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CHARACTER ARTISTRY IN THE NOVELS OF ELIZABETH GASKELL

by

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled CHARACTER ARTISTRY IN THE NOVELS OF ELIZABETH GASKELL, submitted by Janet A. R. Panuska in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT

The novelist Elizabeth Gaskell expresses herself in particularly personal terms. Her understanding, sympathy, and tenderness of human feeling are revealed in the presentation of character and situation with perception, respect, pathos, light irony, and humor. The novels, including those traditionally esteemed mainly for their concern with the Victorian social scene and its problems, are more properly understood if studied for her distinctive contributions to the development of characterization in the English novel.

The traditive characters, those who represent a code of social and moral principles which generally remains unchanged during the novel, illustrate Mrs. Gaskell's technique in setting up an interplay of values among her characters. Her innovations in the areas of characterization include distinctive interpretations of character types already established in the novel and additions to the types of characters in the novel. The exploration of states of near madness in various abnormal personality types reveals her achievement, in comparison with her near contemporaries, in complex motivational analysis.

Mrs. Gaskell considers her fictional characters with regard to their individual reactions to the social settings in which they are placed and interprets their

responses as they reflect the impact of a constantly changing social scene. She also examines the development of the awareness of the need for change in the individual's evaluation of himself and others. Her discussions of social and personal problems which reflect the influence of change in society illustrate these attitudes. These changes are not only accepted but they are emphasized in a positive manner: Mrs. Gaskell examines the complex world of the ever-changing present and sees change as a reason for looking forward rather than looking back.

The analyses of characters in her novels show what the characters are or become psychologically and ethically. Their struggles to act in right conscience in complex moral situations are often the center of interest in the novels. Mrs. Gaskell examines the individual's recognition of the complexity involved in determining a moral code on which to base ethical behavior. The recognition of the autonomy of the individual is at the heart of all her work, which is characterized by a profound seriousness and distinctly reverent attitude towards the individual and life. Mrs. Gaskell is a novelist of unmistakable artistry in her ability to analyze the individual in his moment of greatness: the moment when he comprehends and accepts his personal responsibility and duty to himself and to life. Mrs. Gaskell shows that human existence can never be intrinsically meaningless if an individual accepts his suffering and fate. In this way, a man's life retains its meaning up to the

taking of his last breath, and so long as he is conscious, he is responsible to realize values. For this is what being a human being means, being conscious and being responsible. In searching for the meaning of life, man is thrown back upon himself; he must realize that he is questioned by life and that he has to be answerable with his life.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The Gaskell references incorporated in the text are to The Works of Mrs. Gaskell, The Knutsford Edition, 8 vols., London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1906, edited by A. W. Ward, by abbreviation of title and page number. For convenience in referring to the novels, I give abbreviated titles, as follows:

CP	Cousin Phillis (1863-1864)
C	Cranford (1851-1853)
MB	Mary Barton (1848)
NS	North and South (1854-1855)
R	Ruth (1853)
SL	Sylvia's Lovers (1863)
WD	Wives and Daughters (1864-1866)

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

To her contemporaries, the early novels of Elizabeth Gaskell were exciting, challenging contributions to the literary interpretation of the Victorian social scene. Her first novel, Mary Barton (1848), was considered one of the more perceptive and sympathetic interpretations of the problems of the working poor in relation to their masters. The Athenaeum declared that "we have met with few pictures of life among the working classes at once so forcible and so fair as 'Mary Barton.' The Truth of it is terrible."[1] Although there was controversy about the legitimacy of the social vision expressed in the novel, the critical appraisals of this work largely acclaimed the skill and power which enabled the author to capture the ignorance, destitution, and vice pervading and corrupting Victorian society. In literary reviews, the social criticism inherent in Mrs. Gaskell's works was stressed, and her role as a novelist began to be conceived as a social one. This characteristic was re-enforced with the publication of her second novel, Ruth (1853), concerned with the subject of the fallen woman and the evil of the double standard which needed "The pen of a gifted woman to challenge its consideration."[2] The appraisal of Ruth was divided between those who severely criticized and those who found only praise for the presentation and delineation of character in the novel; all critics ad-

mitted the praiseworthiness of the subject and the courage of the writer in handling such a theme. An extension of the opinion that Mrs. Gaskell was primarily interested in the development of social problem themes was made with the publication of North and South (1855), a novel in which the presentation of the relative merits of the conflicting sides of the condition of England question was interpreted as the major interest of the work. It was, and often still is, usual for these three novels to be interpreted in the light of their social themes and judged in accordance with the presentation of a social problem and the suggestion of a satisfactory solution.

Mrs. Gaskell's growing reputation among her contemporaries as a skilled novelist is reflected in the several reviews which compare her novels with those of Charlotte Brontë, Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot. In 1857, William Greg, feeling it his responsibility as a literary critic to expose the misuse of an author's power, compared Dickens' Little Dorrit with Reade's It Is Never Too Late to Mend and Mary Barton and found them similar in their distorted, one-sided pictures which misused facts in the presentation of the defects of the English government and society.[3] G. H. Lewes praised the moral of the story in Ruth which was not preached but manifested, obvious but general, and, like that of Vanity Fair, insinuated. He compared it with Charlotte Brontë's Villette which did not convey a morale en action but aimed to convey power and passion.[4]

The exuberant power, bold theme, and passionate heroine in Villette were again compared in Putnam's Monthly with the more simple, concentrated intensity of Ruth. The unconventional heroines of both works spring from the different viewpoints of the authors: "Villette is written from a curious study of character; Ruth from profound sympathy with it."[5] The love story between Jemima and Mr. Farquhar in Ruth was considered almost perfect and wrought with the truth and finish of Jane Austen.[6]

The writers of her time read Mrs. Gaskell's work with interest, remarked on its quality, and recognized their indebtedness to its suggestive power. Dickens' requesting Mrs. Gaskell to contribute to Household Words indicates his respect for her talent. This respect extended to an admission of praise: "My unaffected and great admiration of your book [Mary Barton] makes me very earnest in all relating to you."[7] Elizabeth Barrett Browning praised Mary Barton[8]; Walter Savage Landor wrote a poetic tribute to its author.[9] George Eliot felt that

> Ruth, with all its merits, will not be an enduring or classical fiction -- will it? Mrs. Gaskell seems to me to be constantly misled by a love of sharp contrasts -- of 'dramatic' effects. She is not contented with the subdued colouring -- the half tints of real life. Hence she agitates one for the moment, but she does not secure one's lasting sympathy; her scenes and characters do not become typical. But how pretty and graphic are the touches of description.

She admitted her being influenced by Mrs. Gaskell:

> ...I was conscious while the question of my power was still undecided for me that my feelings towards life and art had some affinity with the feelings which inspired 'Cranford' and the earlier chapters of Mary Barton. That idea was brought

nearer to me because I had the pleasure of reading 'Cranford' for the first time in 1857, when I was writing Scenes from Clerical Life; and going up the Rhine one dim wet day in the spring of the year, when I was writing Adam Bede. I satisfied myself for lack of prospect by reading over again those earlier chapters of Mary Barton.[10]

Ward suggests that "Rarely have fact and fiction -- Wahrheit und Dichtung -- been more deftly interwoven than in Cranford, -- the joint product of quick observation, tender remembrance, and fresh imaginative power."[11] Charlotte Brontë read it "once to myself, and once aloud to my Father. I find it pleasurable reading; graphic, pithy, penetrating, shrewd, yet kind and indulgent."[12] Mrs. Gaskell's literary reputation among her contemporaries was enhanced with the publication of The Life of Charlotte Brontë in 1857. It was acclaimed: "As a work of Art, we do not recollect a life of a woman by a woman so well executed."[13] Although it was criticized for having "to take away the reputation of a number of other people in order to excuse the peculiarities of the [Brontë] women,"[14] its excellence was still admired in 1896 by Clement Shorter:

In the whole of English biographical literature there is no book that can compare in widespread interest with The Life of Charlotte Brontë by Mrs. Gaskell. It has held a position of singular popularity for forty years; and while biography after biography has come and gone, it still commands a place side by side with Boswell's Johnson and Lockhart's Scott.[15]

The homely charm of Cousin Phillis (1864) attests to Mrs. Gaskell's being, in T. S. Eliot's estimation, among those "writers who have known how to make a literary virtue out of provinciality -- and, in her case, simple goodness."[16] Sylvia's Lovers (1863) is one of Mrs. Gaskell's most fasci-

nating stories, a "tale of the unvarnished joys and sorrows of a few simple folk"[17] which George Eliot hoped to be "finding a just appreciation. It seems to me of a high quality both in feeling and execution -- so far as I have read."[18] Mrs. Gaskell's last novel, Wives and Daughters, was reviewed and completed in 1866 by Frank Greenwood in the Cornhill in which it was serially published.[19] It was later reviewed by Henry James in The Nation[20] and admired for its long, quiet, detailed quality which revealed the minutiae of homely, bourgeois life and educated the reader in the proper degree of interest in character. The many obituary notices in the literary periodicals and newspapers at Mrs. Gaskell's death in 1865 reflect the high value which was accorded to her: "if not the most popular, with small question, the most powerful and finished female novelist of an epoch singularly rich in female novelists."[21]

Surveying Mrs. Gaskell's novels in 1874, George B. Smith concluded that her work could be divided into three stages, represented by the three novels, Mary Barton, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.[22] The first phase of her work, including Cranford, Cousin Phillis, and Ruth, is distinctive in its expression of force, truthfulness, and concentration. The second phase includes North and South and reflects a greater maturity in her grasp of character and the actual expression and power of drawing life. A natural and unstrained handling of plot and character marks the third phase of her work. In this critical evaluation, Smith

suggests that Mrs. Gaskell's greatest contribution to the novel lies in the individual and intense presentation of character. His comments on the importance of Mrs. Gaskell's contribution to characterization in the novel agree with the critical observations suggested by some of her contemporary reviewers.

The Victorian critic William Greg praises the presentation of several of the characters in Mary Barton for whom Mrs. Gaskell had shown a "sincere, though sometimes too exclusive and undiscriminating, sympathy"[23] in delineating their joys and sorrows. William Minto argues that the critics misjudge Mrs. Gaskell's intention in Mary Barton, for "it did not fall within her moral purpose...to trace the discontent of the working class to its true causes, leaving it for others to suggest practical remedies...."[24] The Athenaeum praises the excellence of the author of Mary Barton "in the anatomy of feelings and motives, in the display of character, in the life-like and simple use of dialogue: -- and the result is a painful interest very rare in our experience."[25] Henry James' review in The Nation reflects his delight in Mrs. Gaskell's slow and careful development of the characters in Wives and Daughters, especially Cynthia and Mrs. Gibson. Wilbur Cross in The Development of the English Novel states that Mrs. Gaskell is concerned with the study of the influence of action on character. In this turn of the century evaluation of her work, Cross appreciates Mrs. Gaskell's talent for writing novels of the

inner life. He maintains that Ruth is a psychological work in a restrictive sense: "The outward sequence of its incidents is the correlative of an inner sequence of thought and feeling, which is brought into harmony with an ethical formula and accounted for in an analogy of motive."[26]

This critical approach to Mrs. Gaskell's work, in which her interest in and talent for delineating character is emphasized, has continued to be adopted in several of the more recent evaluations of her achievements as a novelist. This approach suggests that the novels of Mrs. Gaskell, including those which had previously been studied for their concern with the social scene and its problems, may be more properly understood if studied for the achievements made in characterization.

What can be deduced from an examination of the criticisms of her work by her contemporaries is that Elizabeth Gaskell was recognized as an influential figure in the literary milieu of mid-Victorian England. Her social novels were appreciated for their sympathetic, lucid and authoritative delineation of the problems in question. The realism of her pictures of the poor, the troubled, and the anxious man and woman were highly praised. Her courage in dealing with controversial subjects was admired even if it shocked. And her skill in the presentation of her material was favorably compared with that of her famous contemporaries.

Macmillan's writer, David Masson, concluded his

obituary tribute with the observation that "It is impossible to determine now the exact position which Mrs. Gaskell will hold ultimately amongst English writers of our day. It will be a high one, if not amongst the highest."[27] From the more detached perspective possible with the passage of time, it is now possible for the critics of Mrs. Gaskell's work to examine and define it more objectively.

Twentieth-century criticism reflects the continued evaluation of Mrs. Gaskell as a social critic and moralist. Cazamian's study of Le Roman Social en Angleterre (1904) includes a discussion of Mary Barton and North and South as works reflecting the opinions, shifts, causes and effects of social problems in relation to the times and suggesting a solution in l'interventionnisme chrétien -- the extension of sympathy and understanding as a corrective mode for the amelioration of social problems. G. De Witt Sanders' study, published in 1929, reinforces the conception of Mrs. Gaskell as a novelist with a purpose -- a novelist whose aim was to arouse interest in the ills of society with a view to curing them. Again, more recently, Mrs. Gaskell is reviewed as a social novelist by John Lucas in "Mrs. Gaskell and Brotherhood." He maintains that Mrs. Gaskell's social-problem novels show that there is a flaw inherent in the genre of the social-problem novel which is the result of an author's failure to deal honestly with social experience in his novels, a failure in imaginative honesty to follow the impli-

cations of the situation to an end. But compared with the novels of such of her contemporaries as are concerned with social problems -- Disraeli, Kingsley, Dickens and others -- Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton and North and South are now considered to reflect with unusual closeness the condition, environment, and problems of the working classes. Lucas maintains that he does not

> ...wish to deny that Mrs. Gaskell succeeded in her exploration and observation of character, but assuredly it is not that which makes her a remarkable, even unique, novelist. Where she is one, is in her ability to render moments and processes of social change, even though this is frequently contradicted within novels by the intrusion of her conscious convictions.[28]

I think that it is more legitimate to say that Mrs. Gaskell was able to embody the social and economic conflicts of her times, which absorbed her attention, in the exceedingly well-realized characters in her novels. Respected as some of the social aspects of Mrs. Gaskell's novels may be, the question remains whether these social themes were the major intent and interest in the novels by the novelist.

Twentieth-century critics are concerned with various aspects of Mrs. Gaskell's work. The 1906 Knutsford Edition of the complete works of Mrs. Gaskell prepared by Sir Adolphus Ward is a chronological presentation of her novels with the minor works -- short stories, essays, and articles -- included among them. Ward's fine introductions are informative and interpretive appraisals of her works. He recognizes two main sources of Mrs. Gaskell's inspiration, the labor troubles of the cities and the sequestered

peace of the country. The country settings in her works are based on the town of Knutsford in which Mrs. Gaskell spent her girlhood. Interest in identifying Cranford and Hope Farm and other novel settings with the Knutsford originals started with an article by Payne in 1895, and the references were more fully examined, sometimes with tedious detail, by Chadwick in Mrs. Gaskell: Haunts, Homes and Stories (1910), a biographically oriented work. Again, the 'dear adopted native town' of Knutsford was sentimentally reviewed as part of Mrs. Gaskell's background by Tooley in a centenary article.

Payne's Mrs. Gaskell, A Brief Biography (1929) is a laudatory work which includes limited critiques of the novels. A broader approach to a presentation of Mrs. Gaskell's life and evaluation of her work is made by A. Stanton Whitfield in Mrs. Gaskell: Her Life and Work (1929): he sees her work controlled by the attempt at reconciliation and a sense of moral obligation. Elizabeth Haldane studies Mrs. Gaskell (1931) in relation to the friends whose lives were intertwined with hers. She feels that Mrs. Gaskell's value as a novelist is in her being pre-eminently of her time; as both a representative and an accurate observer of it, her work interprets her own age and time as it appeared to the ordinary man. A. B. Hopkins' biography, Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work (1952), provides real insight into the person of Mrs. Gaskell and the conflict between the social and inner self of the novelist. However, Kathleen Tillotson justifiably calls Hopkins' critical

evaluation of Mrs. Gaskell's work, "not remarkable, seldom going beyond description, appreciation, and expression of personal preferences," and adds, that the author has not attempted to relate it to that of other novelists, which she acknowledges as long overdue.[29] Arthur Pollard's work Mrs. Gaskell: Novelist and Biographer (1965) is more a review of criticism than a critical study. Edgar Wright's Mrs. Gaskell: The Basis for Reassessment (1965) is a fine exploration of themes, character, and style. Wright sees Mrs. Gaskell primarily as a social novelist, "concerned not with society at large but with the small communities in which individual conduct and feeling are important, and which will serve at the same time to illustrate universal standards."[30] He sees her religious views as coinciding with natural feeling, with a belief in reconciliation through understanding. He feels that Mrs. Gaskell views the family as representing the core of emotional and social stability and functioning as a shock absorber between the individual and the world, and he suggests that she is searching for a stable basis with which the individual can face a changing world. Margaret Ganz's Mrs. Gaskell: The Artist in Conflict (1969) contains a sensible biography of Mrs. Gaskell and some fine psychological interpretations of characters, but the work does not convey the sense of Mrs. Gaskell's achievements as an artist. Yet this study is a contribution which "will usefully complement the not too extensive work on a novelist

who merits more consideration."[31] John Sharps' Mrs Gaskell's Observation and Invention: A Study of Her Non-Biographic Works (1970) is a carefully annotated and footnoted examination which tries to show a connection between Mrs. Gaskell's life and writings and the inter-relationship between the works, but the study lacks critical perception and analysis. The Letters of Mrs Gaskell (1966), edited by Chapple and Pollard, provides important materials for the study of this novelist.

What is suggested by these critical studies and evaluations by Mrs. Gaskell's contemporaries and by the more recent critics is that interest in her work has been erratic, non-developmental, and only rarely exploratory. No biography to date has been recognized as definitive. No study to date has been acclaimed as capturing the essence of Mrs. Gaskell's expression of her talent as a novelist. There is no critical edition of her works. More penetrating studies of Mrs. Gaskell's work seem to be needed to supplement those studies which have attempted to present a panoramic, general criticism.

Since Mrs. Gaskell's essential qualities as a novelist have not been fully defined in the various studies attempted, I suggest that her particular nature as a novelist does not lend itself to the approach used in broad critical interpretations. Actually, the distinguishing features of her work as a novelist are glossed over or lost in the generalizing nature of these longer and more comprehensive studies. A more vibrant picture of Mrs. Gaskell's

intent and achievement as a novelist is given by the Victorian critics. Certainly the enthusiasm of their reviews, positive or negative, reflects an intention to criticize and judge the particular merits and characteristics of Mrs. Gaskell's work.[32] In fact, the nature of a survey-like criticism works against the understanding and interpretation of this novelist, whose concerns were expressed in particularly personal terms. On the other hand, the more recent, shorter criticisms, evaluations, and interpretations often succeed in reaching new insights into Mrs. Gaskell's work.

Among the shorter criticisms, for example, a stimulating discussion of the belief that there is a central sexual concern in Cranford is led by Martin Dodsworth.[33] But Edgar Wright sees the work as representing certain attitudes and standards in a way of life whose followers are hereditary custodians of manners and ethics[34]; Margaret Tarratt maintains that the work presents a society abnormal in membership, attitudes, and habits and attempts to observe the community's progress towards a state of normality.[35] Again, Dodsworth presents a provocative re-analysis of the heroine, Margaret Hale, in his introduction to the paperback edition of North and South. Dorothy Collin has reconstructed the differences of opinion between Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens regarding intention and structure in the composition of North and South.[36] H. P. Collins attempts to reveal 'the naked sensibility' of Elizabeth Gaskell.[37] His severe and controversial charges against her may not be

clearly proved or easily accepted, but he certainly stimulates a critical concern with his observations. Charles Shapiro tells the 'severe truth' about Mrs. Gaskell's literary work -- love Cranford and leave the rest.[38] Rosamond Lehmann's criticism of Wives and Daughters reflects an enthusiastic appreciation of the poetic qualities in the traditional pastoral vein contained in the novel.[39] C. A. Johnson's exploration of Mrs. Gaskell's reputation in Russia,[40] complementing A. B. Hopkins' previous study of Mrs. Gaskell's reputation in France,[41] widens the appreciation of Mrs. Gaskell's influence and reputation abroad.

Since the general surveys have not captured the particular art of Mrs. Gaskellwhereas the restricted analyses of her work present more particular and imaginative interpretations and approaches, I believe that an approach to the interpretation of the work of Mrs. Gaskell should be based on studies of individual aspects of her work, concentrating on discovering her distinguishing characteristics in specific areas. An examination of the various aspects of her work as a novelist would lead to the discovery of the distinguishing features of this novelist and would suggest her total stature as a writer.

One of the significant experiences in reading fiction is the discovery of a novelist's expression of some truth about human nature and the human condition: the Brontës,

for example, can be read for their insight into the oneness of primitive human passions and the elemental forces of nature; Thackeray for his ironic vision of the sham and corruption of human existence; Dickens for his powerful grasp, variety, and presentation of eccentric characters; Eliot for her impressive reflection of the meaning of life and existence in a limited framework. The novelist's view of human nature and the human condition is realized in the presentation of characters who are worked from within outwards, not manufactured, life-like puppets but created beings with an inner living self out of which behavior, thought, feeling, and action can be expected to emerge.

The fact that Mrs. Gaskell's works have withstood the test of time indicates that her genius lies in her ability to reveal some aspect of human nature, which, but for her, might not have been known, and which only she could have produced because it is embodied in characters which only she could have created. A study of her characterization reveals that Mrs. Gaskell's work in the novel extends humanity's awareness of itself. Her unique vision is revealed through the characters she has created, the picture of the world in which they are placed, and their expression of the novelist's sense of values of what is and what is not worth living for. Therefore, in this study, I will examine an aspect of Mrs. Gaskell's literary talent -- the uniqueness of her artistry in characterization -- in her novels Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Cranford, Sylvia's Lovers, Cousin Phillis, and Wives and Daughters.

In this discussion, characterization -- the presentation of credible images of imaginary persons which exist within the limits of fiction -- is considered the functional center in Elizabeth Gaskell's novels. I see it as Mrs. Gaskell's major interest around which all events focus themselves and against which all events are measured in the novels. Although it is agreed that Mrs. Gaskell's concern was with the social changes of her times, in themselves they are not at the heart of her renderings of the social scene. What is most important to her as a novelist is the presentation and development of character. Since the characters in a novel cannot be disassociated from their surroundings and the influences of their environment as it operates on them, character is best understood in terms of background. Therefore, in the interpretation of character, the society in which a character functions and the social changes reflected in the fictional work may also be interpreted. In Mrs. Gaskell's novels, the background has particular relevance to the development of character, but it is the change in character which is the central concern in the novels. The pressures of external events on the development of character are shown through an examination of character in the context of plot and action. Mrs. Gaskell's novels provide the background necessary to comprehend the development of character, because the setting is used in relationship to experiences.

Although the novelist may include essentially

factual material in his creation of background and character, it is not the factual material but the imaginative faculty which makes it possible for the material to be blended into a satisfying whole. Edward Bloom succinctly makes the point: "Fiction is a mode of thinking or of saying that serves a purpose other than the purely factual."[42] Also, although the events in the novel are so presented that they are credible and bear a relationship to an existence which is probable, they do not pretend to represent situations and experiences and events which have happened in fact. Understood in this manner, "Fiction, by definition, creates what it describes and does not allow us to compare the original subject matter with the partial version embodied in the prose of the novel."[43] The changes which are reflected in the setting of a novel, the changes in religion, conduct, politics, and literature, reflect the changes which had to occur in human relations. Virginia Woolf believes that these processes are inter-related, and she further states that these social changes are important to the novelist because they reflect the changes in character and character relations:

> I believe that all novels...deal with character, and that it is to express character -- not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novel, so clumsy, verbose, and undramatic, so rich, elastic, and alive, has been evolved....
>
> ...think of the novels which seem to you great novels -- War and Peace, Vanity Fair, Tristram Shandy, Madame Bovary, Pride and Prejudice, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Villette -- if you think of these books, you do at once think of some character who has seemed to you so real (I do not mean by

> that so lifelike) that it has the power to make you think not merely of it itself, but...of religion, of love, of war, of peace, of family life, of balls in country towns, of sunsets, moonrises, the immortality of the soul...And in all these novels all these novelists have brought us to see whatever they wish us to see through some character. Otherwise, they would not be novelists; but poets, historians, or pamphleteers.[44]

Setting, then, is used for the purpose of establishing relationships to the characters' experiences. Even if the background of a novel is interesting or exciting or shocking, it is never absorbing simply for its own sake. It is meaningful in relationship to characters who are unfolded by their conflicts with events and the tension which this builds. Also, the plot, "the means used to confront 'character' with situations provoking conflicts,"[45] is used for the revelation of human nature which is, as has been suggested, a basic motive in fiction. This recognition leads to a confirmation of Douglas Grant's definition of the novel as "a judgment on experience expressed in terms of character."[46]

It seems to me most helpful to organize the discussion of character in this study into three categories -- 'traditive' characters, 'innovated' characters, and abnormal personality types. These categories have been established as a frame for the organization of the material on which to base an examination of Mrs. Gaskell's achievements in the creation of character; in themselves they reflect the variety of her approach. Within this framework, the discussion will lead to an understanding of the vision of life

Mrs. Gaskell expresses through her characters.

In this study, the 'traditive' character represents a code of social and moral principles which generally remains unchanged during the greater part of the developing action of the novel. The function of a traditive character is to show by contrast and comparison the personal growth and adjustments of other characters whose codes change as a consequence of their interaction with a changing environment. I have chosen the term 'traditive' to define a particular type of character, a character whose relatively static nature sharply setsin relief the shifting position of other characters, who are in the process of change.

The term 'innovated' character refers to those characters who illustrate Mrs. Gaskell's distinctive treatment of characters whose appearances have already been established as customary in fiction and who have been treated in a variety of ways by English novelists. Also, those contemporary social character types which Mrs. Gaskell treats as individual personalities are considered innovated characters.

In the category of abnormal personality types are included those characters in Mrs. Gaskell's novels who display intense emotional and psychological deviations from what is generally accepted as normal behavior for their particular character and situation. I feel that it is legitimate to examine this type of character and behavior in psychological terms. It is possible to maintain that Mrs.

Gaskell's observation, knowledge, and experience of the human being in particular situations are influences on her intuitive understanding of the human being's response to stress. This knowledge enables her to portray graphically the aberrations of the mind of a psychologically disturbed person, just as it enables her to describe the conflicts with which a normal personality is confronted.

In my interpretations of characters who display the characteristics of abnormal personality types, I have based my analyses on a close reading of the texts of the novels. My interpretations discuss the characters using modern psychiatric terminology, but the analyses are based first on evidence gained through an examination of the fictional characters' thoughts and behavior as presented in the novels. Only then have I consulted the classic psychiatric descriptions of abnormal personality types and described the characters' symptoms and behavior in modern psychiatric terminology. I feel that this procedure makes it possible to control random, unsupported interpretations and identifications of these literary characters as psychological types. In this way, the characters and situations in the novels provide the evidence which composes a case study of the abnormal personality; the application of psychiatric evaluations and psychiatric terminology does not control the interpretations of the development of character.

In this thesis, I examine the distinctive quality of Mrs. Gaskell's contributions to the development of charac-

terization in the English novel. The characters in her novels are analyzed, or re-interpreted, to show what the characters are or become psychologically and ethically. The traditive characters, which illustrate Mrs. Gaskell's technique in setting up an interplay of values among her characters, are examined in themselves and as they inter-relate with other characters. The examination of those characters which Mrs. Gaskell innovated shows her unique interpretation of character types already established in the novel and her expansion of the scope of characters in the novel. Mrs. Gaskell's exploration of states of near-madness in abnormal personality types reveals her achievement, in comparison with her near contemporaries, in complex motivational analysis. All the characters examined are considered in relation to their individual reactions to the social setting in which they are placed, and their responses are interpreted as these responses reflect the impact of a constantly changing social scene. Comparisons of techniques and approaches to character in the works of Mrs. Gaskell and her contemporaries provide a framework for evaluating the scope and variety of her development as a novelist of character. Through an examination of her characters, a conclusion about Elizabeth Gaskell's vision of life is deduced.

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CHAPTER TWO

TRADITIVE CHARACTERS

Mrs. Gaskell's strength in the novel lies in her perceptive and often exciting characterizations. In this section, I study her treatment of traditive characters.

For several reasons, I do not use the common descriptive term, 'traditional character,' in the discussion in this section. Since the term has been applied to suggest or define various literary tendencies and traditions, I feel that the term naturally suggests preconceived ideas about its definition. (See Appendix.)

A traditional element in literature suggests something which the author has inherited from the past, and there are several types of characters which have been established in fiction. In the literary tradition of all genres, the stock characters which appear in the medieval morality plays, the Elizabethan revenge tragedy, and the fairy tale, continue in every type of fictional literature -- novels, romances, detective stories, comedies, tragedies, metrical romances, moving pictures, and television. The conventional traits drawn from the tradition of stock character enable the reader to identify easily the function of the stock character represented in relation to the more complex and

more finely individualized characters in the work. Also suggested by the term traditional character is the character type, a descriptive sketch of a personage who typifies some definite quality. A character type is generally described not as an individualized personality but as an example of some vice or virtue or type, or, the character type may have both features. Some of Mrs. Gaskell's characters examined in this section could be discussed as examples in the tradition of the stock character or the character type.

However, since it is not my intention to examine these characters as traditional types of characters but to study them in the restricted sense of their representing a tradition -- the inherited code they represent -- the references to them as traditional characters would possibly invite a misunderstanding of the approach used in the analyses of these characters. For this reason, the term which means traditional, and which suggests the handing down of statements, beliefs, and customs -- traditive characters -- is used to distinguish the meaning and intention of the term as it is applied to the characters discussed.

I examine the traditive characters in this section primarily for their roles as representatives of a tradition of social and moral principles. They confirm the values of a tradition and assert their own belief in them, which is

not necessarily that of the author. Within the context of Mrs. Gaskell's novels -- which, I believe, are all concerned with personal and social changes and their effects upon individual characters -- the traditive characters, who are usually, but not necessarily, minor characters, generally remain stationary in their beliefs during the major action of the novel while the main characters are in the process of change.

Both the traditive character and the dynamic character are presented in relation to their times and the changes in it. Because of the contacts among the traditive and dynamic characters, the static natures of the traditive characters' values are more clearly outlined as opposed to the shifting positions of the values of the dynamic characters. The traditive characters function in contrast to and in comparison with the personal growth and adjustments of other characters whose codes change as a consequence of their interaction with a changing environment. The steadiness of the traditive characters' positions emphasizes the changes taking place in the dynamic characters, and provides a standard against which the changing characters may be measured. The steadiness of the values of one type of character emphasizes the fluctuations in the values of the other.

Thus, the traditive characters help to illustrate a basic interest in Mrs. Gaskell's characterization -- the

attempt to achieve an understanding of the individual in the process of change against a background of change.

To illustrate this concept, I will now examine several of Mrs. Gaskell's characters who function as traditive characters.

The servants in the novels are very often individuals who demonstrate an inherited traditional code. In Cousin Phillis, for example, the words and actions of Betty, the servant in the Holman family, indicate that she endorses the values of hard work, simplicity, and obedience; she is a family-oriented person whose loyalty, honor, and judgment have gained her the respect of the family she serves. She is quick and able in her perception, which leads her to understand and consequently to castigate the two ministers -- they are similar to and as strongly satirized as the ministers in Charlotte Brontë's Shirley -- who visit Hope Farm and whose presence and behavior is upsetting to Betty's master, Reverend Holman:

> 'Od rot 'em!' said she; 'they're always a-coming at ill convenient times; and they have such hearty appetites, they'll make nothing of what would have served master and you since our poor lass has been ill. I've but a bit of cold beef in th' house; but 'll do some ham and eggs, and hat 'll rout 'em from worrying the minister. They're a deal quieter after they've had their victual.' (CP, 105)

Again, Betty's common sense, sharp interest, and love for the family lead her to realize that Phillis' parents cannot see

that "the child" has grown to womanhood and has attracted Holdsworth as a lover. Betty wishes that "he'd been farred before he ever came near this house, with his 'Please Betty' this, and 'Please Betty' that, and drinking up our new milk as if he'd been a cat..." (CP, 89), because her values lead her to judge the nature of Holdsworth's behavior in regard to Phillis: "It's a caution to a man how he goes about beguiling. Some men do it as easy and innocent as cooing doves" (CP, 89).

She is the one who forces Paul to recognize Phillis' love sickness:

> 'I say, cousin Paul...something's amiss with our Phillis, and I reckon you've a good guess what it is. She's not one to take up wi' such as you...but I'd as lief yon Holdsworth had never come near us. So there you've a bit o' my mind.' (CP, 87)

This conversation, initiated by Betty, precipitates Paul's more mature reflections on his culpability in telling Phillis of Holdsworth's love for her. It is Betty's practical advice, "Now, Phillis!...we ha' done a' we can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself" (CP, 108), which finally rouses Phillis to accept the responsibility for her own recovery from the intense hurt she has experienced in loving Holdsworth. The patient, positive philosophy of the house-servant holds steady against the conflicts brought on by the encroaching, changing world into the stillness and steadiness of Hope Farm and

which occupy the other characters. Mrs. Gaskell uses Betty as a traditive character to establish a standard which values honesty, fair play, and consideration, against which the varying and changing standards of behavior of the other characters is compared. The subtle and complex appreciation of the concept of the principles of behavior in social and ethical terms, as achieved by Paul, Reverend Holman, and Phillis, are contrasted to this traditive character's clearly defined concepts of social and moral values.

Betty is a strikingly different character from the Hales' servant, Dixon, in the novel North and South. Betty's colorful speech is replaced by Dixon's precise, critical, humorless statements; home-spun, optimistic philosophy is rejected for stoical acceptance; concern for the complete family group is replaced by favoritism; a servant's recognition of place turns to what is often brash intimacy and snobbery. Although Dixon feels that "There are three people I love; it's missus, Master Frederick, and [Margaret]. Just them three. That's all" (NS, 154), her main faults stem from her intense loyalty to Mrs. Hale, to whom she is a devoted servant and friend,and to her commitment to the manners and customs of the south of England. These traits are revealed in some of Dixon's reactions expressed to Margaret about the necessity of the Hales' moving to Milton-Northern: "Since your mamma told

me this terrible news, when I dressed her for tea, I've lost all count of time. I'm sure I don't know what is to become of us all....And master thinking of turning Dissenter at his time of life, when, if it is not to be said he's done well in the Church, he's not done badly after all" (NS, 52-53). Both Margaret and her father realize that they "shall have to put up with a very different way of living" (NS, 57) in Milton; they agree that Dixon will not be amenable to the demands of change and recognize that "if she has to put up with a different style of living, we shall have to put up with her airs, which will be worse" (NS, 57).

Dixon refuses to change her attitudes and habits and so she functions in the novel as an individual who refuses to adapt to changes in situations and place. This rigidity in her code is shown in the matter of hiring a servant-girl in Milton. It is "nothing short of her faithful love for Mrs. Hale [which] made her endure the rough independent way in which all the Milton girls, who made application for the servant's place, replied to her inquiries respecting their qualifications" (NS, 79).

> Dixon's ideas of helpful girls were founded on the recollection of tidy elder scholars at Helstone school, who were only too proud to be allowed to come to the parsonage on a busy day, and treated Mrs. Dixon with all the respect which they paid to Mr. and Mrs. Hale, and good deal more of fright. (NS, 79)

Margaret, at least, tries to adjust to the differences,

but Dixon's views remain fixed. She cannot learn to respect the values which are held by others: "Miss Hale...where's the use o' your going to see the poor thing laid out? I'd never say a word against it, if it could do the girl any good; and I wouldn't mind a bit going myself, if that would satisfy her. They've just a notion, these common folks, of it's being a respect to the departed" (NS, 257). In her inflexible adherence to a code, Dixon serves as a reflector of the prejudices of class and station from which Margaret is eventually weaned. Dixon also functions as a competitor to Margaret for the affection and confidence of Mrs. Hale. Margaret pleads, "Don't let Dixon's fancies come any more between you and me, mamma. Don't, please!" (NS, 151). During Mrs. Hale's serious illness, Margaret "was excluded from the room, while Dixon was admitted" (NS, 146). The doctor feels that he would prefer not to tell the nature of Mrs. Hale's illness to Margaret because "My dear young lady, your mother seems to have a most attentive and efficient servant, who is more like her friend" (NS, 147); Mrs. Hale "expressly desired that you might not be told" (NS, 147) because Dixon thought Margaret would shrink from her mother if she knew the nature of her illness. The function of Dixon as a traditive character in North and South is to show how an endorsement of an unalterable code of principles may be open to criticism. Dixon's inability and unwillingness to change to the demands of her new society is in marked contrast to the changes effected in Margaret when she interacts with the new people and

boss" Martha's tone to Miss Matty was just such as the good rough-spoken servant usually kept sacred for little children" (C, 159), and Martha is successful in keeping control of the situation. Martha's very kind and extemely tender resolution to marry quickly in order to take in Miss Matty as a lodger in her home would have been a serious, melancholy offer had it not been presented, with the dramatic moves indicated, as a comic routine with Martha and Jem in the leading roles.

> 'And please, ma'am, he wants to marry me off-hand. And please, ma'am, we want to take a lodger -- just one quiet lodger, to make our two ends meet; and we'd take any house comformable; and oh dear Miss Matty, if I may be so bold, would you have any objections to lodging with us? Jem wants it as much as I do.' [To Jem:] -- 'You great oaf! why can't you back me? -- But he does want it all the same, very bad -- don't you, Jem? -- only, you see, he's dazed at being called on to speak before quality.'
>
> 'It's not that,' broke in Jem. 'It's that you've taken me all on a sudden, and I didn't think for to get married so soon -- and such quick work does flabbergast a man....I dare say I shan't mind it after it's once over.' (C, 160-161)

In her willingness to offer graciously to help others to whose needs she is sensitively aware, Martha endorses the moral principles of Cranford. But she is distinguished from the stern sterility of the Cranford ladies by her physical vitality and obvious need and desire for a lover. In relation to the novel as a whole, Martha and Jem provide the standard for normal affection, love, and family life. In functioning as a character whose social and moral values are both distinctive and common to those of the other characters, this traditive character reflects that which is best in the society with which she interacts and exhibits

those values which the other characters could well emulate.

Kester, the extra hand at the Robson's Haysterbank Farm, is one of 'Sylvia's Lovers' who has a protective attitude towards her. His fatherly love prompts him to evaluate her suitors: "...to Philip, Kester had an instinctive objection, a kind of natural antipathy such as has existed in all ages between the dwellers in a town and those in the country, between agriculture and trade" (SL, 192); and so he measures "the desirability of the young man [Kinraid]...as a husband for his darling: as much from his being other than Philip in every respect, as from the individual good qualities he possessed" (SL, 192). None of the good Philip does for the Robson family influences Kester's opinion of him: " -- he liked Hepburn not a whit better than he had done before all this sorrow had come upon them" (SL, 334); in fact, Philip's assumption of the role of the family's protector incites jealousy in Kester "who would fain have taken that office upon himself" (SL, 335). When Sylvia's problems and sorrows increase she "was driven more and more upon Philip; his advice and his affection became daily more necessary to her [and] Kester saw what would be the end of all this more clearly than Sylvia did herself; and, impotent to hinder what he feared and disliked, he grew more and more surly every day" (SL, 340). His suspicions of Philip's growing hold over Sylvia are confirmed when Sylvia tells him of her commitment to marry Philip. He is horrified at her decision, which she says is motivated by the need to protect and to

keep her mother in comfort: "Ay, and thee in comfort. There's a deal in a well-filled purse in a wench's eyes, or one would ha' thought it wern't so easy forgettin' yon lad as loved thee as t' apple on his eye" (SL, 343). He cannot accept Sylvia's choice of Philip and suggests that since

> '...a've a sister as is a decent widow-woman, tho' but badly off, livin' at Dale End; and if thee and they mother '11 go live wi' her, a '11 give thee well on to all a can earn, and it'll be a matter o' five shilling a week. But dunnot go and marry a man as thou's noane taken wi'; and another, as is most like for t' be dead, but who, mebbe, is alive,havin' a pull on thy heart.' (SL, 344)

Since Kester and Sylvia place the same strong value on a love match in a marriage, Kester's words deeply move Sylvia to reconsider her action: "Oh, Kester," said she once more, "what mun I do?...Shall I go and break it all off? -- say!" Kester's answer is foreboding: "Nay, it's noane for me t' say; m'appen thou's gone too far. Them above only knows what is best" (SL, 345). In Sylvia's despair after her marriage, Kester is the link with the natural world which Sylvia clings to; he is the sole survivor out of her once happy past who knew the real secrets of her life. To Kester, Sylvia remains the center of his affection. He remembers the joy he experienced from the warm, welcoming, sweet looks, and cordial words of the child Sylvia. He has seen her suffer sorrows which he could not alleviate. His tender care and watchful eye for Sylvia's protection and support continue to help her in her sorrows after her marriage. His visits to her, which, because he "had a sort of delicacy of his own which kept him from going to see her too often, even when he

was stationary at Monkshaven," are important to Sylvia, and "he looked forward to the times when he allowed himself this pleasure, as a child at school looks forward to its holidays" (SL, 498). With Kester, Sylvia may speak of her past life which Kester stands for, a life in which familial and romantic love were important centers around which all else revolved, a life of spontaneous and warm affection, a life lived easily and naturally in a rural setting whose peace and simplicity influenced the pace and tone of life itself. Sylvia admits the important function Kester serves in her life: "I niver justly feel like myself when yo're away, for I'm lonesome enough at times" (SL, 503). Sylvia can discover the code of social and moral principles she has lost in her friend, Kester, the representative of the values she once endorsed.

In the story of Ruth, the maid, Sally, holds equal place with Mr. Benson, whom she almost worships, and his sister, Faith, whom she loves. Irascible, dynamic, alternately narrow-minded and tolerant, Sally commands the household from her spotlessly clean kitchen. Her characteristics of racy speech, quick wit, and sharp analyses are similar to those of Betty in Cousin Phillis; they make her a formidable opponent in a verbal discussion. Her prompting Jenny shows that she would have been ready to answer Mr. Gradgrind's question: "Quadruped, a thing wi' four legs, Jenny; a chair is a quadruped, child!" (R, 150). Her humorous stories are effective antidotes for the sadness which sometimes overshadows the

Benson home.

For example, to coax a wearied Ruth to sleep Sally tells the story of her lovers. She admits that "excepting John Rawson, who was shut up in a mad-house the next week, I never once had what you may call a downright offer of marriage but once" (R, 164). But in refusing this one offer, Sally does not fail to tell her present lover about the other: "You're not the first chap as I've had down on his knees afore me, axing me to marry him (you see I were thinking of John Rawson, only I thought there was no need to say he were on all fours -- it were truth he were on his knees, you know)..." (R, 167). Dinah Moore's placid temperament might have been startled by Sally's comments on a suitor's behavior who spoke to her while she was down on her knees pipe-claying the kitchen:

> 'So at last I squatted down to my work, and thinks I, I shall be on my knees all ready if he puts up a prayer, for I knew he was a Methodee by bringing-up,...and them Methodees are terrible hands at unexpected prayers when one least looks for 'em. I can't say I like their way of taking one by surprise, as it were;.... However, I'd been caught once or twice unawares, so this time I thought I'd be up to it, and I moved a dry duster wherever I went, to kneel upon in case he began when I were in a wet place. By-and-by I thought, if he would pray it would be a blessing, for it would prevent his sending his eyes after me wherever I went; for when they takes to praying they shuts their eyes, and quivers th' lids in a queer kind o' way -- them Dissenters does.' (R, 165)

As a traditive character, Sally represents an individual whose social and moral principles influence her thoughts and actions in a very positive manner. She judges others only in terms of her code. For example, Sally is amazed that Ruth, "this chit," is a widow, and she frankly

exclaims her opinion: "If I'd been her mother, I'd ha' given her a lolly pop instead on a husband. Hoo looks fitter for it" (R, 134). Because of Ruth's age and position, Sally "dropped the more formal 'you,'...and 'thou'd' her quietly and habitually," "uttered quite in the tone of an equal, if not of a superior" (R, 136). That Sally does not like an intrusion on her routine and relationships is clear in her reaction to learning that Ruth is pregnant: " -- a baby in the house!...I'd sooner have rats in the house" (R, 137). Her doubts about Ruth's marital status elicit a statement of her judgment of the situation and reveal her conformity to the code she endorses in agreement with society's:

> 'Missus -- or miss, as the case may be -- I've my doubts as to you. I'm not going to have my master and Miss Faith put upon, or shame come near them. Widows wears these sort o' caps, and has their hair cut off; and whether widows wears wedding-rings or not, they shall have their hair cut off -- they shall. I'll have no half work in this house.' (R, 143)

But Sally's values which are based on the values of her society cannot stand up against the personal learning experiences she undergoes and which she can evaluate in a private way in relation to the situation, the circumstances, and the individual. The cutting of Ruth's hair seems to Sally to be required by her code, but

> When she had done, she lifted up Ruth's face by placing her hand under the round white chin....Ruth's soft, yet dignified submission, touched Sally with compunction, though she did not choose to show the change in her feelings. (R, 144)

In seeing the effect of the application of a code not tested in her experience, Sally realizes the complexity involved in applying an abstract principle to an individual situation.

That Sally has already realized this fact is clear in her statement of prejudice: "...I'm a parish-clerk's daughter, and could never demean myself to dissenting fashions, always save and except Master Thurston's, bless him" (R, 165). In her immediate response and reaction to a new situation, Sally presents the viewpoint expressed in a strict social and moral code; in her considered thoughts and actions she represents the individual whose code can be adjusted to meet the influence of new experiences. In this way, Sally is a traditive character who serves both the function of expressing a particular code of principles and the individual whose inter-relations with new characters and experiences can result in personal growth and adjustment. Sally slowly changes her values from the defense of the general to the particular and, like all the other characters in the novel, slowly changes her interpretation of the ethical code -- a difficult adjustment for such a strong-willed character.

Strong-willed Sally never does get married. But like most of Mrs. Gaskell's other single characters, she does come to terms with her state in life by using her energies and talents productively. Mrs. Gaskell's nineteenth-century interpretation and presentation of the unmarried woman as an old maid revives the dignity and understanding which had generally been denied her in England since the shift in women's position.

Utter and Needham, in their discussion of the changing position of the single woman in society, suggest

that the loss of the respect once commanded by single women was partially due to the loss of their economic independence. The breakup of the monasteries under Henry VIII closed the convents which had formerly served as respectable intellectual and economic shelters for the unmarried woman. The Puritan commercial concerns disapproved of single women amassing capital; therefore, single women were deprived of their opportunities for self-support and then were condemned as unproductive members of the community.[1] An early use of the term "old maid" in reference to single women is given in the Oxford English Dictionary as occurring in the anonymous seventeenth-century play, The Lady's Calling (1673), (II, i, 5): "An old Maid is now...look'd on as the most calamitous Creature in nature." Obviously, old maidhood was then considered a curse, the state of the superannuated virgin. Utter and Needham maintain that European comedy absorbed the traditional comic presentation of the single woman from the Greeks and Romans, and that the French summed up the old maid as a stock figure which was transferred to and adapted by the English. The characteristics and caricatures of the old maid type, which appeared in literature as soon as the old maids became numerous enough in society, were developed by Defoe, Fielding, and Smollett, Addison, Steele, and Dr. Johnson. The "major of the eighteenth-century battalion of old maids" is Aunt Tabitha in Smollett's The Expedition of Humphry Clinker. This "fantastical animal," this "diabolically capricious woman" who devoted herself to minding other people's affairs,

acting on them like a "perpetual grindstone," hilariously accommodates herself to her role in the farce of life.[2] Dickens' presentation of the old maid figures in his early works is stylized. They serve to illustrate a vice, virtue, or physical trait: kind, eccentric Miss Betsey Trotwood; harsh, unbending Jane Murdstone; unreasonable, passionate Rosa Dartle; plump Rachael Wardle, the plumper Misses Mould with cheeks like ripe peaches; and strange, tormented, unhappy Miss Wade. However, Jane Austen's old maid figure, Miss Bates, is not a stock character who is the butt of jokes or a functional type caricature. To her dignity and respect are given. Her faults are shown and she may be subject to ironic interpretation, but she is not a comic fool even though she provides humor. This mode of presentation is in keeping with Austen's interpretation of the essential dignity of each human being. Mrs. Gaskell continues in this tradition in her interpretation of the unmarried woman. Her understanding of the possibility of a fulfilled life in the single state reflects her independent thinking in an age which generally saw the role of wife and mother as the only worthy state for women.

That Mrs. Gaskell believed this step could be taken is reflected in her letters:

> I think an unmarried life may be to the full as happy, in process of time but I think there is a time of trial to be gone through with women, who naturally yearn after children.[3]
>
> ...I think I see every day how women, deprived of their natural duties as wives & mothers, must look out for other du-

ties if they wish to be at peace.[4]

Mrs. Gaskell dramatizes a consideration of the responsibility of a single life in her novel North and South. Margaret Hale, since she has neither a husband nor a child to create natural duties for her, and since she realizes "that she herself must one day answer for her own life, and what she had done with it...tried to settle that most difficult problem for woman, how much was to be utterly merged in obedience to authority, and how much might be set apart for freedom in working" (NS, 497).

Perhaps it is the matter of tone in Mrs. Gaskell's attitude towards and the portrayal of the unmarried woman which enables her to treat the subject of the old maid with such delicacy. Her work interprets their character with subtle but pointed irony and lightness and wit which screen the sharp critical penetration. If the irony is severe, its intention is always clear: to see, to expose, to laugh at the eccentricities of the old maid with the felt understanding that the individual old maid is worthy of respect because she lives life with dignity and purpose. The different approaches to the subject of old maids are expressed by Mr. Knightley and Emma regarding Miss Bates in Jane Austen's Emma:

> 'How could you be so insolent in your wit to a woman of her character, age, and situation? Emma, I had not thought it possible.'
>
> Emma recollected, blushed, was sorry, but tried to laugh it off.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 'Oh!' cried Emma, 'I know there is not a better creature

in the world; but you must allow, that what is good and what is ridiculous are most unfortunately blended in her.'[5]

The blending of the good and the ridiculous is the substance of Cranford, "the highwater mark of the old maid in art."[6]

The happy days passed in Cranford are recalled by by the narrator, Mary Smith.[7] Miss Smith's reminiscential narration of a story concerned with events set in the past places her as a 'writer' who

> ...belongs to the old-fashioned classes of the world, loves to remember very much more than to prophesy, and though he can't help being carried onward,...he sits under Time, the white-wigged charioteer, with his back to the horses, and his face to the past, looking at the receding landscape and the hills fading into the grey distance.[8]

Miss Smith also serves as a participant in the drama of the tender, quiet life which unfolds in the town. Perhaps, without the participant narrator, a story of this type of life would challenge credulity because of its fairy-tale like character. Miss Smith's comments reinforce the reality of the vision of a world in the possession of Amazons. When she says --"I can testify to a magnificent family red silk umbrella" (C, 2); "Then there were rules and regulations for visiting and calls" (C, 2); "As we did not read much" (C, 12); "Such was the state of things when I left Cranford and went to Drumble" (C, 14); "I went over from Drumble once a quarter at least, to settle the accounts and see after the necessary business letters" (C, 176) -- she testifies to the actuality of such a town with such people acting in a particular way and to the reliability of the

material of the story. Her acceptance of some of the more startling events at Cranford -- the subject of the Alderney cow, the frightful boldness of Captain Brown's admission of poverty as opposed to elegant economy; the marriage -- considered a madness -- between Lady Glenmire and Mr. Hoggins, and the story of the lace and the cat -- reinforces their probability and plausibility. Miss Smith's reliability as a narrator is attested to by her restricted credence of some matters. She will not vouch for the story of Captain Brown's saying, sotto voce, "D--n Dr. Johnson!" His helping a poor old woman to carry her mutton and potatoes home receives the wry comment, "This was thought very eccentric" (C, 12); and her acceptance of the bizarre story of the fears and efforts of the Cranford ladies to protect themselves against robbers is qualified: "Really, I do not know how much was true or false in the reports which flew about like wildfire just at this time" (C, 109).

The narrator's judgments are an aid to the acceptance of the values which set the standard for behavior at Cranford. The fact that she moves in and out of the Cranford world adds to the objectivity of the narration; her visits to several homes in the town enable her to give an intimate first-hand account of events. Her moves from industrial modern Drumble to the quaint tradition-loving town of Cranford suggest a comparison between the two entirely different worlds, their way of life, and the values they endorse. Miss Smith narrates the circumstances and in-

fluences of outside events on the life mode in Cranford, which, of course, fail to change its basic pattern and the values which support it.

Miss Smith is a traditive character in the story. But the narrator's commitments to a code change in the course of the tale. The innuendos of this shift are felt in the tone of the narration and in the reflections of Miss Smith's degree of involvement in Cranford life. At the beginning of the tale, Miss Smith, serious and objective in her interpretation of the role of narrator, offers her personal endorsement as a one-time inhabitant of Cranford to support the validity of the story. She makes judgments on her impressions but admits to a lack of total knowledge of scenes and situations after she leaves the town. She speaks of what the ladies themselves did, and remains distanced from the action she narrates. As the account progresses, Miss Smith becomes more personally involved with the characters and her emotional participation becomes more obvious. She begins to defend the standards of Cranford against the outside world when the pressures against its code become stronger.

For example, the fall of the Town and County Bank brings out the essential goodness in Miss Matty. The outside world may call her honest and unselfish behavior foolish, but she triumphs morally in following the standards in which she believes. Miss Matty's personal misfortunes deeply upset the narrator and the accounts of the daily sadness be-

setting Miss Matty are told from a now totally sympathetic point of view. Miss Smith's active step in trying to locate Miss Matty's brother brings her further into the action of the story. When she mails the letter to Peter, she realizes the significant step she has taken: "I dropped it in the post on my way home, and then for a minute I stood looking at the wooden pane with a gaping slit which divided me from the letter but a moment ago in my hand. It was gone from me like life, never to be recalled" (C, 154). Miss Smith's sympathetic involvement with Miss Matty's personal and financial problems affects the intimate tone which characterizes the latter part of the story and suggests the narrator's movement from an objective observer to a fully committed participant. Her involvement is shown in her manner and response: "It was some time before I could console her enough to leave her" (C, 167); "Miss Matty smiled at me through her tears, and she would fain have had me see only the smile, not the tears" (C, 153); "We had neither of us much appetite for dinner, though we tried to talk cheerfully about indifferent things" (C, 151); "I...promised all sorts of things in my anxiety to get home to Miss Matty" (C, 168). The shift in emphasis in the narrator's position also suggests an endorsement of the principles of Cranford over those of the modern world and a nostalgic recognition of the fact that this old world is soon to be no more.

All the old maids in Cranford are traditive characters; as a matter of fact, they are consciously aware

that they are the transmitters of a particular tradition. They are steadfast in maintaining the status quo, which is, in narrative time, that of the late eighteenth century. The traditions which they endorse and which they are proud to transmit are based on the social and moral values of a time which is forever gone. The fact that for the Cranford ladies time present is only seen in terms of time past makes them the representatives and transmitters of principles which are valued only by themselves. Thus, the principles which govern their behavior -- propriety and humanity -- result in actions which are good and sensible in themselves insofar as they are based on an admirable code, but these actions often seem ridiculous if they are examined by someone who does not completely see the world in Cranfordian terms and who judges the actions in relation to the social and moral values of time present. The pervading irony in Cranford is created by this juxtaposition of viewing the action by the standards of the past and the standards of the present.

Some of the standards which are endorsed by the Cranford ladies are carefully noted by Miss Smith, and very often she supplies the ironic contrast which emphasizes the resulting blend of the good and the ridiculous.

> Although the ladies of Cranford know all each other's proceedings, they are exceedingly indifferent to each other's opinions;...but, somehow, good-will reigns among them to a considerable degree....The Cranford ladies have only an occasional little quarrel....(C, 2)

> Their dress is very independent of fashion; as they observe, 'What does it signify how we dress here at Cranford, where everybody knows us?' And if they go from home, their reason

is equally cogent, 'What does it signify how we dress here, where nobody knows us?'...but I will answer for it, the last gigot, the last tight and scanty petticoat in wear in England, was seen in Cranford -- and seen without a smile. (C, 2)

Then there were rules and regulations for visiting and calls;'...never to let more than three days elapse between receiving a call and returning it; and also, that you are never to stay longer than a quarter of an hour.'

'But am I to look at my watch? How am I to find out when a quarter of an hour has passed?'

'You must keep thinking about the time, my dear, and not allow yourself to forget it in conversation.'

As everybody had this rule in their minds, whether they received or paid a call, of course no absorbing subject was ever spoken about. (C, 2-3)

We none of us spoke of money, because that subject savoured of commerce and trade, and though some might be poor, we were all aristocratic. The Cranfordians had that kindly esprit de corps which made them overlook all deficiencies in success when some among them tried to conceal their poverty. When Mrs. Forrester...gave a party in her baby-house of a dwelling,' and the little maiden disturbed the ladies on the sofa by a request that she might get the tea-tray out from underneath, everyone...talked on...as if we all believed that our hostess had a regular servants' hall, second table, with housekeeper and steward....(C, 3)

...almost every one has his own individual small economies... Now Miss Matty Jenkyns was chary of candles...In the winter afternoons she would sit knitting for two or three hours -- she could do this in the dark, or by firelight -- and when I asked if I might not ring for candles to finish stitching my wristbands, she told me to 'keep blind man's holiday.' (C, 50)

It was really very pleasant to see how [Miss Matty's] unselfishness and simple sense of justice called out the same good qualities in others....I have heard her put a stop to the asseverations of the man who brought her coals by quietly saying, 'I am sure you would be sorry to bring me wrong weight;' and if the coals were short measure that time, I don't believe they ever were again. (C, 174)

Miss Matty...had some scruples of conscience at selling tea when there was already Mr. Johnson in the town, who included it among his numerous commodities... [she]...trotted down to his shop...to inquire if it was likely to injure his business. My father called this idea of hers 'great nonsense,' and 'wondered how tradespeople were to get on if there was to be a continual consulting of each other's interests, which would

put a stop to all competition directly.' ...I have reason to know [Mr. Johnson] repeatedly sent customers to her, saying that the teas he kept were of a common kind, but that Miss Jenkyns had all the choice sorts. (C, 173-174)

The blending of the good and the ridiculous is also evident in the behavior of other traditive characters in the story.

In thoughtfully preparing an apple full of cloves which, when heated, will smell pleasantly in Miss Brown's sick room, Miss Jenkyns makes a particularly kind effort since her statement that Dr. Johnson's work is superior to Dickens' was challenged -- to her amazement -- by Captain Brown. But this intimidating lady is not daunted or defeated in her opinion because "as she put in each clove, she uttered a Johnsonian sentence" (C, 19). Miss Jenkyns strictly upholds the rules of Cranfordian decorum but she relaxes them if she believes that it is the best thing to do. Thus, when Miss Jessie's lover returns and the two are seated in the drawing-room, Miss Matty sees them and reports:

> 'Oh, goodness me!' she said. 'Deborah, there's a gentleman sitting in the drawing-room, with his arm round Miss Jessie's waist!' Miss Matty's eyes looked large with terror.
>
> Miss Jenkyns snubbed her down in an instant:
>
> 'The most proper place in the world for his arm to be in. Go away, Matilda, and mind your own business.' (C, 26)

Miss Pole is willing to act on what she called the great Christian principle of 'Forgive and Forget' and agrees to attend Mrs. Jamieson's party, but Miss Smith reveals the amusing reason for her seemingly charitable effort: "...

Miss Pole, in addition to her delicacies of feeling, possessed a very smart cap, which she was anxious to show to an admiring world" (C, 88). In a sincere desire to fulfill her role as the perambulatory gossip, Miss Pole spreads and enlarges rumors of robberies in the town. Explaining to Miss Matty the nature of life and the world, she states that the robbers must be men since all men want to be considered Samson or Solomon; she bases her authority for this information on the fact that "my father was a man, and I know the sex pretty well" (C, 115). Miss Betsy Barker's naive trust leads her to take literally Captain Brown's advice to cover her Alderney cow which fell into a lime pit with a dark gray flannel; certainly the innocent misunderstanding makes both Miss Betsy and the cow look ridiculous. Because the ladies do not feel that it would be quite kind to refuse Mrs. Forrester's invitation simply because it is suspected that there are robbers in town, they go with simulated courage only to return with a fear and trembling so strong as to motivate a lavish payment by Cranford standards for safe transport to their homes.

> 'Oh! pray go on! what is the matter? What is the matter? I will give you sixpence more to go on very fast; pray do not stop here!'
> 'And I will give you a shilling,' said Miss Pole, with tremulous dignity, 'if you'll go by Headingley Causeway.' (C, 121)

Miss Pole's serious deportment while conducting the meeting held to obtain aid for Miss Matty is made lighter by the narrator's slightly jealous observation of Miss Pole's ef-

fective use of prompt cards during her speech. The generosity of the old maids' contributions to Miss Matty's support matches the generosity of the widow who gave her mite; but the serious element in the action is lightened by the descriptions of the old maids' fuss and bother and devious mannerisms.

> She [Mrs. Forrester] drew me in, and when the door was shut, she tried two or three times to begin on some subject, which was so unapproachable apparently, that I began to despair of our ever getting to a clear understanding. At last out it came....(C, 166)

In this juxtaposition of the serious and the flighty, the good and the ridiculous, Mrs. Gaskell achieves a special blending of humor and pathos in the work. In this light, humorous way, Mrs. Gaskell presents her special understanding of the idiosyncratic old maid whose code of gentility pivots on a kindness which is somewhat incomprehensible to the worldly:

> ...I told [Mr. Smith] of the meeting of Cranford ladies at Miss Pole's the day before. He kept brushing his hand before his eyes as I spoke; and when I went back to Martha's offer the evening before, of receiving Miss Matty as a lodger, he fairly walked away from me to the window...'See, Mary, how a good innocent life makes friends all around. Confound it! I could make a good lesson out of it if I were a parson; but as it is, I can't get a tail to my sentences....'(C, 169)

The circumscribed world which the Cranfordians have created for themselves is influenced by the changing social values of the outside world. Even in Cranford, a man is accepted into its female society, Dickens' influence on the literary scene is recognized, a Cranford lady is proposed to and marries, a lady associated with trade is allowed to join

the 'aristocratic' group, and one of the Cranford ladies enters into trade. But these adjustments are minor ones which do not change the basic way of life. The moral principles of Cranford remain firm; to the end, kindness and goodness are in the most treasured tradition of Cranford's moral values. In this work, Mrs. Gaskell's traditive characters represent a generation whose essential principles are very often admirable but which soon will be obsolete. The principles which govern the outside world, change and competition, have nothing in common with a code based on propriety and kindness. Miss Smith recognizes this fact when she tries to determine what Miss Matty has to offer the world: "No! there was nothing she could teach to the rising generation of Cranford, unless they had been quick learners and ready imitators of her patience, her humility, her sweetness, her quiet contentment with all that she could not do" (C, 158). In recognizing the incompatibility of Cranford's code with that of modern society, it becomes clear that the old values and way of life are soon to be lost. However, since the limitations, strictness and narrowness of the Cranford code are also shown in the story, the past is not viewed idyllically. That there is a need for adjustment and change in its code is indicated by the change which takes place in Miss Matty.[9] She widens her perception of life and her appreciation of its many joys. Of the traditive characters in Cranford, only Miss Matty's viewpoint is sufficiently adjusted to meet the challenge of

applying a general code to a particular situation.

The Misses Browning in Wives and Daughters resemble the ladies of Cranford in the social and moral principles which they endorse. They, too, are preoccupied with modes and customs, are sensitive to criticism, aware of place, jealous in little things, are kind, loyal, and warm in loving. Gossip and card playing and dozing before the fire occupy their time. Just as the Cranford ladies were hysterically excited about meeting Lady Glemire and making a good impression -- Miss Pole wore seven brooches on her dress -- so too are the Browning sisters about meeting the aristocracy from the Towers. The unexpected visit of Lady Harriet catches them unawares:

> 'And sister was taking her forty winks; and I was sitting with my gown up above my knees and my feet on the fender, pulling out my grandmother's lace which I'd been washing. The worst has yet to be told. I'd taken off my cap, for I thought it was getting dusk and no one would come, and there was I in my black silk skull-cap, when Nancy put her head in, and whispered, "There's a lady downstairs...".' (WD, 193-194)

Just as the old maids of Cranford respect a hierarchy among themselves, the Brownings set their own order. Miss Browning explains her not immediately apologizing for her own error to Molly: "It's as well Phoebe shouldn't know, for she thinks me perfect; and when there's only two of us, we get along better if one of us thinks the other can do no wrong" (WD, 171). Since the society at Hollingford is more complex than that of Cranford, the Misses Brownings relationship to the community reflects more clearly the position of the old maid in it. Although their behavior is often

considered foolish in small matters, they still hold the respect of the community. Dr. Gibson confidently gives them the charge of redecorating his house for his bride. He leaves Molly to their keeping because he is sure to approve of the guidance they give her. Miss Browning's telling Dr. Gibson of the rumors about Molly shows the sense of responsibility she accepts as part of her self-image. The Browning sisters demand respect and obedience from Molly:

> 'Heighty-teighty! Miss Molly! don't you remember that I am old enough to be your mother, and that it is not pretty behaviour to speak so to us -- to me! "Chatter" to be sure. Really, Molly -- '
> 'I beg your pardon' said Molly, only half-penitent.
> 'I daresay you did not mean to speak so to sister,' said Miss Phoebe, trying to make peace. (WD, 513)

As traditive characters respecting a code of order, honor, and obedience, the Browning sisters function to reinforce the values which Molly is being taught by her father, but their lack of self-control and perspective show the weaknesses in their characters which Molly must learn to eliminate from her own if she is to mature and function to the fullest of her nature.

Mrs. Gaskell, sensitive to the sacrifices demanded in the single state and aware of its few rewards, also presents a more serious version of the old maid as a traditive character in the novel Sylvia's Lovers. The portrait of Hester Rose is that of a melancholy young woman who loves Philip, a man unable to respond to her interest because of his involvement with Sylvia. Just as little Miss Peecher's feelings for Bradley Headstone are frustrated, Hester's love

for Philip is unrequited.

A glance in the mirror reveals to Hester a blandness and plainness that cannot compete with the spirited beauty of Sylvia; her calm, reliable nature does not enchant as do the wiles of Sylvia. Hester's jealous reaction against Sylvia is understandable; her anger with Sylvia's casual and abrupt manner towards Philip is justified. Continuous repression of her feelings for Philip become sad sacrifices to her devoted love. What she would have treasured and nurtured in Philip's love, Sylvia spurns. Hester's understanding, which grows out of her secret love, beautifully blossoms in her counsel about how to placate Philip, who has been vexed by Sylvia's not being home to give him his tea:

> She poured out a cup of tea, and, coming close up to Sylvia, and kneeling down by her, she whispered --
> 'Just take him this into t'ware-room; it'll put all to rights, if tou'll take it to him wi' thy own hands.' (SL, 386)

As a traditive character, Hester functions in the story as an example of acquiescent and responsible womanhood against which capricious Sylvia's nature is contrasted. Hester is able to control her expression of love for Philip because her principles provide the bases of her self-discipline. Recognizing that she cannot be Philip's lover, she also realizes that she is his friend and that she must therefore fulfill the duties demanded by their friendship.

It is not easy for Hester to treat Sylvia with tenderness and affection. Seeing the selfishness in Sylvia, Hester's inner thoughts reveal her confusion about this

flighty creature who is able to command love.

> What business had the pretty little creature to reject kindly-meant hospitality in the pettish way she did? thought Hester. And, oh! what business had she to be so ungrateful and to try and thwart Philip in his thoughtful wish of escorting them through the streets of the rough, riotous town? What did it all mean? (SL, 35)

Hester soon realizes that Sylvia does not return the deep love which Philip has for her. Realizing the hopelessness of her own love, Hester is ashamed, hurt, and jealous. She attempts to avoid Sylvia whose presence is agitating to her, for when Sylvia "put her hand on Hester's arm to detain her a moment, Hester suddenly drew back a little, reddened still more, and then replied fully and quietly to all Sylvia asked" (SL, 78). When Philip asks Hester to go to Haysterbank Farm to bring Sylvia and her mother for a last visit with the imprisoned Robson, he does not doubt that she will do the favor. Philip says, "It's dree weather for them, but they'll not mind that," and Hester notices "that the rain was spoken of in reference to them, not to her" (SL, 307). It is very difficult for Hester to do this favor even though Philip admits, "I don't know what I should ha' done without thee" (SL, 308), because she realizes that his long looking after her in the jolting cart as it leaves town "was not her own poor self that attracted his lingering gaze. It was the thought of the person she was bound to" (SL, 308). "Her heart kept rising against her fate; the hot tears came unbidden to her eyes. But rebellious heart was soothed, and hot tears were sent back to their source, before the time came for her alighting"

(SL, 309). Sylvia's initial rudeness to Hester at the Farm is regretted and Sylvia's appreciative words somewhat soothe Hester, who wistfully "longed for one word of thanks or recognition from Philip" (SL, 314).

Again, Philip asks for Hester's help in preparing the home for his bride, Sylvia. Again with difficulty, Hester helps him and defeats her jealousy in a conquest of self. "But it was a great strain on the heart...she felt as weary and depressed in bodily strength as if she had gone through an illness of many days" (SL, 357). But Hester cannot bring herself to be Sylvia's bridesmaid: "'I cannot,' said Hester, with sudden sharpness" (SL, 357). Philip coaxes her but "Hester shook her head. Did her duty require her not to turn away from this asking, too?" (SL, 357). Hester refuses to go to the church, for she suggests that her "duty lay in conveying the poor widow and mother down from Haysterbank to the new home in Monkshaven" (SL, 359). Sylvia thanks Hester for this kindness:

> ...in that nameless manner, and with that strange, rare charm, which made Hester feel as if she had never been thanked in all her life before; and from that time forth she understood, if she did not always yield to, the unconscious fascination which Sylvia could exercise over others at times. (SL, 360)

"Hester was almost surprised at Sylvia's evident liking for her. By slow degrees, Hester was learning to love the woman, whose position as Philip's wife she would have envied so keenly, had she not been so truly good and pious" (SL, 366). Through the following of the principles of her code, Hester triumphs over herself: "her mouth was slightly com-

am afraid I enjoy not being fettered by truth...it is necessary,...to tell falsehoods now..." (R, 149).

Faith is not a traditive character in the same way as the other characters discussed are; her code is based on her judgment of a situation after she has rationalized it, which she always does in consultation with her brother so that she may think that she has his approval and support. Her attempts to circumvent the rules of society are, ultimately, concessions to their force. In the presentation of this character, Mrs. Gaskell shows her sensitive and sympathetic appreciation of each human being in his frailty, and her inclination to seek that which is the best in an individual -- Faith's virtue is her kindness -- rather than to search out his faults and flaws. For, "The Jews, or Mohammedans...believe that there is one little bone of our body -- one of the vertebrae, if I remember rightly, -- which will never decay and turn to dust, but will lie incorrupt and indestructible in the ground until the Last Day: this is the Seed of the Soul. The most depraved have also their Seed of the Holiness..." (MB, 102).

Faith Benson is one of the rarer character types in fiction, a contented woman who happens to be an old maid. Old Alice in Mary Barton is a kind, but melancholy, old maid, whose brave suffering before her death is deeply admired by the other characters. As shown in her stories of days and joys gone by and from her kind action towards Mary Barton in the beginning of the tale, she is a traditive character whose

pressed, as most have it who are in the habit of restraining their feelings; but when she spoke you did not perceive this..." (SL, 25-26). Friendship and love mature in a situation which, but for Hester's principled behavior, would have produced discord and alienation.

Mr. Benson's sister, Faith, is an old maid by choice; she refused a marriage proposal because she believed it her duty to stay with her crippled brother. Although she sees herself as an individual who faithfully follows the Dissenter's code, Faith frequently adjusts her principles to fit a particular situation. She is a spirited woman who, quite casually, under the protection of the belief that it is a woman's prerogative to change her mind, tells lies in order to hide any circumstance in a situation which might be criticized by society as a violation of its social and moral principles. For example, since she knows that society will punish Ruth's new-born illegitimate infant, Faith, pitying "the poor, poor child! what it will have to struggle through and endure!" (R, 120), decides that " -- 'after all, it might be concealed. The very child need never know of its illegitimacy'" (R, 120). In her determination to protect Ruth and the child, Faith must tell several lies in order to make her original fictional history of Ruth hold true, for, as Faith herself admits, "...if we are to tell a lie, we may as well do it thoroughly, or else it's of no use. A bungling lie would be worse than useless." She acknowledges " -- it may be very wrong -- but I believe -- I

dreams of goodness and peace are based on a world already gone by and which may only be fulfilled in her hopes for a heaven. But her function as a traditive character is an important one. Her dreams of the gentle countryside where she spent her youth and the kindly people she once knew contrast sharply with the utter bleakness and inhumanity in her present world of Manchester.

The conflicts between a traditive character's principles and the emerging principles of a new pattern of life are examined in another way by Mrs. Gaskell in Cousin Phillis. As in Cranford, the narrator in Cousin Phillis bridges the worlds of yesterday and today. In a reminiscential role, he creates an attitude towards his past which has already undergone change and towards his present which is in the process of change. His participation in the present's activity enables him to remark on and judge the present in relation to the past.

The ironic effectiveness of the idyll, Cousin Phillis, lies in the development of the tale's action by the reminiscential narrator, Paul Manning. He recounts his youthful experiences and, although he finally admits the error in judgment he made as a young man, he tells the major part of his story from his viewpoint as a young man directly involved in the action, tending thereby to justify his behavior by revealing the events with limited vision. The effect of distance is achieved by having the matured participant-narrator looking back and presenting a segment of his

youth; the distance is doubled because the reader is taken into the action by the witness-narrator as a selected onlooker into the self-contained world at Hope Farm. The first person narrator dramatically heightens the reported impression of events which occurred in the past and adds precision and individuality while determining the tone and field of vision.

In telling the story of his cousin Phillis, Paul compulsively narrates his own tale of atonement and thereby reveals his character and his maturing in the perception of character and motivation within the action. He realizes and values the kind gentleness and courtesy in Mrs. Holman and Phillis; eventually he respects the wisdom and frank honesty of the farmer-minister. He learns that people are not stereotypes, that there may be a difference in the external evidence and the essential character of a person, and that a well-intentioned act may be a fault or a folly. It is Manning who initially perceives the moral problem behind the conflict in the story.

Paul represents the new age. He proudly works for the era's most progressive industry, the railroad. He values money and position, is industrious, aggressive, pragmatic, and prosaic, proud of his independence. His critical attitude towards religion reflects the spirit of religious doubt. But his feelings about the new age in which he participates are influenced by his youthful impressionism.

Paul also represents his personal age. A mixture

of the child-adult personality is present throughout the narration of his experience. He hero-worships his sophisticated supervisor, Mr. Holdsworth, is uncomfortable and insecure with the probing and demanding Mr. Holman, blushes at his father's reference to his marriageable age, enjoys the fantasy of picturing himself as what he is not: a tall, bearded, multi-lingual, suave man of the world. It is ironic that Paul's fear that Holdsworth had not the same kind of goodness as the Holmans reverts upon his own behavior as a censure: "I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for [Phillis'] sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before" (CP, 77).

Paul also reflects traits connected with time past: respect for classical knowledge, his elders, the traditional mores, the well-ordered and regulated life pattern, the traditional roles of man and woman, the unwritten but enforced code of behavior based on love, honor, and obedience. The influence of the traditional code enables Paul to understand the roles he and Holdsworth should play at Hope Farm, their parts in the poignant unhappiness of innocent Phillis, and the responsibility for atonement which he has contracted by his own rash action.

In the manipulation of present and past historical time and personal time, Mrs. Gaskell achieves a conception of society as an aggregate of conflicting forces. This interweaving of time helps to suggest a valid perspective of reality. Further indications of the passage of time, which

give a sense of duration, lapses, and accumulations of time, are to be found in this work.

Chronological time is indicated by Paul's advance in years in the time period of the work, Phillis' stages of health and sickness, Holdsworth's coming and departure. The changes of the seasons parallel the mood movements in the romance between Phillis and Holdsworth. It is clear that the days at the farm are measured into periods of work, prayer, and leisure; a time and season are appointed for all things. The tempo of the work itself is measured and slow and deliberate. Throughout the tale, psychological time for the characters reflects its movement in the same terms. Psychological time for the reader also depends upon this tempo which induces him to read and reflect with the same measured pace in order to grasp the meaning in the narrated events and the relationship of each to the whole. Often historical time seems to stop while psychological time is extended and emphasized; one world intrudes itself upon the other and all time is agitated in this moment of conflict. In the narration, Paul emotionally interprets past time in relation to himself as part of the past as well as the present: "...I remember the quick knotting and breaking of the thread with which [Phillis] was sewing. I never hear that snap repeated now, without suspecting some sting or stab troubling the heart of the worker" (CP, 86).

The bitter-sweet tone of Cousin Phillis is emphasized by the recollections of the shifting and passage of

time, youth, innocence, love, tranquillity, order, simplicity, security, and tradition set against the recognition of the necessity of movement and change in time. Phillis' wish for a change, "Only for a short time, Paul! Then -- we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can, and I will!" (CP, 109), contrasts with Paul's more worldly opinion: "Perhaps! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return" (CP, 63).

Another character who realizes that he must change his attitudes towards himself and others, and his standards of judgment, is the odious Mr. Bradshaw, a traditive character who personifies hypocritical Victorian morality in the novel Ruth. His warped sense of values makes him proud to have arranged the control of his wife's honor; he bluntly tells his daughter, Jemima:

> 'Your mother is in the habit of repeating accurately to me what takes place in my absence; besides which the whole speech is not one of hers; she has not altered a word in the repetition, I am convinced. I have trained her to habits of accuracy very unusual in a woman.' (R, 220)

He is so sure of his own purity of behavior that he is immune from admitting to himself that he has taken bribes. He is so sure in his condemnation of Ruth that he damns her as depraved and profligate; he is so blind in his anger directed against a 'sinner' that he cannot sense the question inherent in his statement, "She has turned right into wrong, and wrong into right, and taught all to be uncertain whether there be any such thing as Vice in the world, or whether it ought not to be looked upon as Virtue" (R, 336).

"Not a misfortune or a sin was brought to light but Mr. Bradshaw could trace to its cause in some former mode of action, which he had long ago foretold would lead to shame" (R, 209). But, ironically, he is blind to the evil in himself and in his son. Seen by others as one of the upstanding members of church and community, Bradshaw is actually a hypocritically self-righteous individual. It must be admitted that this Victorian paragon of questionable virtue does direct his anger and strict judgment against his own son's transgressions. In this, he can only be proud to have remained impervious to the pleas of others for his kindness and understanding. Mr. Bradshaw finally does learn from this experience that the frailty of man demands modifications of the moral code through sympathy and understanding. He and Mr. Gradgrind would have made fast friends.

Also in Ruth, Mrs. Gaskell presents a very interesting portrait of another traditive character, Mr. Farquhar, who, because he responds sensitively to all sides of the problems in which he is involved, experiences moments of doubt about the validity of his code. His comprehensive reviewing of the aspects of a problem enables him to weigh it more fully, but it also makes him sympathetic to many sides of a question and tremulous in making a final decision. Farquhar poses to Mr. Benson the perplexing moral question: "Are there not occasions when it is absolutely necessary to wade through evil to good?" because he feels that "in the present state of the world...it is rather difficult to act upon" the

precept which Mr. Benson firmly stated, "We are not to do evil that good may come" (R, 254). Farquhar's questioning indicates his concern with the reliability of the social and moral principles in his changing times.

Certainly his strange and frustrating relationship with Jemima overwhelms his stability and confidence in his judgment. He questions the legitimacy of their relationship in terms of age, ideals, temperament, and experience. For, in terms of the ideals he had set for a wife in his young manhood, "the idea of a staid, noble-minded wife, grave and sedate...full of self-control and dignity" (R, 213), the consideration of Jemima as a wife is a contradiction of his principles. Possibly a change in values, possibly a change from a pragmatic to a more idealistic view of love, or possibly the fact of his being forty and staid and Jemima's being twenty and irrepressible are reasons for his being initially enamored of her. On their first meeting, Ruth judges him as a man to be respected, which he proves to be. He remains loyal to his employer, Mr. Bradshaw, against whose hypocritical behavior Farquhar's search for justice and honor are contrasted, and Farquhar helps him and his son by sympathetic as well as practical advice.

In the light of his previous traditional point of view regarding women, Farquhar's eventual understanding of Ruth's situation, his perception of Jemima's right to freedom in her role as his wife, and his acceptance and recognition of the friendship between Ruth and Jemima are admir-

able adjustments on the part of a man raised with the values of one world and forced to evaluate them in terms of a new.

Some of Mrs. Gaskell's characters hold to the attitudes and mores of an older generation which is living in an age of rapid change. Dr. Gibson and Squire Hamley, characters in the novel Wives and Daughters, do not always make the adjustments demanded of them.

Dr. Gibson is the respected mentor of the members of his family and community. He is practical, calm, modest, persevering, and honorable; above all, kindness is his greatest strength. None of these traits is denied to him; in fact, it would not be difficult to add to this enumeration of positive character traits. He is also admired and appreciated for his medical wisdom and skill; he is an alert professional who has a great interest in the advances being made in medicine. He admits that he would have liked to belong to this new generation:

'So many new views seem to be opened in science, that I should like, if it were possible, to live till their reality was ascertained, and one saw what they led to.' (WD, 752-753)

But Dr. Gibson's progressive attitude towards his work does not carry through into his private life in which he continuously tries to hold back time as it influences his relationship with his daughter, Molly: "I don't want to have my Molly carried off by any young man just yet; I should miss her sadly" (WD, 463). The fact is that it is Dr. Gibson's rash action of marrying Mrs. Kilpatrick which precipitates many of the problems in the novel. How is it that this wise

and practical man should make such a foolish move in an important personal matter regarding himself and his daughter? Dr. Gibson hopes to protect Molly, at seventeen, from having what he considers a premature awareness of love involvements. In order to protect Molly, he decides that his remarrying would give her the advantage of the advice, counsel, and protection of a mature woman. Also, he is personally influenced by Mrs.Kirkpatrick,who should be granted the successful deployment of her charms against Dr. Gibson.

> She was not aware that he finally made up his mind to propose, during the time that she was speaking...her voice was so soft, her accent so pleasant;...the harmonious colours of her dress, and her slow and graceful movements, had something of the same soothing effect upon his nerves....Yesterday he had looked upon her more as a possible stepmother for Molly; today he thought more of her as a wife for himself. (WD, 118)

The marriage which appears to both parties as mutually advantageous is contracted -- and all concerned do not live happily ever after.

Dr. Gibson still enjoys his slow rides through the countryside while he makes his house calls, the quiet serious continuum of his involvements with his patients, the satisfaction found in his relationship with his 'little girl' Molly, and the soothing quality of the steady routine which governs their lives. That he himself fails to accept the maturing of his daughter into young womanhood indicates his preoccupation with maintaining life as he presently enjoys it. He makes no allowance for Molly's opinion in his decision to remarry since he refuses to recognize her maturity. In this way, Dr. Gibson foists a new wife and a new mother into

their home for the purpose of holding back the unwanted but inevitable problems which time is introducing. No simplified solution is achieved, however, and the price paid by all concerned is very high. Because of Dr. Gibson's inability to make wise adjustments to the conflicts which encroaching time presents, the disturbances which seriously affect all the members of his household may be laid against him.

Squire Hamley, like George Eliot's Squire Cass, is a man who allows evil to grow up around him. His lack of continued, responsible attention to the keeping, maintaining, and advancing of the production of his property -- the drainage scheme which would have ended in failure but for Roger's help was "the only concession to the spirit of progress he ever made in his life" (WD, 390) -- shows his neglect of the responsibilities of a positioned man. His loss of place and esteem, reflected in the rude treatment he receives from Preston and Mrs. Kirkpatrick, is attributable to his unreasonable, undisciplined behavior. In his personal life, the Squire behaves rashly, emotionally, stubbornly. His demands on his wife cause her to give up the interests she loved but which he could not understand, and her deprivation of them leads to her slow loss of interest in life. An idealization of his first-born son is part of the reason for Osborne's weaknesses as a human being; the Squire's disappointment in Osborne is a product of his own blindness and stubbornness in failing to face the influence of his own de-

manding behavior on his son, whom he never understands or treats as a unique individual. Certainly there is deep love between the Squire and Osborne, but the differences in their persons, behavior, and attitudes make them personally incompatible and frustrating to each other. There is a splendid scene in which this pathetic misunderstanding is revealed.

> 'It surely isn't six o'clock?' said Osborne, pulling out his dainty little watch. He was scarcely more unaware than it of the storm that was brewing.
>
> 'Six o'clock! It's more than a quarter past,' growled out his father.
>
> 'I fancy your watch must be wrong, sir. I set mine by the Horse Guards only two days ago.'
>
> Now, impugning that old steady, turnip-shaped watch of the Squire's was one of the insults which, as it could not reasonably be resented, was not to be forgiven. That watch had been given him by his father when watches were watches long ago. It had given the law to house-clocks, stable-clocks, kitchen-clocks -- nay, even to Hamley Church clock in its day; and was it now, in its respectable old age, to be looked down upon by a little whippersnapper of a French watch...
>
> 'My watch is like myself,' said the Squire,'...plain, but steady-going. At any rate, it gives the law in my house. The King may go by the Horse Guards if he likes.' (WD, 290-291)

The Squire's refusal to see, before Osborne's failure, the merits in his son, Roger, or to extend his love to him verges on cruelty, and it is ironic that this ignored son should later prove to be his only consolation.

These traits damn the Squire as a selfish, bigoted, stubborn fool -- such is the judgment levied against Squire Cass. But Squire Hamley is like King Lear. This old fool's errors make us more tender towards him who so restlessly, relentlessly, and blindly fights against himself and the changes of time. What does he do whose fruit of life turns sour? What does he do whose values turn false? What

does he do who realizes in his old age that his life's judgments have been wrong? He is fortunate who can find humility to assuage his sorrows.

'I'm getting old,' he said, 'and my head's less clear than it used to be. I think sorrow for her has dazed me. I never was much to boast on; but she thought a deal of me -- bless her! She'd never let me call myself stupid; but for all that, I am stupid. Osborne ought to help me. He's had money enough spent on his learning; but, instead, he comes down dressed like a popinjay, and never troubles his head to think how I'm to pay his debts. I wish I'd told him to earn his living as a dancing-master,' said the Squire, with a sad smile at his own wit. 'He's dressed for all the world like one. And how he's spent the money no one knows! Perhaps Roger will turn up some day with a heap of creditors at his heels. No, he won't -- not Roger; he may be slow, but he's steady, is old Roger. I wish he was here. He's not the eldest son, but he'd take an interest in the estate; and he'd do up these weary accounts for me. I wish Roger was here!' (WD, 296)

And Squire Hamley does receive comfort and respect from his second son:

'Oh! I can nearly say it all off by heart, for many a time when I'm frabbed by bad debts, or Osborne's bills, or moidered with accounts, I turn the ledger wrong way up, and smoke a pipe over it, while I read those pieces out of the review which speak about you, lad!' (WD, 405)

Old age finds fulfillment in the hopes of the young; lost dignity is regained in respectful ministrations; old dreams are reshaped to a newer vision; old attitudes and traditions are acknowledged if not modified by a gentle persuasion of the new. The beautiful moments in which a proud, broken old man experiences the crystallization of hopes of love, respect, and attention are captured in the dialogue, actions, and undercurrents in the conversation during the smoking scene with Roger after Osborne's failure at university is known, and again in the starkly vivid scenes of consolation

of the Squire by Molly after Osborne's death.

Viewed as a man who strongly loves his family, his place, and his position,but who is foolish in the interpretation and application of that love and who is consequently disillusioned in his failure, the Squire's weaknesses demand sympathy and understanding. The past and the present, old age and youth, life and death, respect and dishonor, intention and act are the extremes which confront Squire Hamley, a man ill-equipped by training and temperament to explore subtly the adjustments they demand in order to make the necessary transitions effectively.

The Squire's son, Roger, is a participant in the advancements of his age; he represents the progressive, determined generation which has an interest in and talent for science, and a thirst for the adventure of discovery of the yet undetermined possibilities in the universe. Mrs. Gaskell's characterization of the young scientist shows a timely awareness of the age's shift in emphasis from the traditional occupations to a concern with the nineteenth-century's preoccupation with advances in the scientific sphere. The Squire and Roger represent the old and new attitudes and concerns which existed side by side in the rapidly changing nineteenth-century world. This middle-class pairing is paralleled by the similarly contrasting aristocratic representatives of the traditional landlord, Lord Cumnor, and his son, Lord Hollingford, the scientist. The social distance and personal alienation between the

class representatives of the old generation is widened by the social changes which influence their respective positions. However, the interest in scientific matters is a unifying factor in the relations between the younger class representatives; the interest in the search for knowledge overcomes class barriers. In recognizing this characteristic of the modern world, Mrs. Gaskell reveals a perceptive grasp of the new principles upon which modern society will found its unity, and this vision suggests her belief in a hopeful future for the civilization which will replace the once stable, stratified old order.

Roger is aware of his responsibilities to the older tradition which his father endorses and he accepts his duty to respect the feelings to which the Squire is committed. This attitude is based upon his personal philosophy: "It is right to hope for the best about everybody, and not to expect the worst....One has always to try to think more of others than of oneself, and it is best not to prejudge people on the bad side" (WD, 133). Believing this, Roger can accept the limitations of his pleasures by understanding the needs of others before his own. He can accept and enjoy the praise his parents give to his brother, Osborne, while neglecting him. "When he caressed his mother, she used laughingly to allude to the fable of the lap-dog and the donkey; so thereafter he left off all personal demonstration of affection" (WD, 46); but this external adjustment does not influence his ability to love deeply. Roger's

anticipated delight at meeting and talking with great men of science at Lord Hollingford's gathering is not realized because he is aware that the Squire would be hurt and jealous of his acceptance of the invitation by the Cumnors. Roger is able to understand the needs and desires and difficulties of his father whose dreams crumble in the face of the challenges of the new. His scientific journey provides the Squire with the funds he needs to fulfill his commitment to progress, the drainage works on the Hamley estate. Roger's self-abnegation leads to his individual fulfillment; in seeing and performing his duty to others he is able to find satisfaction. His joy comes through an appreciation of the joys of others. Because his inclinations, spirit, and philosophy are in harmony, this oneness of self puts him in harmony with the universe, in sympathy with it.

Because his sympathy enables him to understand and to accept others for themselves, Roger, the unifying character in the novel, is able to appreciate the best which each individual has to offer. His interest and love of discerning the common and the rare forms of natural life in all their complexities parallels this human interest. The Squire comments to Molly:

> 'Roger knows a deal of natural history, and finds out queer things sometimes. He'd have been off a dozen times during this walk of ours, if he'd been here; his eyes are always wandering about, and see twenty things where I only see one.' (WD, 80)

In recognizing the uniqueness of each individual and respecting each person and the frailty of human nature,

Roger is Mrs. Gaskell's man for all ages, because although he exists in time, his appreciation of it is timeless: he builds his view of the world and his relations with it on the concept which recognizes the individuality, dignity, and responsibility of the human being.

Mrs. Gaskell has created some traditive characters who have minimal roles but who still have definite and often important functions in the novels.

In North and South, Henry Lennox represents the London gentleman and London society; he is a member of a fading class and a superficial world. Lennox is seen in contrast to the vital, dynamic character, the manufacturer John Thornton. It is suitable that Lennox's proposal is rejected by Margaret. He lacks insight into his own limitations; his narrowness continues while Margaret, in comparison, gains in self-knowledge. On the other hand, Mr. Bell, the Oxford don, represents the educated, cultured gentleman; he is a member of the academic world Margaret greatly admires. It is in a discussion with Bell that Thornton expresses his views on money, culture, the past, the aim of life; the exchange enlarges the character of both men. Functionally, Lennox and Bell are representatives of the two cultures against which John Thornton's industrial world of Milton is measured.

Again, through the contrast of two traditive female characters, Margaret herself is defined more clearly. Edith Shaw and Fanny Thornton are flighty creatures whose

concerns are mainly with ribbons and lace. Edith is part of the vain, shallow London world. And, "although she was a spoiled child, she was too careless and idle to have a strong will of her own" (NS, 2). Throughout the novel, Margaret compares the course of development of her own life with that of Edith's and in this comparison she realizes the fuller, more serious, and more worthy life which is to be her own. Fanny Thornton is severely criticized by Mrs. Gaskell for the superficial attitude towards life the undisciplined young woman holds. Her follies are exposed by the ironic promptings and commentaries on her behavior by her brother John, who, like his mother, is critically aware of her faults. When Mrs. Thornton realizes that her own good health makes her unaware of an invalid's problems, John suggests:

> 'Well, here is Fanny then, who is seldom without an ailment. She will be able to suggest something, perhaps -- won't you, Fan?'
> 'I have not always an ailment,' said Fanny pettishly; 'and I am not going with mamma. I have a headache to-day, and I shan't go out.' (NS, 110)

As opposed to Margaret who liberates herself to a maturity in which she realizes her capabilities as a woman and her responsibilities as an individual, both Edith and Fanny perpetuate the tradition of the role of woman as a foolish but lovely ornament.

The same lack of self-respect and conscious moral purpose which characterizes Fanny Thornton distinguishes Sally Ledbetter from Mary Barton. Initially they are aligned in purpose and behavior in their intrigue with Mr. Carson,

but Mary's break with Carson places her outside comparative association with the blowsy, vulgar-minded Sally. In her role as paid confidante and messenger of Carson, Sally reveals her boldness and immodesty. She is brutally insensitive to Mary after Carson's death, suggests that Jem's trial will be an opportunity to pick up a new sweetheart in Liverpool, is concerned more with Mary's dress at the trial than her opportunity to help Jem, and coaxes Mary to go back to her work at the shop since she "shouldn't wonder but you'd prove quite an attraction to customers...to catch a glimpse at you, after the trial's over" (MB, 319). There is a similar comparison of girlhood friends in Sylvia's Lovers, the novel in which Molly and Sylvia grow apart when their different attitudes and values become apparent. In her role as a town wife, Molly becomes proud, overbearing, and insulting. Her pragmatic, dogmatic vision leads her to a smugly complacent, bigoted course in life, while Sylvia's romantic and sometimes selfish ways are modified by her suffering and experience. Molly's role, like Sally's, is small but certainly effective in its presentation of an unadmirable, offensive woman.

Some of the traditive characters are captured in cameo portraits.[10] Mrs. Gaskell draws them in relief; that is, with a descriptive phrase or line, an individual's essential characteristic is drawn to scale to produce a small portrait. Mrs. Gaskell gave an illustrative example of a cameo portrait in her letter to John Forster: "Shall I tell

you a Cranfordism. An old lady a Mrs Frances Wright said to one of my cousins 'I have never been able to spell since I lost my teeth'."[11] In these cameo portraits, an individual is often seen for what he particularly represents.

Lady Glenmire's interpretation of her position and role are deftly cut out by Miss Pole's statement: "My dear! ten pounds would have purchased every stitch she had on -- lace and all!" (C, 91). The duchess' failure to wear the Menteith diamonds to the Hollingford Charity Ball indicates her disrespect for the responsibilities of her place, and this trait is shown in relief by Mrs. Goodenough's cutting remark, "Such a shabby thing for a duchess I never saw; not a bit of diamond near her" (WD, 338). Lady Cumnor engraves her own trait into her portrait in which her stubborn, petulant haughtiness -- to which she believes herself entitled because of her place -- is visible: "When I am tired, Lord Cumnor, I will tell you so" (WD, 111). Lord Cumnor is a great proprietor; he is also a great gossip and an amazingly hospitable host. He is admired and respected for his interpretation of his role in society, but his love of small details and trivial information are emphasized in his portrait: "In short, if ever a peer was an old woman, Lord Cumnor was that peer; but he was a very good-natured old woman, and rode about on his stout old cob with his pockets full of halfpence for the children, and little packets of snuff for the old people" (WD, 610). The cameo portraits of two traditive characters reflect their inter-

pretations of the wifely role. The tender sadness of Mrs. Hamley, who sees her responsibility in passive acquiescence, is brought into relief by a comment: "deprived of all her strong interests, she sank into ill-health; nothing definite; only she never was well" (WD, 46). Mrs. Holman's respect for her husband, his friends, and their interests which she cannot fathom is overridden by an automatic action which defends her area of interest and which outlines a portrait of the homemaker. When Mr. Manning draws a model diagram of his new turnip-cutting machine on the Holman's dresser with charcoal,

> Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. (CP, 34)

A final example of Mrs. Gaskell's artistry in drawing cameo portraits of traditive characters can be appreciated in Mr. ffoulkes' wife's portrait which has been carved by her future husband, whose own cameo comes into relief by this statement:

> 'When he met with a Mrs. ffarington, at a watering-place, he took to her immediately; and a very pretty, genteel woman she was -- a widow with a very good fortune; and "my cousin," Mr. ffoulkes, married her; and it was all owing to her two little ff's.' (C, 128)

Another group of characters from among which examples of traditive characters may be drawn is composed of married women. Aina Rubenius' study, The Woman Question in Mrs. Gaskell's Lifeand Works (1950), examines the special problems which faced Mrs. Gaskell in her own life, and her treat-

ment of these and other women's problems in her works against the background of the conditions of the times and the factors which influenced and changed her mind. One of Rubenius' concerns is the study of Mrs. Gaskell's treatment in her novels of the role of the wife. Rubenius concludes that Mrs. Gaskell's interpretations range from the portrayal of the submissive wife to the presentation of the wife who functions as a strong, independent character. These observations of Mrs. Gaskell's development in the technique of characterization is here extended to an examination of the wifely role in relation to its effect upon husband and children. This approach reveals the woman in the traditive role she assumes as a force operating in the family group.

In Ruth, Mrs. Bradshaw is a traditive character who represents the unquestioning, obedient wife. In attempting to fulfill the submissive role, she has lost her individuality and sense of moral responsibility. She lives in constant fear of her husband, and submission to Mr. Bradshaw's will makes her his tool. She is not allowed to help in determining the code by which her children are to be raised; in fact, she is often forced to demand obedience from them to rules she cannot justify or respect. Her subservience teaches the children duplicity and stimulates the hypocritical role-playing they assume for each parent, neither of whom can win their total respect. In the final stage of the novel, Mrs. Bradshaw breaks out of her role in defense of her son whom her husband intends to have prosecuted for theft: "I have

been a good wife till now. I know I have. I have done all he bid me, ever since we were married....If I'm to choose between my husband and my son, I choose my son; for he will have no friends, unless I am with him" (R, 404). Mrs. Bradshaw finally rejects the code that sees the sin rather than the sinner.

In Sylvia's Lovers, Bell Robson also accepts the role of the obedient, silent wife who defers to her husband's judgment in all matters. It is ironic that her higher and broader intelligence submits to that of her immature and unpredictable husband's. But her obedience helps in creating her own and Daniel's happiness; they both respect and care for each other. However, Bell does not check Daniel's dangerous, growing habit of drinking. This failure to assert her better judgment and discipline shows her deterioration as an individual within an assumed role; she is partially responsible for his foolish actions which lead to his death. And Bell also partially fails in her duties to her daughter Sylvia. Through Bell's example Sylvia learns the traditional duties of a wife and she fulfills them when she is married. But Bell fails to give moral guidance to her daughter, and she does not check the wildness she sees in Sylvia's nature. Sylvia develops into a spoiled, willful, young woman, partially because of her mother's failure to inculcate a respect for the virtue of personal discipline. Bell's habit of submission destroys her initiative to take on the responsibility of determining the principles by which

her family is to be guided.

In Wives and Daughters, Mrs. Hamley's submission to the Squire has destroyed her freedom of choice and action. The traditive role she assumes restricts her effectiveness as a wife and mother. She may, as the Squire knows, be able to make everything appear right to him and make him feel justified, but the effects of her efforts are superficial and temporary. She simply justifies the Squire's behavior for him and rationalizes the ill effects of his errors in judgment. As a mother she is a failure because her submissive nature makes her incapable of asserting her opinions about her son Osborne's behavior and his relationship with his father. As a wife and mother, Mrs. Hamley's encouragement and gentle understanding tenderly minister to those in her care, but it is not in her power to guide her husband and sons towards their independence because the traditive role she plays as a submissive wife undermines her effectiveness as an individual.

Mrs. Hale also fails in her role as wife and mother in North and South. As a traditive character, she endorses upper middle-class values. She constantly expresses her dissatisfaction with her husband's position, and undermines his self-image and confidence to the point that he has not the courage to tell her about his serious personal difficulties. Mrs. Hale drains both husband and daughter of their emotional sympathy because her sufferings are mainly due to her inability to adjust to or to understand

the changing world. In the novel Mary Barton, personal weakness also determines Mrs. Wilson's role. She has lost husband and children, and what remains of Jem's mother is a woman distraught with sorrow, complaining against her lot in life and fearing the burden of additional suffering. Having exhausted her toleration of suffering, she no longer has the will to independence and she compulsively and selfishly clings to her last son. Mrs. Wilson's traditive role as wife and mother is identified with bearing sorrow.

Two of the stronger women in Mrs. Gaskell's novels are Mrs. Bellingham and Mrs. Thornton. Their being widows may account for their more independent behavior. Their interpretations of their roles make them strong forces in their children's lives. Mrs. Bellingham enters and controls her son's life at random. She teaches him the advantages of his place in order to show him how to shield himself from criticism and responsiblity for his actions. As the teacher of false values she deserves censure; as the deceiver of her own son she merits contempt. Mrs. Thornton's relationship with her beloved son is a communication of love and respect. She reinforces his code of justice, and even though she demands much of him and does not want to lose him, her arguments are candid and her behavior honest. It is Mrs. Thornton's misfortune to have a daughter whom she cannot respect. Her care for Fanny is shown during the calls they make together, in her attentiveness to her comfort, and in her pretended enthusiasm about the little things connected with

Fanny's wedding. Mrs. Thornton guides and directs her and gives her external signs of her mother's love, but Fanny does not hold a place in her affection; "she felt instinctively that nothing could strengthen Fanny to endure hardships patiently, or face difficulties bravely;..." (NS, 109). It is a valiant effort that Mrs. Thornton makes to be a counsellor and a friend to both her children.

In Wives and Daughters, Mrs. Gibson represents an individual whose social and moral codes are based on values determined solely by her own interests. She has the desire for security and an admiration of position as well as the ability to adjust her personal behavior in order to achieve her goals. Her code is a selfish one. Mrs. Gibson's function as a traditive character in the novel is to serve as a sharp contrast to those characters whose principles of behavior are based on a liberal understanding of the social code and a strict adherence to a moral code.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick marries Dr. Gibson because "it was such a wonderful relief to feel that she need not struggle any more for a livelihood" (WD, 120); "and her liking for Mr. Gibson grew in proportion to her sense of the evils from which he was going to serve as a means of escape" (WD, 160). Dr. Gibson marries her hoping that she will be his companion and a mother to his Molly. Mrs. Kirkpatrick achieves her marriage goals, and she believes that she fulfills her wifely role in the performance of household duties and in acting as a good mother to Molly by treating her the same as her own

daughter; external role fulfillment is her only concern. But

> Mr. Gibson had been compelled to face and acknowledge the fact, that the wife he had chosen had a very different standard of conduct from that which he had upheld all his life, and had hoped to have seen inculcated in his daughter. (WD, 448)

> Some people might say that Mr. Gibson 'accepted the inevitable'; he told himself in more homely phrase 'that it was no use crying over spilt milk'; and he, from principle, avoided all actual dissensions with his wife, preferring to cut short a discussion by a sarcasm, or by leaving the room. (WD, 476)

Since "Mrs. Gibson was not one to notice slight shades or differences in manner" (WD, 540), her unawareness of the difference between how she sees herself in the roles of wife and mother and the way others see her creates the ironic presentation of her characterization as an individual, a wife, and a mother.

Lady Cumnor suggests that "'Clare was a good creature, but not clever,' the truth being that she was not always quick at resources, though tolerably unscrupulous in the use of them" (WD, 116). She has developed a pattern of behavior which helps her to protect herself and to insure her own ends; she can deviously smile "as sweetly as if the plan proposed was the most charming project in the world, while all the time her poor brains were beating about in every bush for the reasons or excuses of which she should make use at some future time" (WD, 148). Impervious to criticism from others, she is also protected from self-criticism:

'I remember a little poem of Mr. Kirkpatrick's, in which he compared my heart to a harp-string, vibrating to the slightest breeze.'

'I thought harpstrings required a pretty strong finger to make them sound,' said Molly.

'My dear child, you've no more poetry in you than your father' (WD, 520);

She had no great facility for understanding sarcasm; it is true it disturbed her, but as she was not quick at deciphering any depth of meaning, and felt it unpleasant to think about it, she forgot it as soon as possible. (WD, 477)

Mrs. Gibson has learned how to protect herself from being discovered as the superficial, flimsy creature she is.

...she always made exactly the remarks which are expected from an agreeable listener; and she had sense enough to confine herself to those short expressions of wonder, admiration, and astonishment, which may mean anything, when more recondite things were talked about. (WD, 108)

Unpleasant demands on her "slipped off the smooth surface of Mrs. Kirkpatrick's mirror-like mind without leaving any impression" (WD, 152). She has developed a characteristic method of attacking an unpleasant situation, exemplified in her dealing with Lady Cumnor: "I always like other people to tell her things, and then I can see how she takes them" (WD, 120). Her trick is to state an accepted idea and then to criticize it or to manipulate the information, or to reveal, unwittingly, her hidden aim or opinion. For example, Mrs. Gibson is adamant in her plan to accept the resignation of the Gibson servant, and she explains to Molly:

'But, sweet one, you seem to forget that I cannot go against my principles, however much I may be sorry for Betty. She should not have given way to ill-temper, as I said before; although I never liked her, and considered her a most inefficient servant, thoroughly spoilt by having had no mistress for so long, I could have borne with her -- at least, I think I should -- as long as I could. Now I have all but engaged Maria, who was under-housemaid at the Towers....(WD, 201-202)

Her devious, manipulating ways are clear in her discussion of the situation between Roger and Cynthia:

> 'Do you mean that Roger has proposed to Cynthia?' asked Molly.
> 'Not exactly that. But I don't know; of course I know nothing. Only I did hear him say that he had meant to leave England without speaking of his love, but that the temptation of seeing her alone had been too great for him. It was symptomatic, was it not, my dear? And all I wanted was to let him come to a crisis without interruption. So I've been watching for you to prevent your going in and disturbing them.' (WD, 432)

Serious interchange is impossible with her, "although Mrs. Gibson, it is true, was ready to go over the ground as many times as any one liked; but her words were always like ready-made clothes, and never fitted individual thoughts" (WD, 355). Dr. Gibson discovers this vacuity in his discussion with her of the moral nature of her acting upon medical information about Osborne she overheard -- overheard with a decided effort on her part. Her moral obtuseness is abetted by a strong ability to rationalize her behavior or to miss completely the point of the moral situation.

Her lack of principle and her inability to perceive this fact is evident in her evaluation of her daughter's behavior:

> 'But Cynthia will flirt, and I can't help it. She is not noisy, or giggling; she is always a lady -- that everybody must own. But she has a way of attracting men, she must have inherited from me, I think.' And here she smiled faintly, and would not have rejected a confirmatory compliment, but none came. (WD, 628)

Social acceptance is her only motivation for behavior and about this she is a snob. Her decisions and judgments are made for the sake of expediency:

'The future is hidden from us by infinite wisdom, Molly, or else I should like to know it; one would calculate one's behaviour at the present time so much better if one only knew what events were to come.' (WD, 609)

Her interpretation of the code of self-abnegation is interesting:

'I am always *so unwilling* to put any obstacles in the way of anyone's pleasure -- weakly unwilling, I believe -- but it certainly would be very convenient to have you out of the house for a few days; so, for once, I will waive my own wish for your companionship, and plead your cause with papa.' (WD, 725)

Ironically, Lady Harriet admits to Mrs. Gibson that "I used to take you as my arbiter of morals when I was a little girl." She then asks Mrs. Gibson if she thinks it is wrong to tell lies: "Oh, my dear! how can you ask such questions? -- of course it is very wrong -- very wicked indeed, I think I may say. But I know you were only joking when you said you had told lies."

'But, my dear Lady Harriet,' said Mrs. Gibson...'I am sure you thought that you meant what you said, when you said it.'

'No, I didn't,' put in Lady Harriet.

'And besides, if you didn't, it was the fault of the tiresome people who drove you into such straits -- yes, it was certainly their fault, not yours -- and then you know the conventions of society -- ah, what trammels they are!'

. . . . . .

'I should have been miserable if I ever had [told lies]. I should have died of self reproach. "The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," has always seemed to me such a fine passage. But then I have so much that is unbending in my nature, and in our sphere of life there are so few temptations, if we are humble we are also simple, and unshackled by etiquette.' (WD, 416-417)

The irony inherent in this response is more caustic in the situation directly following in which Mrs. Gibson invites Lady Harriet to accept a very simple luncheon:

So she rang twice; with great distinctness, and with a long pause between the rings. Maria brought in coals.

But the signal was as well understood by Cynthia as the 'Hall of Apollo' was by the servants of Lucullus. The brace of partridges that were to have been for the late dinner were instantly put down to the fire; and the prettiest china brought out, and the table decked with flowers and fruit, arranged with all Cynthia's usual dexterity and taste. (WD, 417-418)

The evil to be feared from this woman is made clear by Lady Harriet: "I used to think I managed her, till one day an uncomfortable suspicion arose that all the time she had been managing me." But her conclusion is consoling: "Still it's easy work to let oneself be managed; at any rate till one wakens up to the consciousness of the process, and then it may become amusing, if one takes it in that light" (WD, 182). Cynthia has managed to arrange such a relationship with her mother:

'You are very kind, Miss Browning, but, you see, I hardly like to let them go -- they are not out, you know, till after the Easter ball.'

'Till when we are invisible,' said Cynthia....

. . . . . .

'After Easter, Molly and I shall know how to behave at a card-party, but not before,' said Cynthia demurely. (WD, 272-273)

Mrs. Gibson knows that Cynthia is a "little, leetle wilful" and that "she received much of what her mother said with a kind of complete indifference, that made Mrs. Gibson hold her rather in awe..." (WD, 250). Mrs. Gibson's treatment of Cynthia has earned her this indifference. Cynthia explains her unhappy childhood with her mother:

'It was not the poverty; it was that she never cared to have me with her. As soon as the holidays came round she was off to some great house or another; and I daresay I was at a very awkward age to have lounging about in the drawing-room

when callers came....At any rate, I was very much in mamma's way, and I felt it.' (WD, 545)

Mrs. Gibson continues to be indifferent to or jealous of her daughter. She also fails to create a friendly, helpful relationship with Molly; instead, she is overbearing and usually "vented some of her discontent upon the poor girl, from whom she feared neither complaint nor repartee" (WD, 457).

Any attempts to change Mrs. Gibson's character are flights of fancy. "It was all hopeless, and the only attempt at a remedy was to think about it as little as possible" (WD, 478). And it must be accepted and tolerated that Mrs. Gibson is capable of creating in others an "increased astringency of disposition...which may be best typified by the state of bodily irritation that is produced by the constant recurrence of any particular noise; those who are brought within hearing of it, are apt to be always on the watch for the repetition, if they are once made to notice it, and are in an irritable state of nerves" (WD, 477).

It is clear that Mrs. Gaskell most effectively ensures the proper functioning of minor characters in relation to the structure of the novel and the development of its theme through the conception and use of the traditive character. Mrs. Gaskell's development and manipulation of the traditive character in her novels testify to her artistry in characterization.

In their roles as participants in the action, the

traditive characters serve to lend their particular presence to the effect and tone of a scene and the total action of the work. The traditive characters, such as Dixon and Fanny, and Hester and Kester, function as individuals through whom the other characters, Margaret and Sylvia, are influenced and thereby developed, and also as representatives of a code against which the individual values of other characters may be compared and contrasted.

In using the traditive character as a representative of a particular code, Mrs. Gaskell effectively emphasizes that aspect of a character which is best suited to the needs of the development of her theme. The traditive character expresses his particular point of view on life. This view is respected in itself and it is also examined in relation to the points of view expressed by other participants in the total action of the novel. In this way -- as with Paul Manning, Martha, and Mrs. Gibson -- Mrs. Gaskell uses the minor traditive character in a major way: each traditive character contributes to and is necessary for the expression of the theme in the novel.

Mrs. Gaskell shows a consistent, and it may be supposed, conscious choice of an effective means through which an evaluation and comparison of codes and values may be expressed in an attempt to picture the complexities of a changing world in the use of the traditive character in her novels. The traditive characters illustrate, in rela-

tion to the characters with whom they are compared and the problems with which they are involved -- Mrs. Hale and Margaret and Betty and Paul Manning, for example -- the vitality and complexity of the age in which they function and which Mrs. Gaskell sought to represent.

Mrs. Gaskell's talent for understanding behavior and behavior patterns of a wide variety of characters -- from servants to middle class individuals to the aristocracy -- is clearly shown in her characterizations of the traditive character. The care which she takes in constructing a motivational analysis of most of them suggests her determined pattern of characterization even in relation to the minor traditive character. The uniqueness of each traditive character examined testifies to the wide range of variety in Mrs. Gaskell's choice of characters and also reveals her ability to appreciate and delineate the singularity of each person as measured against those within and outside of his own class and station.

In the presentation of most traditive characters, Mrs. Gaskell is successful in allowing them to speak and act for themselves in order to reveal gradually the code by which their behavior is determined. In this talent for extending respect to the codes endorsed by individual characters, she achieves a distance from the subjects which is based on a respect for the individual's human freedom. This freedom is not a freedom from doing something, but rather a freedom to do something. And that something is the free-

dom to accept responsibility in the performance of his duty, the freedom of an individual to decide for or against his surroundings.

This respect for the uniqueness of the individual and this expression of the belief in the responsibility of the individual constitute Elizabeth Gaskell's particular vision of life as expressed in her novels, a vision fundamentally based on a reverence for life.

CHAPTER THREE

INNOVATED CHARACTERS

In this section, I discuss Mrs. Gaskell's central concern in characterization, the analysis of motivation, and present a statement and amplification of her vision of life. Mrs. Gaskell's thematic interest lies in developing the role of the individual in formulating his concept of self and in determining his relation to society. Her interest moves beyond the concrete into the spiritual in an attempt to determine the meaning of life. How this existential intention of the novelist -- existential in the limited sense of pertaining to existence -- is achieved is considered in this section.

For purposes of organization, two major groups of characters are established in which the emphasis of each group is on a particular aspect of Mrs. Gaskell's innovations in fictional characters. The first group includes characters whose appearances in fiction have already been established as customary and who have been treated in a variety of ways by English novelists. I mean to show how Mrs. Gaskell treats some of these figures -- the clergy and the fallen woman -- in an original fashion.

The focus in the second group is on fictional characters who are derived from Mrs. Gaskell's contemporary setting -- industrialists, workers, and mid-Victorian women.

Although these figures had been used by Mrs. Gaskell's contemporaries as social character types, I believe that her use of them is innovative because she introduces them as representations of individual human beings and attempts to examine them from the inside. It can be said that Mrs. Gaskell introduces these social character types as individual personalities who are unique, and sometimes complex, and who exist by themselves and in themselves in the fictional world of the novel.

In the following section, I discuss Mrs. Gaskell's treatment of the ministers, Reverend Holman, Mr. Hale, and Mr. Benson, and the fallen women, Esther and Ruth.

Innovations in the Treatment of Some Established Literary Character Types in the Novel

The questioning of the validity of one's moral philosophy was characteristic of the Victorian Age. The breakdown of rigid principles brought about the struggle with conflicting moral judgments. Living in a time in which "The Old has passed away, but, alas, the New appears not in its stead; the Time is still in pangs of travail with the New"[1] induced a search for the little security to be found in the traditional framework of thought. Some men were attracted by dogmatism, which satisfied their will to believe within their painful doubt. Sectarian fervor and rigidity were endorsed by some men who sought relief from their agonies of doubt in the comfort of external disciplined

behavior. The abeyance of a moral choice could be justified by admitting to either negative skepticism -- in which judgment is suspended between alternate conclusions, one of which is considered to be true -- or to a state of half doubt in which a belief, only half believed, is affirmed. A decision could be postponed by concealing or suppressing true convictions, by pretending to be better than one was, or by refusing to look at life candidly.[2] These positions were accepted as reflections of a serious sideration of moral difficulties or suspected as hypocritical poses. Some men struggled to reach a decision regarding their particular problems of religious doubt -- the poignant difficulty of which is documented in the histories of Gosse, Darwin, Newman, Butler, Mill -- and also tried to see as many sides of the problem in relation to themselves and other men by keeping an open and flexible mind.

Mrs. Gaskell's open and flexible mind enabled her to present impartially in her fictional work characters of various religious denominations: Dissenters, Quakers, Methodists, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, and Anglicans. Ministers representing some of these sects are included in her novels, and their characterizations reveal Mrs. Gaskell's ability to make innovations in the treatment of the character type of the clergymen. Their roles reflect their individual characters as human beings operating in conformity with their particular moral philosophy. Mrs. Gaskell portrays the clergyman as a functioning person susceptible to

evil and capable of good.

Mrs. Gaskell considers the clergymen interacting with family, friends, and community. In this way, their individual interpretations of the role of minister are made clear. Mrs. Gaskell also examines them as they experience periods of doubt. In capturing the moment in which the comprehension of the crux of their doubt impinges itself upon the consciousness, Mrs. Gaskell succeeds in revealing the essence of a philosophy from which moral principles can be developed.

She herself was the wife of a Unitarian minister and a member of the Unitarian sect whose true importance lies in an undogmatic approach to religious questions, in a devotion to reason in matters of religion and to civil and religious liberty, and in a tolerance of all sincere forms of religious faith. Man's spiritual autonomy is stressed, while the traditional doctrines of inherited guilt and eternal punishment are not accepted. Mrs. Gaskell defines some of her Unitarian beliefs in a letter to her daughter Marianne:

> ...I know it is wrong not to clear our minds as much as possible as to the nature of that God, and tender Saviour, whom we can not love properly unless we try and define them clearly to ourselves. Do you understand me my darling! I have often wished to talk to you about this. Then the one thing I <u>am</u> clear and sure about is this that Jesus Christ was not equal to His father; that, however divine a being he was <u>not</u> God; and that worship as God addressed to Him is therefore wrong in me....[3]

In her novels, Mrs. Gaskell does not discuss the tenets of any particular religious belief. She is not con-

cerned with dogma but is concerned with analyzing the problem of exercising private judgment in matters of morals, in deciding what actions are right or wrong.

The clergymen Holman, Hale, and Benson are forced to make decisions regarding their judgment of themselves or others. In their efforts to evaluate the situation, they all come to the same conclusion: there is a paradox inherent in an individual's formation of an ethical code; being right, one is wrong. Each man, in the working out of a set of moral principles by which he will direct himself, must remember that his code, although right for him, does not in any way necessarily have to be the standard which others follow. For the uniqueness of each individual obliges him to search out his own code and to determine his behavior in relation to it. In this recognition of the right and duty of each man to govern himself in accordance with his perception and understanding of the moral life, a liberal interpretation of the rights of man is achieved: each man is the arbiter of his own conscience. In effect, this is a statement of the recognition of the concept of ethical relativity, a view of moral concepts which makes them relative both to the individual who uses them and to the society in which they operate.[4] Words such as <u>right</u> and <u>good</u> express a specific emotion, that of disinterested and impartial approval of certain actions; <u>bad</u> and <u>wrong</u> express an equally disinterested and impartial indignation. This theory includes the belief that these emotions are not natural or innate or

instinctive; they are implanted in the individual by social pressures. Therefore, society teaches the individual to attach these moral terms to acts which are in the interests, or against the interests, of the society itself. Thus, since the mores can make anything right, and since a man's moral judgments are determined by the teaching of the society in which he lives, it is possible to reject the standards of the society in which an individual has been brought up, and to exercise private judgment in deciding what actions are right or wrong.

In order to illustrate this conclusion, the following studies are made of the perception of this concept as experienced by the three ministers in Mrs. Gaskell's novels. Their roles in the novels are serious ones, because it is through their working out of their moral problems that the expression of the novelist's intention in the novel is achieved. Mrs. Gaskell is kindly and sympathetic in her portrayals of these clergymen as sincere men who try to fulfill their religious, domestic, and social roles to the best of their abilities and in good conscience. In the presentation of these individuals who experience doubts characteristic of the Victorian Age and who find a resolution of these doubts in a relativistic philosophy also characteristic of the age, she contributes her innovations on this character type in the novel.

In the novelette Cousin Phillis, the Reverend Ebenezer Holman is a man who works with his body and soul to

complete his role in life. Laborer, husband and father, scholar, and minister are the many areas of life he participates in which are joined and channelled in one direction, towards the completion of a human being in his dual role of physical and spiritual creature. Each of his actions is ordered to a greater end, the praise of God. Although following the path of perfection, Reverend Holman is not perfect. His seriousness is disturbing to Paul Manning who suffers under its heaviness, his intellectual interests shared with his daughter tend to isolate him from his wife, his loss of temper embarrasses him, a ministerial affectation noticed by Manning implies his vanity: "Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, 'Now I will give out the psalm...'" (CP, 15). But these are quibbling points. More seriously, Reverend Holman refuses to recognize that his child has grown into womanhood because he hopes to guard her with his love at home. And he cannot resign himself to the possibility of his daughter's impending death as an illustration of the will of God in which he should rejoice, or as an act of God sent as a penalty for sin. His views are not orthodox but his motivation is understandable: "Heart of flesh was too strong. Heart of stone he had not" (CP, 104). Learning of the reason for his daughter's illness, Holdsworth's betrayal of her love, Reverend Holman struggles to understand the reasons behind Holdsworth's behavior and the extent of his culpability.

Even before Holdsworth's introduction to the family at Hope Farm, Paul Manning had already suggested the moral difference between Holdsworth and the Holmans which could cause unintentional friction:

> 'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man!'
> 'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'
> 'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness," each having its own idea of right, than between a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness -- which last often arises from an indifference to right?' (CP, 42-43)

Paul is still able to see a clear distinction between 'right' and 'wrong' determined by a code established by society, but he also indicates a more sophisticated appreciation of the terms. In relation to Holdsworth's later actions, which are initially condemned by Paul and Holman as 'wrong,' this conversation foreshadows the complex appreciation of right and wrong which Paul and Holman are to perceive later and which Holdsworth already comprehends.

Reverend Holman admits some reservations in his initial approval of Holdsworth:

> '...I like him, and I think he is an upright man; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says -- But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him, till I forget my duties and am carried off my feet.' (CP, 53)

In his eventual comprehension of Holdsworth, Reverend Holman becomes conscious of the ambiguities in moral complexities. The existence of extenuating factors makes it impossible to comprehend another person in terms of one's own values; each

man must be seen in himself and accepted for himself, and understood in the light of the circumstances of his life. The expression of Holman's moment of sophisticated comprehension of moral and ethical relativity is startling in its dignity and humility, and, somehow, it is melancholy in its implication of the inexplicability of men and morals and the infinite perpetuation of doubt among men:

> 'I said once, his company was like dram-drinking; that was before I knew him; and perhaps I spoke in a spirit of judgment. To some men's minds everything presents itself strongly, and they speak accordingly; and so did he. And I thought, in my vanity of censorship, that his were not true and sober words; they would not have been if I had used them, but they were so to a man of his class of perceptions. I thought of the measure which I had been meting out to him, when Brother Robinson was here last Thursday, and told me that a poor little quotation I was making from the "Georgics" savoured of vain babbling and profane heathenism. He went so far as to say that, by learning other languages than our own, we were flying in the face of the Lord's purpose when He had said, at the building of the Tower of Babel, that He would confound their languages so that they should not understand each other's speech. As Brother Robinson was to me, so was I to the quick wits, bright sense, and ready words of Holdsworth.' (CP, 79)

The conclusion of this perception is the acceptance of the terms 'right' and 'wrong,' 'good' and 'bad,' as relative terms which describe an individual's desires, feelings, or preferences towards the actions considered by him. Reverend Holman perceives that the values and standards of each man are relative to each man, and in understanding further that everyone is entitled to his conclusions, he recognizes the spiritual autonomy of the individual. Thus, Holman confirms a view of life based on the concept of ethical relativity, which also expresses the vision of the novelist.

"The aspect of piteous distress on his face, almost as imploring a merciful and kind judgment from his child, gave her a sudden sickening" (NS, 35). In such a way did Margaret Hale react to her father's statement that after suppression, procrastination, and finally consideration of his difficulties, his "anxiety, for years past, to know whether I had any right to hold my living -- my efforts to quench my smouldering doubts by the authority of the Church" (NS, 36) has forced him to be "no longer...a minister in the Church of England" (NS, 35). The only explanation Mr. Hale can offer for his decision is to quote the words of another clergyman who suffered the same problem:

> 'When thou canst no longer continue in thy work without dishonour to God,...in a word, when the conditions upon which thou must continue (if thou wilt continue) in thy employments are sinful,...thou must believe that God will turn thy very silence, suspension, deprivation, and laying aside, to His glory....It is not pretence of doing God the greatest service, or performing the weightiest duty, that will excuse the least sin, though that sin capacitated or gave us the opportunity for doing that duty.' (NS, 37)

Mr. Hale admits that "I suffer for conscience' sake, my child ... I must do what my conscience bids. I have borne long with self-reproach that would have roused any mind less torpid and cowardly than mine" (NS, 38). But now -- even against the bishop who "has used arguments and expostulations, all in vain -- in vain [because] They are but what I have tried upon myself, without avail" (NS, 38-39) -- Mr. Hale is no longer able to delay making a moral choice, and he says that he is willing to accept the suffering involved in resigning his vicarage. He can no longer shelter

in the protected state of half-doubt and he must leave the society of his Church. Mr. Hale confirms a belief in the right and duty of the individual to be the arbiter of his own conscience.

But Mr. Hale's personal dilemma is never solved; in fact, it cannot be since Mrs. Gaskell never clearly defines it. Even though it is his crise de conscience which activates the plot, Mrs. Gaskell has not made a thorough study of his problems. The emphasis which is placed upon this moral crisis in the beginning of the novel is not justified by the development of the novel as a whole, and I consider this misdirection of material and emphasis a weakness in the structure of North and South. Also, in the opening scenes of the novel, other character traits and behavioral patterns of Mr. Hale are indicated which are never developed in the later action: he views his procrastination of his moral decision as a weakness in himself to accept the consequences of his actions; he shows a lack of confidence in his wife's ability to understand his problem or even her right to share it; and he is unable to make a decision regarding his exiled son. Mrs. Gaskell may have had intentions of creating a more complex and consistent characterization of Mr. Hale, and Dickens' demands to cut the story length might explain the abrupt, unsatisfactory portrait.[5] Mr. Hale is a character whose activities allow manipulation of the plot: he serves as the reason for the move to Milton-Northern, an impartial observer of the

Milton scene, a mediator of opinions between Margaret and Thornton, and an obliging victim to a timely death which influences Mr. Bell to leave his fortune to Margaret. These functions are hardly the role I would anticipate for a character who is so seriously introduced. The definition of this man and his doubts and resolutions are never realized.

A more complex characterization of a man in doubt about the direction of his moral judgment is completed by Mrs. Gaskell in the figure of Thurston Benson, a dissenting minister in Ruth. The analysis of his perception of the determinants of right and wrong closely parallels the path followed by Jemima in her meeting with evil.[6] The developments of both characterizations further enrich Mrs. Gaskell's presentation of the main theme in relationship to the main character, Ruth. Each endorses the belief in the essential worth and dignity of the individual; each accepts the obligation of an individual to determine an ethical code. Each takes on the responsibility to respect the fact that society teaches the attachment of the moral terms right and wrong to acts which are in the interests of the society itself, but each retains his right as an individual evaluating individual cases to determine the rightness or wrongness in acting or judging.

Sometimes Mr. Benson is susceptible to influence, weak in resolution, incapable of direct action. But it is tenderness and love for all creatures and an appreciation of

life's complexities which undermine his resolution.

Mr. Benson is seriously influenced by his sister, Faith, in conceding to agree to a lie which will convey the false impression that Ruth is a widow. He believes that she must be given the opportunity to learn that the child she has is both a responsibility and a blessing. He also believes that the consequences of a sin should not be confused with the sin itself. Mr. Benson is influenced to cover for Ruth's child's illegitimacy in remembering the fatal consequences on another child who discovered his dishonorable birth. Mr. Benson's attempts to tell the whole truth are totally frustrated by the fear of the consequences for Ruth and the child, but his conscience suffers: "My indecision about right and wrong -- my perplexity as to how far we are to calculate consequences -- grows upon me, I fear" (R, 199).

Participating in a discussion related to a political topic with Mr. Hickson and Mr. Farquhar, Benson is startled to hear himself state that evil may not be done so that good may come of it. Mr. Farquhar comments that it would be rather difficult to act upon this precept with the world in its present state. Mr. Benson's unequivocal statement contrasts sharply with Farquhar's apparently indiscreet observation. Farquhar protests:

'Don't be indignant with me till I have explained myself a little more. I don't understand myself yet; and it is a very intricate question, or so it appears to me, which I was going to put, really, earnestly, and humbly, for Mr. Benson's opinion. Now, Mr. Benson, may I ask if you always find it practicable to act strictly in accordance with that principle? For if you do not, I am sure no man living can. Are

there not occasions when it is absolutely necessary to wade through evil to good? I am not speaking in the careless, presumptuous way of that man yonder....I am really anxious to hear what Mr. Benson will say on the subject, for I know no one to whose candid opinion I should attach more weight.' (R, 254)

Benson does not reply, but he is forced to consider the validity of the observation. It is he who defends his lie for Ruth as a deceit intended for a good end, her working out of self-redemption. In Benson's argument with Mr. Bradshaw, Benson admits that in a strict interpretation of the ethical code his means have been wrong in seeking a desirable end. But he also shows that since society has already decided to condemn the fallen woman and because it is now necessary to change this attitude, which reflects an ineffectual ethical code, it is time for him to "take my stand with Christ against the world" in declaring "that to every woman who, like Ruth, has sinned should be given a chance of self-redemption" and they should be recognized as "those who have broken hearts to be bound up, not cast aside as lost beyond recall" (R, 347-348).

Although Benson cannot completely bring himself to a justification of the lie he told, he does arrive at a more complex view of moral principles in relation to their applicability in particular cases:

'I have got what you call morbid, just in consequence of the sophistry by which I persuaded myself that wrong could be right. I torment myself. I have lost my clear instincts of conscience. Formerly, if I believed that such or such an action was according to the will of God, I went and did it, or at least I tried to do it without thinking of consequences. Now, I reason and weigh what will happen if I do so and so -- I grope where formerly I saw. Oh, Faith! it is such a re-

lief to me to have the truth known, that I am afraid I have not been sufficiently sympathising with Ruth.' (R, 358)

What was previously a simple matter of judging in agreement with a set moral code now becomes a complex matter of interpreting the code and tempering it by sympathy and understanding.

Mr. Benson's desire to revert to a blind unquestioning faith in the strict moral code to which he previously adhered reflects the dilemma which faced many Victorians who found themselves unable to follow the ethical code which had been ingrained in them. Outwardly the code could be adhered to, but an individual's inner conflict was his own heavy burden. Because of the skeptical attitudes regarding the validity of the code, conventional behavior based on the traditional creed was no longer believed to be enough to satisfy all the right demands of humanity. Mr. Benson reflects the fragmented man of Victorian society who was pushing forward to a more liberal view of morality and who was at the same time casting a last lingering look at the old security provided by hard and fast doctrine.

Mrs. Gaskell reflects the fragmented woman in Victorian society. Her novels Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Cousin Phillis resolve their problems in endorsing a code which is based on understanding and sympathy among men as the only feasible solution for a successful amelioration of the problems which face men in society. Margaret Ganz argues that Mrs. Gaskell's conservative position reflected in the conclusions of her novels

illustrates the fact that:

> The oscillation between artistic sophistication and conventional reticence is at the heart of Mrs. Gaskell's undeniable limitations as a writer; no true judgment of her nature and of her achievement can be reached without concentrating on the conflict between her artistic impulses and her commitments to conventional standards of moral and social behavior;[7]...she was also generally victimized by the [conventions] of Victorian society whose power she had not sufficient independence to resist.[8]

This is a point of view which presents a harsh and not always legitimate evaluation. It should be recognized that Mrs. Gaskell's sometimes conservative conclusions do not necessarily indicate a conservative attitude to the total problem at hand. In all her novels, Mrs. Gaskell reveals a complex appreciation and interpretation of the core of the problematic situation.

I suggest that Mrs. Gaskell has presented her view of morality in the presentation of the conflicts in her novels. Mrs. Gaskell indicates that the judgments arrived at in attempting to decide whether an action is 'right' or 'wrong' through the interpretation and application of a moral code are not beliefs about objective facts, but that they are expressions of the terms 'right' and 'wrong' as relative terms. This attitude reflects the belief that moral principles are not self-evident, necessary propositions as final and certain truths, and that rigid principles should be broken down if circumstances warrant such an action. Latitude must be given in the interpretation of an ethical code.

In this conclusion Mrs. Gaskell reflects the Victorian climate of doubt. She is both radical and conserva-

tive. Her rebellion lies in her questioning the fundamentals on which the ethics of her society were based. Fundamental questions such as hers, as explored by the three clergymen discussed above, are the kinds of questions which precede a revolution. Certainly original solutions for the problems exposed in her novels against which the characters struggle would be stimulating and satisfying. But Mrs. Gaskell did not simply intend to solve problems; as a novelist she intended to present the development of people in relation to a problem, and all the problems she saw were intimately connected with an intricate interpretation of moral principles. Perhaps "...the narrow-mindedness of some contemporary critical judgments impels us to admire the extent to which such a timid writer was actually willing to challenge her public,"[9] but the word timid is not correct in its application to Mrs. Gaskell. Is one timid who is willing to shake the foundations of his own society's moral code in order to precipitate the search for practical solutions to particular problems?

Mrs. Gaskell is like one of her doubting ministers: she too became less certain of being certain. Comments in her letters show her intellectual restlessness:

> What you say of the restlessness of the age, of the 'search after the ideal in some, and morbid dread of the ideal in others,' strikes me as very true; and it is difficult to steer clear of these two extremes, between which characters seem thrown backwards & forwards like shuttlecocks.[10]

> It is hard work making one's idea of life dear [sic] and I am more and more convinced that where every possible individual circumstance varies so completely all one can do is

to judge for oneself and take especial care not to judge other[s] or for others...But I strive more and more against deciding whether another person is doing right or wrong. Maggie has asked Meta why we did not send Flossy to Mrs Lalor's; we had several reasons one of the principal of which was that we so particularly desired her to learn that different people, equally good, might act in an entirely different manner, and yet be acting quite conscientiously and each and equally striving to do the will of God.[11]

Mrs. Gaskell's personal struggles to reconcile the differences between her moral conscience and the code of society are evident in her comments about George Eliot, whose living with Lewes presented a problem to Mrs. Gaskell. The dilemma is first mentioned in a letter to George Smith in which Mrs. Gaskell discusses Adam Bede:

It is a noble grand book, whoever wrote it, -- but Miss Evans' life taken at the best construction, does so jar against the beautiful book that one cannot help hoping against hope.[12]

If Eliot is the "Madam Adam" referred to in Mrs. Gaskell's later letter to Smith, the curiosity expressed by Mrs. Gaskell about her appears to indicate Mrs. Gaskell's attempts to understand more fully the motivation behind Eliot's association:

Well! but that's not what I am writing about; no, nor even about your kind proposal about Mr Story which I will forward to him[.] No! curiosity comes before friendship or anything else. How could you find in yr heart to be so curt about Madam Adam? Do please remember our utter isolation from all the usual sources of goss[ip&] and we don't know a creature [here] and the evenings are very long, -- and send us PLEASE a long account of what she is like &c&c&c&c&c -- eyes nose mouth, dress &c for facts, and then -- if you would -- your impression of her, -- which we won't tell anybody. How came she to like Mr Lewes so much? I know he has his good points but somehow he is so soiled for a woman like her to fancy. Oh! do please comply with this humble request.[13]

Mrs. Gaskell's honesty about her feelings regarding

the association is seen in her letter to George Eliot:

> I should not be quite true in my ending, if I did not say before I concluded that I wish you were Mrs Lewes. However that can't be helped, as far as I can see, and one must not judge others.[14]

This letter indicates Mrs. Gaskell's attempt to see the action from another point of view. She, like the characters in her novels, recognizes the right of the individual to establish his own ethical code, and this respect leads her to greater sympathy and understanding.

The triumph of Mrs. Gaskell's individual moral code over that of society's code is evident in another letter to George Smith:

> I was very much obliged to you for sending us so much about Mrs Lewes? (what do people call her, --) Do you know I can't help liking her, -- because she wrote those books. Yes I do! I have tried to be moral, & dislike her & dislike her books -- but it won't do. There is not a wrong word, or a wrong thought in them, I do believe....[15]

It seems to me that these letters reflect the problems of doubt which Mrs. Gaskell experienced in her personal life and which found expression in the problems of her novels through which she demonstrates her vision of life. In the detailing of her characters' involvements in existential confusions, Mrs. Gaskell brings into relief a major problem of the Victorian Age: the questioning of the reliability of the established moral code.

Just as the clergy had often been studied in fiction, the fallen woman was also frequently a fictional subject. In Mary Barton and Ruth, Mrs. Gaskell demonstrates her dis-

tinctive views on the position and treatment of these outcast women in Victorian society, and her innovations in the presentations of them as individual human beings distinguish her treatment of this literary character type from that of her contemporaries.

In April 1850, the subject of the social vice of prostitution was deliberately brought to public attention in the Westminster Review because it was believed that a courageous and frank discussion of the problem was necessary before a solution to it might be suggested or applied. In its exposé of the realities of the prostitute's life, reference is made in the article to a scene from Mary Barton[16] which "though in a work of fiction, is a faithful picture of the feelings of thousands of these poor wretches."[17] Mrs. Gaskell's introduction into Victorian fiction of the character of the fallen woman Esther, who showed that some inclination to good still remained in her, was a bold and liberal presentation of the prostitute.

The reasons for Esther's downfall are to be found in her own spirited nature and love of finery, her being spoiled by the attentions of her sister Mary, and by the greater monetary and physical independence she achieved through factory work. Esther herself explains that her fall was due to listening to and loving the man who fathered her child: going into the streets was her last recourse in trying to save her child. She tries to stop her sister's child, Mary Barton, from repeating her sorry mistake. That

this positive moral action could be attributed to this disgraced, degenerate, painted woman, called professionally "Butterfly," shows that Mrs. Gaskell was as courageous and frank in her knowledgeable discussion of the prostitute as the Westminster Review demanded. The miseries and abuses the prostitute endured, the horrifying nights relieved only in a drunken stupor, the agonizing periods spent in wretched prisons, streets, and hovels, the humiliations and self-reproaches, are presented in Mrs. Gaskell's study of the doomed outcast.

> To whom shall the outcast prostitute tell her tale? Who will give her help in the day of need? Hers is the leper-sin, and all stand aloof dreading to be counted unclean. (MB, 182)

Mr. Benson listens to the story of the fallen girl, Ruth, and his help preserves her from Esther's fate. Mrs. Gaskell's novel Ruth, published in 1853, was acclaimed for its sympathetic treatment of the fallen woman, her redemption, and her attempts to relocate herself in society.

At this point, a speculation about the literary influence of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, and Mrs. Gaskell's Ruth, is introduced because both works are concerned with the mysterious realities of the human soul.

On March 16, 1850, Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel The Scarlet Letter was published in Boston by Ticknor, Reed, and Fields. The work was published by two London houses in 1851 and again by two houses in 1852. It was reviewed in the prominent English periodicals and was a succès de scandale.

There was an active interest in Hawthorne's work in England and his popularity there was at times greater than in America. In fact,

> ...Hawthorne had a group of especial admirers in England -- a fairly large group, but comparable in kind to the small group of the elect that had existed in America before the days of The Scarlet Letter. It consisted of persons interested in literature and possessed of 'spiritual' tastes; and the fact that Hawthorne was comparatively unappreciated by the larger public made him the more dear to these few. During his residence in England Hawthorne was much lionized....[18]

Mrs. Gaskell surely was one of these literary admirers who had read the story about the adulterous woman, Hester Prynne, and her child, Pearl.

Mrs. Gaskell's familiarity with American authors at this time is indicated by her references to Longfellow's Evangeline in a letter to her daughters Marianne and Margaret dated Sunday [December ? 1847][19]; and she refers to the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe, in several letters, the earliest of which are to Grace Schwabe, [19 June ?1853], and to Marianne Gaskell, [5 July 1853].[20]

Letters written soon after the publication of Ruth show her continued interest in and knowledge of the American literary scene. For example, in a letter to Charles Eliot Norton, September 3, [1858],[21] Mrs. Gaskell mentions the American firm which had published Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, "Messrs Ticknor & Field." And, in a letter to George Smith, [20 September 1859], her familiarity with Hawthorne's work is indicated:

> Do you know what Hawthorne's tale [The Marble Faun] is about? I do; and I think it will perplex the English public pretty considerably.[22]

In a letter to Edward Chapman, of the publishing house, Chapman and Hall, dated Tuesday [14 January 1851], Mrs. Gaskell asks:

> How is the Scarlet letter going on? Pray ease my mind by sending me the account as soon as ever it is rebound, and dispatched to it's destination.[23]

It is possible that the reference to the "Scarlet letter" is to Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel. The worried tone suggests a respect for what is a valued item either in itself or in its relationship to the person(s) to receive it.

Mrs. Gaskell's first references to her novel Ruth are in letters to [?Marianne Gaskell], of [?October 1852][24] and to [?Eliza Fox], Friday, [?October 1852].[25] This novel was published in three volumes by Chapman and Hall in January 1853.

On the basis of this information, the possibility of Mrs. Gaskell's having read Hawthorne's story is strongly suggested. If this can be accepted, then it would be interesting to try to determine if Mrs. Gaskell's writing of the story of the fallen woman, Ruth, was influenced by Hawthorne's tale of the fallen woman, Hester Prynne.

Thematically, both Ruth and The Scarlet Letter are concerned with the metaphysical problem of the nature of good and evil. But Mrs. Gaskell's tale is a literal translation of an experience, while Hawthorne's story takes on allegorical significance. Mrs. Gaskell draws small pictures of life and tries to create the sense of familiarity with scene and situation: love, sympathy, and understanding are anticipated

for the repentant sinner. This contrasts with Hawthorne's attempt to push character and situation outside the range of possibility; melancholy and woe pervade in a love story that is concerned with obsessive hatred and shame.

There are several similarities in detail which suggest that Mrs. Gaskell's Ruth reflects Hawthorne's influence, although there is a difference in intent in the use of images. Hawthorne's images generally have symbolic connotations, while Mrs. Gaskell's images are used to enhance a mood or heighten the tone.

The name Governor Richard Bellingham might have suggested the surname for Ruth's lover, Henry Bellingham -- Mrs. Gaskell always had difficulty in selecting names for her characters. There is a similarity in the physical persons of Roger Chillingworth and Mr. Benson. Hester Prynne remembers her husband as "slightly deformed, with the left shoulder a trifle higher than the right," "a man well-stricken in years...with eyes dim and bleared by the lamplight that had served them to pore over many ponderous books...those same bleared optics had a strange, penetrating power, when it was their owner's purpose to read the human soul."[26] And Ruth, when she looked up from where she was seated:

> ...saw a man, who was apparently long past middle life, and of the stature of a dwarf...then she saw he was deformed...
> . . . . . .
> She was struck afresh with the mild beauty of his face, though there was something in the countenance which told of the body's deformity,...something of a quick spiritual light in the deep-set eyes, a sensibility about the mouth; but altogether, though peculiar, it was a most attractive face. (R, 66-67)

In Ruth, the flower and water imagery establishes a motif of delicate, soothing gentleness enriching the dramatic scene and unifying the tonal quality of the novel. Hawthorne's flower and water motifs are more heavily stressed and are symbolic influences in the development of the thematic structure. In both works there is a crowning with flowers scene. In The Scarlet Letter:

> The flowers appeared to know it [that Pearl was gentler here]; and one and another whispered, as she passed, "Adorn thyself with me, thou beautiful child, adorn thyself with me!" -- and, to please them, Pearl gathered the violets, and anemones, and columbines, and some twigs of the freshest green, which the old trees held down before her eyes. With these she decorated her hair, and her young waist, and became a nymph-child, or an infant dryad, or whatever else was in closest sympathy with the antique wood. In such guise had Pearl adorned herself, when she heard her mother's voice, and came slowly back.
> Slowly; for she saw the clergyman. (ScL, 147);

and in Ruth:

> He went round, and she waited quietly for his return When he came back he took off her bonnet, without speaking, and began to place his flowers in her hair. She was quite still while he arranged her coronet, looking up in his face with loving eyes, with a peaceful composure. She knew that he was pleased from his manner....When he had decked her out, he said --
> 'There, Ruth! now you'll do... (R, 73),

the crowned are reflected as ornamented sacrificial victims.

Frequently Pearl is shown "gathering handfuls of wild-flowers, and flinging them, one by one at her mother's bosom" (ScL, 72), walking in a garden, demanding a red rose which, in the first chapter has been defined as a symbol, "some sweet moral blossom, that may be found along the track, or relieve the darkening close of a tale of human frailty and sorrow (ScL, 39).

Ruth, too, is frequently associated with and developed in reference to flowers. Mrs. Gaskell's familiarity with the significance attached to flowers is indicated in her letters,[27] and it may be assumed that she was acquainted with their symbolic implications. Certainly the symbolic interpretations of particular flowers used in various scenes in Ruth complement the intention of the scenes. At Ruth's meeting with Bellingham, she receives a camellia, significant of a beautiful life brought suddenly to an end from the manner in which the flower drops bodily from its stem.[28] Mr. Benson tells her the reason why a fox-glove is bending and swaying before her: "it has the power of recognising [the fairies], and all spiritual beings who pass by, and that it bows in deference to them..." (R, 68). After the birth of her child, Ruth receives from Mr. Benson the first snowdrops in the garden, symbolic of friendship in adversity and hope in sorrow. Ruth is shown playing with her child while he cooed among the flowers and she touches his cheeks with rose leaves, the Christian symbol of charity, divine love, martyrdom, and motherhood. It is a single rose which Ruth gives her child as a token of farewell.

Water images in the novel reflect Ruth's innocence during her happy period in Wales and suggest the stormy future of her life:

> The waterfall was magnificent...she longed to extend her walk to the other side of the stream, so she sought the stepping-stones, the usual crossing-place, which were overshadowed by trees....The waters ran high and rapidly, as busy as life, between the pieces of grey rock; but Ruth had no fear, and

> went lightly and steadily on. About the middle, however, there was a great gap...Ruth hesitated for a moment before taking it. (R, 66)

In this scene, Ruth first meets Mr. Benson, and in accepting his assistance in crossing the stream, her future dependency on him is projected: "The water is very rapid; will you take my hand? Perhaps I can help you" (R, 67). In The Scarlet Letter, Pearl refuses to cross the brook at her mother's direction because Dimmesdale -- who lives with Chillingworth in the same house "so that every ebb and flow of the minister's life-tide might pass under the eye of his anxious and attached physician" (ScL, 91-92) -- is with her. Pearl prefers to be set apart from them by the brook, a boundary between two worlds. And it is in this brook that Pearl washes away Dimmesdale's unwanted kiss from her forehead, rejecting him. She crosses to the other side of the brook only when her mother pins the scarlet A to her dress and thereby restores the circumstances of their previous relationship.

In her most troubled periods, Ruth's emotional state and the depression of the situation are intensified by complementing signs in the weather. A wild storm reintroduces Mr. Bellingham at Abermouth, blast-driven rain accompanies Ruth's tormented night vigil after seeing Bellingham again, it rains heavily as Ruth leaves chapel and Bellingham tries to intrude upon her, the moaning of waves lends itself to their sorrowful encounter on the moors. In The Scarlet Letter, Pearl shares with the sea its indifference, its

amorality. Sea and child shift and change, sparkle and dim, soothe and agitate. As transient and transparent as the sea foam in her moods is Pearl, an urchin dressed in sea raiments, as she chases a bird, "scampering after it with winged footsteps," which is "as wild as the sea-breeze, or as wild as Pearl herself" (ScL, 128).

When Mr. Bradshaw condemns Ruth as a deceitful sinner she realizes:

> It was of no use; no quiet, innocent life -- no profound silence, even to her own heart, as to the Past; the old offence could never be drowned in the Deep; but thus, when all was calm on the great, broad, sunny sea, it rose to the surface, and faced her with its unclosed eyes and its ghastly countenance. (R, 333)

Before Hester realizes that she cannot escape an inevitable doom, she haughtily contemplates her release from those who stare at the mark of her shame and thinks that the "mysterious ocean will quench and hide for ever the symbol which ye have caused to burn upon her bosom" (ScL, 161). Hester's cottage was on a shore "looking across a basin of the sea at the forest-covered hills, towards the west" (ScL, 61). And Hester, like Ruth, must survive the tumultuous current in life and face the conflicts to be met with in the moral wilderness.

These several similarities in Ruth and The Scarlet Letter suggest that Mrs. Gaskell might have absorbed some of the heavily figurative language of Hawthorne. Certainly Ruth is singular among Mrs. Gaskell's novels in its artistic imagery and delicate tone which develops from it. Hawthorne

identified The Scarlet Letter as a romance "Not because it is an idealization but because its vision turns inward upon the mysterious realities of the human soul."[29] It is Mrs. Gaskell's interest in the mysterious realities of the human soul which is the core of her novel Ruth.

At various points in the novel, Ruth is presented as a snow-white innocent of saintly demeanor; at other times, she is presented as one who truly understands the nature of her actions, judges herself to have committed a 'wrong,' and consequently views herself as a sinner required to make retribution. This confusion in the nature of her character and the interpretation of her behavior are major flaws in the novel which make it impossible to understand the intention of the characterization. Does Ruth go from sinner to saint or from saint to sinner, or is she an innocent whose love and conscience have been betrayed? This confusion in the novelist's attitude towards the central character makes it impossible to judge if Ruth is a static or a dynamic character.

But there is a moment in her drama when Ruth magnificently proves her personal worth. At this high point in the novel, Mrs. Gaskell achieves a subtle study of the reasons for the fall of a woman, her attempts to overcome continued temptations, and the reasons why a victory over them can be achieved. This struggle and triumph are crystallized in the scene in which Ruth and Mr. Bellingham confront each

other after many years in a meeting on the sands.

Ruth's soul's conflict is reflected in the sea imagery:

> The tide had turned; the waves were slowly receding, as if loth to lose the hold they had, so lately, and with such swift bounds, gained on the yellow sands. The eternal moan they have made since the world began filled the ear, broken only by the skirl of the grey sea-birds as they alighted in groups on the edge of the waters, or as they rose up with their measured, balancing motion, and the sunlight caught their white breasts. (R, 292)

Then, Ruth sees her lover. Terrifed, she responds to his questions. She admits her first love for him, but she coldly states that she wants nothing more to do with him. Her soul is tormented in its exposure to temptation just as the shore "which the receding tide was leaving every moment barer and more bare, and the posts they [the fishermen's nets] were fastened to [were] blackly uprising above the waters" (R, 297). But Ruth's past suffering and expiation support her in her trial and she now rejects Bellingham's love and marriage proposal. Her comprehension of his character supports her decision:

> 'I could never love you again. All you have said and done since you came with Mr. Bradshaw to Abermouth first has only made me wonder how I ever could have loved you. We are very far apart. The time that has pressed down my life like brands of hot iron, and scarred me for ever, has been nothing to you. You have talked of it with no sound of moaning in your voice -- no shadow over the brightness of your face; it has left no sense of sin on your conscience, while me it haunts and haunts; and yet I might plead that I was an ignorant child -- only I will not plead anything, for God knows all.... (R, 299-300)

Her final rejection of Bellingham is also based on her love for Leonard: she would never allow Bellingham to have any-

thing to do with the child who has been her redemption and is her joy.

This scene suggests that Ruth's difficult decision has been arrived at with only her own and Leonard's interests in mind. She appears confident in her judgment and detached in her appraisal of her past love for Bellingham. In itself this scene of decision and action would earn recognition and praise as an unprecedented dramatization of the triumph of the fallen woman. But Mrs. Gaskell's insight into such a character continues to be expressed, and the sad, lonely, suffering of a woman is poignantly revealed.

When Bellingham leaves, angry and mortified, Ruth moves away unsteadily and stunned, exhausted by the conflict. Sad it is to see her struggling to rouse herself from her torpor; startling it is to realize that the effort is being made so that she may see him once more in the distance; pathetic it is to hear her love regrets:

> 'Oh! if I had not spoken so angrily to him -- the last things I said were so bitter -- so reproachful! -- and I shall never, never see him again!' (R, 301)

Love has been the cause of Ruth's destruction. But because love for Bellingham in some way still lives in her, its presence shows the sincerity of her first encounters with him, the reasons for seduction, the pain of his betrayal, the torment of her personal life without him, and the strength of the temptation to feel his love once again. But Ruth has denied him for the love of God and for the sake of her child. Mrs. Gaskell shows that Ruth's redemption through these

forces is a triumph over an evil which appears so much as a good.

Mrs. Gaskell's appreciation of the good-in-evil aspect inherent in the situation of the fallen woman is the quality which enables her to render the essential pathos of an unwed mother's story. Although claims cannot be made for the total plausibility of the story, which is hampered by the conventions of the times and inconsistencies in characterization, Mrs. Gaskell's grasp of the essence of such a character and situation is certainly a singular achievement. Her liberal moral convictions and her courage in exposing them to the public -- a segment of which violently protested the novel's theme -- can best be illustrated by comparing her treatment of this theme with that of some of her contemporaries.

In The Heart of Midlothian, published in 1818, Scott had told the story of Effie Deans who was condemned by her father as "the vile harlot that has disgraced the blood of an honest man."[30] Scott does not sympathize with her. To be sure that the moral of her tale is not missed, Scott added a final paragraph to the novel which emphasized that the tale was written to show that guilt can never confer real happiness, that the evil consequences of a crime live on, and that the paths of virtue are those of pleasure and peace.[31]

Dickens' several characterizations of the fallen woman are superficial. Philip Collins believes that Dickens

was not much interested in character change because he did not strongly believe it happened; in fact, he "has no consistent or thought-out view on these issues of free-will and determinism and moral responsibility; he alters the focus, according to the exigencies of his novel and his own prejudices."[32] Although Dickens was as informed as Mrs. Gaskell about the problem of the fallen woman, Dickens shows an "unwillingness to express the whole truth (as he knew it) in his fiction."[33] Actually, Dickens' observations reflect the clichés of his times.

In the Preface to the Third Edition of Oliver Twist (1841), Dickens argues that his subject matter is within "the noble range of English literature" established by Fielding, Defoe, Goldsmith, Smollett, Richardson, and Mackenzie. They, too, dealt with the "scum and refuse of the land." He maintains that his portrayal of London's poor and London's thieves, and the prostitute Nancy, is further justified because it shows the best and worst sides of human nature, which the world does not always admit. But Nancy is disappointing in her characterization: she is a type of the fallen woman; she is and always will be an outcast. Her death is demanded by the narrow convictions of the times which allowed death, exile, and sometimes marriage as the only releases from the state of the fallen. In David Copperfield (1850), the lost woman Martha Endell is again a type character, but since she does assist in a good effort she is assigned the least severe punishment, marriage. But

Little Em'ly, the once beautiful, drooping, sentimental heroine, now pathetic in her explanation of her seduction by Steerforth: "he used all his power to deceive me, and that I believed him, trusted him, and loved him,"[34] is exiled from those she loves, punished with a life of remorse. In Bleak House (1853), Dickens again draws a character type of the fallen woman in Lady Dedlock who is shut off from life by the memory of her sin and who finds her release from suffering only in death.

In Adam Bede (1859), Eliot skillfully builds a portrait of Hetty Sorrel whose infatuation leads to her isolation and destruction. Eliot's slow revelation of Hetty's character and motivation are more fully realized than Mrs. Gaskell's of Ruth. But Hetty's brittle character, hysterical behavior, and brutal deed are not calculated to inspire sympathy, although the perceptive characterization of Hetty makes it possible to empathize with her pitiful fate. Also, the action leading to the resolution of Hetty's fate is contrived, and Hetty is punished in the conventional way. In The Mill on the Floss (1860), Maggie Tulliver tries to expiate her personal sense of guilt by accepting the consequences of her actions. Ironically, she gives herself up only to discover that the society in which she lives is no longer concerned with moral guilt. In the novel Felix Holt, Radical (1866), Eliot studies the consequences of evil as they finally befall an adulterous woman whose sin has been hidden for many years. Mrs. Transome's horror at

her physical aging suggests a parallel with the horror of the decay in her moral nature.

Trollope's Preface to The Vicar of Bullhampton (1870) attempts to explain his intention in having chosen a "castaway" as a character. He maintains that such a choice is justified because showing the misery and intense horror of such a position might serve as a lesson to a tempted woman. In his Autobiography, Trollope says that "I could not venture to make this female the heroine of my story." He believed that "to have made her a heroine at all would have been directly opposed to my purpose[:]...exciting not only pity but sympathy for a fallen woman, and of raising a feeling of forgiveness for such in the minds of other women".[35] How courageous was Mrs. Gaskell's venture in 1853. Like her, Trollope understands that the fallen woman needs practical help as well as spiritual advice if she is to be rehabilitated. The essentials of the problem are reflected in the Vicar's sensitive understanding of Carry Brattle's position:

> He thought for a moment that he would tell her that the Lord loved her; but there was something human at his heart, something perhaps too human, which made him feel that were he down low upon the ground, some love that was nearer to him, some love that was more easily intelligible, which had been more palpably felt, would in his frailty and his wickedness be of more immediate avail to him than the love even of the Lord God.[36]

In the story of Ruth, Mrs. Gaskell deals with the problem of sexual transgression in Victorian society. She successfully presents the fallen woman in a sympathetic light,

suggests the possibility of her re-acceptance by the community, reveals a respect for the dignity of each human being, and makes a clear condemnation of the double standard of Victorian morality. Since I believe that Mrs. Gaskell's belief -- the belief that the individual is the arbiter of his conscience and that his conscience is the vehicle through which he interprets the established moral code -- is evident in her novels, an expression of her vision of life should be demonstrable in Ruth.

And it is demonstrated in the novel, as has been shown, in particular reference to the characters, Mr. Benson and Mr. Farquhar. Both men are able to judge Ruth, not in relation to the values established by their society, but in a private way -- in relation to the situation, the circumstances, and the individual. The final acceptance of Ruth's worth as an individual by Sally, Faith, and Jemima illustrates Mrs. Gaskell's further intention in the novel -- to make Victorian women aware of their responsibilities in understanding and helping the fallen woman. In the acceptance of Ruth as a person valuable in herself by the community at the end of the novel, Mrs. Gaskell fulfills her intention of showing that there is a possibility of the re-integration of the outcast in society. In her interpretation of the character type of the fallen woman, Mrs. Gaskell reveals a singularly positive attitude towards the amelioration of the problems connected with the sexual transgressor of the Victorian code of morality.

One of Mrs. Gaskell's contributions to the novel in the area of characterization is her distinctive interpretations of men and women who are searching for the proof of the validity of the moral codes by which they direct themselves. She is innovative in her treatment of some of the established literary character types in fiction by showing them as self-evaluating beings existing in a fictional framework, functioning in the contemporary setting in which they are placed, and demonstrating the values which reflect her belief in what is important and valuable in life.

In the following part of this section, I discuss Mrs. Gaskell's introduction into the novel of individualized contemporary character types who belong to specific social groups -- the industrialist, the working man, and the middle-class woman.

Introduction of Contemporary Character Types into the Novel

The fictional representations of the industrialist by English novelists -- previous to Mrs. Gaskell's innovations -- are caricatures or stock representations of their type, or unsuccessful characterizations because of the novelist's failure to understand the type of character he was trying to create.

To talk of the industrial tradition is to mean a handful of novels written primarily in the fourth and fifth decades of the nineteenth century. The earliest is Harriet Martineau's

A Manchester Strike (1832). This is followed by Mrs Trollope's Michael Armstrong (1839-40); Helen Fleetwood (1839-40) by 'Charlotte Elizabeth' [Mrs Tonna]; Disraeli's Coningsby (1844) and Sybil (1845); Mrs Gaskell's Mary Barton (1848) and North and South (1855); and Dickens's Hard Times (1854). There the tradition virtually ends until the twentieth century.[1]

In none of these novels except Mary Barton and North and South is there a characterization of the industrialist which shows him as both a man of industry and a human being who has the right to demand sympathy and understanding in the judgment of his behavior in these roles. The characterization of the industrialist Harry Carson in Mrs. Gaskell's first novel Mary Barton is an innovation on a contemporary social character type.

The several scenes which are devoted to the development of Carson as a character are most successful in showing the industrialist from the inside by means of relating him to his family and by showing the values he endorses. The description of his home reveals Mrs. Gaskell's hesitancy in adopting an attitude towards his use of wealth: "Mr. Carson's was a good house, and furnished with disregard to expense... in addition to lavish expenditure, there was much taste shown, and many articles chosen for their beauty and elegance adorned his rooms" (MB, 74). The description of Carson in the breakfast scene with his son and daughter again shows the novelist's indecision in formulating an attitude towards the man himself: "The father was a prepossessing-looking old man; perhaps self-indulgent you might guess" (MB, 76). But the narrator's hesitant, unsupported accusation is overpowered

in the following scene in which Carson's daughter, Amy, through her coaxing and playful caressing, reveals Carson as a tender, loving father. This image is reinforced in the home scene in which the news of his son's death is announced into the midst of a pleasantly passing time of leisure before dinner: "When Mr. Carson came in they all drew back and looked at him with the reverence due to sorrow. He went forward and gazed long and fondly on the calm, dead face; then he bent down and kissed the lips yet crimson with life" (MB, 241). Carson admits his wretched anguish at the loss of his son who is "out of hearing of all loving words" to John Barton, the murderer. But even though this beloved child is dead, the old man Carson cannot condemn his son's murderer, for "something of pity would steal in for the poor, wasted skeleton of a man, the smitten creature, who had told him of his sin, and implored his pardon that night" (MB, 429).

There is some information in the novel which defines Carson as an industrialist. He is a self-made man; however, Carson has lost the personal contact with his workers which would enable him to appreciate more fully their position. Carson is pleased that his factory equipped with old machines burns down during a slack period and the "weekly drain of wages given for labour, useless in the present state of the market, was stopped" (MB, 63). He enjoys the leisure of this period while he is unaware of the fact that there are "homes of those to whom leisure was a

curse" (MB, 63). Carson does not understand the conditions of the workers and their sufferings; he is ignorant of and insensitive to their need to have dignity and purpose in their existence. Only through Carson's identity of his manhood with that of John Barton does he recognize that both masters and men are brothers in suffering and that only in attempting to understand each other's positions can any harmony possibly be achieved. Carson transfers this knowledge gained from experience in his personal life to his role as industrial master. In a discussion with the worker Job Leigh, it is Carson, trying to understand the worker's viewpoint -- and it is admitted that his sudden sensitivity to the working man's problems is inadequately prepared for -- who makes a statement recognizing the moral independence of each human being which must be recognized by every other human being. This is the first statement of a concept which becomes a running thematic thread in Mrs. Gaskell's novels:

> 'I can see the view you take of things from the place where you stand. I can remember that, when the time comes for judging you; I sha'n't think any longer, does he act right on my views of a thing, but, does he act right on his own?' (MB, 450)

Mrs. Gaskell's concern with showing Carson's nature as a human being rather than emphasizing his role in industry is reflected in the lack of emphasis on the development of the industrialist aspect of character. And this is a flaw in her characterization. But I think that it is also fair to say that Mrs. Gaskell's characterization of the industrialist is successful if measured against the intent of the novelist,

for I believe that Mrs. Gaskell intended to show that the industrialists were human beings, subject to suffering and pleasure, in much the same way as working men. In establishing a recognition of the bond of humanity between masters and men, Mrs. Gaskell is then able to present her theme for the solution of social ills -- a sincere working on the part of each class to understand the other, based on the belief that the individual has the right to determine his actions and the duty to accept responsibility for himself. In achieving this presentation of the industrialist as both a man and an industrial figure, Mrs. Gaskell sees the industrialist in new terms, and in so doing she contributes a new interpretation of a type of character to the novel.

A more complete and mature presentation of the industrialist side of the character John Thornton is achieved in Mrs. Gaskell's later novel, North and South. In this characterization, the character of the man influences the character of the man of industry. It is recognized that the private man is distinct from the public man, but that it is in achieving the proper balance between the man and the industrialist that the individual is able to achieve most successfully his total self-development and to function as both a man and a master. In the comprehension of this dual function, the industrialist is most effective in determining his own interests as well as giving due consideration to the interests of his workers.

Thornton states his beliefs about industrial life,

the role and needs of the employer, and the position of the worker; and, in the course of the action, his vision of the relations between masters and men is definitely broadened by his experiences.

The zest for living and the excitement of the challenge and opportunity which are characteristic of the large city are endorsed by Thornton:

'I won't deny that I am proud of belonging to a town -- or perhaps I should rather say a district -- the necessities of which give birth to such grandeur of conception. I would rather be a man toiling, suffering -- nay, failing and successless -- here, than lead a dull prosperous life in the old worn grooves of what you call more aristocratic society down in the South, with their slow days of careless ease. One may be clogged with honey and unable to rise and fly.' (NS, 93)

Thornton captures the excitement of the age and the problems inherent in it:

'The whole machinery -- I don't mean the wood and iron machinery now -- of the cotton trade is so new that it is no wonder if it does not work well in every part all at once. Seventy years ago what was it? And now what is it not? Raw, crude materials came together; men of the same level, as regarded education and station, took suddenly the different positions of masters and men, owing to the mother-wit, as regarded opportunities and probabilities, which distinguished some, and made them far-seeing as to what great future lay concealed in that rude model of Sir Richard Arkwright's.' (NS, 95)

Admitting that in the early days of manufacturing the manufacturers were dizzy with power and were tyrants, Thornton feels that with the continued growth of industry, "there were more factories, more masters; more men were wanted. The power of masters and men became more evenly balanced; and now the battle is pretty fairly waged between us" (NS, 96). However, this latter declaration, which is

significant to the understanding of Thornton's position, is left unexplained by him. In his arguments against Parliamentary interference in manufacturing affairs, he states that such interference in the form of laws made by those who do not understand the new industry is ineffective: "all laws which depend for their enforcement upon informers and fines, become inert from the odiousness of the machinery" (NS, 94). Thornton demands, "...give me a constitutional monarchy in our present state of morals and intelligence. In our infancy we require a wise despotism to govern us" (NS, 140); and he declares that "We hate to have laws made for us at a distance. We wish people would allow us to right ourselves, instead of continually meddling, with their imperfect legislation. We stand up for self-government, and oppose centralization" (NS, 398).

Thornton believes that all men who raise themselves out of the strict category of worker to some position of management reflect "one of the great beauties of our system, that a working-man may raise himself into the power and position of a master by his own exertions and behaviour" (NS, 96). But his theory of self-help in relation to the workers does not recognize -- as it did in relation to the distinction among the men who fought to become masters -- that there are basic differences in talents among men. Thornton expresses the industrialist's view of education: workers only need to read and write. He uses his own boyhood as an example, when he, like others, was "too busy to think about

any dead people, with the living pressing alongside of one, neck to neck, in the struggle for bread" (NS, 98). Thornton does not seem to realize that his present re-interest in classical studies stems from the fact that he "had the rudiments of a good education...you do not come to it [Homer] as an *unknown book; you have read it before, and are only recalling* your old knowledge" (NS, 98). Initially, Thornton fails to recognize that the respect and desire for education must be inculcated in the workers, and that they have the right to demand the opportunity to be educated, in both practical and artistic areas.

As an industrialist, Thornton knows how he wants to direct his activities. He is determined to carry through his plans, made with what he believes to be right intention and good will. He is committed to the philosophy of the North: "we do not look upon life as a time for enjoyment, but as a time for action and exertion. Our glory and our beauty arise out of our inward strength, which makes us victorious over material resistance, and over greater difficulties still" (NS, 398). His attitude towards the past is one which distinguishes the thinking of the academic world from the industrial:

> 'It is fine when the study of the past leads to a prophecy of the future. But to men groping in new circumstances, it would be finer if the words of experience could direct us how to act in what concerns us most intimately and immediately; which is full of difficulties that must be encountered; and upon the mode in which they are met and conquered -- not merely pushed aside for the time -- depends our future. Out of the wisdom of the past, help us over the present.' (NS, 398-399)

Even though he may be adamant in his decisions pertaining to the operation of his mill and the direction of his workers, the factory men understand that he will always put up a fair fight, and so they respect him:

> 'Did yo' ever see a bulldog? Set a bulldog on hind-legs, and dress him up in coat and breeches, and yo'n just getten John Thornton.'
>
> '...let John Thornton get hold on a notion, and he'll stick to it like a bulldog; yo' might pull him away wi' a pitchfork ere he'd leave go. He's worth fighting wi', is John Thornton!' (NS, 159)

And, "among his fellows, there was no uncertainity as to his position. He was regarded by them as a man of great force of character; of power in many ways. There was no need to struggle for their respect. He had it, and he knew it" (NS, 192).

In his discussions regarding the strike, Thornton states that he feels that the employer has every right to do as he wishes without being obliged to tell the reasons for his behavior; he also feels that "the time is not come for the hands to have any independent action during business hours" (NS, 142), and that the masters do not have the right to interfere in the workers' independent life outside the mills. Thornton considers the strike a folly of the workers and would like to see the combination laws in force. When he states that

> 'It is too bad to find out that fools -- ignorant, and wayward men like these -- just by uniting their weak silly heads, are to rule over the fortunes of those who bring all the wisdom that knowledge and experience, and often painful thought and anxiety, can give. The next thing will be -- indeed, we're all but come to it now -- that we shall have

to go and ask -- stand hat in hand -- and humbly ask the secretary of the Spinners' Union to be so kind as to furnish us with labour at their own price' (NS, 170-171),

he indicates his distrust of the Union and his misunderstanding of the workers' aims. As an industrialist who wants to direct his own affairs without explaining his actions, Thornton's statement reflects a fear of the power of organized labor, and his desire to discredit its right to exist is reflected in the mocking tone of his statement, created by exaggerated vocabulary and situation aimed to gain sympathy for the underdog, the industrialist. This belief is modified through the effects of the strike and his personal contacts with the worker Higgins, and with Margaret Hale.

At the conclusion of the novel, Thornton recognizes the need for a deeper understanding and closer relations between masters and men. He aims to effect this end through experimental plans involving team work between them:

'I have arrived at the conviction that no mere institutions, however wise, and however much thought may have been required to organise and arrange them, can attach class to class as they should be attached, unless the working out of such institutions brings the individuals of the different classes into actual personal contact. Such intercourse is the very breath of life.' (NS, 515)

Thornton does not expect Utopian results from this attempt at harmony between masters and men, but he does believe that greater understanding and sympathy will at least lead to an alleviation of the intensity of the problems:

'My utmost expectation only goes so far as this -- that they may render strikes not the bitter, venomous sources of hatred they have hitherto been....A more hopeful man might imagine

that a closer and more genial intercourse between classes might do away with strikes. But I am not a hopeful man.' (NS, 516)

Thornton recognizes that conflicts will arise between men. But he also learns the invaluable lesson: all men are human beings who are unique in themselves and who are responsible to themselves for performing their duty as they see it. Thornton achieves a view of life which acknowledges that only through sympathy and understanding and respect for each individual may harmony among men possibly be achieved. Mrs. Gaskell's vital, credible characterization of Thornton as an industrial master is a contribution in portraiture to the English novel, and the vision of life Thornton adopts demonstrates the viewpoint of the novelist as expressed in her work.

The fact that this character who is an industrialist in mid-Victorian England is also an admirable man makes him a distinctive character in the fiction of this period. In fact, the primary aspect of Thornton's character is that he is first and foremost a 'man.' Opposing Margaret's term of praise,'gentleman,' Thornton states that "A man is to me a higher and a completer being than a gentleman." "I take it that 'gentleman' is a term that only describes a person in relation to others; but when we speak of him as 'a man,' we consider him not merely with regard to his fellow-men, but in relation to himself -- to life -- to time -- to eternity" (NS, 194).

Thornton is fair and just to his fellow-men. Al-

though he is jealous of Lennox and Bell because of their close association with Margaret, he accepts their right to hold positions of respect and appreciation with her. During the time that Thornton believes Margaret to have been seen with a lover in a lonely rendezvous, he respects her secret even though he questions her wisdom; he feels that "the woman whom he had once loved should be kept from shame" (NS, 332). He fully respects the right of the workers to live independent lives after their contracts for daily work have been fulfilled, and he strongly states that they should continue to expect this right. He would himself in no way tolerate another's intrusion upon his rights to freedom of action and choice for which he accepts responsibility.

As an individual, Thornton is a highly admirable character. His tender side is evident in his loving care of his mother and doing his best to guide and protect his sister Fanny. His paying off his father's debts and working his way up to become the owner of a factory testify to his discipline, intention, intelligence, and control. His love for Margaret shows a soft and tender nature capable of intense passion and devotion: he willingly gives himself up to his passion but never loses his reason in determining his behavior. The hurt he suffers when Margaret is apparently indifferent to him, rejects him, and leaves him is particularly impressive, because throughout their relationship he continues to think of her welfare rather than his own. He is particularly admirable in his ability to describe his love for Margaret

and yet more admirable in the self-discipline which enables him to hold back its expression and to direct himself away from self-pity into a constant awareness of others' needs over his own. One of his triumphs of character is his quiet acceptance of the money which Margaret offers to him so that he may again direct his mill; this man of great pride has the greater gifts of wisdom and humility. In self-knowledge he has gained the wisdom of life: the ability to see things in their proper perspective, to see through other's eyes and not just one's own. The total portrait of Thornton is permeated with the virtues of understanding and sympathy. All his actions are directed to the fulfillment of the best in his nature in relation to his fellow-man and measured in the light of their completing his goals which are established in terms of their final ends. At the end of his life as a master he finds himself broken in spirit and he compares his position with that of the successful Lennox:

> 'Happy and fortunate in all a man cares for, he does not understand what it is to find oneself no longer young -- yet thrown back to the starting-point which requires the hopeful energy of youth -- to feel one half of life gone, and nothing done -- nothing remaining of wasted opportunity but the bitter recollection that it has been.' (NS, 518)

But the sympathy Thornton's position elicits never turns to pity because he fulfills his nature in his strength of character and he redirects his activity even though the effort demanded is great and success is not guaranteed. John Thornton is a fine man, but his being one is not surprising since it was Mrs. Gaskell's intention to create him as such:

> I've got to when...Mr Thornton ought to be developing himself -- and Mr Hale ought to die -- and if I could get over this next piece I could swim through the London life beautifully into the sunset glory of the last scene. But hitherto Thornton is good; and I'm afraid of a touch marring him; and I want to keep his character consistent with itself, and large and strong and tender, and yet a master. That's my next puzzle. I am enough on not to hurry; and yet I don't know if waiting and thinking will bring any new ideas about him.[2]

In the successful creation of this man whose character is "large and strong and tender" as an industrial master, Mrs. Gaskell contributes a distinctive characterization of the industrial man to the novel.

The industrial age forged out of its strong influences and demands the industrial woman. Formidable in appearance, strong in convictions, determined in action, Mrs. Thornton in North and South represents one of the first literary portraits of the woman associated with modern industry who reflects the influences of her particular time on her character and personality and who stands behind the man of industry.

Mrs. Thornton thrives in hurried, busy, dynamic Milton. She is intensely proud of the crowded manufacturing city; she sees beauty in its factories and "magnificent warehouses." Economical, careful, industrious, sensible, Mrs. Thornton displays the faith in self-help and progress characteristic of the commerical classes in the industrial age. She calculates the value of an object by its utility. Even though her home is situated so that "the bald ugliness of the look-out [from the drawing-room] into the

great mill yard, where wide folding gates were thrown open for the admission of carriages" is apparent to other people, who are disturbed by the fact that the "mill loomed high on the left-hand side of the windows, casting a shadow down from its many storeys" (NS, 189-190), Mrs. Thornton does not feel that such a location is unpleasant:

> 'I am not become so fine as to desire to forget the source of my son's wealth and power. Besides, there is not such another factory in Milton. One room alone is two hundred and twenty square yards.' (NS, 190)

The noises and smells connected with the factory do not disturb her, because "If I think of it at all, I connect it with my son, and feel how all belongs to him, and that his is the head that directs it" (NS, 190).

Her haughtiness and pride find their source in her belief that she, in herself and through her son, represents the achieved goal of the age -- material success. Her philosophy is one of place; she believes that it should be enough for her son to have only one desire "and to bring all the purpose of his life to bear on the fulfillment of that... To hold and maintain a high, honourable place among the merchants of his country -- the men of his town" (NS, 132-133). She condemns the workers who feel that they have a right to strike as "a pack of ungrateful hounds" who "want to be masters, and make the masters into slaves on their own ground" (NS, 135). She has no inhibiting fears of workers, strikes, insults or harm, and she believes that courage and fortitude must be characteristics of a woman who supports a leader in

industry. Mrs. Thornton is totally bound to and restricted by the values and standards of the utilitarian viewpoint of the industrialist class.

Socially, Mrs. Thornton represents the woman whose place and her interpretation of it are determined by material progress. Maternally, she portrays the universal mother jealously guarding her son. Her initial unprovoked attack against Margaret Hale, who she assumes will naturally try to win her prize son, shows her as an unreasonably over-protective mother, but her battle to protect her son from being harmed in any way by his involvement with Margaret is fought with dignity, intelligence, and respect, and she thereby becomes a woman deserving of sympathy and admiration. Mrs. Thornton tries to protect her son from being hurt by a girl whom she believes to be haughty, penniless,and unaware of the worth of her much loved son -- a girl who needs to be told to "Listen, young lady, that you may understand, if you can, what sort of man you rejected" (NS, 376). When Mrs. Thornton realizes that her son wants to marry Margaret, she is able to accept his decision partially because she feels that "To be chosen by John, would separate a kitchen-wench from the rest of the world. And Miss Hale was not so bad. If she had been a Milton lass, Mrs. Thornton would have positively liked her" (NS, 248).

It is in her attentions to her son that the essential Mrs. Thornton reveals herself. Apparent coldness, taciturnity, and rugged frankness suggest a fierce competi-

tion in their relationship, but the fact remains that their love, based on deep respect and passionate loyalty, is so intense and so confidently cherished that it can accept the boldness of the truth they speak to each other. They live with an intense awareness of the strength of their relationship in which their hearts find comfort and rest: "... his mother had wished him goodnight, with that long steady look of hers which conveyed no expression of the tenderness that was in her heart, but yet had the intensity of a blessing..." (NS, 171).

Mrs. Thornton's morality is based on a sense of justice that is contemptuous of a weak character. This trait enables her to admire Margaret Hale for her independence, spirit, and pride. Her sense of justice demands that she recognize that Margaret's love may enable her to be worthy of her son and leads her to admit sadly that this recognition "is a good deal for me to say...for after tonight, I stand second. It was to have you to myself, all to myself, a few hours longer, that I begged you not to go till tomorrow" (NS, 224). When Margaret refuses John, Mrs. Thornton reacts the only way her love allows her to when her son admits that he loves Margaret more than ever:

> 'And I hate her,' said Mrs. Thornton, in a low fierce voice. 'I tried not to hate her, when she stood between you and me, because -- I said to myself -- she will make him happy; and I would give my heart's blood to do that. But now, I hate her for your misery's sake.' (NS, 250)

Her love and sense of justice are so outraged by Thornton's failures that her recitation of them is a litany of the sor-

rows beating down on this mother's wounded soul:

> 'I can't think,' said she, with gloomy defiance in her tone, 'how it comes about. Here is my boy -- good son, just man, tender heart -- and he fails in all he sets his mind upon: he finds a woman to love, and she cares no more for his affection than if he had been any common man; he labours, and his labour comes to nought. Other people prosper and grow rich, and hold their paltry names high and dry above shame.' (NS, 506)

That Mrs. Gaskell would have the last line of the novel North and South end with Margaret's flippant remark about Mrs. Thornton seems to me to be an error in her evaluation of character. Although the remark that Mrs. Thornton will be indignant about Margaret's marrying John is basically true, the dignified deportment of Mrs. Thornton throughout the action demands that her strength of character be respectfully recognized. Behind the seldom-disturbed façade of a stern face and forceful, naked speech, this woman's heart inclines her to love magnificently: "all worldly mortification sank to nothing before the consciousness of the great blessing that [John] himself by his simple existence was to her. She thanked God for this, and this alone, with a fervour that swept away all rebellious feelings from her mind" (NS, 508). An uncommon woman is this firm, severe, dignified Mrs. Thornton, who reflects the molding power of the industrial age in which she lived and of which she is a product.

Mrs. Gaskell also creates the character and personality rather than a character type of the working man in

John Barton. She succeeds in presenting the portrait of the working man as a human being, subject to his human nature, who earns his wage by selling his labor to industry. Her decided respect and appreciation for the individual, no matter what his place or station, is evident in her choice of a working man "hero."[3]

In her critical appraisal, Elizabeth Gaskell: The Artist in Conflict, Margaret Ganz finely studies the characterization of John Barton and perceptively traces Mrs. Gaskell's psychological analysis of the doomed man. The novelist:

> ...carefully suggests the complex interaction of temperament, personal experience, and external circumstances which leads to the downfall of her hero. Early insights into Barton's nature and the quality of his bitterness clearly anticipate his future conflicts. The balance of his moral nature is shown as precarious because of his emotional intensity (his basic characteristic is that of 'extreme earnestness; resolute either for good or evil'); moreover, severe mental suffering in one who possesses a 'sort of latent enthusiasm' may already have distorted his moral values....
>
> The loss of his wife which soon follows [the scene in which Barton discusses the child he has tragically lost] in the novel is an appropriate psychological step in his alienation from 'the gentle humanities of earth' for he now lacks a restraining influence on that emotionalism whose positive attributes almost imply negative ones. His very reaction to his wife's death exemplifies his potential for love and hatred and the inexorable connection between the two, for his overwhelming tenderness for the departed soon gives way to a strong vindictiveness against the person he believes responsible for his loss....
>
> Barton's inability to forgive is closely allied to the most dangerous tendency in his nature. Unlike Alice Wilson ...John Barton is incapable of resignation. His tragedy, like that of so many heroes, has its root in his rebellion against fate, in his obsession with challenging not only the existing realities of social conditions but the basic nature of justice...
>
> By analyzing Barton's progressive despondency after his return from London [Barton supported the Chartist petition and felt 'a really pure gladness of heart' in actively promoting 'some grand relief' for the working men], the author

appropriately prepares us for his final indignation which will burst out during the strikes (when mediation has failed) in the irrepressible 'have at the masters!'....The physical weakness of hunger, the sense of unreality induced by the opium which staves off craving for food, and the desultoriness of unemployment enhance his tendency to brood and give to discontent the dimensions of an obsession....

There is a genuine psychological insight in her realization that Barton's 'overpowering thought,' his perpetually reiterated questioning of 'why' the 'rich and poor' should be 'so separate, so distinct, when God has made them all' and 'it is not His will that their interests [be] so far apart,' is especially destructive because it leads him away from the particulars of his own state to a questioning of the universal condition of man, to a probing of 'the problems and mysteries of life.' In his bafflement at these 'mysteries,' he clings to the one abiding reality, a characteristically dual emotion: 'the only feeling that remained clear and undisturbing in the tumult of his heart, was hatred to one class, and keen sympathy with the other.'

. . . . . .

After the general decision to kill Harry Carson, Barton's act of hybris is requited by nemesis in the drawing of lots. In destroying Carson, he destroys himself, for a man capable of strong feelings of love and loyalty to some of his fellow men is not one to throw off lightly the denial of love even to those from whom he has become fully estranged. Only death can be the appropriate deliverance from that muddle of life which has led Barton to reject the moral principles that could sustain his own humanity.[4]

Ganz points out that Mrs. Gaskell's sympathies in Mary Barton are primarily given to John Barton and the workers, but that "at other times her desire to remain a moderator in the conflict between masters and men leads to a marked ambiguity in her evaluation, not only of Barton's position, but of his nature.[5] There are clashes in the presentation of Barton as a robot, lacking a "soul," and in the analysis of his moral and mental turmoil as a man, and in the questioning of the reliability of his views on social conditions. Ganz feels that Mrs. Gaskell's real convictions about social responsibility and the appropriateness of political action on the workmen's part are unclear.

Although I agree in the main with Ganz's criticisms, I also think that the novel actually does reflect a considered viewpoint. I believe that Mrs. Gaskell intended to and does express her belief in the singularity of the individual who has and is responsible for his own vision of the world. For this reason, it is possible for Mrs. Gaskell to present each character's confirmation of an individual code through his actions and to respect the validity and rightness of the expression of his beliefs. Naturally, this view, which admits ethical relativity, leads to the problem that if each man is to be considered right in himself and in his actions, how is he to be viewed in relation to other men who are also right in themselves and in their actions. Only through understanding, respect, and sympathy among men can there be found the possibility of achieving harmony among men. And this viewpoint of Mrs. Gaskell regarding the relations and responsibilities which exist among men is made clear in the novel Mary Barton through the interaction of men in a problematic situation: masters and workers interact in the conflict of the rights of employers and employees in an industrial society. On this point of the role of the individual Mrs. Gaskell is clear, and this theme is more explicitly presented and more fully developed as a central concern in her following novels.

Ganz feels that Mrs. Gaskell is "emotionally incapable of remaining an objective arbiter of disputes while exploring the state of mind of her "care-worn men," yet

morally committed to oppose a rebellion against accepted standards and norms [and she tends] to qualify that allegiance with the downtrodden to which her sympathy impels her."[5]

I do not see Mrs. Gaskell's qualifications of her sympathy with the workers and the industrialists as a fault in her presentation, because the ambiguity is itself a recognition of the possiblity of error in individual judgment and the realization that the interpretation of a situation must be recognized in reference to the individual himself and to the individual in relation to other men. That Mrs. Gaskell is "morally committed to expose a rebellion against accepted standards and norms" is a serious charge which I believe is invalid. Mrs. Gaskell allows her character, John Barton, to interpret the social scene and his position in it and to act according to his conscience in the carrying out of his beliefs. John Barton participates in unionist Chartist activities, and he stimulates the workers to participate in the effort to make known their demands for a better existence. In these activities, John Barton is supported by Mrs. Gaskell's sympathies because she respects the individual acting in right conscience. After John Barton as a member of the Trades' Union loses his individuality by becoming part of a mass, Mrs. Gaskell seems to lose interest in the character who has lost interest in himself as a human being. And in keeping with the expression of Mrs. Gaskell's vision, it is right that he should be treated so,

for Mrs. Gaskell believes that man, in escaping into the mass, loses his most intrinsic quality -- individual responsibility. In becoming a member of the union and consequently of the mass, John Barton is forced to act as if he were a mere part of the whole; he becomes a depersonalized entity. A conformity to norms replaces John Barton's personal responsibility because he is now a part of the mass. In accepting the dictum of the union that he is to murder young Harry Carson, John Barton accepts the idea that men who are part of a mass are responsible for something they are not actually responsible for; he believes the mass is ultimately responsible for his individual action. In the eventual realization and acceptance of the fact that he, John Barton, is the individual who is responsible for his act of murder, and his deed against a fellow creature who is "no longer the enemy, the oppressor, but a very poor and desolate old man" (MB, 425), John Barton re-enters the world of men as a human being with a conscience who does his duty in the acceptance of his responsiblity:

> But now he knew that he had killed a man, and a brother -- now he knew that no good thing could come out of this evil, even to the sufferers whose cause he had so blindly espoused. (MB, 426)

Although Mrs. Gaskell recognizes the many circumstantial influences in John Barton's life -- hunger, unemployment, lack of education, bad example, the death of his wife and the starvation of his child -- as factors in his downfall which may lessen his culpability, the solution of the problem of participant responsibility is not offered.

Barton's fate must be seen as influenced by his natural disposition or endowment, his situation, and the position or attitude he takes towards his disposition and situation. It is clear that Mrs. Gaskell feels that ultimately it is John Barton himself, product of his environment though he may be, who is totally responsible for himself. This responsibility arises out of and grows with the concreteness of Barton as a person operating in particular situations.

This problem is discussed again in North and South in which Mrs. Gaskell attempts to examine the motivation and behavior of the working man John Higgins.

In the process of education in another point of view and his acceptance of his errors, Higgins realizes that each man's commitment to himself must also take into account the rights of others.

Higgins believes that the extreme situation of the workers demands that they band together against the masters since "It's the only way working men can get their rights, by all joining together. More the members, more chance for each one separate man having justice done him" (NS, 347-348). He endorses the Union's severe methods of forced membership and his analogy is convincing:

> [The Union is] 'a great power: it's our only power. I ha' read a bit o' poetry about a plough going o'er a daisy, as made tears come into my eyes, afore I'd other cause for crying. But the chap ne'er stopped driving the plough, I'se warrant, for all he were pitiful about the daisy. He'd too much mother-wit for that. Th' Union's the plough, making ready the land for harvest-time. Such as Boucher -- 'twould be settin' him up too much to liken him to a daisy; he's liker a weed lounging over the ground -- mun just make up their mind to be put out o' the way.' (NS, 348)

But he later realizes -- through the suicide of Boucher who is driven mad by the pressures of his family and the Union -- that forced membership in the Union is a violation of the individual's right to determine his own behavior. Boucher had already told Higgins:

> 'Yo' know well, that a worser tyrant than e'er th' masters were says, "Clem to death, and see 'em a' clem to death, ere yo' dare go again' th' Union." Yo' know it well, Nicholas, for a' yo're one on 'em. Yo' may be kind hearts, each spearate; but, once banded together, yo've no more pity for a man than a wild hunger-maddened wolf.' (NS, 183)

To the belief in the individual, the determination of individual roles, and the concept of responsibility, Higgins is committed. He also believes that each individual has his particular vision of a situation, limited though it may be because of biological, social, or psychological constraints:

> 'And I'm not one who thinks truth can be shaped out in words, all neat and clean, as th' men at th' foundry cut out sheet-iron. Some bones won't go down wi' every one. It'll stick here i' this man's throat, and there i' t' others. Let alone that, when down, it may be too strong for this one, too weak for that. Folk who sets up to doctor th' world wi' their truth, mun suit different for different minds; and be a bit tender in th' way of giving it too, or the poor sick fools may spit it out 'i their faces.' (NS, 273)

Higgins feels that the strike is justified; however, he has determined a Union policy that "above all there was to be no going again' the law of the land" (NS, 237). Consequently, he is horrified at the attack on the mill by a group of strikers and realizes the Union's error: "They reckoned on their fellow-men as if they possessed the calculable powers of machines, no more, no less; no allowance [was made] for human passions getting the better of reason...(NS, 270-

271). In the description of the riot scene at the mill, the mob, deprived of reason, takes on animal characteristics; this is suggested by the vocabulary: savage, wolves, enraged, rage, wild beating, troop of animals, stormy passions. Just as John Barton loses his identity in the mass, the body of rioters loses the essential qualities of the human being. Although Higgins detaches himself from the unreasonable mob, he does not break with the Union nor disclaim strikes. Instead, through this experience and by discussions with Thornton and the Hales, Higgins' outlook is broadened to include a willingness to see the views of both men and masters and to develop a deeper respect for the autonomy of the individual.

The working-class hero in nineteenth-century English fiction was generally represented as one of several character types: respectable, intellectual, the object of social pity, debased, eccentric, or criminal.[7] Mrs. Gaskell is unique in her presentation because she seeks to describe and understand the working man in industry as an individual, and to recognize the actual situation of the world in which he lived:

> [Bessy] did not cry -- she only quivered up her breath. 'My heart's drained dry o' tears,' she said. 'Boucher's been, in these days past, a-telling me of his fears and his troubles. He's but a weak kind of chap, I know, but he's a man for a' that; and tho' I've been angry, many a time afore now, wi' him an' his wife, as knew no more nor him how to manage, yet yo' see, all folks isn't wise, yet God lets 'em live -- ay, an' gives 'em some one to love, and be beloved by, just as good as Solomon. An' if sorrow comes to them they love, it hurts 'em as sore as e'er it did Solomon. I can't make it out.' (NS, 184)

Mrs. Gaskell tries to capture the feelings, habits,

opinions, character, and social conditions of this particular group of people, and the episodes in Mary Barton and North and South are particularly successful in creating tonal reflections in the scenes described. Through patient, persistent accumulation of detail, Mrs. Gaskell draws her pictures of the poor, showing them as workers, parents, friends, lovers, enemies, and she studies their emotional reactions and intellectual perceptions in particular situations.[8] Tenderness, deep love, magnanimous concern, and gaiety -- a trait observed and attributed to the poor which is unique to Mrs. Gaskell's characterization of them -- fear, isolation, doubt, and sorrow, are some of the human emotions which the dignified human beings, the poor, reveal. The scenes speak best for themselves.

> The tray was soon hoisted down, and before the merry clatter of cups and saucers began, the women disburdened themselves of their out-of-doors things, and sent Mary upstairs with them. Then came a long whispering, and chinking of money, to which Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were too polite to attend; knowing, as they did full well, that it all related to the preparations for hospitality; hospitality that, in their turn, they should have such pleasure in offering. So they tried to be busily occupied with the children, and not to hear Mrs. Barton's directions to Mary.
>
> 'Run, Mary, dear, just round the corner, and get some fresh eggs at Tipping's (you may get one apiece, that will be fivepence), and see if he has any nice ham cut, that he would let us have a pound of.'
>
> 'Say two pounds, missis, and don't be stingy,' chimed in the husband.
>
> 'Well, a pound and a half, Mary. And get it Cumberland ham, for Wilson comes from there-away, and it will have a sort of relish of home with it he'll like, -- and Mary' (seeing the lassie fain to be off), 'you must get a pennyworth of milk and a loaf of bread -- min you get it fresh and new -- and, and -- that's all, Mary.'
>
> 'No, it's not all,' said her husband. 'Thou must get sixpennyworth of rum, to warm the tea; thou'll get it at the "Grapes." And thou just go to Alice Wilson; he says she lives just round the corner, under 14 Barber Street' (this

was addressed to his wife); 'and tell her to come and take her tea with us; she'll like to see her brother, I'll be bound, let alone Jane and the twins.'

'If she comes she must bring a tea-cup and saucer, for we have but half-a-dozen, and here's six of us,' said Mrs. Barton.

'Pooh, pooh, Jem and Mary can drink out of one, surely.'

But Mary secretly determined to take care that Alice brought her tea-cup and saucer, if the alternative was to be her sharing anything with Jem. (MB, 14)

[In that dim light, which was darkness to strangers, Wilson and Barton discover the state of Ben Davenport's family while he is down with the fever.]

'We mun do summut for 'em,' said [Barton] to Wilson...

So he strode, and ran, and hurried home. He emptied into the ever-useful pocket-handkerchief the little meal remaining in the mug. Mary would have her tea at Miss Simmonds'; her food for the day was safe. Then he went upstairs for his better coat, and his one gay red-and-yellow silk pocket-handkerchief -- his jewels, his plate, his valuables, these were. He went to the pawn-shop; he pawned them for five shillings: he stopped not, nor stayed, till he was once more in London Road, within five minutes' walk of Berry Street -- then he loitered in his gait, in order to discover the shops he wanted. He bought meat, and a loaf of bread, candles, chips, and from a little retail yard he purchased a couple of hundredweights of coal. Some money still remained -- all destined for them, but he did not yet know how best to spend it. Food, light, and warmth, he had instantly seen were necessary; for the luxuries he would wait. Wilson's eyes filled with tears when he saw Barton enter with his purchases. He understood it all, and longed to be once more in work that he might help in some of these material ways, without feeling that he was using his son's money. But though 'silver and gold he had none,' he gave heart-service and love-works of far more value. Nor was John Barton behind in these....

. . . . . .

The two men, rough, tender nurses as they were, lighted the fire, which smoked and puffed into the room as if it did not know the way up the damp, unused chimney. The very smoke seemed purifying and healthy in the thick clammy air. The children clamoured again for bread; but this time Barton took a piece first to the poor, helpless, hopeless woman, who still sat by the side of her husband, listening to his anxious miserable mutterings. She took the bread, when it was put into her hand, and broke a bit, but could not eat. She was past hunger. She fell down on the floor with a heavy unresisting bang. The men looked puzzled. 'She's well-nigh clemmed,' said Barton. 'Folk do say one mustn't give clemmed people much to eat; but, bless us, she'll eat nought.' (MB, 66-67)

It is Mrs. Gaskell's sympathetic appreciation of human dignity which enables her to capture what she feared was not properly understood: "In short, the beauty and poetry of many of the common things and daily events of life in its humblest aspect does not seem to me sufficiently appreciated."[9] She achieved this appreciation of "the faithful representation of commonplace things"[10] in the novels Mary Barton and North and South.

The industrialist and the factory workers were a new breed of people which met the demands for capital and labor created by the Industrial Revolution. The effects of industrialization were felt in all areas of life, in modes, customs, manners, and attitudes, in England's stratified society. At this time, important changes in the attitudes towards woman as an individual and as a member of society were also occurring.

Through a wide range of female characters, Mrs. Gaskell shows the married and single women of the lower, middle, and upper classes functioning in their particular situations and in the community. Mrs. Gaskell's sensitivity to the interpretive changes in the attitudes towards women in the nineteenth-century is particularly evident in her characterizations of Jemima in the novel Ruth and Margaret Hale in North and South. Both these women are determined in intention and will, and consider themselves free to choose what type of individual they would like to be and what roles

they would like to assume in life. These freedoms allowed to the nineteenth-century woman indicate a break in the traditional interpretation of the role of women. To Mrs. Gaskell they also suggest contingent responsibilities. A woman has the full responsibility to know herself as an intellectual, physical, and moral being and to understand herself in relationship to others. This demands a knowledge of the personal, social, and moral forces operating within society. In the acceptance of her freedom and responsibility, the 'new' woman in middle-class nineteenth-century England represents the liberated human being whose fulfillment is in a maturity towards the acceptance of responsiblity and duty.

In the characterization of Jemima, Mrs. Gaskell shows the difficulties which this maturity creates for a woman, and in so doing she presents a characterization which is new to the novel: she analyzes the effect on a nineteenth-century middle-class woman who, in order to gain maturity, must suffer a moral crisis unique to women in fiction to this time. Jemima is faced with the recognition of evil in herself. The crisis is then compounded by her conflicting interpretation of the moral code she has been taught; and, finally, Jemima's faith in the ethical code of her society is undermined.

In order to appreciate the contribution Mrs. Gaskell makes to the novel in her introduction of an individualized contemporary social type through the creation of

Jemima, I think it is advisable to review the position of women in the Victorian Age and examine what Mrs. Gaskell's contemporaries in the novel were expressing through their characterizations about their understanding of the position of contemporary middle-class women.

The Victorian woman is most commonly seen in the role of the submissive wife. Bound by moral and legal bonds to her husband, the master, whom she was to love, honor, and obey, she accepted the dictum that "the first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to men -- inferior in mental power, in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength."[11] Or, sold into bondage, she might serve but not always willingly; Lady Castlewood explains:

> 'The men who wrote your books,' says my Lady, 'your Horaces, and Ovids, and Virgils, as far as I know of them, all thought ill of us, as all the heroes they wrote about used us basely. We were bred to be slaves always; and even of our own times, as you are still the only lawgivers, I think our sermons seem to say that the best woman is she who bears her master's chains most gracefully....'[12]

Against this bondage, some women revolted and began to seek their liberation through equal rights with men in education, suffrage, and the opportunity for careers. Between these conservative and radical views, there was a middle position which held that women were equal to men but were different in nature and function; therefore, all of woman's activity should be evaluated in terms of its relationship to her womanhood.[13]

Of course, these roles were open to only one type of Victorian woman, the woman of respectable position. Vic-

torian fictional works reflect these types of women and the attitudes towards them: the submissive wife whose yoke is heavy -- Betsy Quilp, Mercy Pecksniff, Rachel, Lady Castlewood; the liberated woman who determines her own code of behavior -- Jane Eyre and Shirley; the mediating woman who is man's guide and inspiration for good -- Nancy Lammeter, Mrs. Amos Barton, Mrs. Josiah Crawley. They are women whose lives, although they may be touched with great sorrow, are positively directed towards the doing of good within their specific roles. Happiness may be denied to them in this life, but they firmly believe that through the fulfillment of their duties and obligations in their state in life they will gain a spiritual reward. "To love is woman's duty -- to be beloved, is her reward" counsels Mrs. Ellis; but if an earthly reward is denied to her, a woman should decide to live for eternity.[14] Not permitted to criticize her husband's transgressions and restricted in her worldly contacts, she is expected to live cloistered from the evils of the world which have been defined by her society. The romantic heroines of the Gothic and the sentimental novels, those of Dickens' female characters who are tinsel heroines, the Madonna figures of Disraeli and Kingsley's works, would be the pure products of this isolated upbringing. Although it is possible to pretend that this isolation from evil could always be strictly enforced, it is very difficult to believe that it was.

There are heroines in Victorian literature who show

that they are exceptions to the pretense that the respectable woman is ignorant of evil in both a general and particular sense. Who they are, what they experience, and what the consequences of their contacts with the knowledge and temptations of evil are, is an interesting area for exploration.

In their novels, Charlotte Brontë and Mrs. Gaskell show that a woman could be recognized as a human being with moral choice open to her, who could act independently and successfully if confronted with the evils defined in society's moral code. Brontë's bold heroine, Jane Eyre, triumphs over the evil which tempts her to ignore the fact that Rochester is married and to seek the satisfaction of her desires. Being morally strong and disciplined, Jane Eyre shows that it is possible for a morally mature woman to triumph against a great temptation. Momentarily she may consider the allure of the temptation, but her faith in the rightness of her beliefs is never weakened and it supports her resistance to temptation.

Another illustration of the belief that a woman is capable of responsibly directing herself is Mrs. Gaskell's characterization of Jemima Bradshaw in Ruth. This analysis is distinctive because Jemima, a middle-class, respectable young woman, is confronted with a direct awareness of evil which disturbs her confidence in her code of ethics. In this characterization, Mrs. Gaskell re-directs the traditional Victorian beliefs concerning women by showing that a woman can be enriched by such an experience. I believe that this

innovation in the interpretation of the conventional heroine is a contribution towards the development of the psychological interpretation of character in the novel. George Eliot's defense of her analysis of the moral conflicts faced by Maggie Tulliver in Mill on the Floss (1860) is an endorsement of this suggestion:

> If the ethics of art do not admit the truthful presentation of a character essentially noble but liable to great error -- error that is anguish in its own nobleness -- then, it seems to me, the ethics of art are too narrow, and must be widened to correspond with a widening psychology.[15]

Attempts to mold Jemima's character into the accepted form of a pure, young, middle-class girl, meek and obedient to social and moral laws, are not completely successful. She cannot accept rules unquestioningly; she will not be forced to submit her will to that which she cannot accept as right. She strains under the conflict between conditioned and impulsive behavior. Petulant, fiery, and unpredictable, proud Jemima's temper cannot tolerate hypocrisy. She revolts against it: "So! I am to behave well, not because it is right -- not because it is right -- but to show off before Mr. Farquhar" (R, 221). She demands honest behavior based on set principles. Her father cannot stand up to this expectation; neither can her mother. When her respect for Mr. Farquhar is destroyed by suspicions of his duplicity, Jemima's faith in man's perfectibility then rests in Ruth, whose peace through acceptance Jemima ironically misinterprets: "Oh! you beautiful creature!" thought Jemima, "with your still, calm, heavenly face, what are you

to know of earth's trials?...the sorrow I have pulls me down and down, and makes me despise and hate everyone -- ..." (R, 226). Feeling that her rude, indifferent behavior has cost her Mr. Farquhar's affection, Jemima, whose jealousy of Ruth is compared to that of Cain towards Abel, watches him being drawn to Ruth's quiet, gentle ways. She searches within herself to discover the motivating forces behind her own behavior. "Is not this the old stinging hatred which had prompted so many crimes? The hatred of all sweet virtues which might win the love denied to us?" (R, 243). She is led to the horror of it, the horror of self-comprehension:

> 'Oh! God! help me! I did not know I was so wicked,' cried Jemima aloud in her agony. It had been a terrible glimpse into the dark, lurid gulf -- the capability for evil, in her heart. (R, 243)

And in the realization that the Ruth she believed to be a paragon of virtue is in reality a woman whom society condemns as fallen, Jemima's personal contact with this embodiment of 'evil' shatters her faith in the strength of her extreme moral code and judgment which now seem inadequate to support her in the present complex reality:

> Two hours ago -- but a point of time on her mind's dial -- she had never imagined that she should ever come in contact with any one who had committed open sin; she had never shaped her conviction into words and sentences, but still it was there, that all the respectable, all the family and religious circumstances of her life, would hedge her in, and guard her from ever encountering the great shock of coming face to face with Vice. (R, 320)

Her training had been geared towards hating the sin and the sinner, and although Jemima had wrestled against

these hard doctrines, she now is affected by them. So she looks at Ruth "with shrinking, shuddering recoil, instead of a pity so Christ-like as to have both wisdom and tenderness in it" (R, 320). Stunned by the shock, horrified to meet with Ruth, terrorized by her new knowledge of the intimate nature of Evil, Jemima fitfully yearns "to know what was seeming, and what was truth, in this traitorous hollow earth..." (R, 323).

Only in her impulsive defense against the cruelty and injustices of her father's castigation of Ruth does Jemima release herself from commitment to the narrow ethical code which did not allow sympathy and understanding to influence a decision on the morality of an action. Jemima realizes herself in her more complex moral maturity; in recognizing the fact of evil in herself and others -- as well as the fact of good -- she has determined that conventional behavior based on a traditional belief in an ethical code is not enough to suit all the just demands of men and that the moral code must be tempered by sympathy and understanding when applied to frail humanity.

As Mrs. Farquhar, Jemima has a strong nature which is directed to the fulfillment of her role; she freely commits herself to the duties of her state while enjoying the sharing of life with her husband. Certainly this positive picture of the growth and development of the impulsive, doubting girl into a mature woman with a defined vision of life is one of Mrs. Gaskell's finer achievements in charac-

terization, an analysis of the female mind liberated through its exposure to the knowledge of evil to an understanding of the difference between a privately determined or a generally accepted ethical code.

Mrs. Gaskell is also original in her characterization of the heroine of North and South, Margaret Hale, because this young woman accepts the challenge in the process of self-education demanded of her by the three nineteenth-century milieus to which she is exposed: the social, the intellectual, and the industrial.

The novel North and South is more properly viewed not as a social problem or social protest novel as it often has been, but rather as a novel in which the major interest lies in the development of the heroine through a process of self-education. To study whether the comparison between North and South is the main interest of the novel would show that the comparison is not balanced; so much more information and interest are extended to the North. Although Margaret's description of Helstone assists in creating a picture of an attitude towards the South, the view remains incomplete. The loneliness, poverty, ignorance, and apathy of the southern agricultural laborer is discussed in the work, but the presentation of his life and its problems remains unclear in comparison with that given of the type and quality of the life of masters and men in the industrial North. The industrial problems are presented with the intent to show both

the worker's and the industrialist's points of view. Although the industrial background is important and interesting, the industrial theme is a sub-theme which effectively provides the complications necessary for the interaction of characters. It is not simply the problems of men in industry which Mrs. Gaskell seeks to reveal but the problems of the human heart.

There are several points which indicate that the development of the heroine was to be the central interest in the novel. Mrs. Gaskell intended to call the work Margaret Hale; it was Dickens who suggested the title North and South after having seen only several chapters of the work (the novel was serialized in Household Words).[16] Margaret is the center of interest for the other characters in the novel; they function in relation to her. I believe that she is the unifying character in the first and last several scenes in the novel and throughout the work.

However, Martin Dodsworth in his introduction to North and South feels that Mrs. Gaskell intended the first scenes to be disjointed:

> It seems to me that she deliberately sets out to confuse her reader in the first chapters of North and South, and that she does so with two objects in mind to make clear, first, the sort of novel she is not writing, and second, the sort of novel she is writing.[17]

Dodsworth suggests that Mrs. Gaskell wanted to make clear that North and South was not intended to be another novel suited to the feminine talent, like Ruth or Cranford. He maintains that the intention of chapters one and two is to

separate "the conventionally feminine trappings of the novel's opening"[18] -- the scenes in Harley Street drawing-room and the scene in Helstone in which a rejected suitor is present only so that he may withdraw from the story -- from the unconventional story and the unconventional heroine to follow. Dodsworth sees the reason for Mrs. Gaskell's abrupt changes in scene in the introductory section as an effort "to draw us into the story at the same time as it warns us what the story is not."[19]

With these deductions I do not agree. It seems to me that Margaret, viewed rightly by Dodsworth as an unconventional heroine who is seen in the introductory chapters in terms of the conventions she will go against, is the character who unites the shifting opening scenes dealing with the London-Helstone-Milton triangle and that each of these places is in its turn the setting for another adjustment demanded of her. The final scenes of the novel, which are again set in London and Helstone with a projected end in Milton, serve as contrasts and comparisons to the changes which have taken place since the first scenes of the novel; the balancing of the beginning and ending scenes frames the action of the story concerned with personal change. Margaret's first-hand experiences of the changes occurring in the worlds to which she once belonged confirm her mature perception of the fact that all things of this world are always and necessarily and rightly in the process of change. It is for these reasons that Mrs. Gaskell presents shifting, not disjointed,

scenes in the beginning and at the end of the novel.

The first several chapters of the novel deal with London and Helstone, and the successful adjustments Margaret has made to the demands in each of these environments project the possibility of her success in making another adjustment in Milton. She understands that "It is a painful thing, but it must be done, and I will do it as well as ever I can" (NS, 40). Since her adjustments have been made to the demands of the external environments of these places, it is not surprising that an adjustment to the smog-filled factory area of Milton-Northern, as depressing and unpleasant as it is, can be managed. The physical adaptation does not take long; social adjustments are more difficult but contacts with workers and industrialists assist and ease the changes. What is a more lengthy and most important process is the adjustment of Margaret's concept of self as she functions in the different environments. To support this view, a study of the heroine is made to show the stages in her personal growth.

Margaret stands aloof from the London world. She is obliging, obedient, and rather charming, but she is not emotionally involved. On request she models Indian shawls like a puppet for her aunt, she controls the social scene when others are flustered by emotional reactions, she overhears conversations which she judges silently, she speaks when spoken to in the accepted fashion but resents personal inquiries. Margaret cherishes the thought of her idyllic

home in Helstone. In her conversation with Mr. Lennox it is clear that she feels that no one has the right to intrude upon this world or even comment on it. Her self-image is an ideal one. She sees herself in terms of being the only daughter of a minister who has an obligation and delight in fulfilling an important post, and she is proud of her simple tastes and simple values.

In Helstone, Margaret lives a protected life with her parents. She loves the rambles and walks in the close woods. Ironically, her out-of-doors life is perfect, but the dull monotony of the indoor life which is marred by her mother's discontent and her father's uneasiness disturbs her. She is concerned with preserving her façade of "high maidenly dignity" which keeps her removed from others. In fact, Margaret feels "guilty and ashamed of having grown so much into a woman as to be thought of in marriage" (NS, 34). She sees herself as an ascetic,since "Her keen enjoyment of every sensuous pleasure was balanced finely, if not over-balanced, by her conscious pride in being able to do without them all, if need be" (NS, 17). In the future, Margaret can contemplate herself in the role of a warm, loving woman to some man, but in the present she can only think of herself as a friend to her suitor, Mr. Lennox. Her refusal of his marriage proposal shows that she does not consider him man enough for her strong moral self, and "she felt a tinge of contempt mingle itself with her pain at having refused him" (NS, 31). This aspect of her character is reinforced in her

together. Communication is both intellectual and physical. Verbal communication is enriched by communication through bodily movement. Mr. Thornton reacts to her presence: "It was a stinging pleasure to be in the room with her, and feel her presence..." (NS, 283).

> He never looked at her; and yet, the careful avoidance of his eyes betokened that in some way he knew exactly where, if they fell by chance, they would rest on her. (NS, 283)

Margaret's reactions to his presence are just as powerfully present: Mr. Thornton "then took his leave, and Margaret's movements and voice seemed at once released from some invisible chains" (NS, 283). Margaret and Thornton may be obscured from each other but they 'see' each other; they may not speak to each other but they 'sense' the unspoken opinion:

> ...he did not look at her. Only, he knew what she was doing -- or not doing -- better than he knew the movements of anyone else in the room. (NS, 191-192)

Mr. Thornton "glanced at Margaret, standing all by herself at the window nearest the factory....As if she felt his look, she turned to him and asked a question..."(NS, 207). Thornton's searching looks seem to enable him to touch Margaret's flesh; he is hypnotized by her every movement, her features, her attire. Margaret feels challenged in his presence, sensing that he demands something of her:

> She had a bracelet on one taper arm, which would fall down over her round wrist. Mr. Thornton watched the re-placing of this troublesome ornament with far more attention than he listened to her father. It seemed as if it fascinated him to see her push it up impatiently, until it tightened her soft flesh; and then to mark the loosening -- the fall...he was almost sorry the obligation of eating and drinking came so soon to prevent his watching Margaret. She handed him his cup of tea with the proud air of an

> unwilling slave; but her eye caught the moment when he was ready for another cup; and he almost longed to ask her to do for him what he saw her compelled to do for her father, who took her little finger and thumb in his masculine hand, and made them serve as sugar-tongs. (NS, 91)

Since she cannot control the situation to suit her terms, Margaret hides behind "her quiet coldness of demeanor" (NS, 71).

Margaret's appreciation of Mr. Thornton slowly begins to change as she learns more about him as a master and as a man. She tells her father that "He is the first specimen of a manufacturer -- of a person engaged in trade -- that I had ever the opportunity of studying, papa. He is my first olive: let me make a face while I swallow it. I know he is good of his kind, and by-and-by I shall like the kind" (NS, 197). Slowly, her prejudices against him are defeated.

But Margaret admits only to a friendship between Thornton and herself. Consequently, when an impulsive action prompts her to try to protect Mr. Thornton from angry strikers, she is frightened and ashamed. Humiliated by being accused of unmaidenly behavior and horrified at the suggestion of being motivated by physical desire, Margaret, in a daze, questions herself:

> 'I, who hate scenes -- I, who despised people for showing emotion -- who have thought them wanting in self-control -- I went down and must needs throw myself into the mêlée, like a romantic fool!...But what possessed me to defend that man as if he were a helpless child! Oh!' said she, clenching her hands together, 'it is no wonder those people thought I was in love with him, after disgracing myself in that way.' (NS, 225-226)

She concludes that she behaved rightly in doing her woman's work: "Let them insult my maiden pride as they will -- I walk

pure before God" (NS, 226).

On the following day, Thornton passionately proposes to Margaret and she is forced to consider the nature of their relationship. She must admit that a powerful force exists between them. She acknowledges his "rock-like power of character, his passion-strength" which enables him to throw off with contempt her conflicting opinions "until she felt the weariness of the exertion of making useless protests." She realizes that their relationship is very different from the relationship she had with Lennox:

> An involuntary comparison between Mr. Lennox and Mr. Thornton arose in her mind. She had been sorry that an expression of any other feeling than friendship had been lured out by circumstances from Henry Lennox. That regret was the predominant feeling, on the first occasion of her receiving a proposal. She had not felt so stunned -- so impressed as she did now, when echoes of Mr. Thornton's voice yet lingered about the room. In Lennox's case, he seemed for a moment to have slid over the boundary between friendship and love; and, the instant afterwards, to regret it nearly as much as she did, although for different reasons. In Mr. Thornton's case, as far as Margaret knew, there was no intervening stage of friendship. Their intercourse had been one continued series of oppositions. (NS, 234)

Intellectual conflict is further complicated by emotional conflict; Margaret does not know what to do now that the

> ...clear conviction dawned upon her, shined bright upon her, that he did love her; that he had loved her; that he would love her. And she shrank and shuddered as under the fascination of some great power, repugnant to her whole previous life. She crept away, and hid from this idea....She diskliked him the more for having mastered her inner will. How dared he say that he would love her still, even though she shook him off with contempt? (NS, 234-235)

Margaret's pride will not allow her to recognize her humanity; her education in self-comprehension must begin.

This southern woman seems so different, so distant, so much more perfect than any one the working girl, Bessy Higgins, has known before that Bessy begins to wonder:

> 'I wonder if there are many folk like her down South. She's like a breath of country air, somehow. She freshens me up above a bit. Wo'd a thought that face -- as bright and as strong as the angel I dream of -- could have known the sorrow she speaks on? I wonder how she'll sin. All on us must sin....' (NS, 163)

This strange foreshadowing is fulfilled. Forced by circumstances to choose between the safety of her brother and the telling of a lie, Margaret's human emotions override her moral conscience. This action is devastating to her self-image. She now has been stripped of her moral pride; she has chosen to do an action more on the motivation of feeling than on an abstract principle. This moral frailty, understood in the light of her recent emotional conflict, brings Margaret to the realization that she is weak in spirit; in fact, she is like all other people, a human being subject to human frailty.

Margaret is now forced to come to terms with the totality of her nature by recognizing her need to be loved. Once disdainful of Thornton, Margaret realizes how much she admires and respects him now that she feels she has lost his respect because he knows that she has lied:

> ...'Oh!' thought she, 'I wish I were a man, that I could go and force him to express his disapprobation, and tell him honestly that I knew I deserved it....' (NS, 367)

But she still refuses to recognize her own feelings about Thornton. However, Margaret is forced to admit that she loves

him at the moment of her deepest humiliation. When Thornton tells her that "any foolish passion on my part is entirely over," Margaret wonders:

> 'What can he mean?...what could he mean by speaking so, as if I were always thinking that he cared for me, when I know he does not; he cannot. His mother will have said all those cruel things about me to him. But I won't care for him. I surely am mistress enough of myself to control this wild, strange, miserable feeling, which tempted me even to betray my own dear Frederick, so that I might but regain his good opinion -- the good opinion of a man who takes such pains to tell me that I am nothing to him. Come! poor little heart! be cheery and brave. We'll be a great deal to one another, if we are thrown off and left desolate.' (NS, 391)

From this point, Margaret is forced to come to terms with the totality of her nature by recognizing her fallibility and her sexuality.

Only when Margaret realizes that she must follow the way of humility in order to achieve self-understanding does the novel reach its climax in relationship to its main theme, the tracing of the growth of the educated self:

> '...I must not think so much of how circumstances affect me myself, but how they affect others, if I wish to have a right judgment, or a hopeful, trustful heart.' (NS, 479)

Now seeing her life in terms of others, she learns:

> 'The way of humility. Ah,' thought Margaret, 'that is what I have missed! But courage, little heart. We will turn back, and by God's help we may find the lost path.' (NS, 412)

Margaret achieves this knowledge during a visit to Helstone with Mr. Bell where she had once, in her mind, lived perfectly. With the shock that Helstone, too, has been subject to change, Margaret arrives at her maturity. Having realized the changes which have taken place in herself and

the physical world, Margaret is able to come to terms with the fact which encourages hope and understanding:

> 'And I too change perpetually -- now this, now that -- now disappointed and peevish because all is not exactly as I had pictured it, and now suddenly discovering that the reality is far more beautiful than I had imagined it....' (NS, 480)

In making the adjustments necessary to appreciate the positive and negative characteristics of these three cultures, Margaret gains deeper insight into herself as an individual and as a participant in society. Her adjustment is an acceptance of the industrial culture in which she presently lives without neglecting to continue to appreciate the qualities of the other two worlds. Margaret recognizes the fact that both she and the world about her are in the process of change; she represents the individual who accepts the changes in his world, realizes the positive and negative influences of such changes, and understands that the past and the present must be accepted for their positive and negative aspects. Margaret learns that right and wrong are relative terms, and that in order for men to understand each other's needs and desires, they must inculcate an understanding of other men's beliefs and values. Cultural dislocation proves to be an opportunity for growth.

Mrs. Gaskell's awareness of the conflicting pressures inherent in the changes demanded of the individual in the nineteenth century is evident in her characterizations

of men and women directly affected by industrial or other contemporary social changes. In these studies, she expresses her views on human nature and the human condition. Certainly Elizabeth Gaskell's perception, personal tone, and sincerity as a novelist distinguish these creations.

CHAPTER FOUR

ABNORMAL PERSONALITY TYPES

Mrs. Gaskell is interested in the complex mental and emotional states of the characters she created who are pulled, pushed, and twisted about by the influences of forces within and without themselves. She also recognizes the relationship between physical and mental states. Her interests in and attitudes towards the development of personality are evident in her own comments in some of her works.

The narrator in Sylvia's Lovers comments on Daniel Robson:

> Since his wife's illness, the previous winter, he had been a more sober man, until now. He was never exactly drunk, for he had a strong, well-seasoned head; but the craving to hear the last news of the actions of the press-gang drew him into Monkshaven nearly every day this dead agricultural season of the year; and a public-house is generally the focus from which gossip radiates; and probably the amount of drink thus consumed weakened Robson's power over his mind, and caused the concentration of thought on one subject. This may be a physiological explanation of what afterwards was spoken of as a supernatural kind of possession, leading him to his doom (SL, 268);

and on Bell Robson:

> Ever since Daniel's committal, the decay that had imperceptibly begun in his wife's bodily and mental strength during her illness of the previous winter had been making quicker progress. She lost her reticence of speech, and often talked to herself. She had not so much forethought as of old.... (SL, 324)

Mrs. Gaskell is aware of the process of analytical reasoning as contrasted with intuitive awareness as an ex-

planation of motivation. This is indicated by the narrator's comment in speaking of Sylvia, who is considering Kester's behavior:

> She had guessed some of the causes which kept him from greeting them on their first return. But it was not as if she had shaped these causes into the definite form of words. It is astonishing to look back and find how differently constituted were the minds of most people, fifty or sixty years ago; they felt, they understood, without going through reasoning or analytic processes; and, if this was the case among the more educated people, of course it was still more so in the class to which Sylvia belonged. She knew by some sort of intuition.... (SL, 336)

Other sources of information about Mrs. Gaskell's observations of the influences on the development of the individual include her work My Diary: The Early Years of My Daughter Marianne, which shows her attempts to define Marianne mentally, physically, and spiritually. Her concern with a balanced development in the child suggests that she recognized a correlation in these parts of the human being. Her understanding of complex natures is also attested to by the fact that Reverend Patrick Brontë requested that the life of his daughter Charlotte be written by Mrs. Gaskell, whose understanding and sympathy would enable her to present an accurate portrait of Charlotte as a woman. That he was satisfied with the study of the complex personality of his daughter is clear in a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Gaskell:

> Though past eighty years old and unfit for the task I would have undertaken to write the memoir of my dear daughter's life, if you had not acceded to my request to do it. You were the fittest person, and you have done the work in such a way as no person but you could have done it.[1]

The Life of Charlotte Brontë (1857) was written with an aware-

ness of the influence of environment on the development of the personality. The introductory pages are devoted to a detailed and critical description of Yorkshire and its inhabitants. It is evident throughout the work that Mrs. Gaskell was impressed by the influence of the howling wind, constant rain, barren moors, and open sky upon the isolated Brontës. Also, Mrs. Gaskell's sympathetic interest in people, her role as wife and mother, writer, hostess, and social worker, and her wide reading, and travel experiences enriched her understanding of the human being and the strain he undergoes in trying to function successfully as a social and moral individual. This knowledge and interest led Mrs. Gaskell to undertake the motivational analyses of her characters and the examination of normal and abnormal personality types.

Personality, often used synonymously with character, refers to the sum total of the patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior that an individual habitually employs in his on-going adaptation to life. Normal personality implies a state of the greatest possible fulfillment of the individual in terms of his adaptation to adult reality. For many people, personality development involves a process of becoming psychologically rigid and of making peace with one's own illogicalities, eccentricities, and follies. As a result, there is a certain loss of freedom of thought and action which prevents the formation of symptoms which can be observed. The structural rigidities of personality of-

ten conceal deep-seated diseases of the mind. Under stressful conditions sufficient to disrupt these structures, severe symptom formation, including mental disorders affecting the total personality, may erupt.[2]

Mrs. Gaskell's interest in character, which includes the analysis of the individual who functions within the bounds of a stabilized personality, also includes those personality types forced to the breaking point of their tolerance. Mrs. Gaskell's main concern in the evaluation of an individual's psychological state is with actual life performance rather than with the symptoms which are displayed. The important question is not whether the character has psychopathology but whether the psychopathology 'has' him. In evaluating the individual, Mrs. Gaskell makes inquiry into the areas of family, work, play, and community in order to examine the character functioning in a specific role. The effectiveness with which the character performs this role is a measure of mental health, just as impairments in these areas are a measure of life pattern disturbances and mental illness. Mrs. Gaskell's ability to show these states is a measurement of her success in the psychological interpretation of character. Her careful analyses of the abnormal personality types are distinctive contributions to literature. In this section, a study is made of some of Mrs. Gaskell's analyses of abnormal personality types: Miss Matty, the central old maid character in Cranford; Molly Gibson, the heroine of Wives and Daughters; Sylvia Robson and Philip

Hepburn, the unhappily married couple in Sylvia's Lovers.

I believe that in the work Cranford, in which the central interest -- the concentration on the change in Miss Matty's character -- supports the theme of change in the story, Mrs. Gaskell certainly takes a firm hand in developing a credible portrait of Miss Matty as a repressed personality type, whose actions and motives are rendered coherent through the detailed analysis of her behavioral traits.

A synopsis of the present-day interpretation of the characteristics of the behavioral disorder of repression is given here so that the points made in the following discussion of Miss Matty's specific repressive traits can be more fully appreciated in relationship to the whole portrait of the repressed personality type.

> In individuals who are prone to anxiety attacks, unacceptable sexual and aggressive thoughts, feelings, and impulses are ordinarily excluded from conscious awareness through the process of repression. In repression, one simply fails to see, hear, or attend to threatening stimuli, whether they arise in terms of internal pressures (intolerable wishes, impulses, or ideas) or external threats (emanating more directly from other people). This process goes on unconsciously; the person is no more aware of repressing something than he is of forgetting something. Unlike material that is forgotten, however, repressed material continues to seek expression through derivative behavior that often takes the form of disruptive symptoms.... Although repression leaves the individual perennially immature, naive and unreflective, it may work tolerably well in protecting the individual from experiencing excessive anxiety without resulting in gross distortion of reality. In certain situations, repression fails to serve this purpose, because of either the nature of the external threat or the nature of internal pressure arising from intolerable wishes. The failure of repression then gives rise to directly experienced anxiety and its physical manifestations.[3]

In keeping with the characteristics of the repressed

personality type, Miss Matty shows an unconscious wish to be taken care of and to have her dependency needs satisfied. Her elder sister, Miss Deborah Jenkyns, is both a 'good mother,' who protects Miss Matty from her fears, and a 'bad mother,' whose presence reassures Miss Matty that her own impulses will never fully reveal themselves. If Miss Matty, called by this familiar name only after Deborah's death, writes a letter and ventures into giving an opinion of her own, she is frightened by her show of independence and begs the reader "not to name what she had said, as Deborah thought differently, and she knew"; or in a postscript there "probably followed a recantation of every opinion she had given in the letter" (C, 14). In writing to Miss Smith,"Miss Matty humbly apologised for writing at the same time as her sister, who was so much more capable than she to describe the honour done to Cranford" (C, 16). Although both sisters buy the new carpet for the living room, it is Miss Matty, aided by Miss Smith, who, under Miss Jenkyns' supervision, "were very busy...one whole morning, before Miss Jenkyns gave her party, in following her directions" to make paper paths for the visitors to follow over the carpet (C, 16). Miss Jenkyns expects Miss Matty's maid-like services; she directs Matty's activities and Miss Matty is dependent upon her sister's whims. Miss Jenkyns makes the rules for living and she also feels free to rework them to suit her own pleasure.

Even after Deborah's death Matty continues to be-

have like a typically repressed personality type; she suffers from feelings of inadequacy: "since my dear sister's death I am well aware I have no attractions to offer; it is only to the kindness of my friends that I owe their company" (C, 28). She also suffers intense guilt feelings about her sister's death. Realizing that she was often critical of her sister, Matty now tries to compensate for this deficiency: "Miss Jenkyns's rules were made more stringent than ever, because the framer of them was gone where there could be no appeal" (C, 32). Miss Matty is nervous, tearful, and regretful during Miss Smith's visit after Deborah's death. Matty continues to find her own inadequacies as she considers her sister's talents. Never before left to do anything independently, Miss Matty is incapable of making decisions. The problems with servants and household cares are often too much for her; she is befuddled by a male visitor, the training of servants, the keeping of household traditions, and the enforcement of domestic regulations. Miss Smith remarks that the ways of the house "were religiously such as Miss Matilda thought her sister would approve. Many a domestic rule and regulation had been a subject of plaintive whispered murmur to me during Miss Jenkyns's life; but now that she was gone, I do not think that I...durst have suggested an alteration" (C, 30).

Miss Jenkyns' role is not limited to that of an authority figure. Martin Dodsworth, in his article "Women

Without Men in Cranford," states that Miss Jenkyns has a "hidden desire to equal the male" and that this tendency is dealt with "in terms of sexual perversion, disguised in the familiar form of the practical joke."[4] Her brother

> Peter Jenkyns dresses up in woman's clothes not once, but twice, particularly addressing his affront to Deborah Jenkyns, who believes women are superior to men. His appearance in her clothes nursing the likeness of a baby is a blow at both Cranford's sexual repression and its gentility (since the baby would be illegitimate).[5]

Dodsworth does not suggest that Miss Jenkyns' envy of the male may be attributed to her childhood experiences. But it should be noted that Miss Jenkyns was the child who replaced her brother Peter in her father's affection; she learned quickly, performed obediently, and enjoyed following the conventional path, and these qualities gained her his favor. Of course, Deborah never has the same love for her brother as did Matty since her place in the estimation of her father is dependent upon Peter's. When Peter came home once after having run away in disgrace, Miss Matty recalls that "Deborah used to smile...and say she was quite put in a corner. Not but what my father always wanted her when there was letter-writing or reading to be done, or anything to be settled" (C, 71). Deborah's place as favorite child, beloved by her father whom she greatly admired, would have made it difficult for her to give up this role. Miss Matty recalls that "Deborah said to me, the day of my mother's funeral, that if she had a hundred offers she would never marry and leave my father. It was not very likely she would have so

many -- I don't know that she had one..." (C, 70). Deborah shows herself to be a conventional figure with a father fixation in her behavior towards her sister while Matty is being courted by Mr. Holbrook. Using her father as the measurement and epitome of the male, Miss Jenkyns can not approve of the unconventional Mr. Holbrook as a family relation.

An understanding of Holbrook is important because his relations with Miss Matty further the understanding of her character. The description of Holbook when he meets Matty by chance after many years emphasizes the individuality for which he had been criticized by Miss Jenkyns and which he still possesses. The description is of an independent, strong personality type, an individual -- a rebel:

> He would not allow himself to be called Thomas Holbrook, Esq.; he even sent back letters with this address, telling the postmistress at Cranford that his name was Mr. Thomas Holbrook, yeoman. He rejected all domestic innovations; he would have the house door stand open in summer and shut in winter, without knocker or bell to summon a servant. The closed fist or the knob of the stick did this office for him if he found the door locked. He despised every refinement which had not its root deep down in humanity. If people were not ill, he saw no necessity for moderating his voice. He spoke the dialect of the country in perfection, and constantly used it in conversation; although...he read aloud more beautifully and with more feeling than any one...except the late rector. (C, 34)

His home reflects his interest:

> The rest of the pretty sitting-room...was filled with books. They lay on the ground, they covered the walls, they strewed the table....He evidently chose his books [which did not include a Johnson work] in accordance with his own tastes, not because such and such were classical or established favourites. (C, 39)

His conversation reflects his poetic soul:

'...Now, what colour are ashbuds in March?'

. . . . . .

'I knew you didn't. No more did I -- an old fool that I am! -- till this young man comes and tells me. Black as ash-buds in March. And I've lived all my life in the country; more shame for me not to know. Black! they are jet-black, madam.' And he went off again, swinging along to music of some rhyme he had got hold of. (C, 42)

Holbrook's ability to respond spontaneously and willingly to the joy and adventure of life is reflected in his long postponed visit to Paris. In the city of which he dreamed in his youth, he sickens; and he dies soon upon returning home where, for many days, he sat "with his hands on his knees in the counting-house, not reading or anything, but only saying what a wonderful city Paris was!" (C, 46). His death at this time may indicate that he has fulfilled the dreams of his life, or, more likely, that he experiences the destruction of his self-image in coming face to face in the dream city Paris with the possibilities of living he had destroyed or been denied during his lifetime.

The fact that Miss Matty is attractive to such a character as Holbrook suggests a streak of imagination and spirit which must have been characteristic of her when she was a pretty young girl. Miss Matty is affected by the chance meeting with Holbrook, and when she returns home she "went straight to her room, and never came back till our early tea-time, when...she looked as if she had been crying" (C, 36). The invitation to lunch with Holbrook is almost refused on the principle that "She did not think Deborah would have liked her to go" (C, 37), and when the date ar-

rives, Miss Matty "was in a state of silent agitation all the way to Woodley" (C, 37). Mr. Holbrook is at ease in his home; the food is simple, eating habits are relaxed if not proper: "the peas were going wholesale into his capacious mouth, shovelled up by his large, round-ended knife" (C, 40). "After dinner, a clay pipe was brought in, and a spitoon;... he presented his pipe to Miss Matty, and requested her to fill the bowl." This was a compliment to a lady in his youth; but it

> was rather inappropriate to propose it as an honour to Miss Matty, who had been trained by her sister to hold smoking of every kind in utter abhorrence. But, if it was a shock to her refinement, it was also a gratification to her feelings to be thus selected; so she daintily stuffed the strong tobacco into the pipe....(C, 40)

Miss Matty's willing response shows again her spark of independence and individuality. She does not call Mr. Holbrook's manner uncouth, feeling that it is "too hard a word. I should call him eccentric; very clever people always are" (C, 41). Her ease and enjoyment in a man's presence is naturally expressed: "It is very pleasant dining with a bachelor"; but her inhibitions make her frightened, "I only hope it is not improper; so many pleasant things are!" (C, 40-41). Miss Smith speculates that "the remembrance of Matty's youth had come very vividly before her this day, and she was annoyed at finding that golden time so far away in the past" (C, 43). That Miss Matty still cares and hopes for the tenderness of Mr. Holbrook shows in her "wearing her best cap every day, and [she] sat near the

window, in spite of her rheumatism, in order to see, without being seen, down into the street. He came" (C, 43-44).

But he came only for a farewell before leaving for Paris. His trip and his sickness upon return wear on Miss Matty's health because she must repress her feelings for him. That she has been thinking regretfully on the past is reflected in her overemphasis of the good points of her late sister, whose influence stopped her relationship with Holbrook. But Matty's sincere love for Holbrook reveals itself in her wearing something in the fashion of a widow's cap for him after his death; her understanding of the great loss she has suffered through the influence of others and through her own inability to assert her will is compensated for in her allowing the servant Martha to entertain a follower, an act prohibited by Deborah's decree, but which Matty violates because of her new understanding: "God forbid...that I should grieve any young hearts" (C, 48).

The first section of Cranford has been shown to be concerned with developing the character of Miss Matty by showing the motives behind her actions which illustrate her repressions. It has also developed the character of Miss Matty to the point at which she gains some knowledge of herself as a person responsible for her actions to others and to herself. I believe that Cranford is structured in parts which deal with the changes in Miss Matty. In the second section, chapters V and VI, Miss Matty's attempts to confront her past with honesty, and her efforts to salvage what

is important and meaningful to her life are examined. She searches for the causes of her abnormal behavior and in facing them she is able to realize herself more fully as an individual.

Miss Matty and Miss Smith spend several evenings reading old family letters. The early love letters of Miss Matty's parents show the foolishness and tenderness of courtship days and the later ones reflect the more serious problems of parenthood. Matty's love for her gentle mother is revealed and the strictness and partiality of her father come to light. Reading Deborah's "superior" letters proves to be an emotionally difficult experience for Matty, who by now, to her own displeasure, is critical of her sister. Matty talks about "poor Peter," her brother, and tells of the plans which were built around him and the results he did not achieve. Miss Matty understands mischievous Peter who allowed her to share his secrets. She vividly recounts the story of Peter fooling his father into believing that he, dressed in women's clothing, was an admiring female church member who was interested in the rector's one published Assize Sermon. Again, the spark of humor and adventure and the repression of them are evident in Matty's account that Peter told her stories in "very bad language, my dear, but Peter was not always so guarded as he should have been; my father was so angry with him, it nearly frightened me out of my wits: and yet I could hardly keep from laughing..." (C, 61). The stories of brother Peter bring to light the

terrible emotional shock Miss Matty undergoes when he ran away from home after having been beaten in public by his father. Just as the severance of the attachment with Holbrook leads to Matty's physical decline, her "screams (my horrible laughter had ended in crying)" (C, 67) are hysterical after the loss of Peter.

In these situations, Miss Matty represses her real feelings and conforms to the standard behavior set in Cranford. Just as the first section of the novel, in which Matty realizes the loss of her happy past, ends with her allowing a freedom to her servant, this section of the work dealing with Matty's recollection of her repressions ends with the sound of Martha and Jem kissing: if the natural expression of her feelings has been denied to Matty, at least she can now allow others to enjoy it. Matty's regret for the past which has been lost in all its happiness and tenderness is made more vivid by the presence and acceptance of it by Martha and Jem.

Miss Matty's tale falls into the background during the next several episodes of the third section of the novel in which the idiosyncrasies and adventures of the ladies of Cranford are emphasized. But the few points made about Matty are rather interesting in their relationship to her change in personality.

The story of her rolling a penny ball under her bed in order to search for men hiding under it shows Matty's fear "that is often considered characteristic of old maids,

and is here given a strangely concrete quality -- the fear that there will be a man under her bed who might catch hold of her leg, 'just as she was getting into bed'."[6] But the same penny ball is again referred to under a different circumstance which indicates Matty's change from her frightened past self to a person capable of confronting reality; she is no longer frightened of a man as a hidden evil because she now more naturally and openly accepts the possibility of male-female relationships. Miss Matty covers the penny ball with "gay-coloured worsted in rainbow stripes" for the little Brunoni child because "she looks as if she had never had a good game of play in her life. I used to make very pretty balls in this way when I was a girl, and I thought I would try if I could not make this one smart and take it to Phoebe this afternoon" (C, 126). Miss Matty is again trying to shake off the abnormalities in her personality in an attempt to rediscover the natural values she had in her youth.

Matty also makes progress in asserting her true feelings when she is able to admit the truth that "she remembered the time when she had looked forward to being married as much as any one....I may say that there was a time when I did not think I should have been only Miss Matty Jenkyns all my life; for even if I did meet with any one who wished to marry me now...and he is dead and gone, and he never knew how it all came about that I said 'No,' when I had thought many and many a time -- Well, it's no matter

what I thought" (C, 127-128). Although she still cannot make a candid statement of her true feelings and even though it is too late to act, Miss Matty is now partially able to express regret for repressing her feelings.

The full sadness of Miss Matty's faded, wasted life of repression is made clear:

> 'My father once made us,' she began, 'to keep a diary, in two columns; on one side we were to put down in the morning what we thought would be the course and events of the coming day, and at night we were to put down on the other side what really had happened. It would be to some people rather a sad way of telling their lives' (a tear dropped upon my hand at these words) -- 'I don't mean that mine has been sad, only so very different to what I expected.' (C, 128)

The fourth section of Cranford, chapters XIII and XIV, deals with Matty's attempts to function independently.

Miss Matty's inability to make a strong decision, which will have consequent results, is made clear after she suffers economic disaster. It is evident that her weakness in asserting herself has been and is her behavorial trait; only in the particular can she react. The virtues which make her admirable, "her patience, her humility, her sweetness, her quiet contentment with all that she could not do" (C, 158), are not the virtues that make her an effective person in a practical sense. Limited vision makes it impossible for her to weigh her behavior in the light of long range goals:

> '...I never feel as if my mind was what people call very strong; and it's often hard enough work for me to settle what I ought to do with the case right before me...it's rather a strain upon me to keep thinking and thinking what I should do if such and such a thing happened; and, I be-

> lieve, I had rather wait and see what really does come;.... You know, love, I'm not like Deborah.' (C, 151)

Repression has left her "perennially immature, naive and unreflective," but it also works tolerably well in protecting her from experiencing excessive anxiety. The return of Peter to Cranford provides Matty, a repressed personality type, with the protector she needs.

The happy reunion which greets Peter's arrival in Cranford in the closing section of the story has been criticized for being artificial. Admittedly a staged ending, it seems, however, to be in harmony with the tale which in no way pretends to be realistic. The details of the story and the characters are particular and credible, but the tone is that of a fairy tale in which the 'Once upon a time' phrase introduces us to a world in the past which is considered worth remembering for its significance and relationship to the present and future. In Cranford, the values of a bygone age, respect, obedience, gentility, authority, class, are aspects of a society now gone. This bygone age is respected for its fine values; but, as shown in the story of Miss Matty, whose repression of her own inclinations to the demands of her society has cost her the living of her own individual life, the past is not seen as a perfect time. Instead, the present is represented as all important, for it is in the present that people must live. Tastes, habits, and beliefs have changed in the process of the story, and if some of the values of the past have been lost, the loss is regretted. But the vital, complex, changing present is what

must occupy the individual, for in the present there is change; the world, people, and things are constantly in the process of change. When Peter and Matty meet at the end of the tale, they are representative of two approaches to life. Peter defied Cranford conventions and rules and went out to meet the world; to all appearances, he is happy in his life. He is still critical of those elements in Cranford society which inhibit the individual, as is shown in his question to Matty: "Do you know, little Matty, I could have sworn you were on the high road to matrimony when I left England that last time!...You must have played your cards badly, my little Matty, somehow or another -- " (C, 187). Matty does not answer, but she shivers with the thought of her sterile response to life. Matty's obedience and conformity may be seen as noble submissions to the demands of her life, but her personal reward is only a vicarious participation in the joys of life.

If Cranford tells anything about the process of change in life, it is that change is a positive reality; that the flux of life is continuous. Only in the assertion of self and the definition of goals can an individual try to hold steady in shifting time. It is the individual's right and duty to choose and determine his mode and manner of existence. Cranford illustrates the belief that all is flux; that the past becomes the present and the present is the past in its own moment. What is past must be appreciated and evaluated in the light of the present. Again, Mrs.

Gaskell confirms a positive philosophy which respects the old and values the new.

The process of change in life is also a theme in the novel Wives and Daughters. The structure of this work parallels the stages of development in the education of self which the heroine, Molly Gibson, experiences. The first section is concerned with Molly's childhood and background; in the second section the crisis of her father's remarriage rudely awakens her to problems of reality and she tries to mature and relate to the adult world. The third phase of Molly's education is concerned with her relations within the Gibson and Hamley homes, and the final chapters reveal Molly moving in the adult world.

There is also a metaphorical structure to the novel which creates a fairy-tale pattern. The Towers is the castle where Molly visits and where, to her anguish, she meets the 'witch,' Mrs. Kirkpatrick. Molly flees the castle and is rescued by her 'knight,' her father, and they anticipate spending happy days together. But the 'witch' becomes Molly's step-mother and Molly's problems begin. Her life is further complicated by the 'naughty step-sister,' Cynthia. Only with the help of Roger, a sincere friend, but an 'ugly duckling,' does Molly manage to learn how to deal with the reality of life, aided by the advice of her 'fairy godmother,' Lady Harriet. After a while and after

many problems, Roger and Molly meet by chance, and the help of the 'fairy godmother,' in the castle, the Towers. Roger sees Molly as transformed into a beautiful Princess, and she sees him as her trusted, noble Prince Charming. And, of course, they should live happily ever after.

But the story of Molly's self-education is not so simple. It seems to me that she is one of Mrs. Gaskell's more subtle creations because of the complex motivational analysis which is made of her development. Mrs. Gaskell attempts to show why and how Molly makes her adjustment to life. In this process in which Molly's behavior is carefully examined, a commentary on the effect of the adjustment is given, and an interesting insight into Mrs. Gaskell's vision of life is achieved.[7]

In the introductory chapters of the novel, the characterization of the little girl Molly indicates the bases for the development of her dependent personality. Also, the specific incidents from Molly's childhood are important in relation to the personality traits she shows as a maturing woman. The interpretation of Molly as an abnormal personality type is not made simply in relation to a specific period or a specific event in her life, but it is based on the whole person of Molly as she develops through the novel. Seen in this way, the character of Molly may be interpreted in psychological terms specifically related to her personal psychic development.

The timidity and self-consciousness Molly exhibits

as a child is never outgrown. Her first visit to the Towers agitates her, and since "It was very awful, as Molly thought, ...she half wished herself at home again" (WD, 12); "the thought of the familiar happiness of home brought such a choking in her throat, that she felt she must not give way to it, for fear of bursting out crying; and she had instinct enough to feel that, as she was left at the Towers, the less trouble she gave, the more she kept herself out of observation, the better" (WD, 54). These reactions evoked in Molly as a child in a strange atmosphere are similar to the ones she shows as a young woman, this time, ironically, in a situation in her own home, where she now does not completely fit: "Molly could stand it no longer [Mrs. Gibson's upbraiding]; she went upstairs to her own room -- her own smart new room, which hardly yet seemed a familiar place; and began to cry so heartily and for so long a time, that she stopped at length for very weariness" (WD, 216).

Molly's terror of being observed is shown as a child when she is required to thank Lady Cumnor for her hospitality:

> Yes! she was there -- forty feet away -- a hundred miles away! All that blank space had to be crossed; and then a speech to be made!
> 'Must I go?' asked Molly, in the most pitiful and pleading voice possible. (WD, 25)

This same distaste for exposure in a sensitive moment occurs again later:

> 'Now, you must play a little, Molly,' said Mrs. Gibson; 'play us that beautiful piece of Kalkbrenner's, my dear.'
> Molly looked up at her stepmother with beseeching eyes;

but it only brought out another form of request, still more like a command. (WD, 313)

On both occasions, Mrs. Gibson does not give Molly the assistance she needs, and at both times Molly distances herself further from a trusting relationship with her: "Molly did not know how it was afterwards, but she pulled her hand out of Mrs. Kirkpatrick's on hearing these words ..."; "'There, now I've done!' said Molly, standing up quickly as soon as she had finished the eighteen dreary pages; 'and I think I will never sit down to play again'."

As a child, Molly wishes to please people: " Please, papa -- I do wish to go -- but I don't care about it " (WD, 7); she prefers to be alone: "she lost all consciousness of herself by-and-by when the party strolled out into the beautiful grounds" (WD, 12); she is obedient: "Molly did as she was bid" (WD, 16); she is simple and trusting: Lord Cumnor "had no idea of the misery his jokes were to the sensitive girl" (WD, 22). These traits are to be reflected in the woman.

Because she is basically non-assertive, Molly's passiveness is complemented by a more dominant personality. As a child, Molly naturally depends on her father, her only parent. They build a satisfying, secure relationship upon understanding and love.

In the introductory scenes, Molly anticipates her first visit to the Towers without her father. During the festivities she discovers that she is experiencing "a dis-

mal day of pleasure." Her unhappiness and insecurity are relieved temporarily by a retreat to a natural harbor in the gardens where she finds calm in her anxious state:

> She saw a great wide-spreading cedar-tree upon a burst of lawn towards which she was advancing, and the black repose beneath its branches lured her thither. There was a rustic seat in the shadow, and weary Molly sat down there, and presently fell asleep. (WD, 13)

When Molly is rescued from the Towers by her father, their treasured, intimate relationship is revealed. At the Towers she "felt like a lighted candle when they're putting the extinguisher on it" (WD, 27), but now, riding in the protection and care of her father she feels the joy of the open fresh air. And when she is hesitant about her security she cries for the help she knows is there:

> 'Papa! are you there? I can't see you.'
> He rode close up alongside of her: he was not sure but what she might be afraid of riding in the dark shadows, so he laid his hand upon hers.
> 'Oh! I am so glad to feel you,' squeezing his hand hard. 'Papa, I should like to get a chain like Ponto's, just as long as your longest round, and then I could fasten us two to each end of it, and when I wanted you I could pull, and if you didn't want to come, you could pull back again; but I should know you knew I wanted you, and we could never lose each other!' (WD, 27)

But her father's decision to remarry isolates his dependent daughter who feels rejected: "'You don't know what we were to each other -- at least, what he was to me,' she said humbly" (WD, 131). The break in the father-daughter relationship never fully repairs itself. Molly feels that she has lost her first place in the affections of her father. The old feeling in their love relationship returns only temporarily while Mrs. Gibson and Cynthia are gone to London.

Molly and her father, who in the past always enjoyed riding down the lanes together while the doctor made his rounds, again enjoy these intimate moments of pleasure:

> 'Somehow' all Molly's wishes came to pass, there was only one little drawback to this week of holiday and happy intercourse with her father. Everybody would ask them out to tea. They were quite like bride and bridegroom.... (WD, 511)

But the honeymoon lasts only until Mrs. Gibson returns and intrudes upon the private, intimate character of the father-daughter relationship.

Molly's first experience with the feelings of rejection by her father's decision to remarry are made somewhat easier to bear because she finds that Roger Hamley provides her with a new reason for living. It is in the natural retreat to which she has fled in her sorrow, as she did when a child, that Molly admits her problems to Roger:

> She went quickly on to the bourne which she had fixed for herself -- a seat almost surrounded by the drooping leaves of a weeping-ash -- a seat on the long broad terrace walk on the other side of the wood,...
>
> When she had once got to the seat she broke out with the suppressed passion of grief. She did not care to analyse the sources of her tears and sobs -- her father was going to be married again -- her father was angry with her; she had done very wrong -- he had gone away displeased; she had lost his love....She had cast herself on the ground...and leant up against the old moss-grown seat; sometimes burying her face in her hands; sometimes clasping them together, as if by the tight painful grasp of her fingers she could deaden mental suffering. (WD, 128)

Roger tries to show Molly that the marriage to Mrs. Kirkpatrick will give her father "a pleasant companion," but she objects: "He had me." The change in Molly's dependent relationship with her father and the beginning of the influence

of Roger in her life is suggested: "So they remained in silence for a little while; he breaking off and examining one or two abnormal leaves of the ash-tree..." (WD, 133). At this point, Roger takes on the role of her guide and director and Molly begins to depend on his continuing in the role of a counselling friend.

Roger shares his philosophy with her and advises that she should think of "her father's happiness before she thought of her own."

> 'It is right to hope for the best about everybody, and not to expect the worst. This sounds like a truism, but it has comforted me before now, and some day you'll find it useful. One has always to try to think more of others than of oneself, and it is best not to prejudge people on the bad side. My sermons aren't long, are they?' (WD, 133)

Molly enthusiastically embraces Roger's philosophy of thinking of the happiness of others rather than her own. However, Molly discovers that its application is extremely difficult for her. Molly's pride and temper were indicated in her childhood behavior. At the Towers, she reacts to Mrs. Kirkpatrick's officiousness: "Molly grew hotter and hotter as these last words met her ear. If they would only leave her alone, and not labour at being kind to her; would 'not trouble themselves' about her!" (WD, 23). Annoyed by an impertinence spoken to her governess, "the girl flew out in such a violent passion of words in defence of her silent trembling governess, that even Betty herself was daunted ..." (WD, 37). Later, Molly herself reflects that since she "had been once or twice called saucy and impertinent" (WD, 170),

she had better change her ways. "She had often been called naughty and passionate when she was a child; and she thought now that she began to understand that she really had a violent temper" (WD, 363). Molly's impertinence may be only that she is frank; she is told by Lady Harriet, "You at least are simple and truthful ..." (WD, 185). But just as her governess thought best to "reprove Molly for giving way to her passion" (WD, 37), Molly continues to entertain the belief that it is better at all times to control oneself. Thus it is that "Molly bit her lips to prevent herself from saying something disagreeable" (WD, 198), that she tries to assuage Mrs. Gibson with "'Papa had said I might go,' but choking a little " (WD, 214); that "It was pretty hard work for her to keep the tears out of her eyes; and she endeavoured to think of something else rather than dwell on regrets and annoyances" (WD, 214); that she corrects herself: "'I don't like,' said Molly, in a low voice. 'I think papa wouldn't like it'" (WD, 219); that "She put down her book on the table very softly, and turned to leave the room, choking down her tears until she was in the solitude of her own chamber" (WD, 242). Molly's adoption of a code based on self-abnegation runs counter to her nature and the repressions of her feelings which "had been overwrought for some time past, without finding the natural vent in action" (WD, 242) lead to a physical breakdown.

In a conversation with Roger Hamley, Molly tells of her objections to the philosophy of living for others:

'It will be very dull when I shall have killed myself, as it were, and live only in trying to do, and to be, as other people like. I don't see any end of it. I might as well never have lived. And as for the happiness you speak of, I shall never be happy again.' (WD, 154)

And she speaks rightly. Molly destroys her individual self in the process of living for her father, Mrs. Gibson, Cynthia, and Roger. Functioning in relation to their wills, she cannot develop into a person with individual wishes, desires, and goals which she might aim to fulfill. Molly walks in the shadow of others, dependent on their will. She is a child.

Molly considers Roger as a brother. The lack of sexual communication in such a relationship makes it possible for Molly to continue to be protected, loved, and guided in the same manner with Roger as she was with her father. There is no need for her to grow up and to face the existence of the reality of love and womanhood because she remains the child who must be petted, guided, taught, and counselled. Molly is unaware of the development of her romantic interest in Roger. During an evening at the Brownings, Roger falls victim to Cynthia's charms. Molly must overlook the animated conversation going on between Roger and Cynthia from her place with the children. Although she realizes that she has a keen interest in the subjects which Roger is discussing with Cynthia and although her anxiety is reflected in her thinking that the game and the evening would never end, Molly does not analyze her reasons for her discontent. She accepts as a child does the loss of his

parents' interest in him when they are absorbed in conversation with adults. When Roger is departing for his scientific mission, he says good-bye to Cynthia first, and Molly fears that he will forget to say good-bye to her. It is into the mind of a child that we enter when we listen to Molly's thoughts:

> Just then she heard nearer sounds; an opened door, steps on the lower flight of stairs. He could not have gone without even seeing her. He never, never would have done so cruel a thing -- never would have forgotten poor little Molly, however happy he might be! No! there were steps and voices, and the drawing-room door was opened and shut once more. She laid down her head on her arms that rested upon the window-sill, and cried -- she had been so distrustful as to have let the idea enter her mind that he could go without wishing her good-bye -- her, whom his mother had so loved, and called by the name of his little dead sister. (WD, 433)

Her thoughts may be those of a little girl but her impulsive actions are those of a girl in love:

> She felt the slackened touch of the warm grasping hand; she looked up...and the place was empty where he had been ...and then as quick as lightning Molly ran up to the front attic -- the lumber-room, whose window commanded the street down which he must pass...
>
> 'I must see him again; I must! I must!' she wailed out....' (WD, 436)

Cynthia suspects Molly's love for Roger and asks, "...what's the matter with you? One might think you cared for him yourself."

> 'I?' said Molly, all the blood rushing to her heart suddenly; then it returned, and she had courage to speak, and she spoke the truth as she believed it, though not the real actual truth. (WD, 438)

Molly reveals a lover's tenderness when she reads the first letter from Roger:

> [she] took the letter, the thought crossing her mind that he had touched it, had had his hands upon it, in those far dis-

tant desert lands, where he might be lost to sight and to any human knowledge of his fate. (WD, 479-480)

Molly's sublimated desire for Roger causes her deep anxiety which manifests itself in her fretful sleep:

> Molly was not in strong health, and perhaps this made her a little fanciful; but certain it is that her thoughts by day and her dreams by night were haunted by the idea of Roger lying ill and unattended in those savage lands.... (WD, 480)

She is willing to sacrifice herself for the sake of the welfare of the loved object and prays,

> 'Grant that he may come home safe, and live happily with her whom he loves so tenderly -- so tenderly, O God.' And she would burst into tears, and drop asleep at last, sobbing. (WD, 480)

Now her thoughts of Roger are mixed between a brother image and a love object, but Molly is still unaware of the significance and existence of the latter dependency. In a conversation with Cynthia she admits that it was

> ' ...Roger, who told me how I ought to take papa's marriage, when I first startled and grieved at the news. Oh, Cynthia, what a great thing it is to be loved by him!' (WD, 508)

Molly's dependent personality, reflected in her assuming the role of a child,prevents her developing an awareness of her own sexuality and the influence of physcial desire in the relations between men and women. Evidence of this omission in Molly's development is presented literally and symbolically in the scene in which Molly encounters Cynthia and Mr. Preston passionately arguing in a lonely wooded area. The experience might have provided Molly with an initiation into the comprehension of the sexual life, but she remains unaware of Cynthia and Mr. Preston represent-

ing forces stronger than their individual persons; she does not see the clash between men and women, spirit and flesh, will and desire.

When Molly leaves her father after the dog-cart ride, she must follow a route home which symbolically suggests an initiation from the uncomplicated path of innocence to the complex approach to an understanding of the existence of good-in-evil:

> The loneliest part of the road was the first -- the lane, the wood, the little bridge, and the clambering through the upland fields. But Molly cared little for loneliness.
>
> She entered the wood. As she turned a corner in the lonely path, she heard a psssionate voice of distress....She stood still and looked around....There were some thick holly bushes shining out dark green in the midst of the amber and scarlet foliage. If anyone was there, it must be behind these. So Molly left the path, and went straight, plunging through the brown tangled growth of ferns and underwood, and turned the holly bushes [sic]. There stood Mr. Preston and Cynthia; he holding her hands tight.... (WD, 533-534)

Molly never understands the sexual and emotional attraction and ties between Cynthia and Mr. Preston; she does not perceive the rough expression of the male ego which seeks to dominate the female who is under his control. Molly's reaction is like a child's who sees only two types of people, those he knows and those he does not, who represent to him the good and the bad. Her evaluation of the situation and relationship between Cynthia and Mr. Preston is devoid of subtlety since she fails to catch the innuendoes of the male-female situation.

The conversation between Cynthia and Mr. Preston (WD, 531-541) is replete with barter imagery: " you pro-

mised long ago to be my wife "; " I will go if Cynthia tells me "; "He brought the water, and Cynthia drank"; " I think I have some letters that would convince Miss Gibson of the truth; I shall only be too glad to explain to Mr. Gibson on what terms I stand in relation to her "; " lent me money at my need, and made me give you a promise of marriage "; " If you will but keep your word, and marry me, I'll swear I'll make you love me in return "; " I wish I'd never borrowed that unlucky money...I thought if I could but repay it, it would set me free "; " You seem to imply you sold yourself for twenty pounds "; " I did not sell myself; I liked you then. But oh, how I do hate you now! " Molly does not catch the tone of the argument which is influenced by the vocabulary in this exchange of dialogue; she is unaware of what it is that is being bought and sold, given and taken back. Even when she goes at Cynthia's request unwillingly to demand the return of the letters from Preston

> ...and still more unwillingly she began to be afraid that she herself might be led into the practice [of deceit]...she would try and walk in a straight path; and if she did wander out of it, it should only be to save pain to those whom she loved (WD, 552),

she is still unaware of the weight of the exchange which is being demanded by this man and woman. She does not understand the depth of Cynthia's fear of Preston's type of love: " It is his way of loving. He says often enough, he doesn't care what he does so he gets me to be his wife; and that after that he is sure he can make me love him " (WD, 551). Molly approaches her meeting with Preston -- that Preston who rides an

admirable horse, wears high boots and riding breeches, and carries a whip -- believing " I am sure we have right on our side; and that makes me certain he must and shall give up the letters " (WD, 551). Her total unawareness of sexual love is pointed out to her by Preston, who, not attending much to her answers to his questions but instead "working the point of his stick into the turf...his eyes...bent on it", says: "'You are very simple, Miss Gibson, ... I suppose you don't know that there is any other feeling that can be gratified, except love. Have you never heard of revenge?'" (WD, 560). As their conversation progresses, Preston realizes:

> There she stood, frightened, yet brave, not letting go her hold on what she meant to do, even when things seemed most against her; and besides, there was something that struck him most of all perhaps, and which shows the kind of man he was -- he perceived that Molly was as unconscious that he was a young man, and she a young woman, as if she had been a pure angel of heaven. (WD, 561)

And Molly still seems to remain one later in the novel. When she again meets Roger at the Towers,

> in her pretty evening dress, with her hair beautifully dressed, her delicate complexion flushed a little with timidity, yet her movements and manners bespeaking quiet ease, Roger hardly recognized her, although he acknowledged her identity. He began to feel that admiring deference which most young men experience when conversing with a very pretty girl; a sort of desire to obtain her good opinion in a manner very different to his old familiar friendliness. (WD, 717)

But Molly seems content with the old terms of their relationship:

> They separated then, and Molly went upstairs very happy ... it was so pleasant to have Roger talking to her in this way, like a friend .... (WD, 721)

And her farewell to him before his departure indicates her position:

Molly makes her adjustment to life in following Roger's philosophy that it is best to live for the happiness of others. But her emotional make-up makes it extremely difficult for Molly to control herself in order to achieve her goal. Constant repression of her feelings is the result, which takes a heavy toll on her constitution. As has been shown, repression also cripples Molly emotionally and mentally. It seems to me that this portrayal of a character whose adoption of a code of self-abnegation leads to personal suffering and to the stifling of the development of an individual self shows that Mrs. Gaskell understood the toll which a life led in the interest of others could exact, especially from a temperamentally unsuited individual. Molly's personality abnormality has been nurtured by the discipline and demands of the code in which the abnormality is inherent. It could be that Molly's characterization demonstrates Mrs. Gaskell's deepest analysis of the individual and the development of a code of behavior and expresses her fullest vision of life.

The tender, brooding tone of Wives and Daughters contrasts sharply with the restlessness and passion so evident in the novel which preceded it, Sylvia's Lovers. In this work, Mrs. Gaskell examines the abnormal behavior in the personalities of Sylvia and Philip and traces the bitter effects of their inability to maintain self-control.

The capricious heroine, Sylvia, chooses the red cloth for her new cloak instead of the respectable, quiet-looking article in grey. She chooses the red even though it is advised that it would mark with every drop of rain and lose its first brightness in wet or damp; she believes that the color would stand a great deal of wear. Sylvia later proves to have the same characteristics as the red cloth she so happily chose. With every sorrow, every disappointment, every frustration, her superficially strong character crumbles. But against the adversities which storm her, she struggles to remain faithful to her obligations, perform her duty, and be honest to herself.

Little prepared is she in discipline and self-control to endure the tremendous onslaught of suffering which corrodes the basic foundations upon which her life had been founded. Having no interest in learning about things outside herself, which would help her to see herself in relation to that outside of her, she only seeks the immediate and personal. When she is thrown into contact with a larger world, Sylvia, who once delighted in her freedom, independence, and self-confidence, discovers that she is not capable of managing herself and her affairs without dependence on someone. Sylvia is an insular creature who is unaware of the values of reasoning and discipline and whose only response in simple and complex situations is an emotional one. Sylvia's involvement in experiences which thwart the satisfaction of her impulses will be extremely frustrating to her and will lead to

anxieties and greater conflicts which, because they cannot be solved, will begin to destroy her once-felt stability, and lead to abnormal behavior.

Sylvia's emotional breakdown is caused by her being stripped of the security of love with which she has been surrounded. When Charlie Kinraid's love is taken from her, Sylvia becomes dispirited and withdrawn. A year after his disappearance, she, witch-like, gazes into the fire with abstracted eyes, and is able to conjure his image. But she aches to see him in the present, so much so that "she wrung her hands tight together as she implored some, any, Power to let her see him just once again -- just for once -- for one minute of passionate delight!" (SL, 282). Her frustrated passion for Kinraid is sublimated and she finds some consolation in substituting the secure love of her doting parents.

The imprisonment of her father pushes the responsibility for the family on immature Sylvia. Frightened and ignorant, she instinctively seeks refuge in Philip's protection. She is terrified of standing alone. When Philip goes to town to investigate how matters stand, "then Sylvia lifted up her voice with a great cry. Somehow, she had expected him to do something -- what, she did not know; but he was gone and [she and her mother] were left without stay or help" (SL, 299). When her mother senses that she is to follow her husband in death, Sylvia moans, "'But me, mother! thou's forgetting me!...Oh, mother, mother, think on me!'" (SL, 329). Sylvia is supported by her consuming hatred for

those who went against her father, and by her protective love for her mother whose strength has been shattered. Against her reason and inclination and Kester's advice, Sylvia agrees to marry Philip because she has been trapped by her own inability to deal positively with her now complex conflicts. The roots of her old life have been cut away, and without the stability of home, family life, and lover, Sylvia loses her youth,not by stepping into the role of an adult,but by passing into another dependent state in marriage to a lover who is approved of by her mother and is a substitute for her father. Like Amelia in Vanity Fair, "She didn't wish to marry him, but she wished to keep him. She wished to give him nothing, but that he should give her all."[8]

But Sylvia's incompatibility with Philip cannot be overcome and her sublimated love and passion for Kinraid work against her efforts to conquer her distaste for Philip. Her depression worsens; she yearns to die. She becomes quiet and passive in her isolation. Her spirit, which was always at peace in the free open air under the sky, is stifled in the close town environment. Unlike Philip, who prospers in its business life, she finds her surroundings unnatural. She now yearns for her country dress and uncovered hair, the joy of running out into the fields of Haysterbank Farm to bring in the cow, or the pleasure of making up butter or spinning wool.

She sometimes thought to herself that it was a strange kind of life, where there were no outdoor animals to look after;

'the ox and the ass' had hitherto come into all her ideas of humanity; and her care and gentleness had made the dumb creatures round her father's home into mute friends, with loving eyes looking at her as if wistful to speak in the words the grateful regard that she could read with the poor expression of language. (SL, 361)

Because she is unprepared to meet the adjustments required by town life, Sylvia becomes isolated and she is forced to seek out that with which she has something in common. Her deep sorrows, the loss of her father and Kinraid, are soothed by the freedom and fresh air found at the top of the rugged, raw, masculine cliffs along the sea where

She used to take off her hat, and sit there, her hands clasping her knees,the salt air lifting her bright curls, gazing at the distant horizon over the sea, in a sad dreaminess of thought; if she had been asked on what she meditated, she could not have told you. (SL, 370)

But this outlet for her pent-up emotions can neither resolve her conflicts nor free her from a sense of dull hopelessness weighing upon her because of this irrevocable marriage which she knows is a mistake; it continues to irritate old and produce new conflicts. After the birth of her daughter, Sylvia's psychological instability parallels her physical decline.

Mrs. Gaskell closely follows the course of Sylvia's breakdown. Sylvia exhibits a reactive depression to the loss of her loved ones and her identity; her reaction is characterized primarily by feelings of sadness, pessimism, lassitude, and inadequacy.

When Kinraid returns, it is Sylvia's duty to her child which makes her reject his suit and cut herself from

wifely ties with Philip. But the new isolation and conflict make her realize, "I cannot tell what ways to take. Whiles, I think my head is crazed" (SL, 436). Sylvia finds that she has not the inner resources necessary to enable her to withstand the pressures of her new condition. Learning to read allows her to find comfort in the Bible. She begins to understand that she has spent her life in self-pity and selfishness. This understanding helps her to recover her emotional stability, but its duration is dependent on the quality of her independence and is temporary and short.

It seems that in her reconciliation with Philip and her telling him of her love for him that Sylvia has learned to appreciate the love Philip has given to her and which she had abused, and she seems to forgive him totally for his sin done in the name of love. But Sylvia's pride has been wounded by Kinraid's quick marriage; she criticizes his behavior first to herself, and then to Hester. That she has been weighing Kinraid's behavior is clear in her talk with Kester:

'...Philip had a deal o' good in him. And I dunnot think as he'd ha' gone and married another woman so soon, if he'd been i' Kinraid's place.' (SL, 500)

Sylvia tells Philip one of her motivating reasons for her forgiveness of him and acceptance of his love:

'Thou thought as he was faithless and fickle,' she answered quickly; 'and so he were. He were married to another woman not so many weeks after thou went away. Oh, Philip, Philip! and now I have thee back....' (SL, 523)

Sylvia's pride, wounded by Kinraid's marriage, is a motivating

factor in her acceptance of Philip. And Sylvia's dependent personality still craves support. Philip's death makes it impossible for the proud Sylvia who has been humiliated by Kinraid's behavior to find security once again in Philip's protection. And, although she is reconciled to her fate, she fails to mature fully through her experiences. No surprise is it to discover that this pale, sad woman died before her daughter was grown up.

Also in Sylvia's Lovers, the secrets of the sad, lonely person of Philip Hepburn are slowly unravelled. Why this man, admired by the townspeople, respected by his business associates, cherished by his friends, dies repentant and humbled, broken in body and spirit, is the basis of an arresting psychological study. It is an examination of a mind contaminated and diseased by choosing the more comfortable path of living with delusions and superstitions than with the truth. It is a presentation of the abnormal personality.

Seen through Sylvia's eyes, Philip is to be mocked because of his trade knowledge of women's things; avoided because his presence is stifling and irritating; challenged since she "would not have yielded to Philip in anything that she could help" (SL, 28). It is impossible for Sylvia to accept wholly the Philip who seems to her to be overbearing, directive, and presumptuous in his belief that there exists a bond between them deeper than friendship. But Sylvia knows

that the friendship itself must be preserved for her mother's sake who sees Philip as a good, steady young fellow, as well as for some unrecognized inclination in herself to depend upon him, so that after a quarrel "she instinctively chose the best method of making friends again, and slipped her hand into his...She was half afraid, however, when she found it firmly held, and that she could not draw it away again without making, what she called in her own mind, a 'fuss'" (SL, 82).

However, what is constrictive to Sylvia is freedom to Philip. He treasures the slightest physical contact with her; he guards the thought of the character of Sylvia's shake of his hand and recalls it with pleasure, "his hand still tingling from the touch of hers" (SL, 83). Seeing Sylvia through Philip's eyes reveals that he delights in a sensuous, delicate, and jealous observation of her features which, because of its intensity and possessiveness, likens him to an animal of prey:

> Sylvia's cheeks were rather flushed by the warmth of the room after the frosty air. The blue ribbon with which she had thought it necessary to tie back her hair before putting on her hat to go to market had got rather loose, and allowed her disarranged curls to stray in a manner which would have annoyed her extremely, if she had been upstairs to look at herself in the glass....Her round, mottled arm and ruddy, taper hand drew out the flax with nimble, agile motion, keeping time to the movement of the wheel. All this Philip could see; the greater part of her face was lost to him as she half averted it, with a shy dislike to the way in which she knew from past experience that Cousin Philip always stared at her. But, avert it as she would, she heard with silent petulance the harsh screech of Philip's chair as he heavily dragged it on the stone floor, sitting on it all the while, and felt that he was moving round so as to look at her as much as was in his power.... (SL, 44-45)

Philip's sensual delight in her is clear to Sylvia:

> ...only the very evening before -- she heard a soft, low whistle; and looking round unconsciously, there was her lover and affianced husband, leaning on the gate, and gazing into the field with passionate eyes, devouring the fair face and figure of her, his future wife. (SL, 345)

The emphasis on the words lover, affianced, husband, passionate eyes, devouring, face and figure, his future wife, suggests Philip's passion and desire for Sylvia which yearns for fulfillment when there will no longer be a 'gate' between them. When Sylvia is preoccupied with grief for her father, Philip's comfort is more a display of passion:

> Philip was on his knees by her, dumb from excess of sympathy, kissing her dress, all unfelt by her; he murmured half-words, he began passionate sentences that died away upon his lip.... (SL, 318)

Masochistic pleasure is his reward when agonizing sorrow moves her to stifle the pain by "catching at Philip's hand, and wringing it with convulsive force, till the pain that he loved was nearly more than he could bear" (SL, 318).

The instinct to fulfill his life and his sexual passion drives Philip to continue desperately to pursue Sylvia. He cunningly shifts tactics from an open pursuit which frightens Sylvia to subtle advances made under a mask of indifference. But Philip fails to recognize that "her ideal husband was different from Philip in every point; the two images never for an instant merged into one" (SL, 136). He resists accepting the truth about Sylvia, himself, and their situation so that he fails to see the destruction imminent in their engagement and marriage. What Philip needs and wants is the possession of Sylvia, and the frustration

of the desire causes intense suffering.

Philip is constantly anxious about the sources of danger which may deprive him of Sylvia. He realizes that his neurotic anxiety may lead him with an uncontrollable urge to do anything in order to hold her. Submitting to such an urge, he allows Kinraid to fall into the press-gang's ambush and to observe the capture effected while he hypocritically and defensively murmurs, "It is God's providence" (SL, 228). Dehumanized by his actions, Hepburn blends with the rocks and his features change:

> After a while he climbed up a few feet, so as to mingle his form yet more completely with the stones and rocks around. Stumbling over the uneven and often jagged points, slipping on the seaweed, plunging into little pools of water left by the ebbing tide in some natural basins he yet kept his eyes fixed as if in fascination on Kinraid, and made his way almost alongside of him. But the last hour had pinched Hepburn's features into something of the wan haggardness they would wear, when he should first be lying still for ever. (SL, 227)

Several times he repeats the denial of the possibility of Kinraid's safety to inquiries made. Although he can relieve his anxieties and stave off external complications through his wit, kindness, tact, and lies, Philip's moral anxieties increase with the continued repression of his sin. His Quaker upbringing which determined his sense of right and wrong does not allow him to escape the punishment of his conscience, which recognizes his behavior as being contrary to the standards of his ideals. His dreams of Kinraid's return reflect his repressed emotions, his neurotic anxiety, and fears of discovery, while at the same time, they reveal

that he would be relieved by the discovery of his treacherous deed because he could then punish himself for the evil he knows he has committed.

Little satisfaction is given to him as a reward for his love because Philip is aware that it possesses him and controls him beyond the order of things, so much so that he knows that "my heart and my sense are gone dead within me. I know that I've loved you, as no man but me ever loved before. Have some pity and forgiveness on me, if it's only because I've been so tormented with my love" (SL, 403). Frustration is Philip's only reward for his passion. He is kept from the enjoyment of the possession of Sylvia by the realization that she does not and cannot love him as deeply as he wants; he has captured a docile, quiet and sad shadow of a Sylvia who was once gay, headstrong, and eager.

He suffers the perception of the sputtering end of the light in his love:

> As soon as [Sylvia] had left the room, Philip set down his half-finished basin of bread and milk, and sate long, his face hidden in his folded arms. The wick of the candle grew long and black, and fell, and sputtered, and guttered; he sate on, unheeding either it or the pale grey fire that was dying out -- dead at last. (SL, 394)

Philip is also frustrated by conflicts within his own person. His personal inadequacies loom large before him. Easy is it for him to see the differences between himself, a plain, dull, pedantic shopkeeper and the dashing, adventurous, handsome figure of a manly specksioneer, Charlie Kinraid, who easily won Sylvia's heart:

> The sight he saw in the mirror was his own long, sad, pale face, made plainer and greyer by the heavy pressure of the morning's events. He saw his stooping figure, his rounded shoulders, with something like a feeling of disgust at his personal appearance, as he remembered the square, upright build of Kinraid; his fine uniform, with epaulette and sword-belt; his handsome brown face; his dark eyes, splendid with the fire of passion and indignation; his white teeth, gleaming out with the terrible smile of scorn.
>
> The comparison drove Philip from passive hopelessness to active despair. (SL, 408)

Philip believes that he can only expect the hard eye-for-an eye judgment which Sylvia furiously lashed at the traitor Simpson. Ironically, it is Philip who asks Sylvia to see and to forgive the friendless and repentent dying man whose evidence was fatal to her father -- in a scene which directly parallels Philip's own end -- and he feels beaten in his attempts to soften her attitude. To his description of Simpson's wretched state she answers, "I'm glad on 't... it's t' best news I've heerd fro many a day --"; of his dying, "Well! let him die -- it's t' best thing he could do!"; of his being forced by lawyers to speak against his will, "Couldn't he ha' bitten his tongue out?...It's fine talking o' sorrow, when the thing is done!"; of the forgiving of those who trespass against her, "Well, if I'm to be taken at my word, I'll noane pray at all; that's all" (SL, 350-352). And could Philip ever forget the weight of her declaration:

> 'I tell thee my flesh and blood wasn't made for forgiving and forgetting. Once and for all, thou must take my word. When I love I love, and when I hate I hate; and him as has done me, or to mine, I may keep fra' striking or murdering, but I'll niver forgive.' (SL, 352)

The constant battering of his emotions with anxi-

eties and frustrations so weakens Philip that he has not strength to withstand the ignominious revelation of his treachery. He panics; his instinct is towards self-destruction now that his energy is impulsively directed. No moral or realistic forces influence his behavior in his nightmarish mental state. Obsessed with self-repugnance and near mad with the realization of his fate, his pitiable last attempt to snatch glory on a foreign battlefield so that he may impress Sylvia fails, as did all his other vain dreams.

As a matter of interest, I suggest that the use of the Biblical name Abednego used in an earlier scene functions symbolically in relation to Philip's disaster on the battlefield. When Philip had tried to teach Sylvia how to read and write, the 'sadly spoilt and shamefully ignorant' 'lovely little dunce' demanded of her mother:

'...what's the use on my writing "Abednego," "Abednego," "Abednego," all down the page? If I could see t' use on 't I'd ha' axed father to send me t' school; but I'm none wanting to have learning.' (SL, 98)

Sylvia is so angered by the discipline being effected on her that she tries to wound Philip and defies him:

'If iver I write thee a letter, it shall just be full of nothing but "Abednego! Abednego! Abednego!"' (SL, 99)

In Daniel 3 the story is told of King Nebuchadnezzar setting up a golden image in Babylon on the plain of Dora which all people except Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego worshipped. These men were "bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats...and cast into the midst of the burn-

ing fiery furnace." Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were spared by the Lord God, but the men who took them up to the furnace were burned. Philip's selection of the name as a writing sample and Sylvia's threat to use only this name when writing to Philip suggests by its significant and emphatic use that a particular attention be given to it. Philip was well versed in the Bible and would have known the story connected with the name. Ironically, Philip, to be addressed as Abednego by Sylvia, is guilty of worshipping a false idol, Sylvia herself. It is Philip's fate to be burned and seriously scarred after the battle of St. Jean d'Acre.

Because he worshipped a false idol, the Lord God did not protect him; instead, he had to suffer through the flames -- which suggest the flames of Hell -- in order to realize his sin, as he does in the final scene of the novel. It may be further suggested that Mrs. Gaskell's use of the Biblical name and the allusions which it suggests is intentional; it serves as a symbolic rendering of the theme. Mrs. Gaskell is working outside her element in the narration of the battle scene and the scenes break rhythm with the action of the tale. Yet I feel that these scenes, viewed as complements to the theme and to the solution of the novel's problem in relation to Philip, are structurally justified in serving as ironic symbolic complements to Philip's story. I do not suggest that the battle scenes themselves work successfully within the total structural and thematic organiz-

ation, but I do suggest that there is a functional explanation for their inclusion in the story by Mrs. Gaskell.

With the destruction of his fantasy, Philip begins to accept the conditions of his situation: he finally sees the misappropriation of a total love to a human creature and the relative imbalance of this type of relationship when he admits to Sylvia,

> 'Child,' said he, once more. 'I ha' made thee my idol; and, if I could live my life o'er again, I would love my God more, and thee less; and then I shouldn't ha' sinned this sin against thee. But speak one word of love to me -- one little word, that I may know I have thy pardon.' (SL, 523)

The detailing of Philip's fall from a well-respected mentor in the community to a disgraced outcast because of his treachery motivated by his need to attain a desired object, and the admirable analysis of the tormented mind and its belabored steps towards the comprehension and acceptance of self, show that Mrs. Gaskell is a novelist concerned with character motivation in an abnormal personality type.

So too was Dickens concerned with the presentation of the tormented mind. The terrible suffering and end to which Philip has been driven by his uncontrollable love for Sylvia resembles the fate Bradley Headstone suffers in Dickens' Our Mutual Friend (1865). In the analysis of the stone-like schoolmaster, Dickens deals with a more extreme personality disorder. In modern psychiatric terminology, Dickens, in the creation of the character Bradley Headstone, an epileptic, has portrayed the state of the paranoid schizophrenic. A study of his analysis is presented in order to

compare the effectiveness of Dickens' treatment of the abnormal personality type with Mrs. Gaskell's.

Although it is now believed that there is no specific epileptic type, some theorists identify the epileptic with a set of common personality traits: slowness of reactions, concentration on a subject with minute detailing, rigid emotional attitudes, unresponsiveness to external factors, self-centeredness, hypochondria, and fixed opinions.[9] Bradley Headstone displays these traits of an abnormal personality and also succumbs to several auras and seizures of epilepsy. Some types of epilepsy are associated with schizophrenia and again Bradley Headstone reveals the characteristics of this disorder. He shows the typical but not invariable history of the prepsychotic personality. He is quiet, passive, has few friends, day-dreams, and is introverted in his behavior as an adolescent and adult. He is a model of 'good' behavior because he is obedient and conforming. In his dealing with other characters he shows that he has had little experience with friends and social situations.

Bradley Headstone's schizophrenic breakdown, a breakdown of adaptive struggles, is preceded by a period of marked tension and anxiety. He no longer can repress his desires, he has difficulty in articulating his words, his mouth is dry, he trembles, sweats, and moves nervously. His condition reflects deeply disturbed interpersonal relationships which originated in disturbed family communication and interaction. Headstone angrily defends himself against Wray-

burn's sarcasm, but his responses, unrelated to the argument, reveal his obsession:

> 'I scorn your shifty evasions, and I scorn you,' said the school-master. 'In the meanness of your nature you revile me with the meanness of my birth. I hold you in contempt for it. But if you don't profit by this visit, and act accordingly, you will find me as bitterly in earnest against you as I could be if I deemed you worth a second thought on my own account.'10

Although there are no objective criteria for the diagnosis of schizophrenia, the several basic features of this disease which have come to be generally accepted are evident in Headstone's behavior:

> He held as straight a course for the house of the doll's dressmaker...and walked with a bent head hammering at one fixed idea. It had been an immovable idea since he first set eyes upon her. It seemed to him as if all that he could suppress in himself he had suppressed, as if all that he could restrain in himself he had restrained, and the time had come -- in a rush, in a moment -- when the power of self-command had departed from him. Love at first sight is a trite expression quite sufficiently discussed; enough that in certain smouldering natures like this man's, that passion leaps into a blaze....As a multitude of weak, imitative natures are always lying by, ready to go mad upon the next wrong idea that my be breeched...so these less ordinary natures may lie by for years, ready on the touch of an instant to burst into flame. (OMF, 341)

This description includes the symptoms of schizophrenia which Headstone reveals: hearing his thoughts, believing his thoughts controlled, experiencing control and influence from outside, being extraordinarily sensitive but unable to adjust to the stimulus input. These and other symptoms are again detailed:

> 'Yes! you are the ruin -- the ruin -- the ruin -- of me. I have no resources in myself, I have no confidence in myself, I have no government of myself when you are near me or in my thoughts. And you are always in my thoughts now. I have never been quit of you since I first saw you. Oh,

that was a wretched day for me! That was a wretched, miserable day! (OMF, 395)

'There!' he cried, despairingly. 'Now I seem to have reproached you, instead of revealing to you the state of my own mind! Bear with me. I am always wrong when you are in question. It is my doom.' (OMF, 395)

The emotional distance characteristic of the schizophrenic, a lack of capacity for establishing rapport with others and a loss of ego boundaries, is reflected in Headstone's anguished explanations. He also exhibits the schizophrenic delusional convictions that he is being controlled by other people's thoughts or by some unseen mysterious power:

'No! It would not have been voluntary on my part, any more than it is voluntary in me to be here now. You draw me to you. If I were shut up in a strong prison, you would draw me out. I should break through the wall to come to you. If I were lying on a sick bed, you would draw me up -- to stagger to your feet and fall there.' (OMF, 396)

'You could draw me to fire, you could draw me to water, you could draw me to the gallows, you could draw me to any death, you could draw me to anything I have most avoided, you could draw me to any exposure and disgrace. This and the confusion of my thoughts, so that I am fit for nothing, is what I mean by your being the ruin of me.' (OMF, 397)

In the loss of his ego boundaries and his identity, Headstone loses contact with reality, the core symptom of any psychosis. His wearing Riderhood's clothing symbolically identifies him with the evil which Riderhood represents. Headstone wears this clothing more easily and more suitably than the suit of a schoolmaster. He more readily adapts to the evil in his nature than to the good which could be achieved by constant and strenuous repression. Thus Headstone identifies and fuses his identity with Riderhood's and

symbolically aligns himself with evil.

Headstone exhibits the delusions characteristic of the paranoid schizophrenic. His false ideas of persecution cannot be corrected by reasoning:

> 'I am not complaining,' he returned, 'I am only stating the case. I had to wrestle with my self-respect when I submitted to be drawn to you in spite of Mr. Wrayburn. You may imagine how low my self-respect lies now.'
> She was hurt and angry ...
> 'And it lies under his feet,' said Bradley, unfolding his hands in spite of himself, and fiercely motioning with them both towards the stones of the pavement.'Remember it! It lies under that fellow's feet, and he treads upon it and exults about it.'
> 'He does not!' said Lizzie.
> 'He does!' said Bradley. 'I have stood before him face to face, and he crushed me down in the dirt of his contempt and walked over me. Why? Because he knew with triumph what was in store for me to-night.' (OMF, 400)

Other symptoms of the paranoid schizophrenic are revealed: he is in the age group of twenty and thirty, has an established place and identity in the community, is guarded, hostile, and aggressive. Headstone's attempted murder of Wrayburn is characteristic of the paranoid schizophrenic among whom a high incidence of homicide has been noted. Headstone's motivation is also classic for his type; he is unable to control his reaction to the traumatic experience of a rejection by Lizzie because his extreme sensitivity makes him extraordinarily vulnerable. As a matter of interest, it has been suggested that the schizophrenic who commits homicide harbors deep-seated feelings of rejection by the parents. In suggesting Headstone's negative obsession with his birth and background, Dickens seems to have amazingly included this fine point in his analysis of the schizophrenic.

Both Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens have created detailed, absorbing studies of the abnormal personality. It is possible that Philip Hepburn suggested the development of Bradley Headstone. Certainly both characterizations are exciting portraits of the monomaniac. Mrs. Gaskell's characterization is as penetrating as Dickens' study and this is indicative of her artistry in characterization.

But Dickens' conception of the final end of his character is very different from Mrs. Gaskell's. In the characterization of Bradley Headstone, Dickens relentlessly pursues the disintegration of the schoolmaster's personality and follows his decline to its ultimate end in a suicidal-homicidal death. Headstone falls victim to himself; his lack of control leads him to self-destruction. Certainly this conclusion is most fitting for the elaborate study of the diseased mind because it is the final end to which such a disease often leads. No hope in God, no comfort in religion, no trust in man is available to the outcast. In the deaths of Headstone and Riderhood there is a false suggestion that evil has been punished; but the horror of the significance of their deaths, evil entwined with evil, the symbolic absorption of one personality into another -- shown by the death hold of Headstone on Riderhood -- suggests chilling despair.

Philip's illness is seen as a means of purification; through his mental and physical suffering he finally comes to the realization of his moral fault. Through his recognition

of sin and his reconciliation with God, Philip is allowed to find peace again through suffering. This final end for Philip, characteristic of Mrs. Gaskell's solutions, reflects her belief in the ability of man with the help of God to control his destiny in controlling himself. Thus, Philip's apparently impoverished existence still offers, at last, a chance for the realization of what Mrs. Gaskell considers the greatest opportunity, the realization of values. These values are achieved in Philip's attitude towards his unalterable fate. Mrs. Gaskell demonstrates that the opportunity to realize such attitudinal values is present whenever a person finds himself confronted by a destiny towards which he can act only by acceptance. The way in which Philip accepts, the way in which he bears his suffering, and the courage he shows in accepting it, and the dignity he displays in the face of disaster, is the measure of Philip's fulfillment.

Mrs. Gaskell shows that human existence can never be intrinsically meaningless if an individual accepts his suffering and fate. In this way, a man's life retains its meaning up to the taking of his last breath, and so long as he is conscious, he is responsible to realize values. For this is what being a human being means, being conscious and being responsible. In searching for the meaning of life, man is thrown back upon himself; he must realize that he is

questioned by life and that he has to be answerable with his life.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Elizabeth Gaskell reveals her particular understanding, sympathy, and tenderness of human feeling in the examination of characters and situations in her novels with perception, respect, pathos, light irony, and humor.

One of her singular merits is a decided appreciation of the usual. She deals in the particular. Her characters are not superior, or perfect individuals, but good and honest men and women whose fundamental characteristics are sincerity, kindliness, and moral commitment. Their struggles to act in right conscience in complex moral situations are often the center of interest in the novels. Mrs. Gaskell examines the individual's recognition of the complexity of the determination of a moral code on which to base ethical behavior. The recognition of the autonomy of the individual is at the heart of all her work, which is characterized by a profound seriousness and distinctly reverent attitude towards the individual and life.

The acceptance of the need for constant change in the evaluation of one's behavior in relationship to one's self and others is also examined in relation to the fact that the individual exists in a constantly changing

physical world. This change is not only accepted but it is emphasized in a positive manner: Mrs. Gaskell examines the complex world of the ever-changing present and sees change as a reason for looking forward rather than looking back. Her discussions of social problems and personal problems which reflect the influence of change in society illustrate this attitude.

Mrs. Gaskell creates variations on character types established in the novel and introduces character types into fiction which are drawn from her contemporary setting. These characters are often examined with psychological insight. However, she is content to describe the involvements and feelings of her characters in given situations, and she does not tell why they behaved in a particular way.

Mrs. Gaskell's characters live in limited settings and operate to discover a singularly self-limiting role: they are the arbiters of their conscience in private decisions regarding particular actions. Certainly Elizabeth Gaskell is successful in her distinctive depiction of this comprehension by the characters in her novels.

Mrs. Gaskell's artistry in characterization entitles her to a respectable place among the Victorian novelists. An examination of the characters in Elizabeth Gaskell's novels reveals that she is a novelist of recognized artistry in the sympathetic presentation of the individual in his moment of greatness: the comprehension of his acceptance of his personal responsibility and duty to himself and to life.

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON THE USE OF THE WORD TRADITIVE

The Oxford English Dictionary defines tradition as the act of transmitting or handing down, or fact of being handed down, from one to another, or from generation to generation; the transmission of statements, beliefs, rules, customs, or the like, especially by word of mouth or by practice without writing. Traditional is defined as belonging to, consisting in, or of the nature of tradition; handed down by or derived from tradition. Both words and definitions do not limit the nature of the transmitter. Defined in these terms, tradition and traditional could be used in this chapter which deals with Mrs. Gaskell's use of a character as an individual who represents a particular code of social or moral principles.

However, in A Handbook to Literature, William Thrall and Addison Hibbard, ed., revised edition by C. Hugh Holman (New York, 1960), the entry under tradition reads:

> A body of beliefs, customs, sayings, or skills handed down from age to age or from generation to generation. Thus BALLADS and folk literature in general as well as superstitions and popular proverbs are passed on by oral tradition. A set idea may be called a tradition, like the idea which prevailed throughout the Middle Ages that Homer's account of the Trojan War was to be discredited in favor of certain forged accounts claiming to be written by participants in the war. The tradition of PASTORAL literature means the underlying conceptions and technique of PASTORAL literature carried down, with modifications, from Theocritus (third century B.C.) to Pope. A traditional element in literature

> suggests something which the author has inherited from the past rather than something of his own invention. In another sense, tradition may be thought of as the inheritance from the past of a body of literary CONVENTIONS that are still alive in the present, as opposed to CONVENTIONS of the past which died with their peculiar age and circumstance. (487-488)

This definition shows that the words tradition and traditional have various literary interpretations. It also indicates that the words are used in reference to the characteristics of a literary work or the conventions from which an author draws his material. Because this limited literary definition of the words tradition and traditional does not apply to individuals and the codes they transmit or represent, I have chosen not to use them in this chapter of the thesis. It is possible that my use of the term traditional character in this chapter could suggest the literary definition. To avoid this possibility, the word traditive -- which is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as characterized by belonging to, or being transmitted by, tradition; traditional -- is used as a synonym for tradition or traditional. Because traditive is now rarely used, it should not suggest the literary interpretation of the word, but should be interpreted throughout this thesis in the strict sense in which it is defined in this chapter. Traditive is an adjective which functions to describe the roles of some characters in Mrs. Gaskell's work: a traditive character is a representative of a tradition of social and moral principles.

The category of "Traditive Characters" has been established because I believe that those of Mrs. Gaskell's characters placed in the group illustrate a basic interest in Mrs. Gaskell's characterization -- the attempt to achieve an understanding of the individual in the process of change against a background of change.

Therefore, all the characters referred to as traditive characters will possess one identifiable trait: they will endorse a particular code of social or moral principles and function in the novel as a standard against which other characters may be measured. But the individual traditive character will have individual identifying traits and his role in the novel will be individual to him. Some traditive characters do not change in the course of the novel; others may change their values but they will have been representatives of a particular code against which others were measured through the major part of the novel. Traditive characters may or may not have the approval of the author since their function is to serve as contrasts and comparisons with other characters who are in the process of change. In all cases, the traditive character, who may or may not play a major role, functions to bring out aspects of the major characters or reinforces the theme of comparison and contrast of the process of change in the novel.

I have established three categories of characters, which are not mutually exclusive -- traditive characters,

innovated characters, and characters with personality disorders -- in order to illustrate some of Mrs. Gaskell's techniques in character organization and development. In the category of traditive characters, those fictional characters which I have chosen from the novels to illustrate and define what is meant by a traditive character are arranged according to their social positions in groups: servants, old maids, representatives of the old and new attitudes of the nineteenth century, and married women. These groups of characters have been set up for organizational purposes; the groups of characters are not being examined but the individuals who are traditive characters within the groups are. The variety with which Mrs. Gaskell develops the traditive character, his individual personality, and his role is an illustration of the artistry which is characteristic of her development of fictional creations.

NOTES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

[1] Review of Mary Barton, October 21, 1848, p. 1050.

[2] "The Story of Ruth," Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, n.s. XX (April 1853), 218.

[3] Review of Mary Barton, Edinburgh Review, CVI (July 1857), 124-156.

[4] "Ruth and Villette," Westminister Review, LIX (April 1853), 474-491.

[5] George W. Curtis, "Villette and Ruth," Putnam's Monthly, May 1, 1853, p. 539.

[6] Review of Ruth, North British Review, XIX (May 1853), 151-174.

[7] Letter to Mrs. Gaskell, January 31, 1850, The Letters of Charles Dickens, ed. Walter Dexter, The Nonesuch Dickens (Bloomsbury, 1938), II, 202.

[8] Letter to Miss Mitford, December 13, 1850, The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ed. Frederic G. Kenyon (New York, 1897).

[9] "To the Author of Mary Barton" in his Last Fruit Off an Old Tree (London, 1853), pp. 481-482.

[10] Letter to Mrs. Peter Alfred Taylor, February 1, 1853, and letter to Mrs. William Gaskell, November 11, 1859, The George Eliot Letters, ed. Gordon S. Haight (New Haven, 1954-1955), II, 85-86; III, 198.

[11] In his introduction to Cranford, The Works of Mrs. Gaskell (London, 1906), p. xiv.

[12] In Ward, introduction to Cranford, p. xxiii.

[13] Review of The Life of Charlotte Brontë, The Athenaeum, April 4, 1857, p. 428.

[14] Mrs. Margaret Oliphant, "The Sisters Brontë" in Women Novelists of Queen Victoria's Reign (London, 1897 [1969]), p. 56.

[15] Charlotte Brontë and Her Circle (New York, 1896), p.1.

[16] Review of Letters of Mrs. Gaskell and C. E. Norton, ed. Jane Whitehill (Oxford, 1932), New England Quarterly, 6 (1933), 628.

[17] Ward in his introduction to Sylvia's Lovers, p. xii.

[18] Letter to George Smith, March 10, 1863, The George Eliot Letters, IV, 79.

[19] Cornhill Magazine, XIII (January 1866), 11-15.

[20] Review of Wives and Daughters, February 22, 1866, pp. 246-247.

[21] "Mrs. Gaskell," The Athenaeum, November 18, 1865, pp. 689-690.

[22] "Mrs. Gaskell and Her Novels," Cornhill Magazine, XXIX (February 1874), 191-192.

[23] Review of Mary Barton, Edinburgh Review, LXXXIV (April 1849), 403.

[24] "Mrs. Gaskell's Novels," Fortnightly Review, September 1, 1878, p. 361.

[25] October 21, 1848, p. 1050.

[26] Cross, p. 237.

[27] "Mrs. Gaskell," Macmillan's Magazine, XIII (December 1865), 153-156.

[28] "Mrs. Gaskell Reconsidered," review of Arthur Pollard, Mrs. Gaskell: Novelist and Biographer; Edgar Wright, Mrs. Gaskell, the Basis for Reassessment; The Letters of Mrs Gaskell, ed. J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard, in Victorian Studies, XI, iv (June 1968), 531.

[29] Review of A. B. Hopkins, Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work (London, 1952), Review of English Studies, n.s. IV (1953), 190-191.

[30] Mrs. Gaskell: The Basis for Reassessment (London, 1952), p. 43.

[31] Edgar Wright, review of Margaret Ganz, Mrs. Gaskell: The Artist in Conflict (New York, 1969), Victorian Studies, XIV, i (September 1970), 98.

[32] A bibliography of biography and criticism 1848-1928 by Clark S. Northrup is included in G. De Witt Sanders, Elizabeth Gaskell (New Haven, 1929).

[33] "Women Without Men in Cranford," Essays in Criticism, XIII (1963), 132-145. Cited hereafter as "Women."

[34] "Mrs Gaskell and the World of Cranford," Review of English Literature, VI (1965), 152-156.

[35] "Cranford and 'The Strict Code of Gentility'," Essays in Criticism, XVIII (1968), 152-156.

[36] "The Composition of Mrs Gaskell's North and South," Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, LIV, i (Autumn 1971), 67-93.

[37] "The Naked Sensibility: Elizabeth Gaskell," Essays in Criticism, III (1953), 60-72.

[38] "Mrs. Gaskell and 'The Severe Truth'" in Minor British Novelists, ed. Charles Alva Hoyt (London, 1967), pp. 98-108.

[39] Introduction to Wives and Daughters (London, 1948).

[40] "Russian Gaskelliana," Review of English Literature, VII, iii (July 1966), 39-51.

[41] "Mrs Gaskell in France 1849-50," Publications of the Modern Language Association, LIII (1938), 545-574.

[42] The Order of Fiction: An Introduction (New York, 1964), p. 7.

[43] Jonathan Raban, The Technique of Modern Fiction: Essays in Practical Criticism (London, 1968), pp. 135-136.

[44] "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" in The Captain's Death Bed (London, 1950), p. 97; p. 98.

[45] Douglas Grant, "The Novel and Its Critical Terms," Essays in Criticism, I (1951), 428.

[46] Grant, p. 423.

CHAPTER TWO: TRADITIVE CHARACTERS

[1] R. P. Utter and G. B. Needham, Pamela's Daughters (New York, 1937), pp. 19-42.

[2] Utter and Needham, pp. 214-258.

[3] Letter to Charles Eliot Norton, January 19, [1860] in The Letters of Mrs Gaskell, ed. J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester, 1966), p. 598. Hereafter referred to as Letters. Bracketed name and date information is suggested by the editors.

[4] Letter to Lady Kay Shuttleworth, [1850] in Letters, p. 117.

[5] Jane Austen, Emma (Oxford, 1926), III, vii, 374.

[6] Utter and Needham, p. 252.

[7] I believe that the effectiveness of Mary Smith's position as narrator is enhanced by the fact that she is a single woman and probably an old maid. Although limited information is given about her in the work, several facts indicate that she is single. Miss Pole calls her "Miss Smith" (C, 164). Mary Smith's only mentioned relative is her father; their relationship is mutually dependent and seems to rule out the possibility of Miss Smith's being married or engaged: "I was summoned home by my father's illness....When my father grew a little stronger I accompanied him to the sea-side..." (C, 97); "He [her father] had willingly allowed me to remain all winter at Cranford..." (C, 141). But her time is free for visits: "...I had vibrated all my life between Drumble and Cranford..." (C, 185); "...I had already fixed a limit, not very far distant, to my visit" (C, 179). Although she is not the same age as the ladies of Cranford, Mary Smith's intimate roles as friend, confidante, and advisor suggest that she is a responsible, mature woman. Miss Smith's age is not mentioned in Cranford, but in "The Cage at Cranford," first published in All the Year Round, November 1863, Miss Smith states "I was past thirty." (This episode is included in Cranford, ed. E. P. Watson (Oxford, 1972), Appendix 2, p. 170.) If Mrs. Gaskell envisioned Miss Smith near thirty years of age in Cranford, too, then Mary Smith could be called an old maid -- although a decidedly younger one than the Cranford ladies she writes about.

[8] William M. Thackeray, Roundabout Papers, Vol. XXII in The Complete Works of William Makepeace Thackeray (New York, n.d.), p. 83.

[9] Miss Matty's abnormal personality is discussed in Chapter IV.

[10] Webster's Third New International Dictionary (Massachusetts, 1961) provides a definition of the word cameo which applies to the use of the word in the term cameo portrait: a usually brief literary or dramatic piece that brings into delicate or sharp relief the character of a person, place, or event. An example of the use of the word with this meaning is given: "his cameos and short commentaries on men and manners" -- R. T. Dunlop. The example from The Oxford English Dictionary of cameo used in this sense refers to Miss Yonge's title, Cameos from English History. An example which illustrates the fact that the word cameo defines something shown in relief is: "A woman's accomplishments ought to be...as Dr. Smith expresses it, more in intaglio than cameo" -- Maria Edgeworth.

[11] [17 May 1854], Letters, p. 290.

CHAPTER THREE: INNOVATED CHARACTERS

Innovations in the Treatment of Some Established Literary Types in the Novel

[1] Thomas Carlyle, "Characteristics" in Critical and Miscellaneous Essays (New York, 1869), p. 373.

[2] Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 (New Haven, 1957), pp. 394-430.

[3] Letter to Marianne Gaskell, [May-June 1854], Letters, p. 860.

[4] Edward A. Westermarck, Ethical Relativity (London, 1932).

[5] See Dorothy Collin, "The Composition of Mrs Gaskell's North and South."

[6] An analysis of Jemima is made in the second part of this section.

[7] Ganz, pp. 26-27.

[8] Ganz, p. 83.

[9] Ganz, p. 83.

[10] Letter to Lady Kay-Shuttleworth, May 14, [1850], Letters, p. 117.

[11] Letter to Elizabeth Holland, [?Early April 1859], Letters, pp. 548-549.

[12] August 4, [1859], Letters, p. 566.

[13] November 2, [1859], Letters, pp. 586-587.

[14] November 10, [1859], Letters, p. 592.

[15] November 30, [1859], Letters, p. 594.

[16] pp. 188-189.

[17] William R. Greg, "Prostitution," Westminster Review, liii (April 1850), 454.

[18] Barbara Faust, Hawthorne's Contemporaneous Reputation. A Study of Literary Opinion in America and England 1828-1864 (Philadelphia, 1939), p. 117.

[19] Letters, p. 50.

[20] Letters, p. 237; p. 239.

[21] Letters, p. 516.

[22] Letters, p. 575.

[23] Letters, p. 142.

[24] Letters, p. 204.

[25] Letters, p. 205.

[26] Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter, ed. Bradley, Beatty, and Long (New York, 1961[1962]), p. 46. Further references are cited hereafter in the text as ScL.

[27] Letters, pp. 7, 14, 18, 29-33.

[28] Symbolic interpretations of flowers are given in Gertrude Jacobs, Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore and Symbols (New York, 1961).

[29] In the introduction to The Scarlet Letter, p. viii.

[30] Scott, The Heart of Midlothian (London, n.d.), p.125.

[31] Scott, p. 553.

[32] Dickens and Crime (London, 1962), p. 92.

[33] Collins, p. 114.

[34] Charles Dickens, David Copperfield, The Gadshill Edition, 2 vols. (London, n.d.), II, 342.

[35] Trollope, Autobiography (Berkeley, 1947), p. 273.

[36] Trollope, The Vicar of Bullhampton (London, 1924), pp. 175-176.

Introduction of Contemporary Character Types into the Novel

[1] P. J. Keating, The Working Classes in Victorian Fiction (London, 1971), pp. 6-7.

Keating continues: "Of later industrial novels there is George Eliot's Felix Holt (1866), the only important novel written in response to the agitation for working-class enfranchisement in the sixties, and more concerned with this than industrialism; Charles Reade's attack on Trade Union villainy, Put Yourself in His Place (1870); Gissing's Demos (1886), in which the workers are urban rather than industrial; and William Morris's dream utopia News from Nowhere (1891), in which no recognizably real worker of any kind appears. The only late-Victorian industrial novel which deserves a place beside those of Mrs Gaskell and Disraeli is W. E. Tirebuck's now totally forgotten Miss Grace of All Souls (1895)...."

I believe that Charlotte Brontë's attempt to characterize an industrialist in Shirley (1849) should also be mentioned. Her character of Robert Moore, textile manufacturer, may have been influenced by Mrs. Gaskell's portrayal of Harry Carson in Mary Barton. Brontë shows Moore as a man with two sides to his nature. He can, at times, be a loving, thoughtful, kind man; but he is more a hard-headed business man for whom his mill and financial success are paramount and this side of his character battles ruthlessly with the unemployed workers who try to prevent modernization of his factory.

[3] "'John Barton' was the original name, as being the central figure to my mind; indeed I had so long felt that the bewildered life of an ignorant thoughtful man of strong power of sympathy dwelling in a town so full of striking contrasts as this is, was a tragic poem, that in writing he was [?] my 'hero'; and it was a London thought coming through the publisher that it must be called Mary B. So many people overlook John B or see him merely to misunderstand him, that if you were a stranger and had only said that one thing 'that the book shd have been called John B I should have had pleasure in telling that my own idea was recognized...." Letter to Miss Lamont, January 5, [1849], Letters, p. 70.

"The whole tale grew up in my mind as imperceptibly as a seed germinates in the earth....I can remember now that the prevailing thought in my mind at the time when the tale was silently forming itself and impressing me with the force of a reality, was the seeming injustice of the inequalities of fortune...they must bewilder an ignorant man full of rude,

illogical thought, and full also of sympathy for suffering which appealed to him through his sense. I fancied I saw how all this might lead to a course of action which might appear right for a time to the bewildered mind of such a one, but that this course of action, violating the eternal laws of God, would bring with it its own punishment of an avenging conscience....Through the character of John Barton all the others formed themselves; he was my hero, the person with whom all my sympathies went...." Letter to Mrs Greg, [?Early 1849], Letters, p. 74.

[4] Ganz, pp. 56-62.

[5] Ganz, pp. 63-64.

[6] Ganz, p. 56.

[7] Keating, pp. 26-27.

[8] In "Mrs Gaskell and 'The Severe Truth'", Charles Shapiro states that all the characters in Mary Barton are frightful grotesques, but he also maintains that the best parts of the work are achieved when Mrs. Gaskell does what she can do so well, observe, with humor, the social habits of her subjects. Mrs. Gaskell's contemporary critic, William Rathbone Greg, in a review of Mary Barton in the Edinburgh Review, April 1849, praises the depiction of the sacred patience of the poor and their mutual helpfulness and kindness. However, he criticizes the work for its exaggerated animosity against masters, its indicating that the poor are to look to the rich for a solution of their problems, and suggesting that labor is a curse. He feels that the work is sincere, the depiction of the poor and their circumstances of higher quality than is generally found in the ordinary novel, and the particular scenes are true but calculated to mislead.

[9] Letter to Mary Howitt, [18 August 1838], Letters, p. 33.

[10] George Eliot, Adam Bede (New York, 1948), p. 182.

[11] Mrs. Sarah Ellis, The Daughters of England (London, 1842), p. 11.

[12] William M. Thackeray, The History of Henry Esmond, Esq. (New York, 1936), p. 133.

[13] Houghton, pp. 341-393.

[14] Ellis, p. 21.

[15] Letter to John Blackwood, July 9, 1860, The George Eliot Letters, III, 318.

[16] "North and South appears to me to be a better name than Margaret Hale. It implies more, and is expressive of the opposite people brought face to face by the story." Charles Dickens to Elizabeth Gaskell, July 26, 1854, Letters of Charles Dickens, The Nonesuch Dickens, II, 571. See also D.W. Collin, "The Composition of Mrs Gaskell's North and South."

[17] North and South, ed. Dorothy Collin (Middlesex, 1970), p. 10.

[18] Dodsworth, p. 11.

[19] Dodsworth, p. 11.

CHAPTER FOUR: ABNORMAL PERSONALITY TYPES

[1] Quoted in the notebook of Charles Eliot Norton, April 16, 1857, in Letters of Mrs. Gaskell and C. E. Norton 1855-1865, ed. Jane Whitehill (Oxford, 1932), p. 168.

[2] Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry, ed. Alfred M. Freedman, M. I. Kaplan, H. S. Kaplan (Baltimore, 1967), p. 575.

[3] Freedman, p. 902.

[4] Dodsworth, "Women," p. 135.

[5] Dodsworth, "Women," p. 139.

[6] Dodsworth, "Women," p. 142.

[7] In her introduction to Wives and Daughters (John Lehmann,1948), Rosamond Lehmann discusses Molly as a typical Victorian heroine whose "catalogue of virtues gives an impression of null perfection, but [who is in fact] fresh, human, clearly individualized; not exactly interesting but not at all insipid" (12). Lehmann realizes that Molly cannot come back again from her Victorian tomb. "It is partly the Women's Revolution, partly the Freudian revolution with its consequent profound alteration in the position of the younger vis à vis the parent generation: she could not breathe a moment in a state of society where elders are no longer betters; where so far from being praised for filial merit, she would be roundly condemned by her contemporaries, not to speak of her psychiatrist, for her weak submission to shocking exploitation by father, stepmother, stepsister and elderly neighbours. One can hear the deafening chorus: 'emotional blackmail,' 'infantilism,' 'atavism,' 'father-fixation'; and poor Molly going down defenceless, drowned, beneath it"(12-3).

[8] William M. Thackeray, Vanity Fair (Toronto, 1969), p. 725.

[9] Freedman, pp. 810-812.

[10] Our Mutual Friend (London, 1952[1967]), p. 293. Further references are cited hereafter in the text as OMF.

KEY TO ABBREVIATIONS

CM	Cornhill Magazine
ER	Edinburgh Review
ELH	English Literary History
EIC	Essays in Criticism
FR	Fortnightly Review
GM	Gentleman's Magazine
HLQ	Huntington Library Quarterly
NCF	Nineteenth-Century Fiction
N&Q	Notes and Queries
PQ	Philological Quarterly
PMLA	Publications of the Modern Language Association
PM	Putnam's Monthly Magazine
REL	Review of English Literature
RES	Review of English Studies
TLS	Times Literary Supplement
VS	Victorian Studies
WR	Westminster Review

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