primarily for love; the assumption that romantic love is the cornerstone of a successful marriage; and the behaviour of husbands and wives to one another. This thesis aims to examine how Trollope tackles these issues over the course of several novels, as well as how each novel supports or undermines (or appears to do both) the Victorian ideologies of love and gender roles.

Victorian Ideologies

It is necessary first to establish the ideologies that Trollope was working with. Marriage and courtship in the Victorian age were shaped by two intertwined beliefs — the ideology of love and the ideology of separate spheres. Both of them were highly dogmatic and restrictive: the only 'right' way to live life was to do so by following prescriptions which ignored life's complexities.

One fact which must be recognised is that the concept of marrying for love was a relatively recent development. Stephanie Coontz notes that the Victorians were "the first people in history to try to make marriage the pivotal experience in people's lives and married love the principal focus of their emotions, obligations, and satisfactions" — the emphasis on love-based marriages was a "radical social experiment" and a drastic break from tradition (177). Prior to the idealisation of love-based unions, marrying for wealth, social status or political connections was *de rigeur* and hardly worth raising an eyebrow at. Coontz stresses that from the early Middle Ages through to the eighteenth century, marriage was primarily based on economic factors (6). In fact, the notion that love ought to be the main reason for getting married was "considered a serious threat to social order" as love was deemed too "fragile and irrational" to be a secure basis for such a central economic, social and political institution (15). Marital love, which might develop *after* marriage, was regarded as a bonus, rather than a necessity (10).

However, such practical attitudes towards marriage were beginning to be eroded in the seventeenth century by cultural, political and economic changes in Europe which encouraged individuals "to choose their mates on the basis of personal affection" (Coontz 7). By the end of the eighteenth century, for the first time in five

thousand years, marriage had become regarded as an essentially private relationship between two individuals, rather than part of a system of political and economic alliances (146). The Victorians' horror of so-called 'mercenary marriages', 'prudent marriages' or 'marriages of convenience' was but one reflection of this changed focus of marriage. Claudia Nelson notes that there was a "cultural insistence, often rather desperate in tone," that marriage should mean a lifetime of loving devotion to one's spouse (28). The new love religion of 19th century England transformed the way people viewed marriage: prudent marriages which were accepted and even commonplace three generations ago now became frowned upon.

The Victorian ideology of love exalted romantic love above all else. It was in direct contrast to the Enlightenment view of love which regarded it as a secondary emotion that "developed slowly out of admiration, respect, and appreciation of someone's good character" (Coontz 184). Walter E. Houghton writes that the Victorians regarded romantic love as the "supreme experience of life" as well as "its end and object — the very means by which the soul is saved" (373). It is a "spiritual and eternal" state that cannot be explained rationally (Polhemus, *Changing World* 90), and has the power to "strengthen and apparently purify the whole nature" (Houghton 376). The Victorians regarded it as the most important criterion in selecting a mate: it formed the basis of marriage and it was immoral to marry for any other reason than love (Coontz 179). A person can have only one true love, which lasts throughout one's lifetime, whether or not one's feelings are reciprocated (Polhemus, *Changing World* 90). It "continues throughout life, animating husband and wife no less than the lover and his lass" (Houghton 375). In simple terms, the love ideology taught that one must marry for love alone, and love will ensure marital success and happiness.

What played out in reality was rather more complicated, and less starry-eyed. The idea of marrying only for love was not a practical one, particularly for the upper classes. Joan Perkin points out that aristocratic women had "a coolly realistic view of marriage" and "rarely had high expectations of romance or sexual fidelity in marriage" (54,55). Their marriages resembled the traditional marriages of old, in the sense that they were often contracted primarily for social, economic and political reasons (50), rather than romantic love. Even though middle-class women placed a greater emphasis on romantic love within a marriage than their aristocratic sisters, they too married for economic and social reasons (236).

The love ideal ignored the reality that marriage was a matter of survival for most women. 'Prudent' marriages were decried as immoral but were nevertheless a necessity for many women who regarded marriage as "the only alternative to destitution or prostitution or, . . . genteel dependence on relatives" (Coontz 185). Consequently, they were willing to give up their romantic ideals in return for economic security, and to marry without loving (185). A number of Trollope's heroines — including Caroline Waddington, Julia Brabazon, Clara Amedroz, Laura Standish, Mabel Grex and Nora Rowley — are confronted with this choice, and his depictions of their plight are invariably sympathetic. Although Clara and Nora are eventually granted a conventional, happily-ever-after marriage with their lovers, Trollope suggests that they are the exception, rather than the rule.

The love ideal was inextricably linked to Victorian gender ideology which was dominated by the doctrine of separate spheres. Life was divided into the public and private spheres, with the former being dominated by men, and the latter by women. Husbands and wives were supposed to play different but complementary roles so that

"when [the] two spheres were brought together in marriage, they produced a perfect, well-rounded whole" (Coontz 156). This doctrine was in turn based on the belief that men and women have fundamentally different natures. Men were active, rational, intellectual, aggressive and earthly creatures, while women were passive, emotional, moral and spiritual beings without sexual desire (Coontz 156; Basch 5-8). It was accepted that, given such inherent differences, men and women were naturally suited to different activities.

The Victorians believed that a wife's rightful place was within the domestic sphere. Marriage was the only career open to her, and she was the manager of her household, subordinate only to her husband (Perkin 248). A wife was responsible for the "moral tone" of her home and was expected to wield a positive influence over her husband "by exuding virtues such as purity, devotion, and selflessness" (Nelson 27); her primary role was to make the home so irresistibly pleasant to her husband that he would prefer to remain at home rather than to go to the pub (25). Françoise Basch describes the Victorian woman's role as an essentially reactive one: she "can only justify her presence on earth by dedicating herself to others" (5). Sexually innocent, her feminine purity was supposed to transform man's carnal desires into a motivation to defend and provide for his family (Nelson 19; Basch 8-9).

In contrast, the ideal Victorian husband was active and assertive: he was "the risk-taker, the protector, the partner toughened by contact with the world" who would "provide a safe place for woman to carry out her [domestic] duties" (Nelson 6-7). He was responsible for providing for his family — an inability to do so was considered a loss of manhood (Coontz 188). He was also expected to rule the household by inspiring — instead of demanding — the obedience and submission of his wife (188),

who in turn was to yield to her husband's superior intellect and submit to his God-given authority over her. He was also supposed to "comport himself as a gentleman", "behave toward his womenfolk with gentleness and consideration" and "guard his speech so as not to give vent to coarse language" (Nelson 34).

Closely linked to the roles of husband and wife was the Victorian idealisation of the home as "a source of virtues and emotions which were nowhere else to be found" (Houghton 343). It was a refuge from the immorality of the public sphere as well as a bulwark against the massive changes taking place in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Flanders 5; Houghton 344; Nelson 6). Women, safely protected and ensconced within this fortress, became "the focus of existence, the source of refuge and retreat, [and] also of strength and renewal" (Flanders 5) while men were to regard the home as a sacred haven where they could "escape the materialistic preoccupations of the workaday world of wages" (Coontz 156).

In reality, Victorian gender ideology was fundamentally reductive, forcing both men and women into limited roles which did not always reflect their whole nature. Judith Flanders observes that domestic advice manuals of the day, which reinforced the doctrine of separate spheres, suffered from "flights of imagination" (106); the same may be said for the numerous books on etiquette and behaviour which proliferated in the Victorian period. Nelson, in particular, argues that the Victorians' writings on marriage and family life were a blend "of what they had observed with what they longed for" (14). This gap between rhetoric and reality stems perhaps from what Carolyn Dever calls the "blatant instabilities" of the doctrine of separate spheres: among other things, it ignored "many aspects of female personhood . . . in favour of an egregiously narrow interpretation of women's social options" (162).

Dever argues that ideologies of love and gender were "an attempt to *shape* Victorian culture in the image of . . . a very particular bourgeois norm" (162, emphasis in original). These ideals were essentially middle-class constructs which sought to regulate and codify behaviour; they assumed a certain level of economic ability and social standing in those who sought to abide by them. Not everyone could live up to these ideals, bearing in mind the fact that only twenty percent of the population in the Victorian period belonged to the middle and upper classes (Baxter qtd. in Perkin 118). Nelson points out that the need to support one's family drove many lower-class women out to work for other households, rather than stay within their own homes as housekeepers and moral guides for their own husbands (16).

While Overton argues that "it isn't true . . . that Trollope establishes a deliberately and continuously critical relation to ideology" (13), I believe that Trollope *does* deliberately critique Victorian ideologies of love and gender. The tensions between ideology and reality underline Trollope's depiction of marriage and courtship, even as the surface structure of his novels appears to validate his society's beliefs concerning romantic love and gender roles. I contend that underlying Trollope's later fiction is a deliberate, sustained critique of the Victorian ideologies of love, marriage and gender. While writing novels that appear to support conventional beliefs, Trollope is in fact revealing their impracticability in real life.

In this thesis, I examine how Trollope addresses three tenets of Victorian ideology: first, that marrying without love is immoral; second, that wives should submit to their husbands; third, that a successful marriage hinges on absolute conformity to the ideologies of love and gender. Trollope challenges many of the assumptions of the ideologies of love and separate spheres by portraying realistic

situations that expose their inadequacies and flaws. He does not offer any easy solutions, but instead appears to suggest that at the end of the day, marriage is a private relationship between two individuals who must work things out between themselves instead of relying on an arbitrary set of rules imposed by society. Overton writes that "one of the poles in Trollope's fiction is his commitment to the autonomy of the individual person" (85) — and this autonomy arguably includes the freedom to work out any problems within one's marriage in a manner that suits the couple best, instead of blindly following the dictates of ideology.

Chapter 1: Mercenary Marriages

The term ‘mercenary marriage’ is most often used to describe a marriage in which one or both parties marry for advancement in wealth or social position. However, in the Victorian era, the term could also refer to any marriage which was not based on love but on practical reasons. For the purpose of this thesis, I define the term ‘mercenary marriage’ as any marriage in which either one or both parties marry primarily for prudential reasons (such as survival, advancement or preservation of wealth or social status), rather than romantic love.

Hagan asserts that Trollope’s treatment of mercenary marriages endorses conventional Victorian morality: “Trollope’s moral is obvious and always the same: marriages based solely or principally on mercenary ambitions, a desire for title or position, or other interested motives, are evil and can have only evil results” (21). He supports his claim with a list of female characters — including Laura Kennedy and Julia Ongar — who “in marrying (or seeking to marry) for prudential reasons rather than love, invariably doom themselves to lifelong misery or disgrace” (20-21). However, such a reading of the various mercenary marriages portrayed by Trollope is simplistic. While the plot structure of novels such as *The Claverings* (1866) appears to support Hagan’s argument, a closer examination of the other elements at work within these novels will show that Trollope does not truly proffer a “moral” about mercenary marriages in general, but rather, questions the Victorian ideology of love. Moreover, he often shows that mercenary marriages may not necessarily have or deserve evil outcomes. The Pallisers’ marriage is a case in point: both Glencora and Plantagenet “had married without loving” (*CYFH* 624; ch. 59) but this does not spell utter disaster for their marriage or social position.

In this chapter, I shall argue that Trollope is not primarily concerned with mercenary marriages *per se*. Rather, the issue of mercenary marriages is a smokescreen for the real focus of Trollope's critique — the Victorian worship of love from which society's disdain for such marriages originates. The idealisation of romantic love dictated that "it was both foolish and wrong to marry without love" as loveless marriages result in "personal misery and make one or both partners cruel and selfish and cold" (Houghton 383). Yet, for many women, marriage was necessary for their very survival (Coontz 179). In Trollope's mercenary marriages, the tension between ideology and reality surfaces through the interplay of characterisation, plot and subplots, resulting in a more complicated discourse of mercenary marriages than Hagan indicates. Instead of being an end in itself, Trollope's overt criticism of mercenary marriage is actually a façade for a more subtle critique of the love ideal and its potentially disastrous consequences.

I will analyse Trollope's portrayal of the circumstances surrounding three mercenary marriages and their results to disprove Hagan's claim that Trollope's depiction of marriage reveals an "acceptance of conventional morality" (21). The marriages that will be discussed in this chapter are those of the Ongars (*The Claverings*), the Kennedys (*Phineas Finn, Phineas Redux*) and the Crosbies (*The Small House at Allington*). In each of these marriages, characters who marry for prudential reasons are apparently punished by being denied the enjoyment of the things — wealth, status, influence and connections — which motivated them to marry. However, I contend that this pattern of 'crime' and 'punishment' actually exposes the failings and injustice of the Victorian ideology of love while ostensibly supporting it.

The Claverings

The main plot of *The Claverings* (1866) appears to validate society's disapproval of mercenary marriages by punishing Julia Brabazon, who jilts her lover Harry Clavering and marries the rich Lord Ongar, with a sadistic husband, a tarnished reputation and the irrevocable loss of her true love. The 'moral' is explicit: Marry for money and you will suffer despite your newly-acquired wealth. However, the novel's apparent conformity to Victorian ideology is undermined by Trollope's characterisation of Julia and Harry, as well as the two subplots involving Hugh and Hermione Clavering, and Fanny Clavering and her suitor Mr Saul.

Julia is shown to be trapped in a situation where it is impossible for her to fulfil the demands of the love ideal. Although she is accused of having "sold herself" (*Claverings* 169; ch. 16), Trollope makes it clear that she is forced into a loveless marriage because of her circumstances: she is poor and homeless, yet high-born and therefore expected to marry well. Her acceptance of Lord Ongar is clearly the outcome of pecuniary necessity: "Were not all men and women mercenary upon whom devolved the necessity of earning their bread?" (32; ch. 3). Jane Nardin points out that Julia's 'offense' in marrying for money is excusable, "considering the pressure to marry prudently to which upper-class women were subjected" (*He Knew She Was Right* 157). Yet, Julia is mercilessly castigated by both herself and other characters for a marriage which she is forced into by the demands of her society.

Trollope exposes the impracticalities of the Victorian love ideal and how it overlooks the fact that "many women saw marriage as the only alternative to destitution or prostitution or, . . . genteel dependence on relatives" (Coontz 185). Julia speaks for all economically dependent women when she declares to Harry: "Love is

not to be our master. You can choose, as I say; *but I have had no choice,—no choice but to be married well, or to go out like a snuff of a candle*. I don't like the snuff of a candle, and, therefore, I am going to be married well" (*Claverings* 5; ch. 1, emphasis added). Trollope reveals the harsh reality: women are forced into loveless marriages because society leaves them with no other choice. In the real world, love is a luxury, secondary to physical and financial survival. Far from reviling Julia's decision "to be married well", Trollope's compassionate portrayal of her circumstances and her character instead questions his society's attitude towards love and marriage which not only condemns self-preservation as immoral but also places women in a 'lose-lose' situation.

Trollope also depicts the intense social pressure to conform to ideology. Despite never having met her, Cecilia Burton abuses Julia with a string of invectives: "Horrible woman; wicked, wretched creature!" (*Claverings* 294; ch. 28) while Florence denounces her as a "sadly vicious" woman who is "a creature so base that she had sold herself . . . for money and a title" (169; ch. 16). Their condemnation reveals the self-righteous and presumptuous attitude fostered by the love ideal. What is perhaps more disturbing is Julia's self-condemnation as "one who had made herself vile and tainted among women" (131; ch. 13) when all she did was to ensure her survival. Moreover, she likens herself to Judas Iscariot (127; ch. 12), implying that her betrayal of the love ideal is analogous to his betrayal of Christ. This incredible suggestion reveals the exaggerated importance of the love ideal. While Trollope never suggests that love itself is unimportant, he does indicate that its elevation by the Victorians into a quasi-religion is not only ridiculous but potentially destructive.

Julia's 'sin' of marrying for money is ostensibly punished by the loss of Harry to Florence and the social ostracism she suffers: there is no question in the minds of the major characters in the novel that Julia "deserved" to be "friendless and alone" (*Claverings* 76-77; ch. 8). However, Overton notes that Julia is ostracised not because she married Lord Ongar, but because of groundless rumours that she cuckolded her husband (159). He points out that her damaged reputation is due to the machinations of the insidious Count Pateroff and the cruel Sir Hugh Clavering, and that "to have the ways of society vindicated through [their] activities" is highly discomforting (160). Although Julia's own betrayal of the love ideal by marrying Lord Ongar could have turned public opinion against her by making people more willing to believe the worst of her, this does not change the fact that the rumours of her infidelity are unfounded. Julia's social ostracism is the result of human malice rather than a punishment for marrying prudently.

Moreover, critics have repeatedly pointed out that Julia's loss of Harry to Florence is not much of a loss: Overton feels that "it is difficult to think of Harry personally as anything but a poor prospect either for Julia or Florence" (160) while P.D. Edwards states categorically that "Julia is too good for Harry" (71), rather than the other way around. Theodore Burton's opinion of Harry after the latter betrays Florence by engaging himself to Julia is perhaps the most accurate appraisal by a character within the novel: "the loss of such a lover as that is infinitely a lesser loss than would be the gain of such a husband" (*Claverings* 329; ch. 31). The reader is inclined to agree with Theodore, particularly when "no real attempt is made to identify us with the hero [Harry], and the defences of him usually seem perfunctory" (Kincaid 148).

In fact, the narrator's weak defence of Harry's appalling propensity for making love to pretty women, "usually meaning no harm" (*Claverings* 153; ch. 15), condemns him in the eyes of the reader even as it purports to excuse him. Harry's lovemaking is far from innocent in a society where women are expected to live for love, and can only love one man in their lifetime. By making love to both Julia and Florence, he effectively defrauds them of their affections and supposedly condemns at least one woman to a lifetime of unrequited love. Trollope highlights the double standards of the love ideal — its leniency towards men and its harshness towards women — through Theodore's perspective: "there [can] be no punishment [for Harry's deliberate treachery]. He might proclaim the offender to the world as false, and the world would laugh at the proclaimer, and shake hands with the offender" (291; ch. 28). In contrast, Julia is scorned by everyone around her simply because she marries for survival.

Given such a negative portrayal of Harry, the reader is unconvinced that Julia loses anything valuable in losing him. Her 'punishment' in losing Harry is really no punishment at all. Her inner torment over Harry mirrors her sister Hermione's grief at losing Sir Hugh — both are undoubtedly heart-felt but nevertheless appear slightly ridiculous to the reader who is privy to the true character of both men. They clearly do not deserve to be mourned, yet these two women persist in deluding themselves that one was "the dearest heart, the sweetest temper, . . . and the truest man" (*Claverings* 503; ch. 47) while the other had been "a paragon among men" (476; ch. 45). Their wholehearted acceptance of the love ideal blinds the two sisters to the obvious flaws of the men they love. Their almost farcical idealisation of the worthless Clavering cousins reveals the perils of the love ideology.

Hermione, like her sister, is a victim of Victorian ideology. Trollope suggests that her whitewashed image of her cruel husband stems from "the fact that to her [Sir Hugh] had been everything" (*Claverings* 476; ch. 45). Basch notes that the only contribution allowed to women by Victorian society was "the emotional and moral guidance which are her vocations as wife and mother" (5). Hermione sees herself completely in her ideological roles; with the deaths of both her son and husband, she effectively loses all sense of her identity. The idealisation of her dead husband allows her to cling to her role of a grieving widow and justifies — if only to herself — the years she spent with him. To admit the truth of her unhappy marriage would be tantamount to declaring that she has failed in the 'business' of her marriage, with nothing — neither child nor property — to show for it. Her self-delusion of the nature of her husband's character shows how ideology can perversely exalt love, even when the beloved is not worth loving. Likewise, Julia's obliviousness to Harry's blatant shortcomings reveals an inherent danger of the love ideal: that of love for love's sake. Through Hermione, Trollope criticises the ideology which recognises a woman only if she is a wife or mother.

Trollope's characterisation of Julia also works against the novel's overt moral against mercenary marriages. In contrast to Harry's mental and emotional weakness, Julia is portrayed as a strong, noble character. She resists Harry when he tries to embrace her and presses him to honour his engagement to Florence when she learns of it. Trollope makes it clear that Julia is a not a temptress out to seduce Harry from the path of virtue, but a victim of his vacillation. She inspires the reader's pity and admiration, something which Harry fails to do. The novel's sympathetic depiction of Julia's character and motives makes it difficult for the reader to accept that she

deserves any condemnation at all, while the narrator's half-hearted attempt to ascribe some decency to Harry actually demeans him — both as a character and a prize. Just as her sister Hermione's widowhood is "a period of coining happiness" (*Claverings* 462; ch. 44), Julia's loss of the pathetic Harry is a blessing in disguise, even though, like Hermione, she is unable to appreciate the fact.

The novel's subplot further complicates the overt criticism of mercenary marriage. Fanny Clavering refuses to marry the poor curate Mr Saul for many of the same reasons Julia refuses to marry Harry. However, the lovers are eventually united, thanks to the boating accident which makes Fanny's father a rich baronet, paving the way for the couple's financial difficulties to be easily resolved. Such a fortuitous resolution is ostensibly meant to show that Julia should have been true to Harry — as Fanny is to Saul — and trusted that true love would win the day. However, it ignores the fact that Julia could not afford to wait in the hope of a miracle — unlike Fanny, she was in debt and she had no family able and willing to protect her.

The narrator's disclaimer that "few young ladies, I fear, will envy Fanny Clavering her lover" (*Claverings* 509; ch. 48) ironically belies the fact that Saul is a more admirable and true lover than Harry. If few would envy Fanny her decent lover, even fewer should envy Florence her prize of the false and rather useless Harry. Yet, Harry is undeniably more attractive than Saul, being "six feet high, with handsome face and person, and with plenty to say for himself on all subjects" (98; ch. 10). Saul, on the other hand, is "very tall and very thin, with a tall thin head, and weak eyes, and a sharp, well-cut nose, and, . . . no lips" (20; ch. 2). He is also decidedly unromantic, proposing to Fanny in the middle of a dirty lane. Although the reader is aware that Saul is the better man of the two, Harry ultimately comes across as the more attractive

catch, being good-looking, passionate, rich, and an heir to a baronetcy. Trollope's comparison between Harry and Saul reveals the superficial nature of romantic attraction.

Trollope's attempt to provide the novel with an ideologically-correct ending is highly awkward (Kincaid 148; Polhemus, *Changing World* 118); this incongruity highlights the inadequacy and impracticality of the Victorian love ideal even as the strongly ironic tone of the novel undermines any ideology it overtly supports. Underlying the novel's superficial and moralistic rejection of mercenary marriages is a critique of the ideology of love which reveals the unfairness, superficiality and destructive power of the love ideal.

Phineas Finn* and *Phineas Redux

In *Phineas Finn* (1867) and *Phineas Redux* (1873), the explicit moral is that marrying for power, rather than love, leads to all manner of disasters — separation, madness, social ostracism and even death. Lady Laura Standish, penniless from settling her brother's debts, decides to marry the rich but dull Mr Kennedy instead of the charming but poor Phineas Finn in order to maintain her position as a woman of social and political influence. She does not love Kennedy, but does hold him in high regard, and like Julia Brabazon, she resolves to be a dutiful wife "even though the ways might sometimes be painful" (*Finn* 253; vol. 1, ch. 23). While there had been "no pretence of love" between Julia and Lord Ongar (*Claverings* 131; ch. 13), Laura resolves that she will cultivate her liking and esteem for Kennedy into love: "I have always liked him, and I will love him" (*Finn* 139; vol. 1, ch. 15). However, the marriage is a failure. Kennedy turns out to be a tyrant who stifles his wife's superior intellect and restricts her activities. Laura chafes at her bonds and eventually separates

from him. As a result, he becomes insane and finally dies, while she isolates herself from society. Ramona Denton observes that "the ostensible 'moral' in Laura's story is that when woman, who is created for love, marries to satisfy ambition, she has betrayed her essential vocation" and deserves the misery she brings upon herself (2).

Once again, Trollope plays with the assumption that marrying without love is a crime which warrants punishment. Like other women who marry for interested motives, Laura is denied the very thing she married Kennedy for — political influence: "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" (*Finn* 304; vol. 1, ch. 32). Later in *Phineas Redux*, she explains her sufferings by attributing them to "the mistake she had made in early life" in marrying Kennedy despite loving Phineas (516; ch. 65). She claims that her misery and self-exile are her punishments for violating the ideology that "a woman should marry only for love" (100; ch. 12): "I have done wrong [in marrying Kennedy] . . . No woman was ever more severely punished" (158; ch. 20). Her conviction that she is "punished" for marrying without love tends to prevail upon the reader, with several critics appearing to accept the idea that Laura is penalised for failing to conform to the love ideal (Edwards 156-7; Morse 55).

However, as in the case of Julia in *The Claverings*, the reader must question if Laura's misery is truly a punishment for marrying without love. I have argued that Julia's sufferings are not a penalty for her mercenary marriage, although she interprets them as such. Could the same hold true for Laura? One cannot help but think of Mary Lovelace in *Is He Popenjoy?*, who like Laura, did not love her husband when she married him, but endeavoured to learn to love him. Mary's eventually successful

marriage — along with her title, wealth and leading position in society — refutes Hagan's claim that Trollope invariably punishes his female characters for marrying prudently. It would hardly seem fair or logical that Mary's marriage is a success while Laura's is a failure, when both married without love.

Kincaid suggests that the failure of the Kennedys' marriage may simply be attributed to "trivial bad luck", pointing out that no one would have thought that "this nondescript lord would turn out to be a fanatic for power, turning the force of his religion, his family, most of all his maleness" against Laura in order to assert his authority over her (198). There is no way Laura could have foreseen what Kennedy would become — prior to their marriage, Kennedy had displayed no propensity to tyranny, but had instead evidenced a generosity of spirit by lending Phineas a pony to carry him to a private conversation with his own fiancée. Laura has simply been unfortunate in her choice of husband. Had she married someone more pliable and less tyrannical, it is plausible that her own determination to do well by her husband would have been sufficient to ensure some degree of happiness for them both, as is the case with Mary Lovelace.

Laura's misery in her marriage has little to do with the fact that she had married Kennedy without loving. Instead, much of it stems from the "lack of sympathy" between the couple, so much so that within months of her marriage, Laura becomes "very tired of her life" and "tired of her husband" (*Finn* 209-10; vol. 1, ch. 23). The lively, active Laura cannot accept Kennedy's coldness and detachment: she "had been able to strike no spark of fire from him. Even by disobeying she could produce no heat" (304; vol. 1, ch. 32). While other Trollopean couples, such as the Pallisers and Chilterns, manage to work around their differences by mutual

compromise, little effort is made by Kennedy to concede to Laura's preferences. Given that upper-class wives usually had more autonomy and influence than single ladies (Perkin 5), Laura had every right to believe that she would be able "to do something in the world" as the wife of a rich politician (*Finn* 304; vol. 1, ch. 32), particularly when she had enjoyed the "perfect power of doing what she pleased" as an unmarried woman (32; vol. 1, ch. 4). Instead, her expectations of greater liberty and influence are crushed by reality: her married life is a living tomb in which she is forced to "[do] nothing" because her husband turns out to be a tyrant (212; vol. 1, ch. 23).

As her domestic sufferings increase, Laura's need to "see moral order in the chaos of her experience" leads her to fixate on her love for Phineas (Denton 5): "If she had ever loved any one she had loved him. . . . So she swore to herself over and over again, *trying to console herself in her cold unhappiness*" (*Finn* 304; vol. 1, ch. 32, emphasis added). Although it might initially appear that it is Laura's own love for Phineas which propels her to rebel against her husband, it is in fact the opposite — Laura's love "grows in direct proportion to her burgeoning awareness that her life with Kennedy will not be one of power and influence, but one of daily submission to a petty domestic tyrant" (Denton 4). While it might at first appear that Laura is miserable because she flouted the love ideal by marrying Kennedy despite loving Phineas, a closer look reveals that Laura loves Phineas *because* she is miserable in her marriage to Kennedy. Her passion for Phineas is an afterthought, an attempt to explain the failure of her marriage.

As such, there is no real 'moral' regarding mercenary marriages in Laura's story. Trollope does not punish Laura for rejecting Phineas's suit and marrying

Kennedy without love — nowhere in the *Phineas* novels does the authorial voice condemn her for her marriage. Instead, it is Laura who punishes herself by "explain[ing] her existence in terms of the single principle that woman is created for love" (Denton 4), and attributing her marriage's failure to her love for Phineas. The trope of 'crime and punishment' in Laura's story is constructed by Laura herself in a misguided attempt to make sense out of her life's tragedy.

Rather than attacking mercenary marriages, Trollope is in fact critiquing the Victorian idealisation of love. Although it was "meant to strengthen marriage by encouraging husbands and wives to weave new emotional bonds" (Coontz 178), the emphasis given to romantic love can actually weaken marriage ties instead. Given the Victorian mentality that love is "the supreme experience of life" (Houghton 373), it is natural that the absence of romantic love in her own marriage would lead Laura to focus on the only other man who once claimed to love her — Phineas. While Trollope does not suggest that the love ideal is directly responsible for the failure of the Kennedy marriage, he does show that it exacerbates the existing tensions between husband and wife. Laura not only amplifies her feelings for Phineas in order to rationalise her marriage's failure, she even uses him to provoke Kennedy's jealousy in order to widen the breech between them and thus effect a separation.

This is most clearly seen when Laura receives a telegram from her cousin informing her of Phineas's successful re-election to Parliament. She deliberately baits Kennedy with it:

> She would display all her anxiety for her young friend, *and fling it in her husband's face* if he chose to take it as an injury. . . . "I am glad of this," she said, *with all the eagerness she could throw into her voice*. "I

> am, indeed,—and so ought you to be." The husband's brow grew blacker and blacker, but still he said nothing. He had long been too proud to be jealous, and was now too proud to express his jealousy,—if only he could keep the expression back. But his wife *would not leave the subject*. "I am so thankful for this," she said, pressing the telegram between her hands. "I was so afraid he would fail!" (*Finn* 111; vol. 2, ch. 51, emphasis added)

Laura intentionally provokes her husband, using Phineas as an excuse to "strike [a] spark of fire" from him (304; vol. 1, ch. 32). Having been stifled and repressed by her husband, Laura now wants a dramatic scene that will justify a separation: she "almost longed to talk again about Phineas Finn, so that there might be a rupture, and she might escape" (116; vol. 2, ch. 51). She deliberately stirs up her husband's jealousy by warmly proclaiming her affection for Phineas — "This man is my friend, . . . and is loved by me, very dearly" — and is quick to be offended by Kennedy's very natural dislike of such declarations: "Am I to understand that I am insulted by an accusation? If so, let me beg at once that I may be allowed to go to Saulsby [Laura's father's estate]" (111-12; vol. 2, ch. 51). It is clear that Phineas is merely an excuse, rather than the cause, for the "rupture" in the Kennedy marriage.

Trollope shows just how foolish and even immoral the idealisation of love can be. Laura justifies her actions — her separation from her husband, her self-exile to Dresden, her excessive concern for Phineas — by the ideology of love, and goes as far as to convince herself that she had married Kennedy so that she could better serve Phineas's interests (*Redux* 515; ch. 65). Trollope also shows how the total acceptance of the love ideal can reduce an intelligent, confident woman to a lovesick creature and

destroy all that was once admirable in her. Laura is reduced from a dignified, noble, self-controlled, politically active woman to a miserable shadow of her former self, unable "to imagine herself as anything other than the heroine of an unhappy romance" (Denton 8). Denton argues that Laura's "very diminishment in the *Phineas* novels, . . . suggests that Trollope glimpsed the treacheries of the love religion that she comes so vigorously to espouse" (8-9). Far from an ideologically-correct denunciation of prudent marriages, Laura's tragedy is in fact a critique of the Victorian worship of love.

The Small House at Allington

In *The Small House at Allington* (1862), Trollope appears to examine the problem of mercenary marriages primarily from the man's point of view, rather than the woman's. Adolphus Crosbie falls in love with Lily Dale and becomes engaged to her, but quickly jilts her in order to marry Lady Alexandrina De Courcy, the daughter of an earl. He has a vague notion that such a marriage would be advantageous to his social position. The marriage is a disaster, quickly ending in separation while saddling Crosbie with a load of debts incurred by the De Courcys. After he is widowed, he tries to approach Lily but is repeatedly repulsed. When we last see him in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* he is a deeply unhappy man, snubbed by Lily and her friends, while his one remaining friend has no word of comfort for him.

Trollope makes it clear that Crosbie's marriage to Alexandrina effectively ruins his life. He suffers the same punishment as do other characters who marry for interested motives — the inability to enjoy the very thing for which he married. He quickly realises that the family connections of the De Courcys are a burden rather than a blessing. Ironically, many of the consequences he feared from marriage to the

poor and unsophisticated Lily — financial difficulties and a plain, unfashionable life — result almost immediately from his marriage to the high-born Alexandrina. Julian Thompson notes that early reviewers saw in Crosbie the novel's "finest indirect moral teaching" (xvii). Again, as in Trollope's other portrayals of mercenary marriages, there appears to be an ostensible moral: Marry for love, not for money or influence, or you will be punished like Crosbie.

Yet, this message is complicated by the fact that Crosbie committed not just one, but two offenses against the Victorian ideology of love — he betrayed his troth to Lily and married Alexandrina without loving her. It is clear that Crosbie is punished, but for what? His punishment strongly resembles that of other 'mercenaries' such as Julia Ongar and Laura Kennedy in the sense that his marriage brings him suffering instead of the gains he had hoped for. However, throughout the novel, Crosbie's punishment is linked to his desertion of Lily and his breach of promise, rather than to his marriage. Kincaid claims that "the form [of the novel] properly resists either punishing or rewarding him. . . . resolution is denied" (131). It would be perhaps more accurate to say that resolution is denied not by the absence of either punishment or reward, but by the fact that the form of Crosbie's punishment does not tally with his real offense of jilting his avowed fiancée.

For despite their superficially mercenary qualities, Crosbie's motives in marrying Alexandrina appear to be rather confused. Unlike Julia Brabazon who marries with a clear goal (financial survival) in mind, Crosbie's hopes for advancement are vague and ephemeral. In fact, his objectives in marrying Alexandrina are somewhat similar to Laura's in marrying Kennedy — to avoid degradation and to continue enjoying the good life. However, unlike Laura whose

hopes are founded upon Kennedy's very real political position and wealth, Crosbie's hopes are founded merely upon the impressions he receives at Courcy Castle which have "tended to destroy all that was good and true within him, and to foster all that was selfish and false" (*Allington* 244; ch. 23). He is convinced that marrying the penniless and unsophisticated Lily will curtail his expensive lifestyle: "He must give up his clubs, and his fashion, and all that he had hitherto gained, and be content to live a plain, humdrum, domestic life, with eight hundred a year, and a small house, full of babies" (75; ch. 7). In contrast, he thinks that "a marriage with a daughter of the house of Courcy, would satisfy his ambition and assist him in his battle with the world" (245; ch. 23). Despite the fact that his promotion is almost certain, he believes it would be sweeter if it were obtained by the influence of the De Courcy family: "would it not be well that he should struggle on in his upward path by such assistance as good connections might give him?" (246; ch. 23). Notice how his fears are defined in detail, while his hopes are indistinct and formless. Together, they suggest that Crosbie is a man of pretensions who lacks the courage to face up to reality but opts for the unknown in the hope that it will somehow be more palatable. Considering the reasons for which he married Lady Alexandrina, he is not an outright villain, but "simply a weak, confused man" (Polhemus, *Changing World* 92) who "really never meant harm" (Kincaid 131).

However, one tends to agree with Lord De Guest that Crosbie is a "damned blackguard" for his shabby treatment of Lily (*Allington* 367; ch. 34). After all, to jilt your fiancée, whom you love, for an earl's daughter, whom you do not love, within weeks of your engagement is undeniably wrong. More than just an ideological offense, a breach of promise was a moral and legal offense — the only reason why

Lily's family refrains from taking Crosbie to court is because they wish to protect Lily from further humiliation (298; ch. 27). There is no doubt that Crosbie has behaved badly and deserves to be chastised. Yet, the obviousness of Crosbie's error in jilting Lily for the colourless Alexandrina, even to himself, begs the reader to consider why he would want to abandon the woman he loves for such an inferior specimen. As Juliet McMaster points out, Alexandrina is "not really a good catch from any point of view, worldly or otherwise" (7).

Trollope suggests that Crosbie's betrayal of his "dear, sweet, innocent, pretty" Lily (*Allington* 75; ch. 7) stems from an instinctive revolt against the love ideal which she embodies:

> [Crosbie] told himself that it would be well for him now to tear himself away from Lily; or perhaps he said that it would be well for Lily that he should be torn away. He must not teach her to think that they were to live only in the sunlight of each other's eyes during those months, or perhaps years, which might elapse before their engagement could be carried out. Nor must he allow her to suppose that either he or she were to depend solely upon the other for the amusements and employments of life. (119; ch. 12)

Trollope exposes the sentimental clichés and sheer impracticality of the love ideal: to "live only in the sunlight of each other's eyes" and "to depend solely upon the other for the amusements and employments of life" all sound very well, but Crosbie has come to realise that love in ideology and love in reality are very different. We see how Crosbie is concerned with the practical implications of marriage — how they are to live, which class of society they would belong to, what income they will have, the

potential financial hardships they would face once they have children — while Lily's head is in the clouds, and she expects Crosbie to live there with her: "You must like the soft twilight, and the long evenings when we shall be alone; and you must read to me the books I love, and you must not teach me to think that the world is hard, and dry, and cruel,—not yet. I tell Bell so very often; *but you must not say so to me*" (97; ch. 9, emphasis added).

Lily completely internalises the Victorian love ideal, seeing only romantic twilights and romance. She unquestioningly accepts the doctrine of separate spheres, regarding her role as a moral, domestic one while assuming that Crosbie will protect her from all worldly cares. Lily is "determined to live up to a cultural ideal of feminine behaviour" (Nardin, *He Knew She Was Right* 108) and she does — with the only problem being that this ideal scares Crosbie away. Kincaid notes that Lily's utter adoration and submission creates "a burden and a sly trap" for Crosbie (132), who "did not like to be presented, . . . as a victim caught for the sacrifice, and bound with ribbon for the altar" (*Allington* 93; ch. 9). Furthermore, "there is a desire for power [in Lily's ostentatious deference] that exposes how much of her excessive self-effacement, her exaggerated submission to Crosbie, is really a cry of triumph [at having snagged an eligible husband]" (Kincaid 132). Viewed in this light, Crosbie has legitimate reason to panic and bolt.

Hence, contrary to appearances, Trollope is not really addressing the issue of mercenary marriage through Crosbie and Alexandrina, and Crosbie is not really punished for his "merger-marriage" (Polhemus, *Changing World* 96). The mercenary marriage of the Crosbies and the trope of 'crime and punishment' is actually a smokescreen for the real focus of Trollope's critique — the Victorian ideology of true

love which exalts romantic love to the utter exclusion of everything else. It is Lily's idealisation of love and her internalisation of sentimental clichés which frightens Crosbie off, into the clutches of the De Courcys. In particular, Alexandrina's indifference to him — "She had no conception of any very strong passion" (*Allington* 243; ch. 23) — must have seemed extremely attractive when contrasted against Lily's ostentatious submission and adoration.

Trollope shows how the love ideal can become perverse when it is elevated above all other considerations. Lily's internalisation of the love ideal effectively "harden[s] love into a selfish, private dogma, . . . which has nothing to do with another person or the realities of life" (Polhemus, *Changing World* 98). What is perhaps most tragic about Lily's story is that she never realises that it is her ostentatious conformity to the love ideal that frightens off a man who does love her, albeit in his weak, imperfect way. Lily's insistence on living life according to an impracticable ideal effectively wrecks her engagement and condemns her to a life of singlehood.

Trollope's overt criticism of mercenary marriage in *The Claverings*, the *Phineas* novels and *The Small House at Allington* is actually a façade for a more subtle critique of the Victorian love religion. The ostensible punishments that his characters undergo for marrying without love are revealed to be undeserved, out of proportion to their 'crime', or are in actuality punishments for other transgressions. Trollope shows, through his portrayal of mercenary marriages, that the Victorian ideology of true love is an insidious and potentially destructive force.

Chapter 2: Marital Conduct

Victorian wives were expected to obey and submit to their husbands. A. James Hammerton observes that this ideal of female subordination "was premised on assumptions about male perfection which were bound to strain credibility" (75). It was assumed that men were always sane, moral, and reasonable, and that they would treat their wives with gentleness, consideration and respect. The contemporary author Sarah Stickney Ellis took a more realistic view of human nature and advised the wives of tyrannical, unreasonable husbands to seek the solace of religion "which alone can afford any lasting or effectual help" (*Wives* 140). She also claimed that the highest duty in a woman's life is "to suffer, and be still" (*Daughters* 73). Yet her advice leaves a crucial question unanswered: how can — and why should — a wife submit to a mad, unreasonable or immoral husband?

In Trollope's early novels, he appears to support his society's tenets and portrays conformity to the doctrine of separate spheres as a key to marital success. However, the affirmation for the Victorian conception of spousal roles in *Framley Parsonage* (written in 1860) gradually gives way to a more subversive portrayal in his later novels, such as *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1866), *He Knew He Was Right* (1868), and *The Prime Minister* (1875). In these later novels, Trollope examines the factors which affect the ability of both husbands and wives to conform to society's ideals. He also appears to consider the limits of wifely submission by revealing the "blatant instabilities" of the ideologies underlying marital behaviour (Dever 162). After depicting an ideologically-perfect wife in the person of Fanny Robarts in *Framley Parsonage*, Trollope begins to question the ideas underpinning Victorian spousal behaviour, particularly the belief in husband's right to command and a wife's

duty to obey. His main concern is not marital conduct *per se* but the beliefs and motivations that affect the behaviour of married couples towards one another.

Framley Parsonage

Trollope affirms the Victorian ideal of wifely conduct in *Framley Parsonage* through his portrayal of Fanny Robarts, the wife of the weak, vain and ambitious clergyman Mark Robarts. Fanny epitomises the ideal Victorian wife whose moral influence eventually inspires her husband to return to the path of virtue after his attempts to gain worldly advancement lead him into questionable company and threaten his family with debt. The novel asserts the supremacy of feminine virtue over male ambition, thus supporting the prevalent belief that women were more spiritual and moral, while men were more worldly.

Although Fanny is a model wife, Mark is far from the ideal husband. He fails to live up to his role as the responsible breadwinner who shelters his family from the immorality of the outside world. Instead, his ambitions lead him away from his home and into the company of people whom he knows his wife, as well as his patroness, Lady Lufton, will not approve. Away from the sanctuary of his home and the moral influence of his wife, Mark becomes susceptible to the negative influences of the Chaldicotes set and behaves in a manner inappropriate to his position as a clergyman. His actions and their dire consequence — a debt of 900 pounds, equivalent to an entire year's income, and accusations of obtaining his prebendal stall through dishonourable means — would try the patience of any wife.

However, although Mark is not a very good husband, he is sane, rational and open to reason and correction. He also possesses a conscience and accepts

responsibility for his actions. It becomes clear upon comparison with Trollope's later novels that these qualities in a husband are essential prerequisites (even though they are not guarantees) for wifely submission. However, there is no indication that Trollope was consciously aware of this while he was writing *Framley Parsonage*. Rather, the way in which these qualities are taken for granted here suggests that Trollope, like his society, assumed that most husbands were moral beings who were sufficiently sane and reasonable, and would thus never issue wrong or unreasonable orders. Hence, there is no intrinsic reason why wifely submission is impossible as long as a husband is neither mad nor bad. This may explain why, in spite of his poor behaviour, Mark still retains Fanny's support and submission, and why Fanny's devotion to her husband is depicted without any irony.

Mark's failings highlight Fanny's success as a wife who lives up to society's standards. Indeed, one can argue that Fanny's wifely virtues shine brightest in adversity. She is submissive to her husband even when she is aware that he is doing wrong; she stands by him through his difficulties and literally clings to him in his hour of need; she is a successful housekeeper who makes the home a haven for her husband; she is her husband's helpmate and comforter. When bailiffs arrive to catalogue the contents of the parsonage, it is Fanny who comforts her husband with both words and actions: "'Mark, dearest Mark, my own dear, dearest husband! Who is to be true to you, if I am not? . . .' And then she threw her arms around his neck and embraced him" (*Framley* 513; ch. 44). This "touching" portrayal ('J.A.' qtd. in Smalley 131) of the loyal wife is an affirmation of the ideology of wifely conduct, and would have very likely reminded contemporary readers of Mrs Ellis's injunction that "it is [a wife's] sacred privilege to forget herself, to count no item of her loss, to

weigh no difficulty, and to shrink from no pain, provided she can suffer for, or even with, the companion whose existence is bound up with hers" (*Wives* 78-9).

Fanny certainly behaves as though it is a "sacred privilege" to stand by her husband, embracing him even as he wonders how she can bear to remain with him. While she is horrified at Mark's initial confession, she is not completely despondent. Instead, she is "so glad she knew it, that she might comfort him. . . . to have thought that her lord had troubles not communicated to her,—that would have been to her the one thing not to be borne" (*Framley* 399; ch. 33). She bears the threat of ruin better than he does, perhaps seeing in the crisis an opportunity to win him back to the safety of the home by her love and support. Only when her drawing room is threatened does she betray the slightest unhappiness for herself, but even then, she refrains from speaking of it, "lest by so saying she might add to Mark's misery" (515; ch. 44). However, her momentary instinct to save her worldly treasures gives the scene a sense of realism which in turn upholds ideology by implying that Fanny's ideological perfection is attainable even by flesh-and-blood wives.

This streak of realism is important, particularly since Fanny's devotion to her husband seems independent of his (mis)behaviour. Fanny defends Mark before Lady Lufton not because he is blameless but simply because he is her husband: "[she] remembered only her husband,—that he was her husband, and, *in spite of his faults, a good and loving husband*;—and that other fact also she remembered, *that she was his wife*" (*Framley* 82; ch. 5, emphasis added). Fanny's defence of Mark hinges on her position as his wife: "you forget yourself in speaking that of my husband . . . If I don't defend him, who will?" (82-83; ch. 5). Her ideologically-driven loyalty is never questioned; rather, it is explicitly praised by Lady Lufton, who tells her that "there is

no duty which any woman owes to any other human being at all equal to that which she owes to her husband, . . . And I loved you for what you were doing" (87; ch. 5). Both women unquestioningly accept the dogma that a wife's paramount "duty" is to submit to, obey and defend her husband regardless of his flaws and misdeeds.

The Victorian belief in female moral superiority is affirmed in Trollope's depiction of Fanny as a pillar of moral strength for her worldly husband who is, ironically, a clergyman. Nardin points out that while Fanny does venture to rebuke her husband at times, she always does so "in the most deferential manner" and never withholds her support or affection (*He Knew She Was Right* 82). At times, Fanny makes her disapproval of Mark's behaviour evident by silence or a distinct lack of enthusiasm: "she would say nothing to him" (*Framley* 182; ch. 14) — falling back on a technique recommended to Victorian wives for the management of their husbands by using silence to shame them (Perkin 261). This proves to be effective, as Mark feels "cut . . . to the heart" by his wife's wordless rebukes (182; ch. 14). While Fanny's disapproval admittedly has little immediate effect on her husband's actions, Trollope suggests that such small acts of wifely reproof do produce results — the collective influence of Fanny's feminine virtues eventually triumphs over Mark's folly.

Trollope also promotes the ideal of the home as a moral sanctuary in *Framley Parsonage*. Mark gets into trouble when he leaves the refuge of his home. It is no coincidence that it is at Gatherum Castle, the seat of "that fabricator of evil, the Duke of Omnium" (48; ch. 2), where Mark caves in and signs the first bill for Mr Sowerby (125; ch. 8). When he becomes disenchanted with his high-flying acquaintances at Chaldicotes, it is to his domestic circle — "his own snug room at home, with Fanny

opposite to him, and his bairns crawling on the floor" (105; ch. 7) — that his thoughts turn. Mark's desire to be at home is proof of Fanny's success as a wife who has made the home a sanctuary for her husband. Trollope's sincere portrayal of the benefits and pleasures of home life, and the dangers outside it, affirm the ideologies of his day.

Of the four novels discussed in this chapter, *Framley Parsonage* stands apart for its unreserved support of Victorian beliefs concerning marriage and gender roles. Unlike Trollope's later novels, there are no clearly subversive subplots which undermine the overt message of the novel's main action. Instead, the subplots all demonstrate the moral superiority of women over men — the Crawley subplot in particular affirms the role of the wife as a helpmate to the husband. Trollope's support of the conventional wifely ideal is also evident through the way in which his descriptions of Fanny's behaviour at times give way to ideological platitudes: "Is not that sharing of the mind's burdens one of the chief purposes for which a man wants a wife?" (400; ch. 33). Trollope's depiction of Fanny's eventual success in 'reforming' her husband promotes the belief that a wife can positively influence her husband and improve his character if she lives up to society's standards of wifely submissiveness. Nardin points out that Fanny's "self-suppression . . . earns its reward" as she "becomes the dominant partner in her marriage" (*He Knew She Was Right* 82-83). The novel's overt message is an optimistic one: even if a husband's misdeeds threaten to ruin the family, a good wife's love and support may still win the day.

Kincaid describes the world of *Framley Parsonage* as "a perfect English idyl [sic]", a "pastoral world" where there are "no really ominous forces, only a little corruption within" (121-22). Only in a world where a husband's morality, sanity and rationality can be taken for granted can the Victorian ideologies of love and marital

conduct function successfully. Their dependence on a myriad of factors, both internal and external, becomes evident when one compares *Framley Parsonage* with Trollope's later novels. In *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, Trollope directs our attention to a non-idyllic portion of this pastoral world which was glossed over in *Framley Parsonage* and reveals the inadequacy of ideology in difficult circumstances.

The Last Chronicle of Barset

The Last Chronicle of Barset was written in 1866 — six years after *Framley Parsonage.* Here, the main action revolves around the impoverished curate Josiah Crawley who is accused of theft. Trollope's portrayal of Crawley's wife is a subtle departure from his idealistic depiction of Fanny in *Framley Parsonage* and raises questions about the Victorian tenets of wifely submission and spousal roles, even if it does not criticise them outright. Trollope seems to question if the Victorian model of wifely behaviour is the only 'right' way to be a good wife, as well as examine one of the foundations on which the ideal of wifely behaviour is built — the presupposition that the husband is both sane and reasonable.

Trollope makes it clear from the very beginning of the novel that Mrs Crawley is a good wife: "It is declared that a good wife is a crown to her husband, but Mrs Crawley had been . . . crown, throne, and sceptre all in one" (*Barset* 11; ch. 1). Yet, it also becomes evident that her virtue as a wife has nothing to do with conformity to society's tenets on wifely behaviour. She is unable to live up to them, but instead, adapts them to the trials of her married life. Trollope suggests that part of what makes Mrs Crawley a good wife lies in her attitude towards her husband, which mingles practicality with selfless devotion and respect:

> She had struggled to conceal from him her own conviction as to his half-insanity, *treating him at the same time with the respect due to an honoured father of a family,* and with the careful measured indulgence fit for a sick and wayward child. . . . He had told her that she was a beggar, and that it was better to starve than to beg. She had borne the rebuke without a word in reply, and *had then begged again for him, and had endured the starvation herself*. (*Barset* 12; ch. 1, emphasis added)

Despite her husband's half-insanity, Mrs Crawley accords him the respect that is his due. Given a choice between his comfort and his oversensitive pride, she would deny him her obedience in order that he might have food to eat. She discriminates between the luxury of idealism and the need for practicality, choosing her husband's welfare over the worshipful obedience and passivity promoted by the code of 'proper' wifely behaviour. The narrator's explicit approval of her behaviour implies that the 'spirit' of ideology (seen in the effort and desire to serve one's husband) is more important than keeping the 'letter' of ideology (such as submitting and obeying him in all things). It also suggests that conformity to ideology is not the only way in which one can be a good wife.

This is not to say that Mrs Crawley deliberately disregards conventional beliefs concerning wifely behaviour. Rather, Trollope shows that she is torn between the conventions of ideology and the necessity of setting them aside:

> She could not bear to torment him by any allusion to his own deficiencies. She could not endure to make him think that she suspected him of any frailty either in intellect or thought. Wifelike, she

> desired to worship him, and that he should know that she worshipped him. But if a word might save him! 'Josiah, where did it come from?' (*Barset* 193; ch. 19).

The implication here is that by conforming to the ideal of 'worshiping' her husband, she risks damning him, while an 'un-wifelike' question might save him. In this instance, her struggle is a brief one — the minute chance of rescuing her husband from his difficulties is evidently more important to her than playing the ideologically-correct role of the adoring wife.

Ironically, Mrs Crawley serves her husband by disobeying the dictates of ideology. She is perhaps the only wife in the *Barsetshire* chronicles whose direct reprimand of her husband — "Be a man and bear it. Ask God for strength, instead of seeking it in an over-indulgence of your own sorrow" (*Barset* 113; ch. 12) — does not incur censure or ridicule from the narrator. Unlike Fanny who at times refrains from verbally reprimanding her husband (*Framley* 39; ch. 1), Mrs Crawley does not drop the subject easily at the first sign of her husband's displeasure but persists in trying to convince to him snap out of his depressed state. Her actions contradict the belief that wives are supposed to lead their husbands solely by moral influence and the meekness of their behaviour. The narrator shows that Crawley's perverse pleasure in his sufferings justifies his wife's rebuke and that her unconventional actions are appropriate given the circumstances. Conforming to society's ideal of the meek, submissive and docile wife would mean coddling her husband even more, enabling him to sink deeper into self-pity and despair. Instead, her rebuke rouses her husband, albeit momentarily, and elicits his implicit promise that he will not seek his own death: "Let me pass on; you need fear nothing" (*Barset* 115; ch. 12).

Trollope reveals that the ideal of wifely submission cannot exist in isolation — it is very much dependent on the character and nature of the husband. Unlike Mark Robarts, who is merely slightly vain and worldly, Josiah Crawley is unrelentingly stubborn, proud and idealistic, almost to the point of madness. In order for the Crawley family to survive, Mrs Crawley has to repeatedly disobey her husband's unreasonable wishes on refusing aid from others, and habitually leaves him "in the dark" about many things (*Barset* 13; ch. 1). Trollope shows that the ideals of absolute submission and wifely influence are impractical in the Crawley marriage because of Crawley's pride and obdurate temper. The belief that a wife can positively influence her husband primarily through her passivity is dispelled by this depiction of Crawley's extreme obstinacy and eccentricity.

The text also suggests that the model of the breadwinner husband may be somewhat responsible for Crawley's half-maddened state. A husband's foremost responsibility is to provide for his family but Crawley cannot even manage this, simply because his living does not pay him enough to do so. His abject poverty is made even more bitter by his recognition that his "diligent working, in which he had ever done his very utmost for the parish" earns him a mere pittance that is insufficient to feed and clothe his family according to their position in life (*Barset* 116; ch. 12). From the itemised account of the Crawleys' finances and the minute description of their "wretched, poverty-stricken room" (36; ch. 4), one can infer that the deaths of his children probably resulted from the family's poverty and inability to provide proper nutrition or medical care. Crawley has, in spite of his abilities and efforts, abjectly failed in his role as the provider of his family. Little wonder that he chafes at his wife's 'beggary' (12; ch. 1) — it reveals to the rest of the world his failure as a

man. Given Crawley's astute intellect, vast education and deep pride, it is highly probable that the shame of his inability to fulfil the basic responsibility of a husband and the guilt of his children's deaths have, over the years, driven him half-mad. Here, the ideal of husbandly responsibilities is the root of Crawley's eccentricity and near-insanity, which in turn are, ironically, the reasons why Mrs Crawley is unable to fully conform to the Victorian model of the meek, submissive wife.

Trollope also seems to suggest that the ideal of wifely submission essentially strips wives of all real power of action. Mrs Crawley's moral influence, support and even direct reprimands have only a limited effect on her husband. She cannot force him to accept the comfortable living offered by Archdeacon Grantly, but can only hope that his oversensitive conscience will permit him to accept the position. Given the workings of Crawley's mind, it is possible that he would have rejected the position had he found a reason to do so — and his wife would have been powerless to prevent him from doing so. She does fear such an outcome, asking worriedly: "you will not refuse it?" (*Barset* 848; ch. 82). Although her fears are quickly assuaged, the episode highlights the powerlessness of Victorian wives — the ideological platitudes about women's moral influence merely mask their absolute dependence on husbands who may or may not be rational, sane and moral.

Polhemus observes that in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* the "Barsetshire idealists . . . either die or are tamed" (*Changing World* 133). One could perhaps also argue that ideology itself is tamed. The ideologies of love and gender roles are essentially middle-class constructs and do not take into consideration the privation faced by the lower classes. Through the grind of the Crawley marriage, Trollope reveals the limitations of Victorian ideology in adverse circumstances. The middle-

class beliefs of the Crawleys are clearly incompatible with their lower-class circumstances. Trollope's depiction of the Crawleys shows the inadequacy of ideology in regulating marital conduct for both husband and wife in a non-idyllic, non-middle-class setting. It also highlights the dependence of ideology on the husband's state of mind — Crawley's near-madness makes it impossible for his wife to fully conform to society's model of wifely passivity and subjugation.

On the other hand, Trollope also shows how a woman can be an excellent wife without conforming to the dictates of society, and how transgression against ideological standards may sometimes be justified by the exigencies of survival. Trollope's earnest affirmation of the wifely ideal in *Framley Parsonage* is moderated by the harsh realities of poverty and madness in *The Last Chronicle of Barset*. While the ideals governing marital conduct are still seen as desirable, they are not absolutes. Trollope shows that it is the desire to minister to one's spouse that truly matters, rather than rigid adherence to the dictates of ideology.

He Knew He Was Right

In both *Framley Parsonage* and *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, Mrs Crawley disobeys her husband's wishes for his own good. However, her disobedience is justified by the fact that Crawley is not entirely in his right mind and the only way for the family to survive is through the charity of others. The spectre of an unreasonable husband who makes it impossible for his wife to completely submit to him is further developed in *He Knew He Was Right.*

In this novel, the central issue initially appears to be that of wifely obedience. Louis Trevelyan orders his wife Emily to refuse to see an old family friend; Emily

feels insulted by her husband's order and refuses to comply. What begins as a minor issue becomes a battleground for the couple, with both husband and wife refusing to compromise but instead fortifying their positions with arguments which make reconciliation increasingly difficult (Polhemus, *Changing World* 93). Emily's "obstinate heartlessness" and refusal to submit to her husband led one contemporary critic to blame her for the tragedy of the Trevelyan marriage (Smalley 326). However, the Trevelyans' quarrel is not merely about Emily's refusal to obey her husband, but is essentially a struggle for dominance and self-determination. Through it, Trollope questions the limits of wifely submission: how can — and why should — a wife accede to an unreasonable husband when doing so would compromise her own individuality?

Overton claims that one important feature in Trollope's work is "his commitment to the autonomy of the individual person" and that he is "especially sensitive to those whose autonomy is threatened in some way" (85). Self-assertion is necessary at times to protect one's autonomy, but any attempt to assert oneself ought not to impinge on another individual's right to independent action and freedom. However, Louis's desire to "be master in his own house" (*He Knew* 47; ch. 5) is incompatible with Emily's right to autonomy because he does not merely wish to affirm his authority over his wife but seeks to dominate her completely. Kincaid notes that Louis's "demand for obedience soon becomes a fierce demand for total submission" and the only way Emily can survive in such a marriage is to "cheerily . . . accept annihilation" (154) — an impossible task. Shirley Letwin concurs, noting that Louis's goal is the "slavery" and "unlimited submission" of his wife (170).

Emily's wilful disobedience of Louis's wishes is thus justified by her husband's tyranny. Even though conventional ideology requires her to submit to her husband without protest, Trollope suggests that no amount of abasement on her part will fully satisfy Louis: "Had she been able always to keep her neck in the dust under his foot, their married life might have been passed without *outward* calamity" (*He Knew* 818; ch. 98, emphasis added). The Trevelyan marriage would still have been rife with tension, and complete submission — had it been possible — would have been an inward tragedy for Emily. Trollope portrays a marriage in which the ideal of wifely obedience is impracticable primarily because of the husband's overwhelming desire to assert himself at his wife's expense.

In fact, Trollope drops numerous hints to suggest that Emily's rebellion is the result of a long persecution by her husband. Louis apparently abuses his position as Emily's "master": "Nothing that I can do pleases him. He is civil and kind to you *because he is not your master*; but you don't know what things he says to me [Emily tells her sister] . . . It was a gross insult and *it was not the first*" (*He Knew* 12; ch. 1, emphasis added). The reader is inclined to believe that Emily is telling the truth, particularly when the narrator wryly remarks that "for nearly two years the little household in Curzon Street went on well, or if anything was the matter no one outside of the little household was aware of it" (11; ch. 1). The apparent happiness of the Trevelyan marriage is merely a façade, an absence of "outward calamity". We are also informed that at the end of two years, Louis "had begun to think that he should like to have his own way *completely*" (11; ch. 1, emphasis added). We may infer that the tensions in the Trevelyans' marriage have been building for some time, and that they stem from Louis's desire to "completely" dominate his wife.

For Emily, the quarrel is a matter of defending her reputation from unjust attack by her own husband and an assertion of her own individuality: "It cannot be a wife's duty to acknowledge that she has been wrong in such a matter as this" (*He Knew* 99; ch. 11). Submitting to Louis's demands would require her to admit that "she has been wrong" and would thus further tip the balance of power in Louis's favour and erode her position within their marriage. Moreover, submission to her husband in this matter requires her to lie, as she points out to Nora: "letting him suppose that I think he is right—never! I should be lying to him then, and I will never lie to him" (90; ch. 11). To be *forced* into telling a falsehood merely to appease her husband's temper is repugnant to Emily; it is also an immoral request on Louis's part. As a moral being, Emily has to tell the truth, particularly when there is no moral justification for lying. By doing so, she resists the kind of self-abnegation Louis demands. Under such circumstances, Emily's disobedience is actually a desperate attempt to preserve her freedom as a moral being; she flouts the ideal of wifely obedience in order to protect her self-identity.

Emily is caught in situation where wifely submission is impossible, as it would effectively mean self-annihilation. Her angry rebellion is the instinctive reaction of a strong-willed woman who sees her husband's demands for absolute submission as a threat to her autonomy. She is clearly on the defensive, reacting instinctively rather than rationally, and lashing out angrily when she feels threatened. She "could not refrain from hard words" (*He Knew* 507; ch. 60) even though "at the bottom of her heart, there was a hope that the quarrel should be healed before her boy would be old enough to understand the nature of quarrelling" (277; ch. 32). Her highly emotional responses repeatedly sabotage efforts to reconcile with her husband,

suggesting that what is at stake is so fundamental to her very being that any attempt to surrender her position triggers off an instinctive knee-jerk reaction to defend herself.

Attempts to dominate another person recur throughout the novel, particularly in the relationship between Miss Jemima Stanbury and her niece Dorothy. Like Louis, Miss Stanbury "likes her own way" (*He Knew* 71; ch. 8). She tries to control the lives of those around her — cutting off her nephew Hugh when he refuses to give up an occupation of which she disapproves and attempting to marry off Dorothy to Mr Gibson. Her need to dominate others is a milder, more benevolent version of Louis's tyranny: "There was no end to her doing good for others if only the others would allow themselves to be governed by her" (311; ch. 36). However, Miss Stanbury "was one whose only selfish happiness could come to her from the belief that others loved her" (612; ch. 73). Her desire to be loved supersedes her longing for power and control, and in this she differs from Louis, whose desire for mastery overshadows everything else — even his love for Emily. Moreover, the relationship between Miss Stanbury and Dorothy is not as deeply coloured by society's tenets as is that between Louis and Emily. No ideology supports Miss Stanbury's desire to control her niece's life, but the doctrine of separate spheres validates the authority of a husband over his wife.

This is arguably one of the factors that makes it impossible for Louis to back down from his position and give way to Emily. He feels that his right to dominate over his wife is sanctioned by society and thus insists on claiming "that obedience which I, as her husband, have a right to demand" (*He Knew* 521; ch. 62). Victorian ideology supported the:

> inalienable right of all men, whether ill or well, rich or poor, *wise or foolish*, to be treated with deference, and made much of in their own homes. . . . [A husband], *whatever may be his degree of folly*, is entitled to respect from [his wife] because she has voluntarily placed herself in such a position that *she must necessarily be his inferior*." (Ellis, *Mothers* 28, emphasis added)

Hammerton observes that Victorian husbands' preoccupation with their marital rights and patriarchal authority "often moved to the point of neurotic obsession" when they were challenged (89). When Louis declares to Lady Rowley that he is determined "to be master in my own house, and to be paramount in my influence over [Emily]. . . . She must be *crushed* in spirit" (*He Knew* 527-28; ch. 62, emphasis added), he reveals a similar "neurotic obsession" with patriarchal authority. He becomes mad not only because his wife challenges his right to her obedience, but because her defiance shatters his illusions — fostered by Victorian beliefs in male superiority and female submission — of his own pre-eminence. Trollope thus exposes one of the dangers of trying to live by ideology's dogmatic principles and implicates the Victorian doctrine of proper marital behaviour in the breakdown of the Trevelyan marriage.

Trollope also reveals ideology's erroneous focus on outward behaviour rather than one's motives and attitudes. Nora initially tells Emily that she is in the wrong: "Simply do what he tells you, whether it is wrong or right. . . . *I don't care about reason*. He is your husband, and if he wishes it, you should do it" (*He Knew* 48-49; ch. 6, emphasis added). Later, she urges her sister to "give way" and "be trampled upon", confidently adding that Louis "is the last man in the world to [do so]" (90; ch. 11). Nora's shallow disregard for "reason" is ironic because the ideal of wifely

subjugation is premised on the understanding that husbands are sane, rational and moral. Her blithe assurance that Louis will not "trample on" Emily reflects the assumption that husbands will not abuse their authority but "make [their] mastery palatable, equitable, . . . a thing almost unfelt" (47; ch. 5). Her advice is rooted in her society's belief that wives are to be subservient to their husbands in all things. She wants her sister to submit to Louis mainly because society says she should, but also because she is aware of the terrible consequences of defying social norms; Margaret Markwick notes that a woman "risk[s] losing everything — reputation, means to live, children — if things go wrong" within a marriage (187).

Given that Nora acts as "a barometer of public opinion" (Markwick 184), her initial dismissal of "wrong or right" suggests that Victorian society turned a similar blind eye to the possible abuses of ideology and patriarchal authority by men. Like Nora who tries to prevent the Trevelyans' separation even though she is aware of the tensions within their marriage, society was primarily concerned with outward conformity rather than the emotional wellbeing of individuals. This is ironic because the notion of marrying for love was meant to secure the personal happiness of the married couple (Coontz 146), yet Trollope shows that the Victorian emphasis on conformity to ideology can result in the opposite.

Previously, in both *Framley Parsonage* and *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, the ideologies of love and wifely submission served a positive purpose. Fanny's wifely virtues help to reform Mark's character, while Mrs Crawley's observance of the spirit (if not the letter) of ideology allows her to support and comfort her husband. However, in *He Knew He Was Right*, society's tenets concerning marriage and gender roles serve no useful purpose whatsoever. They have no power to curb Louis's "desire

for mastery" (83; ch. 9) or Emily's wilful disobedience because the prerequisites necessary for wifely submission — a husband's rationality and sanity — are absent. Here, these beliefs are reduced to a dogmatic set of codified behaviours devoid of meaning and purpose. Rather than strengthening the Trevelyan marriage, they contribute to its tensions. Their negative depiction in *He Knew He Was Right* suggests that Trollope's support for his society's tenets has drastically waned since writing *Framley Parsonage* nine years earlier.

The Prime Minister

In both *The Last Chronicle of Barset* and *He Knew He Was Right* Trollope examines how the ideology of marital conduct can be threatened by the mental instability of the husband. However, neither Josiah Crawley nor Louis Trevelyan demands that their wives act immorally *against* other people. If anything, one might argue that their 'madness' stems from their extreme sensitivity to the slightest perception of misconduct — whether real or imagined — either in themselves (Crawley) or their wives (Louis). In *The Prime Minister*, Trollope explores a marriage in which the husband suffers from the opposite problem — a total lack of moral scruples — and reveals yet another weakness of the ideology of marriage: the presupposition that the husband is a morally upright being.

At first, it appears that the Lopez marriage breaks down because of Ferdinand's inability to be the gentleman he pretends he is. This argument is heavily supported by the text's continual emphasis on Lopez's identity (or non-identity) as a gentleman. The ideal of a gentleman pervades the novel by appearing in every notable instance in the Lopez plot. Ferdinand's ambiguous status is highlighted from the beginning of the novel when the narrator notes that "it was admitted on all sides that

Ferdinand Lopez was a ‘gentleman’” (*Prime* 10; ch. 1). When Emily realises his unworthiness, she can only articulate it by “draw[ing] comparisons between her husband and Arthur Fletcher” and concluding that “Arthur Fletcher certainly [is] a gentleman” while her husband is not (265-66; ch. 31). Other characters explain Ferdinand’s misconduct as stemming from the fact that “he is simply not a gentleman” (290; ch. 34). Given the emphasis on gentlemanly conduct in the novel, it is tempting to conclude that Ferdinand’s marriage to the conservative, bourgeois Emily collapses because he fails to live up to the gentlemanly ideal.

Morse seems to support this view, arguing that Trollope uses the Lopez marriage to examine “a husband’s power over his wife when it is not restrained by the code of the gentleman [that Plantagenet Palliser embodies]” (105). Unfortunately, this code is never satisfactorily defined. Although Morse cites Letwin’s definition of gentlemanly love (“the apotheosis of regard for individuality”) and the virtue of honesty as elements of this code (109), they are not unique to gentlemen but are qualities that we can rightfully expect to find in all morally upright men. By distinguishing between Judeo-Christian morality’s “invariant (but minimal) principles and the changeable (but detailed) mores of particular communities” (Nardin, *Moral Philosophy* 34), and taking Plantagenet — Trollope’s “perfect gentleman” (*Autobiography* 20) — as a model, one can surmise that a Trollopean gentleman is one who obeys the rules of Judeo-Christian morality and tries to abide by the mores of the Victorian middle and upper classes. In fact, the example of Plantagenet suggests that a gentleman ought to be more scrupulous and have a far more sensitive moral conscience than someone who is not a gentleman.

The attributes Morse cites — honesty and regard for individuality — are features of Judeo-Christian morality rather than qualities exclusive to a nebulous 'gentleman's code'. Ferdinand's failures in these areas are not violations of gentlemanly conduct, but of morality itself. Although he has acquired the mores of the middle class by studiously cultivating its appearance and manners — thus surmounting the social barriers formed by etiquette — he has "no inner appreciation whatsoever of what was really good or what was really bad in a man's conduct" (*Prime* 497; ch. 58). Not only does he not have the heightened moral sensitivity of a gentleman, he does not even seem to possess a moral compass. The narrator constantly reiterates that Ferdinand is unaware that he is wrong: "He did not know he was a villain . . . he was not aware . . . he did not understand" (462; ch. 54). The real reason for Ferdinand's failure, both as a husband and a gentleman, is his amorality.

Even though the other characters in *The Prime Minister* attribute Ferdinand's wrongdoings to the fact that he is "not a gentleman" (290; ch. 34), the narrator never cites this as the cause of the Lopez marriage's collapse. Rather, he states that Ferdinand's lack of moral scruples repulses his wife: "everything that [Emily] had discovered of his moral disposition since her marriage was of a nature to disgust her" (462-63; ch. 54). Furthermore, when one considers Ferdinand's failures as a husband, one can clearly see that they are largely moral failures. The narrator attributes his misconduct to the fact that he lacks moral sense: "He was hardly aware what doings, and especially what feelings, were imputed to him as faults,—not understanding the lines which separate right from wrong" (373; ch. 43). He offends morality — without being aware of it — by having no respect at all for his wife's individuality, going so far as to assume that he has the unquestioned right to control her very thoughts: "You

are a child, my dear, and must allow me to dictate to you what you ought to think in such a matter as this" (261; ch. 30). Even Louis Trevelyan never goes as far as that, despite his madness!

Furthermore, Ferdinand has no qualms about "torment[ing] and ill-us[ing]" his wife to extract her submission (*Prime* 395; ch. 46). His treatment of Emily is not merely un-gentlemanlike, but downright wrong. In fact, the narrator suggests that Ferdinand would have subjected Emily to far worse treatment if not for the fact that it would not serve his purpose of ingratiating himself with his father-in-law: "Had it been his wife only he thought that he could soon have quenched her condemnation. . . . But he had put himself into the old man's house, where the old man could see not only him but his treatment of his wife, and the old man's good-will and good opinion were essential to him" (373; ch. 43). Ferdinand sees his wife primarily as an instrument with which to obtain a fortune rather than a person to be cherished and provided for: "he still thought that the fortune may come if he would only hold on to *the wife which* he had got" (463; ch. 54, emphasis added). The use of the pronoun "which" instead of "whom" emphasises Ferdinand's perception of his wife as a tool to be exploited, rather than a human being whose wellbeing should be his primary concern. He thus offends the basic moral principle that human beings should be treated as ends rather than means.

Trollope shows how a wife's love and eagerness to obey her husband can be eradicated by her husband's moral deficiency. Emily's initial adoration for her husband is tempered, her loving submission is worn down and she is finally driven to rebellion by Ferdinand's mean suspicions, blatant dishonesty and self-centred conduct. She had been disillusioned by her husband's lessons on money during their

honeymoon, but her heart was still as "full of love" at the end of the honeymoon as it had been on her wedding day (*Prime* 228; ch. 26). However, when Ferdinand unjustly accuses Arthur Fletcher of being a liar and a coward for writing to her, she reacts not merely with sorrow but with horror and disgust at the meanness of his thoughts. Even so, she resolves to be loving, obedient and supportive: "But through all this, her ideas were loyal to him. She would obey him in all things *where obedience was possible*, and would love him better than all the world" (265; ch. 31, emphasis added). Even though Emily appears to have intended to love her husband unconditionally, she quickly realises that her *obedience* to his demands must be conditional — she refuses to obey her husband whenever he tries to make her do something she believes is wrong, such as quarrelling with Arthur Fletcher or helping him fleece her father. Trollope shows that as Ferdinand's dishonesty becomes increasingly evident to her, Emily's love wanes:

> It was impossible that she could continue to love a man who from day to day was teaching her mean lessons, and who was ever doing mean things, the meanness of which was so little apparent to himself that he did not scruple to divulge them to her. How could she love a man who would make no sacrifice . . . [to] her conscience? (411; ch. 47)

Yet, Emily still resolves to obey him "if she could feel sure that obedience to him was a duty" (411; ch. 47).

In fact, there is something almost perverse about Emily's insistence on submitting to a husband whose "conduct was unworthy of her and of her deep love" (*Prime* 334; ch. 39). Trollope suggests that this perverseness stems from the strong belief in the ideology of wifely submission which is held by Emily and her family.

Even Mr Wharton — who loathes the Lopez marriage — acknowledges that "she had made her bed for herself, and must lie upon it" (374; ch. 43). Given that the ideologies of love and gender roles were largely middle-class constructs, conformity to these ideals was especially important to conservative, bourgeois families such as the Whartons. The middle-class emphasis on conformity to ideology becomes a trap, leading women such as Emily to believe that they must submit to their unworthy husbands.

Trollope further suggests that there is something repressive about the Wharton-Fletcher tribe's attitude towards marriage and women. Wives in the Wharton-Fletcher clan have little identity or even personality of their own — Mrs John Fletcher is a case in point. She has little say over anything, is treated like a child and fool by her husband — "you understand nothing about it" — and her affectionate banter seems to go unappreciated (*Prime* 134-42; ch. 16). Even more disturbing is John's pledge to Arthur — "My house shall be your house, and *my wife your wife*, and my children your children" (284; ch. 33, emphasis added) — which makes Mrs John Fletcher sound almost like a piece of property to be shared between the Fletcher brothers.

It is against such a colourless, almost demeaning existence that Emily rebels by marrying Ferdinand. Morse notes that Emily "wants to be more than a piece of property necessary to the continuance" of her family, but her attempt to flee the claustrophobic expectations of the Wharton-Fletcher tribe by marrying the outsider Ferdinand backfires disastrously:

> She has exchanged the benevolent mastery of her social enclave's dictates for women for the tyranny of marriage with the unprincipled

> Lopez. . . . Instead of broadening her life, marriage with Lopez brings a narrowing of focus to only mercenary concerns. . . . [The marriage] is conceived as the subsuming of the wife's personality into his own. (Morse 107)

With no grounds for a divorce or separation, Emily punishes herself by submitting to Ferdinand. Her conformity to ideology is simultaneously a form of self-flagellation and self-defence. Having married unwisely, she will accept its miserable consequences by making a martyr out of herself; she "maintains her position of wronged angel" throughout her marriage (Markwick 135). She will "suffer, and be still" so that her blameless conduct in her marriage will serve as a form of compensation for her earlier transgression of marrying against the wishes of her family. Yet, her attempts to conform to the model of wifely obedience are ultimately futile, as Trollope shows that it is impossible for a moral being such as herself to submit to the immoral demands of her husband.

Through Emily, Trollope undermines the ideal of proper wifely behaviour by portraying a wife who conforms to the ideologies of love and wifely submission, but nevertheless, fails in her marriage. Ideology is unable to hold a marriage together, particularly when adherence to ideology is completely one-sided — Ferdinand expects Emily's unlimited submission, but does not realise that in return, he has to conduct himself in a morally upright manner. Instead, Emily's initial subjugation only eggs Ferdinand on: "It suited his disposition to be imperious within his own household" (*Prime* 299; ch. 35); "his wife was his own, and she must be taught to endure his will" (395; ch. 46). No moral scruples check Ferdinand's commands to his wife, forcing her to disobey him when his orders conflict with the rules of morality.

He, not understanding her reasons for refusing to obey him, "conceived that he was grievously wronged by her" (463; ch. 54) and sees himself as a victim. Unlike Mark Robarts in *Framley Parsonage* who is aware of his failings and tries to change, Ferdinand never does so, simply because he has no sense of right and wrong. His amorality effectively destroys his marriage because it leads him to behave in a manner that no well-brought up young lady with a moral conscience can tolerate for long.

The Victorian ideal of wifely submission is thus like a house of cards. It is underpinned by assumptions of the husband's sanity, rationality and morality. If any of these assumptions prove to be false, the entire system topples. In the novels discussed in this chapter, perfect wifely submission is shown to be unattainable if any one of these assumptions is invalid. The feasibility of the Victorian ideology of *wifely* behaviour ironically hinges on the *husband's* conduct, rather than the wife's own efforts.

There is a noticeable change in the way Trollope engages with his society's beliefs concerning marital conduct between 1860, when he wrote *Framley Parsonage*, and 1875, when he wrote *The Prime Minister*. In his later novels, Trollope's portrayal of ideology is highly pessimistic, with the husbands suffering from more serious flaws then does Mark Robarts in *Framley Parsonage*. These flaws make it impossible for their wives to submit to them completely. It also appears that only in the pastoral world of *Framley Parsonage* and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* do wives have any kind of success in conforming to the ideal of wifely behaviour — the wives in the main action of *He Knew He Was Right* and *The Prime Minister*, which are both primarily set in the city, are shown to have no chance of success at all. Despite her best efforts, Emily Lopez's attempts to obey and submit to her husband's wishes are

sabotaged by his immoral demands, while Emily Trevelyan cannot bring herself to submit to a mad tyrant.

Through his portrayal of the four different marriages discussed in this chapter, Trollope shows that the ability of a wife to submit to her husband is directly dependent on the husband's character and conduct. She can only obey her husband if he is sane, rational and moral. However, as the marriage of the Pallisers show, such qualities merely make it *possible* for a wife to submit to her husband; they do not guarantee that she will do so. Moreover, Trollope's depiction of husbands' mental and moral capabilities in his later novels suggest that he is not very hopeful that husbands are able to live up to the standards set for them by Victorian ideology, and hence they do not have the right to demand their wives to obey them.

Chapter 3: Marital Success

In Trollope's fiction, unhappy and dysfunctional marriages such as those of the Kennedys, Trevelyans and Lopezes are usually explored in greater depth than marriages which are comparatively successful. Most of the time, marriages are the main focus of the novels only when there are tensions within the relationship which need to be resolved, such as the issues faced by the Pallisers in *Can You Forgive Her?* (1864) and *The Prime Minister* (1875), and the Germains in *Is He Popenjoy?* (1877). Given that a lot less is actually said about the workings of successful marriages than dysfunctional ones, the reader must read between the lines in order to piece together a definition of what, in Trollope's view, qualifies as a successful marriage.

From a comparison of the successful marriages in Trollope's work, a minimal standard emerges: both husband and wife are able to live together and are reasonably content with each other. Moreover, such marriages are stable relationships, with little risk of permanent, voluntary physical separation or emotional estrangement. This is seen in Trollope's description of George Bertram and Caroline Waddington's married life in *The Bertrams* (1858): "They now live together *very quietly, very soberly, but yet happily*. . . . Their house is childless, and very, very quiet; but *they are not unhappy*" (531; ch. 47, emphasis added). Given the context of the Bertrams' marriage, one can further infer that such a relationship is based on mutual understanding rather than passion and romance: "there were no soft, honey words of love . . . no happy, eager vows" (531; ch. 47).

Trollope also examines role of mutual sympathy within a marriage; the happiest marriages are those in which this quality is present. He also makes the distinction between 'esteem' and 'sympathy': "no person can live happily with

another . . . simply upon esteem. All the virtues in the calendar, though they exist on each side, will not make a man and woman happy together, unless there be sympathy" (*Finn* 210; vol. 1, ch. 23). Caroline Waddington and Laura Standish hold Henry Harcourt and Robert Kennedy respectively in high esteem, but the disastrous outcome of their marriages implies that some degree of "sympathy" — the ability to understand and share another's concerns, interests and values — is crucial for marital happiness. However, one must draw a distinction between marital happiness and marital success — a successful marriage is "not unhappy", but it need not necessarily be blissful. Mutual sympathy may result in a happy marriage, but the lack of sympathy need not necessarily spell disaster if there is some degree of understanding between husband and wife as to what their respective roles and responsibilities are within the marriage. This is perhaps most clearly seen in the Houghton marriage in *Is He Popenjoy?*, which I shall examine later in this chapter.

Trollope's definition of a successful marriage does not conform to the Victorian ideal — it has much less demanding standards. According to the ideology of love and marriage, a model Victorian marriage is one that is based on romantic love, and in which husband and wife fulfil their respective roles in the public and private spheres. Ideally, this would result in a "perfect, well-rounded whole" (Coontz 156) — a union of perfect harmony — when husband and wife were brought together. The Victorians' idealisation of love contributed to the assumption that marriage was to be a constant state of happiness; ideology depicted marital love as a static, unchanging state of bliss. People were "encouraged to expect marriage to be the best and happiest experience of their lives" (Coontz 149-50). However, there are obvious problems with such an assumption.

First, a constant state of romantic bliss is unsustainable. A couple who has been married for many years cannot be expected to behave like newlyweds who are primarily engrossed in each other. Over time, romance naturally gives way to more practical concerns such as one's family, financial prospects and social position. Second, marriage is a dynamic relationship which might not always be the "best and happiest experience" of one's life. In fact, contemporary critics of the love match were concerned that there would be nothing to "hold a marriage together if things went 'for worse' rather than 'for better'" (Coontz 150).

Unlike his society, Trollope holds a far more realistic view towards marriage. Even in his early novels, such as *The Bertrams*, he recognises that a successful marriage need not conform to the ideals of his society. Instead, he depicts successful unions which reflect reality instead of blindly conforming to Victorian society's tenets regarding love and marriage. Through his portrayal of the matrimonial state, he challenges the assumption that there is only one kind of marital success and that this can only be achieved by the love ideal. Instead, he asserts that no ideological formula can guarantee a "happy" marriage, and that terms such as "happy" and "successful" are highly subjective — one couple's idea of a successful marriage may be another couple's idea of unhappy boredom. Moreover, he challenges the assumption that a marriage is a static relationship; instead, it is an evolving partnership between two individuals who themselves change over time (Polhemus, *Changing World* 120).

Trollope presents a wide spectrum of marriages which may be considered successful by the minimal standards outlined above. In this chapter I shall examine four such marriages — the Grantlys, Germains, Finns and Chilterns. With the exception of the Germains, all these couples appear in more than one novel and

demonstrate Trollope's interest in marriage as an evolving relationship. Through them, he presents different versions of successful marriages, and explores how the concept of "marital happiness" is essentially a subjective one. Yet he does so in a way that readers often receive the impression that conventional beliefs regarding marriage are affirmed — or at the least, not flouted.

The Grantlys

In the Barsetshire novels, Trollope realistically depicts the dynamics of a mature marriage. Theophilus Grantly and Susan Harding have been married for over a decade by the time the reader first encounters them in *The Warden*; in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* the narrator informs us that the Grantlys have been married for more than twenty-five years. Through them, Trollope shows how a marriage need not necessarily conform to the Victorian love ideal in order to succeed.

Trollope's depiction of the Grantly marriage disputes the Victorian conviction that romantic love "continues throughout life, animating husband and wife no less than the lover and his lass" (Houghton 375). There is a distinct lack of romance between the Grantlys who are seldom concerned about their relationship or their spouse's feelings towards themselves; their energies are directed towards the world around them. What "animates" them is not romantic love but their concern for their family, their position within the diocese and society, and their shared antipathy to the Proudies. This suggests that feelings of romantic love naturally give way to more practical concerns over time, and also implies that the Grantly marriage is so stable that there is no need for them to constantly tend to their relationship.

Trollope's portrayal of the Grantly marriage also dispels the notion that a successful marriage is one in which husband and wife are always in perfect harmony. Instead, he suggests that disagreements are inevitable within a marriage, no matter how alike husband and wife might be. Although the Grantlys often share the same point of view and understand each other's reactions, they often differ on how they should act. While the couple presents a united front before the world and Mrs Grantly is "a pattern of obedience" in public (*Barchester* 19, ch. 3), the couple does not conform to the Victorian marital ideal in which the wife "[loses] herself, in the larger being of her husband: while he, . . . takes on himself alone the strife and the weary toil" (Lynton 257). Instead, Trollope defends the autonomy of both Dr and Mrs Grantly by portraying them as distinct individuals with deeply-held (and sometimes contradictory) opinions of their own. Rather than portraying the Grantly marriage as one in which the husband is supreme in all things, Trollope in fact shows that Dr Grantly is often powerless against his wife in the privacy of their bedroom — she alone can effectively silence him, and she often has the last word when they disagree. However, their disagreements are not a sign of marital discord, but instead reveal that a successful marriage does not necessarily mean the subsuming of the wife's personality into that of the husband's. Their disagreements are in fact proof of the couple's respect for each other's individuality — Dr Grantly never tries to force his wife to obey him, but considers her arguments, albeit grudgingly. Likewise, Mrs Grantly does not impose her will upon her husband, unlike Mrs Proudie.

The Grantly marriage reflects the reality that husbands and wives do not always agree with one another; neither do husbands always have the final word. Instead, "ordinary men concede power to their wives" (Markwick 141) and this is

exactly what happens in the Grantly bedroom, where the Archdeacon "talks, looks and thinks like an ordinary man" (*Warden* 12; ch. 2). Trollope is concerned with the "ordinary" rather than the "ideal" marriage, and his realistic portrayal of the Grantly union runs contrary to his society's "abstract glorification of romance and married love" (Coontz 183), which tends to paint married life as a constant state of happiness and complete unity. Instead, Trollope seems to make a point that conflict within a marriage need not always signify disaster — instead, some degree of conflict can even be constructive. We see this in *The Last Chronicle of Barset* when Mrs Grantly refuses to write, on her husband's behalf, the letter disinheriting their son Henry until the next day, knowing that "the evening would come, and that [Dr Grantly] would say his prayers; . . . [and] his rage would hardly be able to survive that ordeal" (327; ch. 33). On the other hand, the absence of conflict does not necessarily indicate that all is well within a marriage; rather, it can signify the complete loss of communication between the couple.

Trollope demonstrates this through his depiction of the Stanhope marriage — it may be free of disagreement, but it also lacks mutual concern. The narrator notes that their relationship is essentially destructive: "It is astonishing how much each of the family was able to do, and how much each did, to prevent the well-being of the other four" (*Barchester* 64; ch. 9). In a novel in which almost all the clergymen and their families are lobbying for advancement and influence, Mrs Stanhope's idleness — "she did not interfere with the purposes of others" (65; ch. 9) — reflects her unconcern for her husband and his career. In stark contrast, Mrs Grantly is "quite as well prepared as her lord to carry on the battle [against the Proudie faction] without giving or taking quarter" (110; ch. 13). Rather than passively relying on her husband

to "[protect] her form all evil, and [shield] her against danger, and [take] on himself alone the strife and the weary toil, the danger, and the struggle" (Lynton 257), she actively supports him in his "battles" and shares his aversion to religious extremes of any kind. Despite the lack of romance and their occasional disagreements, the Grantly marriage is a stable, mutually supportive relationship bound by common values and goals.

However, while Trollope appears to approve of Mrs Grantly's active involvement in her husband's life and work (thus subtly challenging the doctrine of separate spheres), he does not attempt to overthrow the Victorian ideal of gender roles altogether. Although Mrs Grantly has as much sway, if not more, as her husband in the privacy of their bedroom, she never challenges his authority in public: "that wise and talented lady too well knew the man to whom her lot for life was bound, to stretch her authority beyond the point at which it would be borne" (*Warden* 66-67; ch. 8). She understands her husband's nature well enough to know what the limits to her own influence are; similarly, the Archdeacon accepts that there are limits to his "marital control": "he was not a despot who could exact a passive obedience to every fantasy" (*Barset* 326; ch. 33). The Grantly marriage suggests that a successful union requires mutual compromise as well as respect for each other's individuality.

The importance of mutual compromise and respect in a marriage is highlighted by the contrast between the Grantlys and the Proudies. In direct contrast to the "despotic" Mrs Proudie, Mrs Grantly's "sway, . . . is easy and beneficent": "She never shames her husband; before the world she is a pattern of obedience; her voice is never loud, nor her looks sharp: doubtless she values power, and has not unsuccessfully striven to acquire it; but she knows what should be the limits of a

woman's rule" (*Barchester* 20; ch. 3). In contrast, Mrs Proudie has no regard for "the limits of a woman's rule" but instead usurps her husband's domestic and spiritual authority and reduces him to "a state of vassalage" (21; ch. 3). Instead of the supportive partnership enjoyed by the Grantlys, the Proudie marriage is a thraldom, with Dr Proudie being "no better than a puppet" (*Barset* 467; ch. 47). Dr Proudie eventually feels himself disgraced and longs to escape from his wife's tyranny: "Would there ever come to him a time of freedom? . . . Would it not be a fine thing if he could die at once, and thus escape from his misery?" (481; ch. 47). Despite the fact that the Proudie marriage has lasted almost as long as that of the Grantlys, Dr Proudie's "misery" makes it clear that the union fails to meet the minimal standards of Trollope's successful marriage. In contrast, Dr Grantly has never regretted his choice of a wife (25; ch. 2) and sometimes still "wondered at and admired the greatness of [his wife's] mind" (*Framley* 306; ch. 25). This is in spite of the fact that Mrs Grantly does not perfectly conform to the ideal of the passive wife who loses herself in her husband's personality. Instead, she is an active, independent woman who is able to stand up to her husband when necessary. Trollope thus suggests that it is not strict conformity to the standards of ideology that determine the success of a marriage. Rather, mutual respect and compromise appear to play a more important role.

The Grantly marriage is Trollope's first extended attempt at describing a marriage over the course of several novels. Even though the union is never the focus of the Barsetshire novels, Trollope succeeds in presenting a realistic picture of what a successful, mature marriage could possibly look like. Although their marriage is not ideologically correct, it is a stable and constructive partnership, and one of the pillars of the Barsetshire novels.

The Finns and the Chilterns

Through the Finns and Chilterns in *Phineas Finn* (1867) and *Phineas Redux* (1873), Trollope makes a more thorough study of marital relationships and their relation to the ideologies of love and gender roles. Morse argues that the Finns and Chilterns are "two of the most successful marriages in the entire Palliser chronicle", pointing out that in each union, an active, clever and passionate woman is paired off with a husband who appreciates, rather than quells, her unconventional traits (39). She claims that such pairings are examples of "marital equality" in which neither party attempts to tyrannise over the other (39). Unlike Lady Laura Kennedy, whose nature is stifled and repressed by her husband, both Violet Effingham and Marie Goesler are given free rein by their husbands to pursue their own interests instead of being forced to conform to society's standards of proper wifely behaviour. The success of their marriages implies that the ideal of female submission and male domination prescribed by the doctrine of separate spheres is not the only model of a "good" marriage, and that marital success does not hinge on strict conformity to ideology.

Part of the "marital equality" Morse speaks about could be attributed to the fact that both Marie and Violet are significantly wealthier than their husbands. The Victorian ideal of the breadwinner husband does not apply in either marriage. Although both Phineas and Chiltern work, they are financially dependent on their wives, whose financial power makes it possible for them to lead the lives they enjoy. This is especially so given the fact that their chosen occupations — politics and hunting — often do not pay well and may even require considerable expenditure on their part. Their indebtedness to their wives may explain why neither Phineas nor Chiltern attempts to dominate their wives.

In contrast, Kennedy's attempts to tyrannise over Laura are aggravated by her financial dependence on him. Laura believes that her husband feels entitled to impose his will on her because he is wealthy and she is not: "The rich man thought it to be quite enough for her [who had married him because she was poor] to sit at home and look after his welfare" (*Finn* 304; vol. 1, ch. 32). Wealth becomes an instrument of tyranny when Kennedy tries to force Laura to return to him by withholding her fortune. By contrasting the Finn and Chiltern marriages against the Kennedy union, Trollope suggests that a woman of independent financial means has a better chance of achieving marital equality, or at least, resisting being trampled upon by her husband.

The Finns and Chilterns are excellent examples of companionate marriage — unions in which husband and wife freely choose each other and are bonded by mutual interests, common values and love for one another (Perkin 266-69). While the ideal Victorian marriage was based on the companionate model, it was heavily influenced by the prevalent ideologies of the period. The belief in gendered differences in the natures of men and women, the doctrine of separate spheres and the idealisation of love made the Victorian marriage rather more complicated than the companionate marriages of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through the Finns and Chilterns, Trollope suggests that Victorian ideologies are superfluous and do not add any real value to the companionate model of the previous two centuries.

In the Finns, Trollope depicts a successful marriage that goes against many of the ideologies of Victorian society, stripping it of many conventional beliefs in order to reveal that a successful marriage need not depend on conformity to society's tenets. Socially-accepted beliefs about sexual roles, gendered behaviour and the doctrine of separate spheres are questioned or challenged through his portrayal of Phineas and

Marie, and their courtship and marriage. The only convention which their relationship obeys is perhaps that of the love ideal, and even that is subverted through the portrayal of their courtship in which sexual roles are reversed. Moreover, Marie is not Phineas's 'one true love' — and she does not mind that. It is almost as if Trollope is asserting that a happy marriage needs only mutual love and sympathy between husband and wife, and that the tenets of ideology are peripheral.

Trollope challenges gender ideology through his characterisations of Phineas and Marie. He assigns Marie 'masculine' qualities such as ambition, aggression, courage and resolution, and depicts her as a model of self-control and rationality. When she knows that she is to meet Phineas at Harrington Hall — their first meeting after he rejects her proposal — her instinct is to flee. Yet, she checks herself with a very rational thought: "This man would be again in London, and she could not always fly. It would be only necessary that she should maintain her own composure, and the misery of the meeting would pass away after the first few minutes" (*Redux* 120; ch. 15). Marie's ability to make decisions based on reason rather than emotion would have been regarded by Trollope's contemporaries as a masculine trait, yet Marie herself is never seen to be unwomanly. Instead, her rationality and courage are perceived as attractive qualities. She is shown to rise above the simplistic dichotomy of 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits.

In contrast to Marie's self-possession, Phineas is emotional, impulsive and hypersensitive — personality traits which are often considered feminine, although the first two are sometimes associated with the Irish, who were long regarded as being more feminine than their English counterparts (Lengel 49). One of the first descriptions of Phineas emphasises his 'feminine' qualities: "he blushed like a girl" at

Barrington Erle's suggestion that he enter politics (*Finn* 5; ch. 1). Seven years later, Phineas is still unable to school his emotions, suggesting that his emotional sensitivity is an inherent part of his personality, rather than a sign of immaturity. Unlike Marie's, Phineas's reaction to their reunion is thoroughly emotional — "that unavoidable blush suffused his face, and the blood began to career through his veins" (*Redux* 123; ch. 15) — with no rational thought to assuage his embarrassment. Although such emotional sensitivity is usually considered a feminine trait, it is one of Phineas's most endearing qualities.

Despite this odd inversion of masculine and feminine traits, both Marie and Phineas are attractive characters, both to the reader and to the other characters in the *Phineas* novels. Nardin points out that Marie "speaks, thinks and lives like a man — but we do not dislike her for doing so" (*He Knew She Was Right* 93-94). This is perhaps due to the fact that readers recognise — either consciously or subconsciously — aspects of themselves in Marie and Phineas. Trollope's favourable portrayal of both Marie and Phineas is an implicit critique of his society's narrow conception of personhood, which ignored the fact that personality and character are not gender-specific. It is almost as if he is assuring his readers that so-called 'masculine' and 'feminine' traits do not necessary have anything to do with gender: an aggressive, brave woman and a sensitive, emotional man can be just as attractive, if not more so, than their ideologically correct counterparts.

Marie and Phineas are also unconventional lovers. Phineas is the passive ('feminine') party in their relationship, while it is Marie who takes on the aggressive ('male') role of the suitor. When she first proposes to Phineas, she even gives an impression of physical strength — a masculine trait: "she was stronger, larger, more

robust physically than he had hitherto conceived" (*Finn* 318; vol. 2, ch. 72). Unusual as a marriage proposal from a woman might be, nowhere does the narrator suggest that Marie is immodest or too forward. Moreover, her proposal "had gratified all his [Phineas's] vanity"; Phineas rejects her only because he is honour-bound to marry Mary Flood Jones. While the title of the chapter — "Madame Goesler's Generosity" — primarily refers to Marie's offer of her hand in marriage as well as her fortune, it also implies that it is acceptable and even generous for a woman to take the initiative in courtship. By depicting a successful relationship in which the traditional sexual roles are reversed, Trollope challenges the limitations of Victorian gender roles.

It has been noted that Marie and Phineas are very much alike in terms of character, ambition and experience (McMaster 56; Polhemus, *Changing World* 161). Perhaps it is this similarity which accounts for the sympathy between the couple. While Phineas is strongly attracted to other women in *Phineas Finn*, none of them fully understands him. Polhemus notes that as Phineas's love objects, Lady Laura Standish, Violet Effingham and Mary Flood Jones are "metaphors" for his desires for wealth, power, advancement and unconditional love ("Being in Love" 388-89). However, in *Phineas Redux*, Marie is more than a metaphor for Phineas's desires — she is a kindred spirit whose disenchantment with the social world precedes and parallels Phineas's own growing disillusionment with the political world (Kincaid 211-12). She is able to fully sympathise with Phineas — and he with her — because she has "lived through [his] desolation" (Kincaid 215). In yet another reversal of gender roles, it is Marie who guides Phineas through his disillusionment by moving to "a love that lies outside appearances" and "pull[ing] him after her" (Kincaid 212).

In a radical departure from social norms, both husband and wife act in the public sphere; in fact, Phineas is able to operate in the public sphere *because* his wife successfully engages it first — her wealth makes it possible for him to be fully engaged in the political arena without worrying over election expenses and the like. For her part, Marie is not a domestic goddess shut up at home nor an idle heiress living off her late husband's inheritance, but is actively and physically involved in the 'male' sphere of commerce (*Finn* 238; vol. 2, ch. 64) — it is she who is the main breadwinner, rather than her husband. Moreover, she becomes a political mover behind the scenes along with Glencora.

Through the Finns, Trollope presents an alternative to the conventional Victorian family unit. Nardin notes that they are "the precursors of the childless, two-career couple" (*He Knew She Was Right* 201). Like the Bertrams, the Finns have no children, but they are not unhappy. This goes against the conventional model of the Victorian family, which regarded offspring as a sign of a successful marriage. Even modern critics sometimes regard fertility as an indicator of a thriving marriage, or the turning point in an unhappy marriage, as does Morse in discussing the marriages of the Pallisers and Chilterns (20,68). By the same token, childlessness is often regarded as a sign of marital discord (68). However, this generalisation does not apply to the Finns. Trollope thus suggests that what constitutes a successful marriage is ultimately subjective and independent of social norms.

Another unconventional characteristic of the Finns is their mutual independence. Trollope rarely shows the couple together after they are married — Marie is often with the Duchess while Phineas is often away due to his parliamentary duties. Although they seem to lead largely separate lives, they share everything with

one another. The Duchess "took it for granted that Mr Finn knew all that his wife knew" (*Prime* 244; ch. 28) — an assumption which is left unchallenged by the narrator. Unusual for parliamentary husbands, Phineas readily discusses politics with his wife, suggesting that he values her opinion and insight. In contrast, Plantagenet rarely talks to Glencora about such matters of his own accord. The only occasion when Phineas is deliberately kept in the dark by his wife is when she is wronged by the Duke over Frank Tregear's attachment to Mary Palliser. She does this because she is anxious to prevent a quarrel between her husband and the Duke, "fearing that he would feel himself bound to take some steps to support his wife under the treatment she had received" and thus injure his political career (*Duke* 104; ch. 13). Trollope shows that Marie is able to fight her own battles — and win them — without her husband's intervention, thus dispelling the image of a weak, passive wife who is dependent on her husband's protection.

Unlike many other couples in Trollope's novels, the issues of power, authority and submission require no negotiation by the Finns, and Phineas's scruples about Marie's wealth are quickly dealt with: "It must be an even partnership" (*Redux* 632; ch. 79). The couple is also older and emotionally more mature than the average Victorian newlyweds — both are in their thirties when they marry, and it is the second marriage for both. Having married once for money, Marie now desires to love and be loved (*Redux* 241; ch. 30). Having once married an "embodiment of traditional womanly virtues", Phineas's choice of the independent and sophisticated Marie suggests that he craves for something more than Mary's simple adoration (Morse 43).

The Finns demonstrate that it is possible to have a stable and happy marriage without conforming to the doctrine of separate spheres. Their successful marriage

hinges on qualities such as mutual sympathy and understanding which are independent of Victorian conventions regarding spousal roles. Through his positive depiction of the Finns and their unconventional yet blissful marriage, Trollope challenges the doctrine of separate spheres even as he appears to affirm the love ideal.

However, Trollope does not suggest that the Finns' version of marital bliss works for everyone. Although their childlessness does not seem to bother them, it would pose problems for couples who wish to pass down an estate or a title to their own children. In contrast to the unusual marriage of the Finns, Trollope's portrayal of the Chilterns seems to affirm the conventional Victorian family unit comprising an active husband, a domestic wife, and children. This suggests that the form of a successful marriage is dependent on the personalities of the husband and wife as well as the circumstances they are in, rather than their conformity to ideology.

Like Phineas and Marie, neither Chiltern nor Violet conforms to society's expectations. Trollope's portrayal of Violet in *Phineas Finn* undermines the ideal of Woman as Child (Morse 58-61). Her petite and delicate appearance gives the impression that she can be easily controlled: "In figure she was small. . . . there was a softness about her whole person, an apparent compressibility" (*Finn* 90; vol. 1, ch. 10). However, she is not a passive ornament to society, but a lively, active person who excels at a typically male sport — hunting. In defiance of her guardian's wishes, she rode "the famous run from Bagnall's Gorse to Foulsham Common, and was in at the death" (91; vol. 1, ch. 10). Violet's fragile appearance belies her "physical strength and force of character" (Morse 58).

Trollope also subverts the conventional image of the gentlemanly, romantic hero in his portrayal of Chiltern. He has an appearance of "ferocity" and a reputation

for violence and drunkenness (*Finn* 98-99; vol. 1, ch. 11). In no way can he be regarded as a suitable, or even safe, suitor. As Violet herself points out to Laura: "Is he altogether the sort of man that mammas of the best kind are seeking for their daughters?" (95; vol. 1, ch. 10). The anti-romantic Chiltern refuses to woo Violet with soft words and angrily scorns the romantic fiction his sister would have him tell, but instead proposes repeatedly "with a highly un-poetic bluntness" (Letwin 145). Eventually, Chiltern wins Violet, not by romancing her, but by forcibly claiming her as his: "Then he rushed at her, and, seizing her in his arms, kissed her all over—her forehead, her lips, her cheeks, then both her hands, and then her lips again. 'By G—, she is my own!' he said. . . . It was true" (*Finn* 122; vol. 2, ch. 52).

In *Can You Forgive Her?*, Trollope contrasts what he terms the "wild man" against the "worthy man" (55; ch. 2), and shows that it is the "worthy man" John Grey who deserves Alice Vavasor's love. A similar trope recurs in *Phineas Finn*, but is subverted. Of Violet's two serious suitors, it is Phineas who initially appears to be the "worthy man", while Chiltern comes across as the "wild man". Yet, in what seems to be an affirmation of the love ideal, Trollope shows that it is the dangerous Chiltern who is most worthy of Violet's affections because he is utterly devoted to her. Even though she thinks that Phineas is "a better man" than Chiltern, she comes to realise that she does not desire a prudent marriage but "having her lover all to herself" (*Finn* 118-19; vol. 2, ch. 51). She is piqued by the realisation that Phineas "had simply taken up with her as soon as he had failed with [Laura]" (118; vol. 2, ch. 51). Violet realises that she desires devotion and constancy more than she does safety and prudence, and so she accepts Chiltern, to whom Violet is the "only woman" on earth (121; vol. 2, ch. 52). Despite their individualistic natures, their union ultimately appears to affirm

Victorian love ideology as true love wins the day — Chiltern's devotion pays off, and Violet's decision to follow her heart is shown to be the right choice.

However, Trollope complicates this apparently ideologically-perfect resolution. The couple's engagement is briefly broken off because Violet tries to exert a positive moral influence on Chiltern in conformity with the ideal of woman as moral saviour. Chiltern's estranged father Lord Brentford persuades her to 'reform' Chiltern, and the result is an angry separation. Violet quickly realises that her attempt to conform to society's tenets — to "quote something out of the copy-book" (*Finn* 326; vol. 2, ch. 73) — is a failure. She also recognises that it takes more than love to maintain a relationship: "Though we like each other—love each other, if you choose to say so—we are not fit to be man and wife. . . . We are too much alike" (307; vol. 2, ch. 71). The couple learns that, contrary to the ideology of love, marital happiness does not depend on love alone.

Trollope shows that what makes a marriage happy is unique to each couple. While romantic love is present in both the Finn and Chiltern marriages, the Finns do not demand the exclusive kind of attention that Violet and Chiltern require and receive from each other; Marie never feels threatened by or upset about Phineas's previous attachments. Moreover, while mutual sympathy and understanding appear to be the key to the Grantlys' and Finns' marital happiness, these qualities are not enough for the Chilterns. Unlike the Finns, who are both highly adaptable individuals, Violet and Chiltern are extremely stubborn: "Each is too violent, too headstrong, and too masterful" (*Finn* 307; vol. 2, ch. 71). Both must learn to accept and give way to each other. Violet must accept Chiltern for the way he is, rather than relate to him through the prism of gender ideology — or ideology of any kind, for that matter. This

means a conscious rejection of the Victorian wife's duty to uplift the morals of her husband: "I will not say another word, whether you choose to heave coals or not. You shall do as you please" (327; vol. 2, ch. 73). Meanwhile, Chiltern learns to accommodate Violet by tempering his natural ferocity. Through this process of mutual compromise, Trollope suggests the need for couples to consciously adapt to their partners' unique personalities and temperament rather than attempt to conform to society's tenets regarding gender roles.

Chiltern and Violet's separation and subsequent reconciliation upholds one ideology and simultaneously undermines another. The ideology of true love is ultimately affirmed even as gender ideology is indicted as the root cause of their quarrel. Violet tells Phineas that "a woman cannot transfer her heart" and having given her love to Chiltern, she "cannot now give [her]self to another" (*Finn* 249; vol. 2, ch. 64). Her constancy brings to mind Lily Dale when she inwardly defends her loyalty to Crosbie: "What can a heart be worth if it can be transferred hither and thither as circumstances and convenience and comfort may require?" (*Allington* 633; ch. 57). However, while Lily's refusal to change her heart eventually becomes ludicrous, Violet's faithfulness to Chiltern never draws criticism. Instead, the narrator explains that "love had not conquered her, but had been taken into her service" (*Finn* 306; vol. 2, ch. 71). Unlike Lily, who becomes a slave to love, Violet remains clearheaded and in command of her feelings. Her constancy towards Chiltern, like her lover's to herself, appears to affirm the love ideal.

The Chilterns' have an undeniably happy and successful marriage. However, unlike the Finns whose marriage is decidedly non-conformist, the Chilterns are comparatively conventional. Both husband and wife appear to fulfil their ideological

roles without making a conscious effort to conform to society's expectations. When we encounter them as a married couple in *Phineas Redux,* the domestic and public spheres seem neatly divided between husband and wife: "I show Baby, and Oswald shows the hounds", Violet tells Phineas wryly (24; ch. 2), perhaps recognising the irony of her own conformity to the doctrine of separate spheres.

Yet, Violet is not restricted by her new status as a wife and mother — she is a "free, witty and powerful wife" (Kincaid 198). As outspoken as she ever was, Violet banters easily with her husband, as their conversation on providing horses for Phineas shows. Their playful allusion to Phineas's former affections for Violet reveals the absolute trust within the Chiltern marriage. When they discuss Gerald Maule's courtship of Adelaide Palliser, they allude to their own courtship:

> "What fools women are."
>
> "Never mind that. Say you are glad. I like you to tell me so. Let me be a fool if I will."
>
> "What made you so obstinate? . . . I've no doubt it was all right — only you very nearly made me shoot a fellow, and now I've got to find horses for him." (*Redux* 115; ch. 14)

The affection and humour is clearly evident. Like the Finns and Grantlys, they communicate candidly with one another; this suggests that Trollope regarded open communication between husband and wife as an important element of a happy marriage.

Moreover, the Chilterns' efforts to encourage the match between Adelaide and Gerald indicate their own contentment with their marriage. Adelaide and Gerald are

essentially watered-down versions of themselves, and Adelaide's greatest reservation in accepting Gerald — the fear of wrecking her life by marrying an unworthy man — mirrors Violet's own concern in accepting Chiltern. Violet's encouragement of this couple's romance could suggest that she is trying to validate her unconventional choice of the dangerous Chiltern by replicating her experience in Adelaide. However, it is more likely that Violet simply wants Adelaide to have the same kind of happiness she has by choosing with her heart and not her head — given her character, she would not encourage the match if she did not believe in it. Hence, one can regard this matchmaking effort as further proof of the Chilterns' marital happiness.

Considering how individualistic both Chiltern and Violet are, their marriage is surprisingly conventional. The success of both the Finns' unconventional marriage and the Chilterns' slightly more conventional one suggests that neither conformity nor non-conformity to the ideologies of love and marriage has any significant bearing on how well the marriage turns out. Ideology is revealed to be irrelevant. Other factors such as mutual sympathy, forbearance and adaptability seem to play a greater role in determining the outcome of a marriage.

The Germains

In *Is He Popenjoy?* (1877), Trollope questions the very notion of marital success. The main action revolves around the marriage of Lord George Germain and Mary Lovelace. It explores the mismatched couple's growing relationship and the difficulties they encounter over the first two years of their marriage. The novel ends on an ostensibly comic note: the ogre-like old Marquis and his dysfunctional family are replaced by the Germains, whose apparent marital contentment seems to affirm the love ideal. They successfully play out their prescribed roles in society: George

becomes a "model member of the House of Lords," a "satisfied" husband and a "pattern father" (308-09; vol. 2, ch. 64) while Mary carries her new title of Marchioness credibly despite her non-aristocratic background. She also conforms to the Victorian ideal of the sweet, soft and clinging wife: "I have wanted nothing but to have George to live with me" (280; vol. 2, ch. 61). A potentially disastrous match between a dull, stuffy aristocrat and a vivacious, pleasure-loving commoner works out happily.

However, a closer examination reveals that the Germains' happiness is largely the result of their elevated station in life, rather than their love for each other. The difficulties the Germains face in their marriage — incompatible personalities and interests, significantly different social backgrounds and different temperaments — are never satisfactorily resolved. Instead, "all the tensions that have built up between husband and wife . . . are magically, and bathetically, waved away" (Edwards 78) by Mary's pregnancy and the Germains' elevation to the marquisate. The marriage 'succeeds' mainly because of favourable circumstances.

It is in fact difficult to believe that Mary and George love each other in the passionate way prescribed by the love ideal. For one, George is not at all a likable or compelling character. One has to agree with the contemporary critic who noted that "the reader does not see the likelihood of this growth of tenderness [from Mary towards George]. Lord George is not the person to gather affection about him; in fact, he makes a very poor figure throughout" (Anon. qtd. in Smalley 411). Moreover, Mary's love for her husband is an act of will, and not entirely convincing. The narrator tells us that Mary "strove very hard" (*Popenjoy* 19; vol. 1, ch. 2) and "endeavour[ed] to force herself" (272; vol. 1, ch. 28) to be in love with George. When

Jack confesses his feelings for her, Mary's retort that she loves her husband "with all [her] heart—oh, better than all the world" seems like a desperate attempt to convince herself and to shield herself against Jack's charms (222; vol. 2, ch. 55). She is determined to love George because she does not see any other way of living:

> There could surely nothing be so glorious as being well in love. And the one to be thus worshipped *must of course become her husband*. Otherwise would her heart be broken, and perhaps his—and all would be tragedy. But *with tragedy she had no sympathy*. The loved one must become her husband. (15; vol. 1, emphasis added)

Because Mary is determined that her life is to be a comedy rather than a tragedy, the husband that she already has must become the loved one, rather than the other way around.

Moreover, both George and Mary indulge in flirtations which indicate other underlying issues within their marriage. George's dalliance with his old love, Adelaide Houghton, "seems at first comic" (Kincaid 242). Adelaide is not malicious, but mischievous: "She had formed no plot against the happiness of the husband and wife. . . but the plot made itself, and she liked the excitement" (*Popenjoy* 90; vol. 1, ch. 9). She is the forbidden fruit George desires, precisely because it is forbidden to him. George is looking for a thrill: "There was a luxury in it which almost intoxicated him, . . . That she should so love him, as to be actually subdued by her love, could not but charm him" (179; vol. 1, ch. 19). George chiefly desires titillation and excitement, and it is highly unlikely that he would have acted on his physical attraction to Adelaide, given how he panics whenever the latter declares her affection for him. His

dalliance is essentially rather harmless; it is no more serious than Mary's flirtation with Jack.

But in fact, Mary's own attachment to Jack is not as innocent as it appears. He is "the realisation of those early dreams [of romance]" which she had to give up when she married George (*Popenjoy* 277; vol. 1, ch. 28). Yet, she is overly confident of her own heart, and of his: "She was sure that she did not love him, that there was no danger of her loving him; and she was quite confident also that he did not love her" (277; vol. 1, ch. 28). However, Jack does fall in love with her, and the reader suspects that Mary's own feelings are touched as well, even if she doesn't realise (or admit) it. She encourages Jack's attentions so much that Guss Mildmay is almost justified in accusing her of coming in between her and her happiness; Kincaid describes the flirtation as being "criminally thoughtless" (242). She accepts his engagement very reluctantly: "it made her somewhat melancholy to think that he should marry Guss Mildmay" (*Popenjoy* 294; vol. 2, ch. 62). Although she quickly squashes her possessive attitude towards him, her unhappiness that he is to be married is highly indicative that she considers his affections her own.

Together, these two flirtations reveal the lack of romance and excitement within the Germain marriage, which spurs the couple on to seek them in other people. Even though Adelaide is eventually banished from their lives and Jack is safely married off to Guss, there is no indication that the Germains have found the romance and excitement they crave for within their own marriage. Although the novel's ostensible moral is that the Germains eventually have a successful marriage because they manage to fall in love with each other, the truth is that their marital success is based on other more practical factors. In lieu of romance, they are contented with their

social status and their family. Instead of affirming the love ideal and the priority of romantic love, the Germains' story actually suggests that love need not be the cornerstone of a successful marriage.

This reading is supported by Trollope's depiction of other marriages in the novel, which show that love is not the only determinant of marital success. The Brotherton marriage is clearly meant as an antithesis of the 'successful' Germains. It is all too easy to forget that, unlike the Germains', the terrible Brotherton marriage evidently began as a love match — the Marquis must have loved his wife well enough to go through the marriage ceremony *twice*. Yet, love is not sufficient to hold the marriage together — it ends in an angry separation, and when the Marquis dies, his estranged wife is not even informed of his death. The novel's ostensible message that love triumphs over all is not only reductive but false, as the prudent marriage of the Germains is clearly more stable than the love match of the Brothertons.

Trollope acknowledges the fact that people marry for reasons other than love, and as such, it is not always reasonable to assess all marriages by the love ideal. One must consider the reasons why a couple marries and what they expect out of their marriage. When viewed in such a light, the Houghton marriage is arguably a successful one. Adelaide De Baron marries Jeffrey Houghton for financial security; in return, she "make[s] his house comfortable for him . . . and [is] civil to his friends, and [looks her] best at his table" (*Popenjoy* 284; vol. 1, ch. 29). Infidelity appears to be condoned, at least by Adelaide herself: "With whom Mr. Houghton consoles himself I have never taken the trouble to enquire" (30; vol. 2, ch. 35). Husband and wife have no illusions about the nature of their marriage; instead of love, they settle for other benefits such as financial security. However, while the Houghtons are

brutally honest about the absence of romantic love in their relationship, the Germains — especially Mary — try to fall in love with each other. Through the fact that both the Houghton and Germain marriages were motivated by prudent reasons, Trollope suggests that the Germain marriage succeeds not because it is based on love, but because the couple benefits materially from the marriage, as do the Houghtons.

The marriages of Lord Giblet and Jack De Baron also give the reader additional insight into the Germain union. Neither young man looks forward to a life of wedded bliss, but instead, each one tries to avoid matrimony altogether. Jack regards his engagement to Guss Mildmay with horror: "he had run his bark on to the rock, which it had been the whole study of his navigation to avoid" (*Popenjoy* 208; vol. 2, ch. 54). Similarly, Lord Giblet regrets his rash engagement to Miss Patmore Green but is trapped by Mrs Montacute Jones into fulfilling it (173-76; vol. 2, ch. 50). Neither man seems to revel in his wife's society; both prefer to stay away from home — Jack at his club and Lord Giblet at the Entomological Society (310; vol. 2, ch. 64).

However, both men adapt reasonably well to their new station in life: Lord Giblet claims to be "perfectly satisfied" with his life, while Jack "has done his duty in a manner that rather surprised his old acquaintances" (*Popenjoy* 310; vol. 2, ch. 64). Trollope also makes it clear that being married — and married to a rich man — is triumph enough for Guss, who was in danger of being left on the shelf (114; vol. 1, ch. 12). It is difficult to say whether these two marriages are successes or failures — perhaps they are neither. By blurring the lines between success and failure, Trollope challenges the conception that there is such a thing as an ideal marriage. He shows that there are many different factors that can affect matrimony, and that couples adjust to their marriages in variety of ways and in different degrees. What works for one

couple need not work for another. Success is subjective, and does not necessarily depend on conformity to the ideologies of love and gender roles.

The Victorian devotees of the love religion believed that the only 'right' marriage is one that is based on the love ideal. Trollope challenges this assumption by portraying a 'successful' marriage which appears to be anchored in love, but is not. Although both George and Mary are not unhappy with one another, and George is very "satisfied" with his wife (*Popenjoy* 309; vol. 2, ch. 64), their happiness is not based on the deep mutual sympathy evident in the Grantly and Finn marriages, nor the mutual forbearance in that of the Chilterns, but on the mutual understanding of what is expected of them and of each other in their new sphere of life. By fulfilling their responsibilities to each other in both private and in public, they are able to live contentedly together — and this is good enough for them. Trollope does not criticise such a marriage, but instead, depicts it as a different form of marital success.

Conclusion: The Pallisers

In this thesis, I have examined how Trollope challenges three beliefs inherent to the Victorian ideology of love and marriage: first, that one must marry principally for love; second, that husbands and wives are supposed to relate to one another according to the doctrine of separate spheres; third, that in order for a marriage to succeed, it must conform to both the love ideal and gender ideology. I have shown how Trollope undermines the ideologies of love and gender roles through his realistic and sensitive portrayal of marriages and courtships.

In this final chapter, I will discuss Trollope's portrayal of the Pallisers, whose moderately successful marriage often dispels conventional wisdom regarding love and gender roles. First, the marriage begins as a "well-ordered alliance between families" (*CYFH* 270; ch. 24) rather than a love match. Second, Glencora often flouts the doctrine of separate spheres by refusing to play the role of the meek, submissive wife, while Plantagenet is often unable to manage her. Third, in spite of the fact that the Palliser marriage flouts both the ideologies of love and separate spheres, it fulfils the minimal standards of marital success outlined in the previous chapter: the couple is not unhappy and their relationship is an essentially stable one. Trollope thus challenges the belief that one must conform to the prevalent ideologies of the period in order to have a successful marriage.

One of the hallmarks of the Palliser marriage is its complexity. It defies simple categorical terms: adjectives such as "loving", "understanding", "contented", "supportive" — terms which can be used to describe the successful marriages examined in the previous chapter — do not always apply to the Pallisers. Instead, these terms are only applicable at different points in the Palliser marriage. For

example, the mutual concern and support we witness towards the end of *The Prime Minister* is a departure from the competition between husband and wife that goes on throughout most of the novel. This demonstrates the evolving nature of the relationship and how it adapts to changing circumstances. Through the Pallisers, Trollope suggests that marriage is about constant change and adaptation, rather than about rigidly conforming to any kind of static, immovable code which does not take into account the unique needs and personalities of the individuals involved.

Trollope questions the relevance of the ideologies of love and separate spheres to marriage by focusing on Plantagenet and Glencora as individuals, rather than on their marriage. He is more interested in studying "those changes which time always produces" in individual characters (*Autobiography* 183; ch. 10) than in affirming or rejecting ideological beliefs. Although the beliefs of their society affect the couple, it is clear that their marriage is largely shaped by their individual choices and personalities, rather than any deliberate, consistent attempt to conform to or rebel against ideology. Trollope suggests that there can be no one-size-fits-all formula that will work for everyone. Instead, marriage is a highly personal relationship that must be tailored to suit the personalities and circumstances of each couple.

Polhemus writes that Trollope was "torn" between his society's idealistic vision of love and the real behaviour of people: "he sharply defined and tried to uphold the love myths, but he categorically described the breakdown of the love ideal" (*Changing World* 91). He argues that Trollope attempted to reconcile the love ideal to the reality of his day, and that the tone of "uncertainty" in his novels comes "from trying to sustain a dying myth of love" (120). However, I contend that Trollope was not as interested in "sustain[ing] a dying myth of love" and reconciling ideology

with reality as he was in questioning and challenging the love ideal. In his most interesting fictional marriages, he often avoids proffering conventional, ideologically-correct solutions to marital problems and even shows that some problems are created or exacerbated by the love ideal. His portrayal of the Palliser marriage, arguably the most well-depicted of all the unions he ever created, functions as an extended critique of the ideologies of love and separate spheres.

Marrying without Love

In *Can You Forgive Her?* Trollope initially appears to validate his society's worship of romantic love by sympathetically portraying Glencora's misery in her loveless marriage; the reader is led to think that Glencora is unhappy because she had "received a great wrong" by being separated from the man she loved and forced to marry a man she did not (*Autobiography* 181; ch. 10). However, it becomes clear that the she is miserable not because she betrays the love ideal, but because she subscribes to it in the first place. Rather than strengthening her marriage to Plantagenet, society's idealisation of love encourages her to dwell on the image of her former lover, Burgo Fitzgerald. Only when Glencora relinquishes the romantic trappings of the love ideal is she able to accept the undemonstrative love of her husband and fully come to terms with her married life.

Overton notes that "one of the poles in Trollope's fiction is his commitment to the autonomy of the individual person" (85); at the heart of Trollope's critique of the love ideal is how it restricts the choices of women. According to Victorian ideology of love, once a woman falls in love with a man, she is bound to love him faithfully, whether or not her feelings are requited, and regardless of his suitability as a husband. Having fallen in love with Burgo, Glencora expects herself to remain true to him, but

finds that she is not allowed by her environment to do so. Glencora's misery and her resistance towards Plantagenet in the early months of their marriage is aggravated by the fact that she did not choose him freely, but was pressured by her family into marrying him: "I could have clung to the outside of a man's body, to his very trappings . . . *if I had been allowed to choose a husband for myself*" (*CYFH* 306; ch. 27, emphasis added). There is no way for her to fulfil both the ideological and moral imperatives to which she feels herself subject: she cannot stay true to Burgo and elope with him without breaching morality, nor remain with Plantagenet without being "unmaidenly" (288; ch. 25) and untrue to her first love.

Trollope shows the love ideal to be a trap of sorts. Once a Victorian woman subscribes to her society's beliefs regarding love, she narrowly limits her options. Just as Laura Kennedy and Julia Ongar are convinced that they deserve a lifetime of misery for marrying prudently, Glencora believes that she has "no hour of happiness left to [her] in [her] life" because she has married Plantagenet without loving him (*CYFH* 305; ch. 27). Like Laura, Glencora tries to understand her life in terms of the love ideal after she is disappointed by her husband's emotional coldness, and consoles herself with the memory of her former lover. Such consolation is futile and destructive, trapping Glencora in a past that cannot be relived. She even justifies her adulterous desire to elope with Burgo by claiming that her marriage vows have "been all false throughout" because she has never loved her husband (305; ch. 27) — an argument that is perfectly valid only if one believes in the supremacy of romantic love. Rather than strengthening Glencora's marriage, the Victorian idealisation of love instead undermines the very social institution it is supposed to strengthen and uphold.

While Trollope does not disparage romantic love, he suggests that its importance has been exaggerated and that the ideal can become destructive when taken to extremes. Glencora eventually tells Plantagenet that she wants to leave him because they "have never loved each other for a single moment" (*CYFH* 614; ch. 58). Glencora's statement is not entirely true — Plantagenet does love her, only he does not know how (or that it is even necessary) to express his feelings: "I do love you. . . . If you mean that I am not apt at telling you so, it is true, I know" (615; ch. 58). The problem is not that Plantagenet does not love her, but that he does not convey his feelings in a way that Glencora can appreciate. Her perception of love is shaped by her society's belief that love is "a rush of emotion at once erotic and spiritual" (Houghton 391). It is easy to see how the handsome Burgo can inspire such an emotion, and how the emotionally obtuse Plantagenet cannot.

Trollope makes it clear that Plantagenet's failure to give his wife the attention she craves leads her to be even more fixated on Burgo, who, to Glencora, is an embodiment of the romantic love lauded by the Victorians: he was one who "could look up into the eyes of women, and seek [his] happiness there" (*CYFH* 454; ch. 42). The temptation posed by Burgo derives much of its allure from the belief that love is the "supreme experience of life [and] its end and object" (Houghton 373). Glencora initially sees love as a necessity: "to be loved and fondled, were absolutely necessary to her happiness" (*CYFH* 270; ch. 24). Her longing for romantic love is encouraged by the Victorian exaltation of love over all other things. This in turn exacerbates her dissatisfaction with her unromantic husband. The unrealistic expectations created by society's exaltation of romantic love thus add to the initial tensions within the Palliser marriage.

The eventual success of the Palliser marriage hinges on two things: first, on Plantagenet's convincing Glencora that he does love her, albeit not in the romantic fashion she desires; second, on Glencora's willingness to abandon the romantic trappings of the love ideal and to accept the unromantic reality of her marriage and the phlegmatic nature of her husband. Both husband and wife come to a compromise — Plantagenet realises that he must address his wife's need for love and affection and tries, in his own way, to meet it; Glencora makes the conscious decision to renounce her attachment to Burgo and to devote herself fully to Plantagenet and his concerns: "she would think no more of Burgo Fitzgerald as her future master. . . . There could be no further thought of leaving [Plantagenet]" (*CYFH* 618; ch. 59). It is this compromise that rescues their marriage from the brink of disaster, and which sets the tone for the rest of their marriage. Through this, Trollope seems to suggest that, contrary to the Victorians' views, marriage is not just about self-fulfilment, but is about compromise as well.

In the centuries preceding the Victorian age, it was believed that "love developed after one had selected a suitable prospective mate. People didn't *fall* in love. They *tiptoed* into it" (Coontz 178, emphasis in original). This aptly describes the development of the Pallisers' marriage from indifference and aversion to mutual affection and loyalty. Glencora eventually settles for Plantagenet's undemonstrative love, which addresses (albeit imperfectly) her desire "to be loved and fondled" (*CYFH* 270; ch. 24). Trollope does not reject the concept of love itself, but the unrealistic expectations that its idealisation creates. He advocates neither conformity to nor reaction against the love ideal, but suggests that married couples should simply be allowed to work out their problems without interference from ideological dictates.

Marital Conduct and Gender Ideology

In the second chapter, I examined Trollope's portrayal of marital conduct, particularly the issue of wifely obedience. I argued that in Trollope's later works, the ability of a wife to submit to her husband is shown to be dependent on the husband's sanity, rationality and morality. However, regardless of the husband's attributes, the belief that a wife's duty is to submit and obey is fundamentally flawed as it assumes that the wife must be the weaker partner within the marriage. Trollope acknowledges that this does not always hold true in reality and points out that the doctrine of wifely obedience is built upon the erroneous assumption that men are "stronger and greater" than women and notes that "in ordinary marriages the vessel rights itself, and the stronger and the greater takes the lead, whether clothed in petticoats, or in coat, waistcoat, and trousers" (*Belton* 132; ch. 11).

In *The Prime Minister*, Trollope illustrates the tensions that occur in a marriage in which the wife is the stronger (but not greater) partner but cannot take the lead. The loving wifely submission Trollope presents in *Framley Parsonage* is conspicuously absent here, even though Plantagenet is a more admirable character than Mark Robarts and is arguably more deserving of a wife's submission. Instead, Trollope presents a constant struggle for power, with Plantagenet unsuccessfully trying to curb his wife's excesses, and Glencora rebelling against her husband's wishes that she not meddle in politics. Gender ideology creates more tensions between husband and wife by forcing them to deny their true natures: "natural desires seem to be so unnaturally blocked" that Glencora tells Plantagenet "he should have been the woman, she the man" (Kincaid 221).

Like the Chilterns and the Finns, the Pallisers do not fit neatly into the mould of Victorian gender ideology: Glencora is not "at all points a lady" (*CYFH* 524; ch. 49) but is "rough and thick" like a man (*Prime* 369; ch. 42) while Plantagenet's moral scrupulousness and hypersensitivity would be more appropriate in a female. Trollope explicitly reverses the doctrine of separate spheres by positing Plantagenet as the moral influence and Glencora as the spouse who is pragmatic and callous enough to take on the hobnobbing aspect of the political world (Morse 90-92). By doing so he reminds the reader of the innate complexity of human beings and reveals the tensions that result when they are forced to conform to reductive codes of behaviour.

Unlike the Finns who make no attempt at conformity, the Pallisers at times endeavour to obey the doctrine of separate spheres: Plantagenet tries to assert his marital authority while Glencora attempts to obey him without sacrificing her individuality. However, the former is too weak to impose his will on his wife, while the latter is too strong-minded to meekly obey her husband's wishes when they clash with her own. We are told that "no wife had a fuller allowance of privilege, or more complete power in her hands, as to things fit for a woman's management" than Glencora (*Prime* 278; ch. 32). Yet this is not enough for Glencora, who is not content to remain quietly at home but wants to be involved in the male world of politics — and whose active, sociable personality is evidently better suited than Plantagenet's for the position of Prime Minister. Yet, her active nature is forced by gender ideology into a position of domestic passivity.

Plantagenet's ministry gives Glencora the opportunity to be active in the political arena without appearing to defy the doctrine of separate spheres. Her lavish hospitality permits her to influence — or try to influence — the public sphere while

ostensibly remaining within the domestic sphere. However, she goes beyond this and deliberately defies Plantagenet's wishes that she leave the Silverbridge borough elections alone. She encourages Ferdinand Lopez's candidature, hoping for the "exquisite delight of making a Member of Parliament out of her own hand" (*Prime* 243; ch. 28); her longing to assert her own importance and individuality is reflected in her wish "to be written of in memoirs, and to make a niche for herself in history" (244; ch. 28). Her wilful disobedience to Plantagenet's wishes is an attempt to assert her influence on the male sphere of politics, as well as a revolt against Plantagenet's patriarchal authority "because, as an adult, she refuses to be as powerless as a child" (Morse 92). Yet, Trollope shows that her efforts are ultimately futile, and indeed, create the catalytic scandal that brings down her husband's ministry. Superficially, this appears to affirm the belief that women should restrict themselves to the hearth and leave public matters to men; however, it also reveals the unhealthy tensions that build up when women's aspirations for importance and identity are narrowly confined to the domestic sphere.

In Plantagenet's reaction to Glencora's meddling, we see the conflict between the ideological and the personal. On one hand, Plantagenet admires his wife's abilities. There is a tinge of pride when he reflects on her achievement: "a ministry could be kept together, . . . by social arrangements, such as his Duchess, *and his Duchess alone*, could carry out. *She and she only* would have the spirit and the money and the sort of cleverness required" (*Prime* 150; ch. 18, emphasis added). On the other hand, his pride in Glencora is countered by his anger at her political meddling, which he perceives as an affront to his marital and political authority — "it was intolerable to him that she should seek to interfere with him in matters of a public

nature" (278; ch. 32). In fact, he only loses his temper at Glencora when she interferes with political matters. In Plantagenet, we see how the doctrine of separate spheres contributes to his anger against his wife, and conversely, how his personal love for her checks his anger, even if it is she who is at fault — it wounds him to see her unhappy: "God knows I would not hurt you willingly" (368; ch. 42), he tells her mournfully, mere moments after he confronts her with Lopez's letter demanding that Plantagenet reimburse him for his failure at the Silverbridge election.

Likewise, when Glencora understands the very real injury — both political and personal — that she has done Plantagenet by her interference, her concern for making a name for herself takes a backseat, albeit momentarily. In her own imperfect way, she tries to support him and defend him: "It was my doing. Why do they attack him? . . . Let me bear it. My back is broad enough" (*Prime* 437; ch. 51). In her conversation with the Duke of St Bungay, her concern for Plantagenet's political position is equally mixed with her worries for his health: "he is thin and wan and careworn. . . . Of course I watch him" (544-45; ch. 62). Later, when the ministry is dissolved, she assures her husband that she will not be discontented, because he would now be free from the attacks of his enemies (623-24; ch. 72). The behavioural expectations created by gender ideology fade (though they never completely disappear) when Glencora is more concerned with Plantagenet's personal wellbeing than his political career and her role in it.

While the ideology of love aggravates the Pallisers' early marital troubles in *Can You Forgive Her?*, the ideologies of separate spheres and wifely obedience are the culprits behind the marital tensions we witness in *The Prime Minister*. Plantagenet feels most frustrated when he perceives his wife undermining his authority in public,

while Glencora feels most aggrieved when she contemplates her husband's woman-like scruples. Their frustrations largely stem from their inability to force each other to conform to their proper ideological roles. Conversely, when both regard each other simply as human beings without the expectations created by gender ideology, the tensions between them seem to dissolve. The couple's conversation regarding the likely fall of Plantagenet's ministry reveals how both husband and wife endeavour, no matter how imperfectly, to comfort each other instead of dwelling exclusively on their own disappointments (*Prime* 623-24; ch. 72). This episode shows the Palliser marriage at its strongest, when husband and wife are focused on each other's needs, rather than their own. Trollope suggests that genuine concern for one another as individuals bridges the gap between the Pallisers. Yet, the pressure to conform to ideology is ever-present. Despite her earlier protestations that she will not be discontented, Glencora does resent Plantagenet's failure to live up to the active male ideal — "If he had only been a little stronger, a little thicker-skinned, made of clay a little coarser, a little other than he was, it might have been so different!" (657; ch. 76) — as well as her own failure to fulfil the feminine ideal of passivity and discretion (654; ch. 76). Trollope suggests that one can never fully escape the dictates of ideology, and the stereotypes it creates actually widen the rift between husband and wife.

Marital Success

In the third chapter, I argued that marital success is subjective, and that conformity to the ideologies of love and gender roles is not the only way to have a successful marriage. Trollope recognises that people marry for reasons other than love, and thus marriages cannot always be evaluated according to the love ideal. Instead, one must

consider the reasons behind a couple's marriage, and how well they adjust to their life together.

The Palliser marriage is unique as it tries to conform to ideology, fails to do so, but still fulfils the minimal standards for marital success set out by Trollope. It is perhaps the only successful marriage in Trollope's fiction in which the conventional beliefs about love and gender roles are not affirmed in any way; instead, Trollope takes pains to show how these ideologies actually encumber the marriage. The Pallisers' relationship suggests that marital success or failure is directly dependent on a couple's commitment to their life together and the choices they make in order to make their marriage work, rather than on conformity to the ideologies of love and separate spheres.

This is first shown in *Can You Forgive Her?* when Plantagenet declines the long-coveted position of Chancellor of the Exchequer because he believes it is necessary to take Glencora abroad. His commitment to his marriage overrides his life's ambition: "Her happiness demands it, and it is partly my fault that it is so. . . . I can tell you that the sacrifice to me will be almost more than I can bear" (622-23; ch. 59). Yet, the "sacrifice" is seen to be worthwhile — Glencora is finally convinced that Plantagenet does love her, even if it is not with the demonstrative passion that she craves. Even though she tells herself that her husband "does not know what love means" (617; ch. 59), Glencora slowly learns to see that Plantagenet's goodness to her is an expression of love. Plantagenet's sacrifice, and the couple's new commitment to their marriage and one another, is rewarded by Glencora's subsequent pregnancy and the birth of their heir.

However, Trollope makes it clear that mutual commitment is not a panacea for all marital problems. It does not resolve the Pallisers' differences in temperament and personality — instead, these differences persist throughout their marriage. They do not always understand one another: Plantagenet cannot understand his independent wife's new "desire for ploughing" in wanting to subordinate herself by becoming the Mistress of Robes (*Prime* 68; ch. 8), and Glencora admits that she cannot sympathise with her husband even though she recognises his worth (484; ch. 56). However, in spite of their imperfect sympathy with one another, both make the effort to accommodate the other. Like the Chilterns, the Pallisers discover the vital importance of mutual compromise and forbearance within a marriage. While Violet and Chiltern learn that love is not enough, and that it is necessary to adapt to each other's temperament and needs, the Pallisers learn that romantic love is not all-important, and that mutual compromise and commitment can slowly engender enough affection to make married life "not unhappy".

Despite their differences, the Pallisers do grow to love each other in their own fashion. The narrator remarks that Glencora "loved [Plantagenet] dearly,—more dearly in late years than in her early life" (*Duke* 16; ch. 2) while Plantagenet loves his wife "with all his heart, but with a heart that was never demonstrative" (*Prime* 68; ch. 8). Even though the two clearly exasperate one another — Plantagenet is frustrated by his wife's flagrant disobedience (*Prime* 366; ch. 42) while Glencora is irritated by his moral hypersensitivity (439; ch. 51) — their mutual affection, concern and the protectiveness they display towards each other are certainly manifestations of love, even though it is not the idealised, romantic love lauded by the Victorians. While Plantagenet's behaviour towards his wife gradually becomes almost "that of a lover"

(272; ch. 32), Glencora's love is primarily manifested in her protectiveness towards her husband. Even though her concern for Plantagenet's ministry is undoubtedly mixed with her own desire for significance, there are moments when her worry for him appears to supersede her personal desires, such as when she tells him that she "shall not be all unhappy" and that her contentment will be in him and his wellbeing (623; ch. 72).

Polhemus writes that Trollope "wanted to get away from easy judgements and conventional attitudes toward marriage and to bring out the infinite complexity and kinetic quality" of the Palliser marriage (*Changing World* 102). Contrary to the Victorian ideology of love, which dictated that love precedes marriage, Trollope shows that love can develop after marriage. Significantly, romantic love is never the primary focus of the Palliser marriage — the changes within their relationship *result* in love and affection, but love itself plays no major catalytic role, only a minor, supporting one. The union succeeds mainly because both husband and wife are committed to their marriage and learn to adapt to the roles they find themselves in. Glencora adapts to her new life as a politician's wife by throwing herself into politics, despite once regarding it as a great bore (*CYFH* 706-07; ch. 68), while Plantagenet gives his free-spirited wife more freedom than most English wives enjoy, and patiently puts up with her raillery and ridicule. They never achieve an ideologically-correct relationship that lives up to their society's beliefs regarding marital love and gender roles, but they compensate for this with other things, such as their children, Plantagenet's political career and their high position in society. Both eventually come to depend on one another more than they realise.

Trollope never panders to his readers' expectations by providing a conventional, happily-ever-after resolution to the Palliser marriage. Neither does he allow readers the illusion that the Palliser marriage is a perfect one — the couple never attains the idealised union in which romantic love "continues throughout life, animating husband and wife no less than the lover and his lass" (Houghton 375). Instead, Trollope suggests that there is no easy way to categorically define the Palliser marriage — its meaning and significance to Plantagenet continues to evolve even after Glencora's death, thanks to her desire to relive her past through her daughter, Mary Palliser.

Glencora's deception in encouraging Mary's romance with Frank Tregear and her own premature death lead Plantagenet to question his entire marriage and Glencora's attitude towards him. To both Plantagenet and Glencora, Frank Tregear is an incarnation of Burgo Fitzgerald. While Glencora's object is to prevent her daughter from suffering the same kind of heartache she herself endured (*Duke* 10; ch. 2), her sanction of the match is seen by Plantagenet to be a betrayal of sorts (92; ch. 11). He sees in her matchmaking a protest against her own marriage to him, and reacts by repeatedly attempting to justify their marriage and her forced separation from Burgo: "The result had been undoubtedly good. His Cora and all her money had been saved from a worthless spendthrift. He had found a wife who he now thought had made him happy. And she had found at any rate a respectable husband." (189; ch. 24). This same refrain is repeated in various guises throughout *The Duke's Children*, thus revealing Plantagenet's own uncertainty as to the meaning of his own marriage, both to himself and to Glencora.

One feels that if Glencora had survived, the couple would have managed to work through these feelings of doubt and uncertainty. It would have been possible for Glencora, with all her raillery and humour, to make Plantagenet realise that Frank is actually very different from Burgo, and that her attempts to facilitate her daughter's romance with Frank Tregear need not necessarily indicate discontent with her own marriage, but are rather the actions of a doting mother eager to preserve her daughter from heartache. However, Glencora's premature death means that Plantagenet's insecurities are never satisfactorily addressed — she is no longer around to give him the assurance that he seeks, and thus, he never attains closure. The Palliser marriage, which had been progressing well until this point, is shadowed by this uncertainty. Trollope is perhaps making a point on how the meaning of a marriage is never stable, but is always changing, even after a spouse has died. How one interprets the past is shaped by the events of the present. And this, Trollope seems to say, is reality — an imperfect reality which does not fit into the happily-ever-after scenarios conjured up by the love ideal.

To Trollope, "marriage cannot be an ideal; it is a process of two people continually relating to each other, and it keeps changing" (Polhemus, *Changing World* 120). Trollope questions the relevance of the ideologies of love and separate spheres to marriage, and suggests that, given the fact that all couples are unique, there can be no fixed 'formula' that guarantees marital success. In the Palliser marriage, Trollope plays down the importance given to romantic love, and instead suggests that while feelings are not always a matter of choice, decisions and actions are — and it is more often on the latter that a marriage is built. Although the ideologies of love and gender roles are meant to strengthen marital relationships, they are essentially static and tend

to oversimplify complex relationships and human natures. Trollope instead defends the autonomy of married couples by suggesting that they must be free to work out their marital issues in the way that suits their unique needs and circumstances, rather than attempt to follow the arbitrary dictates of ideology.

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