

FEMALE PHILANTHROPY AND WOMEN NOVELISTS OF 1840-1870

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by

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ABSTRACT

Many women writers between 1840 and 1870 were producing a particular form of social or "social protest" novel which is identified here as a "philanthropic novel", a form distinguishable in content and tone from social novels written by men of the same period. The philanthropic novel is a work which has as its main protagonist a philanthropic heroine who is modelled - perhaps more covertly than overtly but significantly so - on the great revolutionary female philanthropists and social campaigners of the day, such as Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler. Despite the social and economic constraints imposed on women, the middle years of the nineteenth century saw an unprecedented upsurge of both women novelists and women philanthropists. A high proportion of women writers, including Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Yonge, were philanthropists themselves; others, like Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, admired the activities of eminent women philanthropists. Although, the majority of women novelists lacked the wider experience of politics, the law and commerce which was available to male writers, they now had available to them this new experience of philanthropy to draw upon for their novels. Notably, philanthropic heroines created by male authors, such as Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley, were more commonly depicted along conventional stereotyped lines as "ministering angels" : the male authors were less inclined to rely on actual women philanthropists as models even though they were personally acquainted with many of these revolutionary women. This analytical and psychological enquiry into the social history and novels of the period, reveals that the philanthropic novel not only played a crucial part in the developing literary tradition of women; it also led to a new, freer consciousness for women which assisted in a reappraisal of themselves and their worth to the wider community.

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FEMALE PHILANTHROPY AND WOMEN NOVELISTS OF 1840 TO 1870

THESIS

That certain female writers of the period between 1840 and 1870 were producing a particular form of novel which may be termed as "a philanthropic novel", as distinct from what is generally known as the "social protest novel" which is usually attributed to both male and female authorship, and that the philanthropic novel had a significant bearing on the subsequent tradition of novel writing by women opening up for them, as writers and individuals, a new kind of emancipating literary expression.

INTRODUCTION

"Why have women passion, intellect, moral activity - these three - and a place in society where no one of these can be exercised?"

Florence Nightingale

"You benevolent ladies! Why you women all play at benevolence - Look at Florence Nightingale: there's a woman for you."

Elizabeth Gaskell

The definition of this thesis presupposes the existence of a significant connection between the role played by nineteenth century women engaged in philanthropy and the

literary output of women novelists of the same period. Philanthropy here is taken to mean good works - personal, alms or labours - done in the public interest to mitigate poverty, disease, infirmity and ignorance and injustice.

Between the years 1840 and 1870 English middle-class women endured severe social and economic constraints, their designated role being one of dependent wife and mother. Yet, paradoxically, the same years produced the finest women novelists - the Brontes, George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell, and many other women writers of lesser literary status but nonetheless sufficiently competent to publish. What is less widely acknowledged, although ably and extensively researched by F.K. Prochaska (1980) ⁽¹⁾ is, that this also was a time when thousands of women turned their energies to a variety of philanthropic works in greater numbers and generally with far more motivation and dedication than their male counterparts.

In 1809 Hannah More, a writer herself and an instigator of the Sunday School movement, put forward the notion that ladies should make charity their "profession". ⁽²⁾ By the mid-century remarkable and intrepid women, like Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler and many more, had far exceeded these earlier expectations of Hannah More. Clearly, both writing and philanthropy were highly popular and accessible pursuits for women during this period. Moreover, both pursuits brought historical fame to women of

genius and personal resourcefulness.

The nineteenth century was a time of relentless political, economic and social transition and change largely brought on by the onset of the Industrial Revolution. The various technical advances in the cotton industry in the 1760's and 1770's, the harnessing of steam-power to drive machinery in the 1780's, the opening of the Liverpool - Manchester railway in 1830, had been considerable factors in the progress towards change. The period between 1840 and 1870 saw considerable industrial growth based on "laissez faire" economic policies, which upheld the philosophy of non-intervention by the State; competition in trade and commerce was given priority. This reached its triumph in the Great Exhibition of 1851. Politically, a marked transition towards new radical ideas was also taking shape. The French Revolution in 1789 had left its fearful mark on early nineteenth century Britain. Liberal conservatism had developed under Peel in the 1830's, followed by a Liberal government under Gladstone in the mid-Victorian period. The industrial revolution was not an abrupt or suddenly overwhelming event, but it gradually affected the whole structure of society. It brought about a period of demographic and economic change, of transition, of upheaval, of division, and of reform. For some it led to wealth and power, for others extreme poverty and destitution. It was a time when Parliament gradually became compelled to intervene in matters of social welfare, largely because of widespread

philanthropic endeavour and the pressures of philanthropic concern.

Ann Oakley, the twentieth century sociologist, has illustrated the effect that the industrial revolution and the resulting demographic movement of families, mostly from the rural south to the towns of the midlands and the north, had on the lives of women. Whereas agrarian woman prior to the eighteenth century had managed her husband's estate while he was away, had worked in the fields and cottage industries with him and had traded her wares at the market, the nineteenth century woman found that this role had been eroded; her new role was restricted to the home and family. The effect of industrialism was that the men of the household went out to work and the women, especially the middle-class women, stayed at home to care for the family, to manage the household and to entertain in the drawing room.⁽³⁾

The life style of Victorian women was essentially "private": not only was their experience drawn from the home, it was also endorsed by female education, the curriculum of which prepared them for a servile life of "feminine domesticity"⁽⁴⁾ as wives and good mothers. As wives and mothers, middle-class women were expected to be a shining example of Christian gentleness and morality, the maintainer of family stability in the home; marriage was deemed a woman's rightful profession. Yet, a social phenomenon of the age was an excess of half a million females in the population.⁽⁵⁾ The number of women who were likely to remain unmarried and seek

some kind of occupation outside the home was on the increase. The socially enforced division of the sexes into the working man and the non-working woman angered and frustrated many intelligent women, like Charlotte Bronte and Florence Nightingale. Prochaska writes of how thousands of women, to alleviate the boredom in their lives, turned to philanthropy :

"There was very little employment suited to middle-class women outside writing and governessing Her frequent complaint was of having nothing to do. Some complained that she gave in too easily to dissipation and the fine arts some, very sensibly, offered her new possibilities. Philanthropy was the vocation that most sprang to mind. Throughout the nineteenth century it was seen as the leisured woman's most obvious outlet for self-expression." (6)

Others found their outlet, more privately, in writing.

The majority of novelists cannot write effectively and convincingly without being able, consciously or subconsciously, to draw on a reservoir of personal experience. Life experience for educated women at the turn of the eighteenth century and up to 1840 had been limited to courtship, marriage, family matters and the immediate neighbours; this is clearly reflected in the novels of Jane Austen, Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth. The restricted "private" life style of nineteenth century women contrasted starkly with the "public" life style of their husbands, brothers, and fathers, whose education

and work gave them opportunities of a far wider life experience which was not normally available to women, namely in politics, commerce, industry, universities, the law and the military at both home and abroad. The patriarchal nature of the Church and the Law gave the male dominance whereas it kept women in a more restricted, less prominent and subservient role. The broader public life experience, and superior education which was available to men consequently, gave male authors of literary works an extensive pool of experience from which to draw upon. Historically, male writers also had available to them a far wider range of literary genre - essays, plays, political and philosophical treatises, poetry, sermons, travelogues, articles, as well as novels. Victorian male writers - Matthew Arnold, Robert Browning, Thomas Carlyle, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Disraeli, Thomas Hardy, Charles Kingsley between them were part of this continuing tradition. For women the situation was different; as Jane Austen's character Anne Elliot reminds Captain Harville when she confronts him on the question of inconstancy of women that "Men have had every advantage of us in telling their story the pen has been in their hands". (7) Jane Austen had taken up the pen and impressively had begun to redress the literary balance. Hundreds of women, both in Jane Austen's time and since, turned to the new genre of the novel as a means of expressing their ideas, emotions, thoughts and impressions. Although many other

women turned to writing poetry, hymns, religious tracts, and children's literature, the novel was an expansive form of literature which the women writers appeared to make their own. A writer's life is necessarily an isolated one and the "private" life style led by Victorian women was conducive to such an activity within the social constraints imposed upon them. Many women felt free to write. Writing was also an inexpensive pastime that could be fitted around domestic duties - the biographies of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell each testify to this. Philanthropy too, began as an extension of personal home management, nurturing and caring, hence it was the special skills of Victorian "feminine domesticity" which women took out with them into the community when they ventured forth to do charitable works. Many intelligent, resourceful middle-class women, therefore, were substituting for the boredom of the drawing room ways of employing themselves constructively, some turning to writing, others to philanthropy and a surprising number to both forms of activity.⁽⁸⁾ Women who attempted to step outside the restricted role of marriage and motherhood assigned to them, were frequently viewed with public disapproval and ridicule. The extent to which women philanthropists struggled to exert themselves against indignities brought about by social prejudice is recorded in biographies of Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler, and Annie Bessant. There was a general antagonism against the idea of "ladies" venturing

into rough, unseemly places of poverty, crime, war and prostitution. Women writers from the seventeenth century to the time of George Eliot frequently found it necessary to publish anonymously, often using male pseudonyms, if they were to gain serious recognition. Resistance to women working outside the home and writing novels eventually became modified. Charitable works by women gradually became socially acceptable once they came to be identified with certain biblical texts: a "virtuous woman" was assumed to have "a rightful and important place in the charitable world". The running of a philanthropic society could be compared to the running of a home.⁽⁹⁾ Consequently, active benevolence became a compelling and respected Christian activity for thousands of women. However, it did not end there, many took to writing about these new experiences and elaborating their views. The daily journal was the most common means of self-expression and a form of writing in which the educated Victorian woman is known to have passionately and universally indulged. Not surprisingly for the more ambitious, it provided a springboard for other forms of prose writing such as autobiographies and novels. Moreover, inspired by growing Christian evangelism and the strong influence of the church and chapel, many women were inclined to reflect their thoughts in other forms such as tracts, hymns and poetry. Very gradually a new respect for women writers began to emerge as the pseudonyms began to disappear or disclosure of gender identity was made. The names of emerging women writers included Charlotte Yonge,

Lady Georgina Fullerton and Felicia Skene, all tractarians as well as novelists; Ella Sophia Armitage and Caroline Maria Noel hymn writers, Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Christiana Rossetti poets, but the most important development came with the literary disclosures of Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot. George Henry Lewes, one of the first critics to acknowledge the profound contribution to fiction by women novelists roundly claimed for them, "a prominent position in the field of literature, the value and importance of which it is not easy to over-rate". (10)

If both novel writing and philanthropic activity served as vital stimulants to the lives of bored and frustrated middle-class women, then it is not unreasonable to assume that the literature they were producing would contain a high proportion of the female philanthropic theme. Of an earlier age, Jane Austen says very little about philanthropy in her novels - it was, as were the effects of the Industrial Revolution, largely outside her time and experience - although her books centred around the integrity of women in their personal relationships. However, Victorian women novelists, writing between 1840 and 1870 had available to them this additional experience which came with the expanding industrial society, either because they were caught up in the philanthropic movement themselves or because hundreds of their sisters were. For women in general it provided a new area of feminine consciousness; for the female writer it gave her a new topic of interest, mobility for her characters and a fresh perspective to life

on which to exercise her imaginative powers.

Names of some of the numerous women known to have combined both the activities of writing and philanthropy, are appended to this thesis.⁽¹¹⁾ Among the more renowned are Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, Charlotte Yonge and Mrs. Humphrey Ward. Elizabeth Gaskell is the best known and the most active philanthropically of the women novelists. As the wife of a Unitarian minister in the grim industrial city of Manchester, she witnessed much poverty and deprivation. In her novels Mary Barton, Ruth, and North and South she relies heavily on her first hand experience in the city. She personally concerned herself with the issues of female employment, the education and rehabilitation of "fallen women" and their migration. Like the young Harriet Martineau, she was committed to using the popular art form for the purposes of highlighting those social injustices which she knew to exist in the hope of improving public attitudes - although their respective outlooks were very different. The more eminent women novelists, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, gave priority to the artistry of the novel, but the topics in their works are frequently focussed on matters of moral and social concern. Despite the limitation of her "public" experience, Charlotte Bronte puts her genius to the issue of the single woman's personal struggle for education, employment and economic self-sufficiency: these are the problems of her fictional

heroines. Her heroines - Jane Eyre, Caroline Helstone, Lucy Snowe, are depicted as moral educators, (usually of men) and are religiously benevolent, independent and self-sacrificing young women. Shirley Keeldar and her companion Caroline Helstone, are active philanthropists in their own community. George Eliot was not actively involved in philanthropy, but she became the focus of many appeals from female activists: she took an interest in the advancement of female education and in the women's press and related issues.⁽¹²⁾ Her sophisticated philosophical conviction was that Art was "the nearest thing to life a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellowmen, beyond the bounds of our personal lot".^(12a) The notion that Art is a moral teacher, an indicator of individual and social responsibility, is an over-riding theme in her novels. Eliot is capable of depicting varying degrees of philanthropic endeavour, recognising at the same time traits of human moral frailty, from Dinah Morris's kindly single-minded evangelicalism to Dorothea Causobon's egotistically thwarted, and hence ineffectual, social resourcefulness. Moreover George Eliot strove towards and succeeded in giving both aesthetic and psychological respectability to the novel and its characterisations. She deplored what she termed 'the silly novels' written by silly women: such works, she claimed, threatened the reputation of the serious woman writer because they were amateurish, ill-written and ill-formed, and filled with risible sentimentality.⁽¹³⁾

Thus some women discovered for themselves through the two activities of philanthropy and writing, a fresh, altruistic perspective of life and a new literary form in which new standards of achievement were possible. The art form of the novel appears to have played a distinctive role in this female sense of release. The majority of women philanthropic writers tended to favour this particular genre to any other. The literary theorist, Richard Stang (1972) writes of the genre that it resulted "from the way the writer received and organised his experience".⁽¹⁴⁾ The novel more than any other form was conducive to the private world of the Victorian woman: it gave them the freedom to express and expand their ideas without immediate interference. This democratic aspect of the novel is affirmed by Louis Cazamian (1973) when he writes of the potency of the novel for freeing the individual especially at a time when literacy was on the increase.⁽¹⁵⁾ Likewise, in the field of philanthropy, Prochaska and Ray Strachey (1923) writing on the "woman question", both assert that philanthropy offered a new dimension to many women's lives by liberating them from the confines of the home and plunging them into the "public" world, not only of doing "good works", but also into the related realm of committee meetings, clerical work, administration and fund-raising.⁽¹⁶⁾ There is clear evidence that women writers and philanthropists made contact with each other; both Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler and Charlotte Bronte knew Elizabeth Gaskell personally. Elizabeth

Gaskell writes admiringly in her letters of Florence Nightingale's nursing endeavours with London prostitutes⁽¹⁷⁾ and Josephine Butler cites Elizabeth Gaskell's novel Ruth as the inspiration for her long and arduous political campaign on behalf of rehabilitating prostitutes.⁽¹⁸⁾ George Eliot and Charlotte Bronte both met Harriet Martineau, although neither woman sustained any lasting friendship with her.⁽¹⁹⁾ If the writers themselves were not actively involved in philanthropy, they were closely acquainted with those who were. In this sense philanthropy formed part of the female consciousness. That is not to say that men were not involved in works of charity. Without question, there were many eminent and effectual male philanthropists in the field and social reformers in Parliament. However, many women believed - as did Hannah More - that because of their sex they were more naturally equipped for work which entailed an intimate concern for people.⁽²⁰⁾ The world was their wider family. This idea was fuelled by the generally shared assumption that women were morally superior to men. Therefore, if philanthropy offered women a whole new set of experiences and the novel was a new liberating, accessible form of literature, then one may reasonably deduce that the depiction of philanthropy, and particularly the philanthropic heroine, in the Victorian "social novel", should reflect in the works written by women the early stirring spirit of the freer, if not emancipated woman.

The concept of the "social novel" is often linked with nineteenth century literature. The Romantic Revival was giving way to Realism, which insisted on accurate documentation, sociological insight, idealization and a degree of melodrama. Subjects were to be taken from everyday life, preferably from the lower class life. Realism in nineteenth century literature, albeit sprinkled with reminders of the Romantic Age, was often associated with the representation of social and moral concerns. Pauline Nestor reminds one of the merging of fact and fiction in the 1840's "with novels drawing on the blue books for source material and the blue books incorporating the popular literary feature of woodcut illustrations".⁽²¹⁾ An increase in literacy made the novel perhaps the most popular and potent form of social commentary. The novels of Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley testify to the growing concern about the widespread poverty and harrowing social injustices of the day, in the hope of bringing these matters to the notice of politicians and the general public. Both Disraeli and Kingsley attempted to advance a religio-political solution to the problem, Disraeli preaching the political gospel of Young England in the paternalist spirit of the Oxford Movement and Social Toryism in his succession of novels Sybil, Coningsby, and Tancred, and Kingsley the more liberal and democratic idealism of Christian socialism in Yeast and Alton Locke. Dickens, both as man and writer had a high sense of public responsibility and was much

disturbed by mass poverty and human degradation in the city slums as were Disraeli and Kingsley. His public speeches, journalism and letters suggest a cautious liberal seeking to humanise the social progress, and his many novels, from the earlier Oliver Twist to the later Bleak House, display his impatience with, and cynicism of, the charitable and legal institutions of his day. Mrs. Gaskell is the one outstanding woman of this group of recognised "social" novelists. Like her male counterparts, she highlights the disparity of the Two Nations: in North and South, the Hale family are forced by their reduced circumstances to move away from rural sufficiency of leafy Hampshire to the industrial impoverishment of smokey Darkshire (Lancashire). Mrs. Gaskell however, is less of a political theorist than Disraeli and Kingsley and less of an outspoken critic of the ills and shortcomings of the establishment than Dickens. In the "Preface" to Mary Barton she disavows of an acquaintance with politics and economy theory: "I know nothing of Political Economy or theories of trade". (22) This however could be interpreted as a sign of feminine reticence expected of women on these matters in the 1840's, because she also records, less publicly in her correspondence, of having read Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations. (23) In the self-same novel she cautiously identifies with the plight of the Chartists and their futile attempt in 1839 to put to Parliament the grievances of the industrial working man. Despite this apparent

contradiction, she largely concentrates on the humanitarian and moral questions affecting individuals and their families, and on the idea of peaceful reconciliation between alienated groups of society.

Even more significantly, Joseph Kestner, a modern day literary critic, challenges the assumption that the "social novel" belongs predominantly to a cannon of male writers. He argues that it was a succession of female writers - women often meriting only a footnote in literary history - who, from the time of the late 1820's, initiated and advanced the tradition of using narrative fiction to register protest, expose abuses, and to promote reform. Kestner's list of neglected female authors consists of Hannah More, Elizabeth Stone, Frances Trollope, Charlotte Tonna, Camilla Toulmin, Geraldine Jewsbury, Fanny Mayne, Julia Kavanagh, Dinah Mulock (Crain), as well as the more prominent authors such as Maria Edgeworth, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot.⁽²⁴⁾ Such women might then be regarded as literary "radicals" . Louis Cazamian has described Elizabeth Gaskell's contribution to the social philosophy of the nineteenth century as "an intimate feminine interpretation". In her own time, Thomas Carlyle said to Gaskell of her novels, "Your field is moreover new, full of rich material."⁽²⁵⁾ Moreover George Henry Lewes, the literary critic, was advocating the idea of a separate literary tradition for women writers, based on their own unique experiences of life, citing the novel as "their

forte". Society, he argued wanted more than an imitation of the novels of men. (26) He writes :

"The advent of female literature promises woman's view of life, women's experience: in other words a new element. Make what distinctions you please in the social world, it still remains true that men and women have different organisation, consequently different experience." (27)

Worth noting here is, that by this time in 1852, when Lewes was writing these statements, hundreds of women had not only begun to write novels but thousands of others were actively engaged in a wide variety of philanthropic works - an experience she was making her own. Taken together these comments indicate that women were writing a different kind of "social novel" to their male counterparts, that they were drawing from a different experience of life. If, charitable work, or philanthropy, was a substantial part of the female experience and consciousness, then it is not unreasonable to assume that the women novelists of the time were producing a different form of the social novel, which might be termed here as "the philanthropic novel".

Significantly, one question under review here must be, if the female novelist was making especial use of the philanthropic theme, to what extent did it influence the nature of her creation of the philanthropic heroine? How far did the main protagonist in a particular novel reflect the author's own sense of personality, her views and

inner feelings and the perceptions she had of her own sex? This can only be answered by critically examining the respective philanthropic heroines created by male and female authors in order to determine any significant differences of presentation and treatment. In Victorian literature there is an abundance of philanthropic heroines from which to make a selection. Rarely was the fiction of the time - from a serious novel to the popular story in a cheap journal - without its "good heroine" or "ministering angel" - the young middleclass woman, who by varying degrees of sympathy and patronage, tended to the needy poor. Frequently an ideal suitor hero is at hand to admire her virtuous, cheerfully-borne, self-sacrificing qualities and on the strength of these, marries her; thus, one finds that the philanthropic interest in the plot is closely linked to the moral chastity of the heroine and to love and courtship theme. This was the stereotype of the "good lady" that society wanted to uphold as an example to all young ladies, but stereotyped philanthropic women rarely reflected the social reality. This raises the question of how close to, or how far from the popular stereotype did the novelists adhere when conceiving their heroines. If women writers were consciously or unconsciously identifying with philanthropists, like Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler, and discreetly using such women as role models for their heroines, then one may expect their creations to be less like the popular stereotype than

those of their male counterparts. Did they, for example, defy traditional conventions of male superiority and of male monopoly in public life? The heroine's philanthropy also served structurally as a device for her geographical mobility in the novel, and metaphorically, as a sign of personal growth and character development. Did the "public" dimension of this development of self-identity differ in the respective novels by men and women? If women were depicting a different, more dynamic type of philanthropic heroine in their novels to those depicted by men, then it is possible that different social-psychological factors are identifiably present in their respective works.

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TWO PREMISES

The research for this thesis involves a strong integration of English Literature and the Social Sciences. The thesis is based on two premises arising out of these subjects. The first is that women novelists achieved their greatness by developing a recognisable feminine literary tradition of their own ; the premise is inspired by statements made by two twentieth century literary feminists, Virginia Woolf (1920) and Elaine Showalter (1978). (28) The second premise is based on the claim of the social - psychologist Carol Gilligan (1982) that males and females may speak, think and carry concepts "in a different voice"

when they define their lives in terms of relationships and the ethics of responsibility.⁽²⁹⁾

The first premise

G.H. Lewis's belief in a separate literary tradition for female writers elicits the question, was the female consciousness of philanthropy one aspect, or even a key aspect, to a feminine tradition of writing? Virginia Woolf, casting herself back in time to the writer Aphra Behn of the seventeenth century, reflects on the different kind of "vision" of the sexes; the male vision is one of established male values and conventions, whereas the female vision has been submerged. Women needed to establish their own cultural identity. Women, she says, are more interested in "the autobiographical experience" ; they can establish a different order of values and new universal truths by exploring their own sex.⁽³⁰⁾ Elaine Showalter in her book a Literature of Their Own ⁽³¹⁾ traces the progression of a literary tradition from Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing, in which she shows a development of "female awareness" within a "feminine subculture". The subculture, she claims, unifying the values, tastes, conceptions, experiences and behaviour of mothers, daughters and wives, has shaped a female literary tradition in the same way as other subcultures - black, Jewish, Canadian, Anglo-Indian - have developed their cultural traditions. Showalter gives definition to three arbitrary phrases in the development

of female literature - "Feminine", from 1840 to 1880; the "Feminist" from 1880 to 1920 on the winning of the vote, and the "Female" phrase as 1920 to the present day.⁽³²⁾

This thesis will largely centre on the period that Showalter refers to as "the Feminine Stage". Particularly significant is Showalter's identification of the manifestation of the female literary sub-culture with the emerging "professional" activities of Victorian women as "social reformers, nurses, governesses, and novelists and with those women in the home who perpetrated the feminine role as teacher, helper and mother of mankind".⁽³³⁾

Curiously, neither Virginia Woolf nor Elaine Showalter especially stress the enormous importance of philanthropy to the release of women from the home. However, the writings of both women suggest that the female literary tradition would be likely to include human caring or philanthropy as a component theme. Therefore the premise, arising from the ideas and theories of Woolf and Showalter, is that the feminine literary contribution, which has hitherto been overlooked and undervalued, should be recognised by way of the female experience of women's own sub-culture, the "feminine stage" of which provided the basic fabric for the philanthropic theme in the novel. And, because the philanthropic theme had a profound effect on the female consciousness in the nineteenth century, it also had a significant effect on the content, characterisations, style and literary techniques of women novelists. The recognition of this special contribution by women could

add to the total perception of humankind and to the seeking after universal Truths.

At this point a note of caution needs to be emphasised, that is, that arguments put forward by some modern-day feminists, which maintain that a female culture should exist totally independent of the established male culture, is not part of this thesis : it would be foolish to imply that there may exist two separate sets of universals - one for male-produced Art and one for female-produced Art. Dale Spender, the modern feminist critic, in her book Women's Ideas and What Men Have Done To Them ⁽³⁴⁾ may have made out a convincing case for female literary suppression by autocratic and paternalistic authors, editors and publishers, nonetheless, educated women are still capable of reading works of literature, theology and philosophy. So, one would expect the previous influence of male literary giants to play a crucial part in the overall female literary development : any study of the history of literature displays that this has always been the case.

The second premise

In her book In a Different Voice, Carol Gilligan claims that males and females speak, think and carry concepts 'in a different voice'. Her research shows that males, in their formative years, define life in terms of a separate identity

and a competitiveness that "empowers the self", whereas females, who define life in terms of relationships, responsibility and caring can, by attachment, create and sustain the community. The differences which become less obvious in maturity, nonetheless feature at a subconscious level in adulthood evoking certain behavioural patterns which endorse certain stereotyped patterns of "gender dynamics" and the formation of "self-identity" which influence the way the two sexes perceive ethical concepts in respect of community care. By applying the concepts, as described by Gilligan, to the social novels written by men and women during the years of 1840 and 1870, it may be possible to detect certain gender differences of structure, style, imagery, use of language and characterisation, especially in the depiction of the philanthropic heroine. For example, Jane Austen's novels are praised for their fine, precise structure, and the novels written by the Brontes are also brilliantly symmetrically structured. One may ask is this a particularly feminine trait which bears a socio-psychological significance to the constrained lifestyle of most women? Also, women novelists tend to dwell on the minutiae of detail of personal human relationships - how far does this display a particular "feminine" awareness of how people really behave, think and perceive the world, and does this also result from having more time in the home than men in which to observe such detail more closely? There is also speculation among sociolinguists

on the possibility of gender differences in the way language is used and how these are related to environment and life experience. (36) If this is possible then the findings could give rise to the proposition that a different female literary consciousness was developing approximately between 1840 and 1870, and that this consciousness was formulating the advance of a female literary tradition by way of a particular kind of social novel - termed here as "the philanthropic novel".

The period from 1840 to 1870 has been selected for this thesis. It is the period when philanthropic endeavour was at its most eruptive, and it is also during this period that the best novels by women were written. However, for the purposes of identifying certain relevant historical perspectives, it will be necessary to step outside - before and beyond this stipulated time-span. It is also assumed there was a breakdown of some of the rigid social conventions after 1870 and that the social freedom of women began to grow in the last 30 years of Victoria's reign. (37)

This thesis has been organised to incorporate the two premises as follows.

In Part 1 there is an introductory survey of the philanthropic movement in nineteenth century industrial Britain and the

"social novelists" response to it. In particular, the section will examine the effects of the changing industrial society on the life-styles of women, especially those educated middle-class women who broke down prevailing stereotyped attitudes concerning their sex and discovered for themselves a new identity in the philanthropic tradition. It will then consider how this new "feminine" experience assisted womankind in formulating her own "ethical concept of care", thereby providing a fresh source of inspiration for women who had taken up writing novels.

In Part 11 there will be a general survey of the role of the novel and its contribution to the literary tradition of women as defined by Virginia Woolf and Elaine Showalter in order to discern signs of the philanthropic consciousness of women within the tradition. The character of the Victorian heroine in literature will be noted. This will be followed by an examination of a selection of fictional philanthropic heroines depicted by both male and female writers - applying the Gilligan "different voice" theory - to identify any significant literary differences. It is expected that the philanthropic heroines depicted by the female writers were - given the public restraints towards the depiction of women in fiction - more closely modelled on the great female philanthropic reformers than were those created by male novelists. Thus, the female writer was producing a form of "social novel" identified here as "a philanthropic novel", which was to form a valuable contribution to the literary tradition of women.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

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PART 1.

NINETEENTH CENTURY PHILANTHROPY

AND

PHILANTHROPIC WOMAN

CHAPTER 1 THE PHILANTHROPIC NATION : A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

The aim of this chapter is to examine the historical development of philanthropy, the nineteenth century's response to its social and economic problems, and the compulsion of novelists to reflect these events.

1.1. ORIGINS AND IDEOLOGIES

"Free trade has filled the towns and emptied our countryside; it has gorged the banks but left our rickyards bare."

William Cobbett

Can I see another's woe,
and not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
and not seek for kind relief?

William Blake

The definition of "philanthropy" given in the Oxford English Dictionary is, "beneficent or friendly to mankind". The word "philanthropy" originates from the ancient Greek word "philanthrope" meaning "loving mankind" and was said of gods, men and even animals. In England the nonenclature "philanthropist" was being used in its wider Greek sense of "friend and lover of man" from about 1730.⁽¹⁾ Perhaps the fuller definition of "philanthropy" given in the Shorter English Dictionary of, "love towards mankind; practical benevolence towards men in general; the disposition to promote

the well-being of one's fellowmen", connotes more exactly the moral and practical ideology of nineteenth century philanthropists. An essential feature of charitable intention at this time was the urgency to improve the quality of life for the poverty-stricken, the ignorant, and the destitute. Widespread philanthropy, individually and collectively practised by men and women, was a special characteristic of Victorian social reform. Nineteenth century philanthropy came about in order to meet the dire needs of the struggling masses who became victims of the developing industrial society. By the 1840's, philanthropy was a popular activity, not only of members of the old landed gentry but also of the new successful industrial entrepreneurial classes, and even of the poor towards each other. There were three prevailing occurrences in the eighteenth century which propelled the nineteenth century into widespread philanthropic effort. They were evangelical Christianity, the Romantic Revival and Utilitarian political philosophy.

Historically, Christianity in England had long been associated with acts of charity to the poor. Prior to the Dissolution in the sixteenth century, these acts were mostly performed by the monastic orders, and later, in Tudor England, when the land was troubled by an element of unemployable soldiers and vagabonds after the French Wars and Wars of the Roses. It was gradually recognised that it was

incumbent on both Church and society to provide work and administrative relief for the poor.⁽²⁾ However, David Owen writing on English philanthropy from 1660-1960, claims that philanthropy, as a recognisable social obligation, began to emerge in the seventeenth century when there was a turning point in the history of British politics, accompanied by material advance, overseas expansion and philosophical and scientific enquiry. The temper and outlook of the upper and middle classes caused benevolence to become less of a person to person affair and alms-giving became more of a collective effort. A patchy network of charity schools and new hospitals became established as a result of charitable corporations patronised by the wealthy. This charity of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was, as Owen observes, "Puritan in temper, but Puritan in an ethical rather than doctrinal sense".⁽³⁾ In 1799, when starving families were moving into the disease-ridden squalor of the towns, there is a reference in the Medical Journal⁽⁴⁾ to 'the philanthropic intentions of men so zealous in the cause of humanity', and Green's Short History⁽⁵⁾ published in 1784 made mention of "a philanthropic movement" of the late eighteenth century which bore the name of Wesley, the Oxford don, whose evangelical movement and its doctrine of personal salvation were closely linked with the winning over of "drunkards and other drop-outs".

In the eighteenth century the principal public outlets of philanthropy began with prison and criminal law reform,

and, more famously, with the anti-slavery crusade. In these areas the Quakers, joined by members of other dissenting faiths and evangelical Anglicans who embraced the biblical imperative to love one's fellow men and applied it as an indispensable Christian duty in their campaigns. They were highly active as they became collectively organised, and, in September 1788, succeeded in instituting the first philanthropic Society for the prevention of crime. The Abolition Committee, led by Lord Wilberforce, was to discover that appealing to the reason and benevolence of government was not so easy an accomplishment, thus they learned that the mobilising of political agitation and public opinion was an inevitable development towards establishing social reforms.⁽⁶⁾ There was also the problem of stirring up the social conscience of the established Church, which, during the Regency period had become coldly illiberal and the majority of Anglican clergy more gentrified and, therefore, remoter from their sick and needy parishioners.⁽⁷⁾ As time went on, it was considered inadvisable for the Church to interfere in the affairs of political economy and the growing industrial problems of poverty and poor insanitary housing.⁽⁸⁾ Powerful reaction to the indifference of mainstream Anglicanism to the poor came from the evangelical revival and Methodism initiated by John Wesley and George Whitfield. The revivist clergy and later, lay-preachers - men and women - came in close contact with the common people, not only by means of open-air preaching but also

through prayer meetings held in the cottages.⁽⁹⁾ The evangelicals relied heavily on literal interpretations of the Bible: Jesus's dual commandment of "Love God" and "Love Thy Neighbour" made it incumbent on the revivalist believers to connect their devotion to the deity with a deep concern for the souls and well-being of others. As Prochaska puts it, "With grace conditional and backsliding a pitfall there was a new emphasis given to good works".⁽¹⁰⁾ Wesley put the fear of God into his followers, warning them that they must assist the poor if they wished to "escape everlasting fire, and to inherit the everlasting kingdom".⁽¹¹⁾ Simultaneously, the revival was a reaction against the moral laxity of the age.⁽¹²⁾ This remarkably influential national crusade, authoritarian and moralistic in many respects, was to have a powerful effect on the Victorian ethos. Wesley, by the time of his death in 1791, had laid the foundations of the deeply religious and puritanical spirit of Victorian Britain which gave considerable impetus to the philanthropic movement in that age. In the main, Victorian philanthropists combined their understanding of the scriptures with certain standards of morality and practical help. It was regarded as particularly necessary to rescue the sinner from his or her sin and the wayward paths of life: the drunks, the "fallen women", those on felonious charges in the prisons, the waifs and strays, those unfortunates in the workhouses and the incapable. Various institutions and organisations, Bible and missionary societies, were set up to deal with the

problems.

Significantly, at this time, women from all levels of life were caught up in the ferment of "practical benevolence". Notably, women from the upper and middle classes began visiting the sick and needy in their homes: the "Lady Bountiful" figure emerged as if to compensate for the lack of humanitarian response which was currently coming from mainstream Anglicanism. The pre-industrialised lady of the manor was often in daily contact with the working people. As the researches of the sociologists Ann Oakley (1974) and Sheila Rowbotham (1973) reveal, she was not only kept busy with the affairs of the household, she shared the running of the estate with her husband and actually took over this responsibility when the men were away.⁽¹³⁾ Anne Summers points out the practice of these early "Lady Bountifuls" of visiting the poor on their estates at times involved a considerable sacrifice of leisure: these women effectively were among the early pioneers of the female philanthropic visiting movement ⁽¹⁴⁾

In evangelical circles in the early days of Methodism, women were discovering for themselves a new egalitarian identity: they, alongside men, were consecrated for the office of preaching until 1833 when the Connexional Conference forbade it. In a short history entitled A Methodist Pageant (1932), the Connexional Editor of that year, B. Aquila Barber,

gives brief cameos of these early women preachers. She records how, in 1787, a permit was forwarded to Sarah Millet to fill the office of preacher - by order of Mr. Wesley and the Conference. The permit enabled her to preach "in the open air and in barns and wagons" as Wesley himself had done.⁽¹⁵⁾ In 1813, Mary Hawkdey, a salaried evangelist, made great progress in "the fellowship of visiting and praying companies"; and Sarah Kirkland, a local lady pioneer who introduced Primitive Methodism to Derby and Nottinghamshire, was said to have "commanded a crowd" and usually preached to "rough and ready" communities".⁽¹⁶⁾ Such women Dissenters also put into practice the Christian charity they preached, and were the forerunners alongside many Quaker women involved in prison work - women like Eliza Richardson, preacher and philanthropist in the 1830's, Catherine Munford, the Wesleyan Methodist, who became Catherine Booth and a Salvationist in the slums of the East End, and Elizabeth Fry and her team of lady Quaker workers in the slums and prisons of the City. The "Lady Bountifuls" and the evangelical women had initiated between them a female tradition in practical public benevolence.

Although eventually there developed a conspicuous degree of overlapping of evangelical opinions from Low Anglicanism to Primitive Methodism, it is clearly evident that the first upsurge of philanthropic activity came from the Dissenters - the Baptists, Wesleyans, Unitarians and, most significantly,

Quakers, although many Church of England Evangelicals were also to be found in the field early on and later were joined by the Anglo-Catholics.

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As an alternative to Wesley's evangelical moral strictures, many Victorians were inspired by Ruskin, the Lakeland poets, and other disciples of Rousseau, who gave weight to a moral philosophy which attributed evil, not to sin, but to society as a departure from the natural state; they believed in the goodness of human nature and the spontaneous flowering of moral sentiments so long as they were uncorrupted by the "evil" influences of civilisation and unrestrained by authoritarian discipline. In the area of the Arts, the Victorians owed much to the Revivalist Romantics, who had seen the dangers and the catastrophic failure of the Age of Reason in the events of the French Revolution.

A new kind of humanitarianism had emerged with the sensitivity of the Lakeland poets, who had reacted against the disciples of "Reason" - Jeremy Bentham, William Godwin and William Hazlitt. Samuel Coleridge, delivering an address at Bristol, spoke out against the dangers of an ideology of benevolence which overlooked the innate "feelings of the heart":

"The searcher after truth must love and be loved: for general benevolence is a necessary motive to constancy let us beware of that proud philosophy which affects to inculcate philanthropy while it denounces every home-born feeling by which it is produced and nurtured. The paternal and filial duties discipline the heart and prepare it for mankind." (17)

Coleridge, wordsworth and other Lakeland poets, gave a new dignity to the lowly rural people who were hit by the Land Reform legislation of enclosure and left to eke out a frugal existence on the poor soils of the common grazing lands. Their close affinity with Nature was identified with innocence and pure thought. Michael, the hill-shepherd, Margaret the deserted wife and mother, the idiot boy, the leech-gatherer, all were given a hitherto unacknowledged dignity by wordsworth in the Lyrical Ballads. The poets operated a new form of mystical altruism through the idea of the humble, intuitive spirit, and provided a salutary warning against the threat of the "dissolute city",⁽¹⁸⁾ and the "dark Satanic mills"⁽¹⁹⁾ of industrialism. The earlier metaphoric denouncement of William Blake, who saw the encroachment of approaching industrialisation on rural life as an evil force capable of destroying the natural childlike innocence of the human soul, was part of the Lakeland poets' pantheistic ethos. Such idealism, which concerned itself with the education of feelings, ran contrary to the utilitarian philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, which specifically denied the validity of the feelings and the effectiveness of sympathy as sanctions of morality. In a

more prosaic form, Mary Wollstonecraft also attempted to reinforce humanitarian principles through literature. Not only did she attempt to bring to the public attention the plight of the uneducated woman in her well known commentary Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792), she also contrived to write a novel, Mary - A Fiction (1787), in which the heroine experiences the world through a series of widening social spheres of family, friendship, marriage, polite society and finally humanity in general. Mary Wollstonecraft claims for her book a special status for art in which sensibility mediates between fiction and life: "Those compositions only have power to delight and carry us willing captives, where the soul of the author is exhibited and animates the hidden springs". (20) Although Mary Wollstonecraft belonged to the Age of Reason, her statement, as Gary Kelly (1979) points out, anticipates Romantic narrative art. Like Coleridge she wished to externalise in "fictitious history" her "inner emotional experience". (21) Unfortunately Mary Wollstonecraft had not learned the novelist's craft and her second novel, Maria or the Struggles of a Woman (1797), which focussed on the handicap of legal inequalities of poor women at the bottom of the social heap, remains unfinished and hence unnoticed, although her biographer Eleanor Flexner sees many characteristics in the novel which anticipated the novels of Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell. (22) Other women, such as Hannah More (1745-1835) and Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849), also wrote novels about the sufferings

of the labouring classes, which Joseph Westner claims, were among the forerunners of the "social protest" tradition of novels.⁽²³⁾ It would seem that women writers seemed happier with expressing human sensibility in prose and, in the main, left the men to its expression in poetry.⁽²⁴⁾ Thus, Victorian writers frequently adopted the Revivalist Romantic cult of "noble emotions" in both poetry and fiction. There evolved from the cult a theory of moral education, which can be identified in the works of Thomas Carlyle, Harriet Martineau, George Eliot, Charles Kingsley and Lord Alfred Tennyson, whose noble people kindle a sense of loving pity for human beings suffering under misfortune and inspire an admiration for what is good and gracious in human nature.⁽²⁵⁾ Unfortunately in the hands of some less skilled Victorian writers, the Revivalist Romantic cult of "noble emotions" was in danger of being expressed in ways that were either sentimental or patronizing. On the whole, the Romantic poets were probably more idealistic than their nineteenth century counterparts: they held a more universally embracing mystical conception of Truth and were less restrained by Christian dogmas and conventions.

It must be stated, however, that the mystical conception of Truth which the Revivalist Romantics upheld, was not necessarily representative of eighteenth century social concern. In fact, Macaulay, in his History of England written around 1840, records that pre-industrialised Britain

was a time of much poverty and cruelty and that the social problems were often viewed with callous unconcern⁽²⁶⁾ - something which, according to Norman McCord (1970), "disturbed the nineteenth century conscience". In the early years of the nineteenth century the problems could no longer be ignored: instead, as McCord writes, "The nineteenth century made a determined effort to find out what was wrong with their society and to do something about it."⁽²⁷⁾ The sensibilities and the conscience of the nation were gradually aroused with the help of the revivalist Romantic tradition.

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The role played by the Utilitarian movement in shaping the Victorian ethos has always been met by mixed reactions from both philanthropists and writers. The ideas of Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), the eminent eighteenth century philosopher, greatly influenced the nineteenth century political-industrial system which, in turn, aroused reactionary movements of social concern. Bentham, the earliest representative of modern empiricism revived the liberal-democratic and utilitarian views established by Locke.⁽²⁸⁾ Hitherto, the political-industrial system had been fairly static since the time of the Tudors. Bentham questioned ruthlessly the established order of things and applied his radical practical philosophy to ethics, politics, social reform, education, legislation, penology and international law. In doing so, he emancipated

himself (and his followers) from the former bonds of the rigid customs and inveterate prejudices of State, Church, the constitution and traditional law. He became the founder of a new political and social ideology aimed at the practical purpose of changing and improving the existing conventions. The spirit of his ideas based on the Utilitarian principle of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" infused itself into every aspect of Victorian society and his followers used the principle to sanction the competitive society. This was a time when the "laissez-faire" doctrines of Bentham were popular, despite the warnings of John Stuart Mill (1806-73), Utilitarian himself, that the doctrine was in danger of overlooking the needs of those oppressed by its competitive ideology. The spirit of free trade and liberal economic policies favoured the new commercial and industrial giants; it also meant extreme hardship for others - the small shop-keeper, agricultural labourers, artisans and industrial workers. The different fortunes of those who were adaptable and entrepreneurial and those who were unable to keep up with the competition of the "laissez-faire" society, are often reflected in the novels of the period. Thomas Hardy's ill-defined character Benchard, the old-styled Mayor of Casterbridge, who is unable to compete on all levels of life, against the young, enterprising Farfrae who brings new scientific ideas and machinery to the Wessex country town, is but one example. (29)

With nineteenth century Utilitarianism, a new paternalism with a new set of standards of social responsibility arrived. The old feudal order and the spirit of rural gentility had been undermined. British society previously had been governed by members of a small aristocratic elite whose powers and authority were based on their possession of upwards of fifty percent of all agricultural land.⁽³⁰⁾ Not only had this given the aristocrats a considerable influence over the rest of the population, it also implied that some degree of social responsibility should be the attitude of the elite for the life of the rest of society. The Free Trade movement reduced the economic privileges of the country gentlemen on whose wealth the rural labourers had been dependent. The stoppage of protective duties on corn together with bad harvests meant that the demand for labourers lessened. As the labouring masses made their gradual move from the rural south to the industrial towns in the Midlands and the North, rural social responsibility became more fragmented than it had been before. The political power, which previously had been the prerogative of the wealthy and squirearchy, fell into the hands of the new economic giants of commerce and industry. Social responsibility now depended more on the whim of the individual conscience. The transition of social responsibility not only gave birth to a new era of social reform, it also heralded the century in which philanthropy - often practised along well-meaning, but harsh utilitarian lines, became the prerogative of thousands of wealthy benefactors of

both sexes and of Parliamentary legislators. The effects of "laissez faire" policies, and of the New Poor Law, worried philanthropic novelists like Charles Dickens. His fictional group of failed members of society, who optimistically yet vainly seek-out "well-to-do connections" to bail them out of the debtor's prison, are indicative of Dickens' concern. Charles Kingsley and Elizabeth Gaskell also distrusted ruthless competitive masters of industry who gave little thought to the poor. Also, even the paternalistic writer, Harriet Martineau, shared with Dickens a dislike of the New Poor Laws. Also Utilitarianism brought with it the concept of the institution for paupers, orphans and the mentally deranged.

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A significant impetus for the upsurge of social responsibility, before and during the nineteenth century, was the variety of contemporary ideologies and movements which often rivalled with one another. Radical politicians, collective movements and individual philanthropists operated under different philosophies of individualism and socialism; the Church of England was divided within itself along similar lines, notably radical Broad Church Christian Socialism being in opposition to the High Church Oxford Movement, which strove to recapture the mystical theology of Rome. Low Church evangelical Anglicanism provided a third theological dimension. However, the power of the Church and the strength of the Christian Faith and the effect these had on individuals in

Victorian England cannot be under-estimated. The majority of reformers and philanthropists claimed to have been spurred into doing what they did through divine inspiration: they firmly believed they were urged by God to go forth and perform his will - these include such persons as Lord Shaftesbury, Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Benjamin Disraeli, F.D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Gaskell, Josephine Butler, Dr. Barnardo, Ellice Hopkins, Branwell and Catherine Booth, Angela Burdett-Coutts as well as those who flooded the missionary field abroad and the city slums. The distinction between religious and philanthropic effort becomes somewhat blurred when individuals interpret their deeply-held religious faith, personal morality and practical output in terms of a manifestation of God's love towards mankind. It, therefore, would be feasible to assume that, in the nineteenth century, when the power of the Cross was so robust, there would be a conspicuous degree of overlapping in religious commitment and personal and collective charity. One striking example of this is Elizabeth Fry, the Quaker prison reformist, who writes of talking over with the women inmates "the morality of her religion", and also of going to Belgium to visit the numerous English there, who without pastor or school, were in her opinion "in a deplorable state". She proposed to have a meeting with them of "a religious and philanthropic nature" in the hope of establishing some schools among them.⁽³¹⁾ Unfortunately, many of the philanthropists affiliated to the sharply divided Church and

other Christian denominations, frequently found themselves in keen and, at times, bitter opposition and competition to each other, caught up in a great deal of inter-denominational bickering and bigotry, and very little inter-denominational co-operation in the field of philanthropy.⁽³²⁾ The Church, despite its apparent authoritarian hold on middleclass belief, was having to face onslaught from those activists of dissenting religions - Unitarians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and the Quakers - who contested it doctrinally, and also in the mission field. In turn all Christian denominations experienced the undermining threat of those agnostic disciples of the scientific and evolutionary schools of Sir Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin,⁽³³⁾ the philosophical humanist movement of Positivism of August Comte⁽³⁴⁾ and working men's political agitators, like the Chartists, the Anti-Corn League,⁽³⁵⁾ the Owenites, and other politically radical groups.⁽³⁶⁾ Despite their fundamental differences and antagonism, the various movements and ideologies of the nineteenth century commonly recognised and highlighted an overwhelming need for improved social justice and produced philanthropists in all spheres where need existed. Taken together, the humanising influence of Christianity, the Romantic revival in literature, and the foregoing and prevailing collective philosophical and political movements contributed significantly to the birth and nurturing of a philanthropic nation and eventually to the introduction of Parliamentary reforms in the nineteenth

century. Hence Victorian society made charity something of a social imperative. As F.K. Prochaska says of Victorian philanthropic commitment, "it befitted a nation which believed that philanthropy was the most reliable and wholesome remedy for its ills".⁽³⁷⁾

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In summary, it is clearly evident, that historically writers of both sexes had available to them the inspiration of a revitalised religious impetus and a humanised literary tradition of sensibility. They also had a considerable new wealth of unique social and ideological material for their novels on a scale not experienced since the time of the Renaissance. However, the industrial revolution brought with it a new separate lifestyle for men and women which was to be reflected in the fiction of the period. The cause and effect of these changes in relation to an upsurge in female philanthropy and novel writing is to be the subject of the remainder of this section - commencing with the kind of social problems to which the Victorian philanthropists, especially many remarkable women, responded.



1.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILANTHROPY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"The anxiety about revolution was by no means confined to anti-reformers. Society was already in a discontented and tumultuous state; its most ignorant portion being acted upon at once by hardship at home and example from abroad; and there was every reason to expect a deadly struggle before Parliamentary Reform could be carried."

Harriet Martineau

"'Machines is th' ruin of poor folk,' chimed in several voices. 'For my part,' said a shivering, half-clad man, who crept near the fire, as if ague-stricken, 'I would like thee to tell 'em to pass th' short-hours Bill.' "

D. Gaskell (Mary Barton)

In 1837 Queen Victoria ascended the throne. Nearly three years later Elizabeth Fry wrote in her journal:

"An eventful time in public and private life. Our young Queen is to be married to Prince Albert. She has sent me a present of fifty pounds for our Refuge at Chelsea, by Lord Normandy. Political commotions about the country - riots in Wales - much religious stir in the Church of England, numbers of persons becoming much the same as Roman Catholics - Popish doctrines preached openly in many of our churches - infidel principles, in the form of socialism gaining ground....." (1)

These words of the Quaker prison reformer reflect well the stirring spirit of patronage and philanthropy against a period of riots and unrest. They indicate something of the

transitional ferment taking place at the time of the young Queen's marriage; the religious revival of the Oxford movement in opposition to the widespread popularity of the growing evangelical fervour within the Church of England; Chartism, a political movement in favour of working men's enfranchisement; new scientific theories which threatened orthodox Christian beliefs, were all establishing themselves in the new Victorian society. It was, too, a time when the earlier fears expressed about industrialism by the Romantic poets were becoming a grim reality. The rural working classes, driven by poor harvests and hunger from the country to the towns and cities, found that they had exchanged one form of poverty for a crueler and more devastating one, changing the lives of thousands of families.

Parliament and society itself had to cope with the twin pressures of economic change and population explosion. Demographic growth from the 1750's had meant an expansion of the population of England and Wales by twenty million between 1801 and 1901.⁽²⁾ The 1851 census showed that half the population, which then stood at eighteen million, was urban, thousands of whom were poor and impoverished. The scientific and economic implications of industrialism were adding to the long term and irreversible effect - Luddism had signified the rapid development of new inventions replacing manpower, which had further increased the problem of unemployment and starving families. The problem clearly overwhelmed the

nation. Large scale poverty had become both a threat and a challenge to both Parliament and people. William Rathbone, Liverpool's leading philanthropist, described the horrendous scale of the problem as being, "beyond the omnipotence of Parliament", (3) and Elizabeth Gaskell records in Mary Barton that: "Even philanthropists who had studied the subject were forced to own themselves perplexed in the endeavour to ascertain the real cause of the misery; the whole matter was of so complicated a nature that it became next to impossible to understand it thoroughly". (4) The challenge that had left Parliament powerless and philanthropists in despair, was nonetheless met by an upsurge in philanthropic endeavour and reform.

Broadly, "laissez-faire" politics determined that legislators should only offer the barest minimum of relief; it was taken for granted that charity would carry the main burden of relieving the unfortunate poor and alleviating the distress of the suffering masses. The legislators only intervened where absolutely necessary, and then not always to good effect. In Mary Barton (1848) Elizabeth Gaskell gives an account of the effect of the Corn Laws and prevailing market problems on the Manchester poor in 1840.

"For three years past, trade had been getting worse and worse, and the price of provisions higher and higher. This disparity between the amount of earnings of the working classes, and the price of their food, occasioned in more cases than could well be imagined, disease and death. Whole families went through a gradual starvation. They only wanted a Dante to record their sufferings. And yet even his words would fall

short of the awful truth; they could only present an outline of the tremendous facts of the destitution that surrounded thousands upon thousands in the terrible years of 1839, 1840 and 1841." (5)

Those whose need could not be met through self-help, mutual aid or charity must be prepared to face the rigours of the workhouse. The most controversial of all statutes in the early nineteenth century was the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 which brought about as much misery and humiliation as it attempted to eradicate. The Act was a Parliamentary attempt to eliminate the so-called "disease" of pauperism - the existence of a class of people on public relief. Edwin Chadwick (1800-90), a Bentham disciple, saw the need to overhaul the former parish relief system which resulted in the Commissioners Report of 1834, the recommendations of which were mostly embodied in the Act. Although eminently sensible theoretically, the statute proved to be somewhat harsh in practice, resulting in the poor being treated as a separate species to be pitied, relieved, ignored or even an object of shame by the better off classes. The Poor Law was intended to be applied to the able-bodied as a separate class of pauper, but in practice was too often applied to all poor persons indiscriminately - the sick, orphans and lunatics. Also, the Malthusian assumption surrounding the Poor Law resulted in pauper women being separated from their husbands in the workhouse, in a discreet attempt to prevent more pauper children being born and becoming a drain on society. In 1838, a Reverend Stevens, outraged by the Act, warned of

the consequences of punishing the destitute and dividing families, and Harriet Martineau, predicting that workhouse institutions would attract more paupers and not less, described the Act as "a gangrene".⁽⁶⁾ The law institutionalised poor relief and shifted responsibility from the parish vestries to new elected boards of Guardians placed under the direction of a new central authority. Dickens's caustic caricature of unfeeling, petty, bumbling officialdom in Oliver Twist is well-known and well popularised, even if somewhat exaggerated. Dickens was prepared to stand out against the assumption that poor relief should be the subject of punitive and deterrent policies and to disparage Benthamite theories as being too harsh, too mechanical and too inhuman. However, in many respects, Parliament was justifiably overwhelmed by the problem; they could have done little else but institutionalise poor relief. In the short term the reforms did succeed to some extent in checking the demoralisation and pauperisation of the working classes.⁽⁷⁾ Nonetheless, the Parliamentary "cure" to the "disease" of poverty proved insufficient in cities such as Manchester and parts of the East End of London, where sweat-shop labour, unemployment, families living in ignorance and squalor, neglected children, disease, drunkenness and prostitution and rise in crime, were taken for granted. Charles Kingsley shows his concern for the sweat-shop labour of women in the tailoring industry in Alton Locke (1850). The climax came in 1845 with the potato famine in Ireland and the influx of a quarter of a million Irish immigrants to main-land

Britain. The majority of the settlers infiltrated the sweated labour industries or were taken on as dockers or railway navvies. Elizabeth Gaskell's novel North and South (1854-5) looks back at the disastrous implications of imported Irish cheap labour to Lancashire which was blamed for depressing wages and the economy.⁽⁸⁾ The working conditions of the labouring masses were deplorable and often considerably dangerous to health.

The legislators intervened only where absolutely necessary to improve working conditions in the mines, factories and mills. With the development of new technology - the steam engine and the power loom - the first Factory Acts of 1802 and 1819 were introduced, but were limited to covering pauper apprentices only. The employment of children in rural England had been commonplace in coal mines and factories. It took forty-six years for Lord Shaftesbury to persuade a reluctant Parliament to intervene in industry to protect women and children in the factories and mines. As member of Parliament for Dorset ⁽⁹⁾ in the face of indifference and greed, he accomplished the introduction of the Factories Act 1833, which provided for the inspection of factories, and the Mines Act of 1842 which prohibited labour underground by children and females.⁽¹⁰⁾ Throughout the following years the problem of government intervention was a hotly debated topic in Parliament, the

press and in literature. The Ten-Hour Act of 1847, and the related 1850 Act, restricted the duration of the working day for all workers. While employers in the factories could rely on cheap female labour, thousands of males remained unemployed. Skilled male workers fared a little better than the unskilled. An article, written by Henry Mayhew for the British Quarterly in 1852 suggests that those with "better skills" were better off in terms of wages:

"We have endeavoured to prove, that the condition of the masses, taking them in aggregate, and looking merely at the amount of real wages earned, is better at the present day than it has been at any former period during the last two centuries. As for the great inequality between the wages of skilled labour of the best kind and ordinary unskilled labour - an inequality which has increased to a remarkable extent during the last fifty years - we have done little more, on the present occasion, than call attention to it, as the most notable phenomenon in our industrial condition; the one above all others to which the attention of a wise statesman would be most earnestly directed....." (11)

Mayhew's was one of many voices critical of the government for its lack of intervention in respect of those who were likely to remain unemployed. He argued that, the government should first provide work at "remunerative wages" for men who were "willing and able to work" and then "the philanthropic government" might direct their attention "to such sanitary and other reforms as the wants of the people require". (12)

The government had been even more reluctant to intervene in matters of public hygiene but were compelled to act after reading a report by the Utilitarian, Edwin Chadwick, who had

who had been investigating the causes of pauperism. In the conclusions of his Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population of 1842, he relates the effects of disease on the poor borne by "atmospheric impurities" and polluted water supplies: he wrote: "The annual loss of life from filth and bad ventilation is greater than the loss from death and wounds in any wars in which the country has been engaged in modern times". He put the figures at 43,000 cases of widowhood and 112,000 cases of destitute orphanage in England and Wales alone. (13) The report eventually led to the first Public Health Act 1848. In practice, Chadwick and his reformers were not able to abate the worst evils of polluted water supplies and "atmospheric impurities" until the late 1860's simply because of lackadaisical local government bodies. (14)

These legislative reforms, and many others, were brought about by intense pressures from society not experienced before by Parliament - pressures from numerous concerned thinkers, activists, collective movements and writers which continued well into the second half of the century.

Charitable enterprise mushroomed in the 1840's and continued to expand well into the 1870's, by which time both official and unofficial philanthropy were being widely exercised. Early records of unofficial philanthropy are incomplete, but twentieth century research into the subject

by both David Owen (1964)⁽¹⁵⁾ and F.K. Prochaska (1980)⁽¹⁶⁾ as well as the many autobiographies and biographies of philanthropists and reformers of the period, provide a remarkable and comprehensive picture of all forms of philanthropic activity from fund raising activities of children to collective enterprises. Prochaska in particular, gives exceptional attention to the memoirs of little-known women and obscure charities as well as to the better known women and the well established charities. More will be said about female philanthropy in the next chapter. Early philanthropists working in the large towns and cities concerned themselves with matters of homelessness, hunger, crime, prison conditions, "fallen women", waifs, strays and juvenile offenders, and then, by the 1840's, they were faced with the even greater problems of large scale poverty, insanitary conditions and related diseases. A growing social problem was drunkenness: the spending of hard-earned wages on gin and other alcoholic drink brought about evangelical movements whose members preached the value of total abstinence.⁽¹⁷⁾ Besides the widespread practice of home visiting, there was the substantial practice of setting up charitable institutions to help the poor, the "fallen" and destitutes.

The practice of visiting the sick and poor in their homes became systemised by the developing charities especially in the towns and cities where the suffering was most concentrated. Organised parties of visitors divided up the

communities so that groups of twenty to forty families could be allotted to one visitor. Prochaska describes how they went out, "armed with Bibles, tracts, blankets, food and coal tickets, their charitable aim being to combat disease and irreligion With characteristic Bentham thoroughness they sought to reform families through a moral and physical cleansing of the nation's homes". (18). Organised visiting parties soon found their way into the various charitable and penal institutions. The Workhouse Visiting society sponsored by the Social Science Association, was established by Louisa Twining, the daughter of a wealthy banker. Prison visiting was established in the 1820's by Elizabeth Fry and her party of ladies, and, before long, visitors were infiltrating the Magdalene homes, the penitentiaries, the orphanages, the workhouses and wherever else they considered they were needed.

Homelessness, street orphans and associated crime proved an enormous challenge to the philanthropists. In London in 1820, the Committee for Nightly Shelter for the Houseless Poor (later re-named the Society for Relieving the Houseless Poor) resulted in the setting up the Houseless Poor Asylum, which began with a philanthropic proprietor offering some premises at London Wall, and by the mid 1840's, had grown into three establishments offering accommodation for twelve hundred. (19) The Seaman's Society, a winter charity which arranged berths for sailors, came into being around 1820. (20) Following the lead of the society for Relieving the Houseless Poor, other shelters were established in London and elsewhere. The

Liverpool Night Asylum for the Houseless Poor opened its permanent shelter in 1830.⁽²¹⁾ There was also the insurmountable problem of thousands of outcast and beggar children. It was widely acknowledged that orphaned and homeless children badly needed the protection and provision of appropriate institutions. The social implications were enormous when thousands were driven to the city streets to beg, thieve and trade as pickpockets.⁽²²⁾ Philanthropists, like Elizabeth Fry, Dr. Barnardo and Lord Shaftesbury, knew that roaming homeless children were vulnerable prey to the criminal element in the cities, that child beggars and starvelings were likely to be villainously used by confidence tricksters and sexual deviants.⁽²³⁾ They knew, as did Dickens, that "kidsmen" as they were known to the underworld, like Fagin, did in fact exist. These managers of child thieves did train them in the way described by Dickens in Oliver Twist. Kellow Chesney in his book on the Victorian underworld gives documentary evidence of real-life "child dippers" and their harsh trainers who operated in the Camden Town area.⁽²⁴⁾ The exploitation of child prostitution was an even greater criminal evil.

To combat the problem of outcast, pauper and criminal children, the provision of some form of basic education for the poor was one recognised solution. The workhouse offered next to no education. The genesis of elementary education for the poor began with the introduction by the Free Churches of the Sunday School movement. Nonconformist Robert Raikes, the proprietor of the Gloucester

Herald, is thought to have started the first Sunday School in 1720. The teaching centred mostly on biblical and moral education, but at the same time groups of working class children were introduced to the rudimentary skills of reading and writing. Seventeen years after Raikes opened his first religious school, a Quaker, Joseph Lancaster, raised the question of primary secular education for the neglected children of the poor and set up a day school in his father's house in Southwark.⁽²⁵⁾ However, religious schools were to remain for some considerable time: Methodists in the areas of Malthamstow and Clapton Park combined Sunday School tuition with free breakfasts for starving children and soup kitchens for the district's poor. Ultimately, the Anglican Church, faced with the expansion of nonconformist "hotbeds of sectarian heresy", introduced the National School Society, the aim of which was to give orthodox Christian education to the poor rather than an all-round education.⁽²⁶⁾ Hannah More was a leading figure in the Anglican evangelical Sunday School movement at the turn of the century. By the early nineteenth century, many philanthropists saw a crying need to give education to the poor. Unfortunately, the educators were divided in their aims: some argued that too much popular education fomented discontent and taught people to aspire beyond their stations; others argued that a measure of education enabled children to read their scriptures and to learn the rules of social obedience - it was a necessary form of social protection.⁽²⁷⁾ The eventual expansion of the

provision of elementary education was largely due to the pioneering efforts of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth, who in 1839 had been appointed Secretary to the new Committee of Council Education set up by the Privy Council. Kay-Shuttleworth's underlying utilitarian aim was to separate pauper children from the debilitating workhouse and adult paupers whose "infamy, vices and misfortunes" and consequential loss of self-esteem he was anxious they should not inherit.⁽²⁸⁾ The District Schools that Kay-Shuttleworth and E.C. Tufnell hoped to introduce around 1848 were never able to develop on a national scale because of political pressure by reluctant ratepayers to give support to pauper schools. Eventually, only six District schools came to be established.⁽²⁹⁾ Before the eventual introduction of Education Act 1870, which provided elementary education for all children, working-class children were dependent for their education - if they received any at all - on an assortment of charities, philanthropists and, in many cases, ill-educated women earning a living. In rural areas there existed Dame Schools, such as that which provided George Eliot with her early education,⁽³⁰⁾ and various denominational church schools, such as the Anglican village school run by the Reverend St. John Rivers in Jane Eyre⁽³¹⁾ and in which Rachael Curtis takes an interest in The Clever Woman of the Family. In the industrial city, the early Victorians established three main categories of institution, "ragged schools" (day or evening), industrial schools, and reformatory schools designed, as Owen puts it,

"for different degrees of misfortune or depravity."⁽³²⁾

Each establishment was part of the overall movement to deal with the child outcast, and each differed in the way it dealt with its child intake of waifs, paupers and juvenile offenders.⁽³³⁾ Lord Ashley and Mary Carpenter were prominent figures in this field. Mary Carpenter set up a "ragged school" in Bristol in the 1830's, and the London City Mission, organised to bring the Gospel to the poor in their homes, was a principle pioneer agency in setting up "ragged schools" in the capital. Dickens was active in campaigning for the "ragged schools" persuading Angela Burdett-Coutts to give money in 1843.⁽³⁴⁾ Other involved philanthropists included Tom Hughes, General Gordon and Dr. Barnardo whose Homes, established in 1860, grew out of the "ragged school" movement, as did the Polytechnic Institute of Quintin Hogg.⁽³⁵⁾

Ragged schools soon spread to the northern cities: in 1861 Liverpool was said to have sixty-four schools, and Manchester seventeen, with average attendances of 7,500 and 3,500 respectively.⁽³⁶⁾ Many expressions of deep misgivings over some of the charitable educational establishments can be found on the nineteenth century literature. Dickens, constantly concerned about atrocities suffered by small children and their educational needs, is probably the most outspoken of the novelists. It is generally agreed that the model for his creation of the brutal and incompetent Wackford Squeers in Nicholas Nickleby (1839) was a master of one of the notorious boarding schools in Yorkshire which he personally visited.⁽³⁷⁾

A decade later, in Household Words ⁽³⁸⁾ he includes a feature article in which he pointedly reminds "a disinterested Minister of State" of the widespread cruelty taking place towards children, claiming, "I saw 30,000 children hunted, flogged, imprisoned but not taught". Likewise in his account of a visit to the Saffron Hill Ragged School in March 1852 he describes one particular orphan boy "with burning cheeks and great gaunt eyes, who was in pressing peril of death... and who had no possession under the broad sky but a bottle of physic or a scrap of writing" - surely an embodiment of Jo, the boy street sweeper in Bleak House who has nothing and knows nothing. ⁽³⁹⁾ Four years later Dickens published Hard Times (1854) in which he attacked the rigid and cruel system of education run on utilitarian principles, which left Tom and Louisa Gradgrind bereft of normal loving emotions. Similarly, Charlotte Bronte caused a public outcry by reproducing in Jane Eyre the harsh conditions suffered by the young Bronte girls at Cowan Bridge School, a boarding school for the daughters of the Anglican clergy, conditions which contributed to the early death of her beloved sister Maria. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ Such commentaries, drawn from first-hand observations reflect something of the disparity in standards and management of charity education before the 1875 Act.

In fact, in the developing industrial society, with its "laissez faire" economic philosophy, many of the impoverished working class adults viewed education as a means of getting,

not only away from the workhouse, but also away from the harsh mechanised tedium of the factory. It beckoned an improved life and perhaps economic independence. The hunger for education among the working class is no better illustrated than by Elizabeth Gaskell in Mary Barton. A close observer of actual working class habits, she writes:

"In the neighbourhood of Oldham there are weavers, common handloom weavers, who throw the shuttle with unceasing sound, though Newton's 'Principia' lie open on the loom, to be snatched at in work hours, but revelled over in meal times or at night. Mathematical problems are received with interest and studied with absorbing attention by many a broad-spoken, common looking factory hand." (41)

The novels of the period are peopled with young and old, who seek to attain or who achieve an improved life-style and social status in life, or who aim to widen the scope of their interests through education - Jane Eyre, old Job Legh, (Mary Barton), the young charges and lace makers of Rachael Curtis (The Clever Woman of the Family), Pip of Great Expectations and many other of Dickens's characters. Ambition ran high for some parents, such as the mill-owner Mr. Tulliver, who was over-anxious for his son Tom, to receive the grossly inappropriate classical education of a gentleman. The reality was, that working men of the industrial society seized whatever opportunity was available to them to gain some form of technical education. With the assistance of enlightened, cultivated men, various establishments like the Warrington Academy and Mechanics Institutes were initially set up. (42)

The Reverend William Gaskell and George Birkbeck were among the considerable number of lecturers who gave to the intelligent artisans a working knowledge of the scientific principles underlying their crafts, and to others a simple technical education. By the 1880's, the Methodists extended the principle further by setting up in the East End of London, a Working Lad's institute with the purpose of assisting to a fresh start the "down and outs", friendless boys and first offenders.⁽⁴³⁾ Although for women there were no such institutions, there was at least one woman, Harriet Martineau, who in the 1830's was inspired to turn the poor man into a thinking man. She developed a positive political policy in respect of education for the masses believing that an efficient education system would spread wisdom, contentment and peace throughout the nation.⁽⁴⁴⁾ There were also the middleclass critics of the Mechanics Institutes, who regarded the movement too closely related to Chartism and the Dissenters. This fear is illustrated in one of Charlotte Yonge's less-known novels, Abbeyfield or Self-Control and Self-Deceit (1844), when Reverend Woodhouse despairs of the new Mechanics Institutes as "part of a system of Chartism and Socialism and all that is horrible, full of follies and mischiefs". Even worse in the Anglo-catholic vicar's opinion the place was managed by Dissenters.⁽⁴⁵⁾ He is unaware that his philanthropic daughter, Elizabeth, is showing an interest in the local Mechanics' Institute, an interest she is ultimately deterred from pursuing.

Poor living conditions and matters of sanitation as a cause of disease featured high among the concerns of the philanthropists and reformers. In 1827, James Kay came to Manchester and practised there as a doctor. In his autobiography he recalls how, "Many thousands of the population lived in basements or cellar dwellings below the level of the street..... These were often imperfectly drained so that the floors were either damp or covered with water, and I have had to make my way to the bedside of patients by stepping on bricks placed in the water of the flooded floors".⁽⁴⁶⁾ This account and plenty of available reports, the Blue Books among them, confirm that Elizabeth Gaskell's graphic description of the Davenport's cellar home in Mary Barton⁽⁴⁷⁾ is no exaggeration but an accurate account of the vile conditions suffered by the labouring communities. Also Dr. James Kay's report, The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Classes in Manchester (1832), tells of the insanitary conditions of Great Ancoats Street district: "The houses are ill-souged, often ill-ventilated, unprovided with privies, and in consequence the streets are narrow, unpaved and worn into deep ruts, because the common receptacle of mud, refuse and disgusting ordure..."⁽⁴⁸⁾ The Social Science Association made sanitary reform one of its main concerns.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The Association argued that public health was more than sanitary streets; it was also sanitary homes and sanitary families. Initially, the education of the poor in health and child care fell to women philanthropists before it became taken

over by officialdom. Frances Power Cobbe moreover, had found in Bristol that some of the worst aspects of the poor law lay in its neglect of the sick poor. The problem was not confined to Bristol; William Rathbone, Liberal M.P. and a wealthy merchant of Liverpool, sought help from Florence Nightingale in 1865 to send nurses to supervise his work-house infirmary. He also encouraged nursing of the poor sick in their homes. In 1874, Rathbone and Nightingale set up an association for providing trained nurses for the sick poor.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Another area where philanthropists became involved was slum clearance - Octavia Hill, the Samuel Barnetts, the Charles Booths and Beatrice Potter (later Beatrice Webb) and Charles Lock and colleagues from the Social Science Association were among the campaigners. By 1877 Octavia Hill's work on housing management aimed at improving urban living conditions, had extended from London to Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester and later to Europe, Russia and America.⁽⁵¹⁾

The connection between poverty and prostitution cannot be overlooked. The police estimated that there were 6,000 prostitutes in London and 25,000 in the country as a whole in the 1860's, but the suggestions of many philanthropists and the investigations of Henry Mayhew, made ten years earlier, indicate that the figure was ten times higher than that of the police estimate. In the 1850's estimates for London alone had ranged from 10,000 to 80,000.⁽⁵²⁾

Also, Hippolyte Taine, the French critic and historian, in his Notes on England records his impression of the "thousands" of prostitutes and street walkers to be seen at Epsom on Derby Day. William Acton, author of much the most reliable account of prostitution in Victorian England, believed firmly that poverty was the chief cause.⁽⁵³⁾ Among the prostitutes in general there can be little doubt that a great many were driven into the trade by the low wages and harsh conditions of so many of the industries available to women; many girls who were seamstresses, milliners on desperately low incomes and girls formerly in domestic service who had lost their characters and consequently their positions, were driven into prostitution from sheer necessity. Howell Casney explains how the problem was further exacerbated by the forces of the Poor Law. He writes:

"Poor Law Unions were naturally very unwilling to give outdoor relief to anyone practising a sweated trade, since the reformed Poor Law aimed to avoid encouraging employers to pay inadequate wages by, in effect, subsidizing them from public funds. If a working woman was unmarried but had dependent children her situation was likely to be desperate, since, with a view to discouraging bastardy among the poor, the law laid the support of an illegitimate child virtually on the mother alone. At the best she might hope to claim two and sixpence a week maintenance from the putative father." (54)

The widespread problem of prostitution and the exploitation of vulnerable girls and women was notably a major area of philanthropic concern. Prostitution was looked upon as corrupting evil, from which women had to be rescued. A

plethora of charitable institutions were set up. As early as 1796, the Unitarians in Liverpool had established a Gentlemen's Committee, a Benevolent Institute for Reclaiming Women and Girls, and administered by Unitarian women, the Ladies Charity to visit the sick and poor.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Brochaska records how articles, written by Henry Mayhew, on the breeding grounds of prostitution and published in the Morning Chronicle in late 1849 and 1850 made a powerful impression on the conscience of the nation towards the problem. Women especially responded to it, for 'they believed prostitution to be disastrous, not only to the misguided soul, but to the social structure at large'.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In 1858 the Female Mission to the Fallen was established, by which time the work was considered to be more suitable for women than for men.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Already work to rescue "the unhappy creatures" had been going on since the eighteenth century, casual and district visitors had often tried to assist the prostitutes when they came in contact with them on their neighbourhood rounds, the result of which was, that women were either returned to their families or placed in a penitentiary. There were also lock hospitals which treated venereal disease. With the upsurge of philanthropy in the mid-nineteenth century, there was a dramatic growth in rescue societies and Magdalene homes: the latter from sixty in 1856 to three hundred and eight at the end of the century.⁽⁵⁸⁾ After the Mayhew publicity, an extensive network of befriending societies sought to aid and reclaim girls at risk, and volunteers and

paid missionaries roamed the streets, visited brothels in search of abandoned sinners. Josephine Butler was among the most predominant of the campaigners, but women from all the Christian faiths from the Roman Catholic Sisters of Charity to Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army involved themselves in this form of charitable work - Elizabeth Gaskell, Florence Nightingale, Felicia Skene, Ellice Hopkins were among the thousands of philanthropists who tried to combat this affront to normal family life as they saw it.

Equally extensive and fashionable as practical philanthropy was the practice of alms-giving to charitable causes. Both Owen and Prochaska ⁽⁵⁹⁾ comment on the phenomenal growth of charitable funds donated individually and collectively. Individual benefactors contributed staggering sums: a patent medicine vendor, one Thomas Holloway, gave well over a million pounds, and it is believed that the extremely wealthy philanthropist, Angela Burdett-Coutts, gave even more. As early as 1830, the Anti-Slavery Reporter, which occasionally published lists of subscribers and donors, showed in December 1830 a total of nearly £300 of which £240 came from local associations and the remainder from individuals. Owen reports how the founder and editor, Zachary Macauley, at one time, gave most of his fortune, a sum of about £100,000 towards the Anti-Slavery cause. ⁽⁶⁰⁾ Prochaska likewise illustrates the astonishing extent of donations by women, who not only bequeathed large sums of money to a

favourite charity but also succeeded in persuading their husbands to donate substantial sums of money. For a sex which was normally dependent on a husband or male relative, the scale of giving was extraordinary generous and frequently exceeded that of male giving. John Kent, biographer, writes of Elizabeth Fry that, "She was more concerned with the right of a wife to turn a part of her husband's income to charitable purposes and with a woman's freedom to do charitable jobs than with a woman's right to hold political opinions."⁽⁶¹⁾ More often, women largely deprived of financial independence, went to great lengths to raise funds at bazaars and other events. Many were appointed to serve on auxiliary committees whose purpose was to raise funds for a particular charity. By the mid-century, the amount of money contributed each year to charity, not including church collections and alms, far exceeded the gross expenditure on poor relief.⁽⁶²⁾ Prochaska points out that little is known about the extent of eighteenth century benevolence, but it is generally acknowledged that the growth of the new, wealthy, nineteenth century industrialist caused an expansion of benevolence, both individually and collectively, which became more organised, more centralised and often highly specialised. Casual almsgiving and visits of clergy and "Lady Bountifuls", which helped to ameliorate poverty and distress in pre-industrialised England did not die out, but those former helpers had proved inadequate to deal with the changing conditions and mass hardship of the new urban industrial environment. The poor

did not always rely on middle-class charity, they also depended on their neighbours. Although philanthropy by the poor to the poor was usually informal and undocumented, there is sufficient evidence in both official documents and in fiction that it did indeed exist. Prochaska supplies some evidence: there is the remark of a London cleric that, "The poor breathe an atmosphere of charity. They cannot understand life without it. And it is largely this kindness by the poor to the poor which stands between our present civilisation and revolution".⁽⁶³⁾ In Mary Barton there is ample evidence of the poor assisting the poor, the most outstanding example being the scene in which the Barton and Wilson families give practically all the food they have to help the starving and sick Davenport family. As Prochaska explains, and Gaskell illustrates, the philanthropy of the working class, especially working class women, was typically casual: dropping in on friends in distress, providing food for deprived children or the sick, giving free or inexpensive lodging to hard-up friends and relatives, or helping out by taking in the washing.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Dickens makes a similar observation through the narration of Esther Summerson, in Bleak House, when Esther visits the bricklayer's cottages:

"I thought it very touching to see these two women, coarse and shabby and beaten, so united; to see what they could be to one another; to see how they felt for one another; how the heart of each to each was softened by the hard trials of their lives. I think the best side of such people is almost hidden from us. What the poor are to the poor is little known, excepting to themselves and God." (65)

Prochaska also records how working class women would give to the institutional charities: in the subscription lists of various charities can be detected such headings as, "a poor woman's mite", "a servant girl", or "a labouring woman". Servants were known to found their own charities to aid fellow servants in distress or to promote religious causes.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Clearly charity and benevolence were not the prerogative of the rich and upper and middleclasses.

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The nature of nineteenth century philanthropy has often come under attack by twentieth century critics and historians, for being too paternalistic, too moralistic, too officious, too judgemental and condescending, designed to keep the lower classes in their place. Some of these accusations may be true, but it is a historian's deception and a mistake of scholarship to impose twentieth century values and attitudes onto another age. It is necessary to understand something of the Victorian mind. The philanthropists genuinely believed they were tackling the root causes of the problems of their age, that of personal morality and workingclass ignorance. What seems like paternalism to twentieth century society, was to the nineteenth century helper, a social or Christian duty towards the less fortunate. Victorian middleclass values of chastity, propriety, modesty. even rigid prudery, probably operated with positive force on the urban lower classes, with

both desirable and undesirable effects. Norman McCord's research reflects something of a seemingly doctrinaire approach taken by a morally conscious society: a distinct demarcation appeared to exist between the treatment given to those in need through no fault of their own who were usually allotted to unofficial philanthropy, while those whose wants arose from circumstances to which they themselves were largely responsible were left to the official machinery.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Unofficial, the more personalised philanthropy, was often preferable to the impersonal machinery of the institution. This is clearly reflected in the literature of the time. Henchard's giving of coal to Abel Little's mother in The Mayor of Casterbridge, Margaret Hale's taking of food to Bessie Higgins in North and South, Sissy Jupe's generosity to Stephen Blackpool and Rachael in Hard Times, and Caroline Helstone's kindness towards the elderly spinsters in Shirley, are all treated more favourably by the writers than are those institutions for the poor and debtors, which Dickens especially satirises - albeit with a degree of exaggeration - in order to highlight the inhumanity, double standards and hypocrisy of officialdom. Disraeli in Sybil prefers the hospitality of the ancient monasteries² to the modern workhouses and jails, and Elizabeth Gaskell's heroine, Ruth, flees from the threat of being sent to the penitentiary for "fallen women", preferring instead to risk facing poverty, ostracisation and even death - fortunately for Ruth, she is saved by an enlightened minister of religion.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Felicia Skene

in her novel Hidden Depths argues for a more humane institution for prostitutes. Concerned novelists, however, fail to mirror the full useful reality of organised societies. Dickens is wont to hold them in contempt; Disraeli displays a political disquiet about them and Elizabeth Gaskell scarcely mentions them. George Eliot's depiction in Middlemarch of the young entrepreneurial doctor, Lydgate, provides an account of an unthinking man's personal struggle to establish a new hospital and modern methods of medical treatment against a community's narrow prejudices and suspicion. Perhaps Eliot's account reflects more closely something of the difficulties and shortcomings of the nineteenth century movement to initiate collective welfare reform.

The main criticism of nineteenth century philanthropy and social reform is that they were set up and carried out in an ad hoc and diversified manner; there was very little attempt to co-ordinate the various organisations or to share resources. The effectiveness of both official and unofficial philanthropy was apt to vary considerably. Where the churches were involved the organisations were often in fierce competition with one another. An emphasis was put upon the Christian virtues of loving mankind and going out and doing good to the less fortunate as well as to those who had strayed from the righteous path. This not only meant that doing good tended to be highly moralistic,

with attention to saving the soul being a strong priority, but it also meant that the techniques and skills required to visit, nurse and generally assist the poor and others in need were mostly considered unimportant. Florence Nightingale, who insisted that nurses be properly trained and set up a school for the purpose, was one outstanding exception to this general attitude. Prochaska also points out that many middle-class female volunteers had led a sheltered life which was apt to make them a "soft touch" to the hardened paupers: they were ill-equipped for some of the unpleasant tasks they did and some of the rough and harsh places they visited.⁽⁶⁹⁾ A study of the ineffectualness of Victorian philanthropy has been conducted by Sheila M. Smith. Smith draws on both literature and the fine arts of the period to illustrate her point: her evidence indicates that there was a great deal of middle-class misunderstanding of the real needs of the poor, who were expected to receive gratuitously-given charity but rarely given an opportunity to help themselves and to improve their own lot in society.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Nonetheless, most societies adopted a policy of guidelines for their volunteers. Early on in the philanthropic movement these aimed to teach visitors, who were mostly women, how to advise and encourage the poor to be industrious, frugal, temperate, clean and religious, and generally to assist them to stand on their own, free from dependence on charity - a line largely taken by Harriet Martineau. In her tale "Brooke and Brooke Farm" a young woman narrator explains that a middleclass family's interest in a

labouring family is because the family is "industrious and tolerably prudent", and adds, "We hope to improve their condition, without either lending or giving them money".⁽⁷¹⁾

As the nineteenth century progressed and the individual societies became more organised, this advice gave way to information on the Poor Law and public health, education and immigration. This did nothing to narrow the deeply divided class differences between the serving middleclasses and the recipient poor. One reason given for this was that social science became very popular with some Victorian philanthropists. Powerfully affected by its influence on the guidelines they were given by their society, these philanthropists took over the role of case-worker; and this had the effect of giving them the power of "professionalism" over the poor. However, the social gulf between the helper and the recipients of charity was something that nineteenth century society accepted more readily than the twentieth century social scientists are sometimes prepared to accept. The poor mostly accepted their status, often looked up to the middleclass and were grateful for the assistance they received. Prochaska produces many examples of gratitude of the poor towards their middleclass helpers especially where medical help was given. One such example is a letter from a miner about one Mary Shepherd, a Methodist visitor, in Cheadle. He writes of how he owed his life to her when she supplied his needs after being crushed in a mine by a mass of earth falling on him.⁽⁷²⁾

In Vera Garret's autobiography Man in the Street is an indication of the kind of awkward gratitude felt by the recipients of voluntary patronage by refined ladies. She writes of the weekly visit of Mrs. C. wife of a wealthy solicitor:

"Mrs. C. ... Being the essence of kindness she not only brought sweet smiles to cheerless homes but also the more substantial boon of useful gifts. To my mother she was a saint from heaven As the speech of Mrs.C. was 'most aristocratic' it was made incumbent on us children, nurtured on the Brummagen jargon of the streets, to exhibit our aristocratic yearnings by not speaking unless spoken to and to say 'Good Morning Mrs.C.' and "Very well, thank you" in the approved styles.'" (73)

Conversely, in the Lancashire song of Edwin Waugh one senses the labouring man's pride and resentment of having to rely upon gratuitous philanthropy:

"I know there's public charity
As will not let a body dee
If he's a spirit that can strup
Ta fotchin doaf, or suppin soup;
But I've not a nat'ral knack o' humblin',
Nor thankin' visitors for grumblin',
An' sayin' "ye please" to t'greatest bore;
They'll keep you alive, but not much moar." 74)

Clearly, mixed attitudes by the poor towards middleclass patronage and public charity existed. Inevitably, philanthropic patronage towards the poor contributed to the retention of a social gulf between giver and taker. By the 1850's the commercial entrepreneurs' passion for respectability to serve God in Church and the State affected a change in

attitude towards the poor. After a considerable debate by philanthropists, reformist politicians and others, a less mechanical and more humane approach to the lower classes was assumed.

Often overlooked by twentieth century critics, who accuse the Victorians of paternalism and hypocrisy, is that many enlightened Victorians were prepared to examine their own shortcomings. A Quaker, Elice Hopkins, engaged in penitentiary work, warned against the dangers of middleclass self-righteousness:

"Let us, above all, get rid of this beam of self-righteousness out of our own eye, remembering that all the pure and blessed moral influences of our own life were not given to us to enable us to sit in harsh judgement on those who have never had them!"(75)

Dickens, philanthropist and novelist, spent the best part of his literary life mocking the less serious "fashionable" philanthropist. The young ladies of charity he describes in Sketches of Boz are notable examples:

"When the young curate was popular, and all the unmarried ladies in the parish took a serious turn, the charity children all at once became objects of peculiar and especial interest. The three Miss Browns (enthusiastic admirers of the curate) taught, and exercised, and examined, and re-examined, the unfortunate children, until the boys grew pale, and the girls consumptive with study and fatigue." (76)

There was also the Liverpool satirist who similarly lampooned charity as a passing fashion:

"The most fashionable amusement of the present age is philanthropy.....we have the religious philanthropists, the social and moral philanthropists, the scientific philanthropists. Everyone who stands in need of the smallest assistance or advice from his neighbour, and a great many who do not, must become the pet or prey of some one or all of these benevolent classes..... because (philanthropy) ... elevates you, don't you see - makes you a patron and a condescending magnate and all that.... Take up Social Science as nineteen twentieths of Liverpool folk do, as something which makes a shopkeeper hail-fellow with a lord and flatters an alderman into believing himself a philosopher." (77)

Derek Fraser rationalises the debate when he writes;

"There was a genuine humanitarianism (often overlooked) in Victorian society..."⁽⁷⁸⁾ The reality was, that without the philanthropists, the nineteenth century would have been a great deal worse off: these middleclass carers not only made Parliament aware of its responsibilities towards the poor, the weak and vulnerable, they also were responsible for creating and maintaining organised societies on a scale never before imagined - hospitals, dispensaries, asylums, reformatories and various institutions for orphans, the blind and the deaf, paupers and prostitutes. Moral and religious education was frequently an intrinsic part of the assistance. Financial and practical assistance readily came from individuals and organisations to pay for these provisions. The scale of Victorian philanthropy is difficult to evaluate, but the scale was enormous. It was a social phenomenon which anticipated the welfare state of the twentieth century.

1.3 THE LITERARY RESPONSE

"The function of literature is to promote a more vivid awareness of pressing social realities like hunger, poverty, threat of war, and, through drawing attention to suffering and injustice in society, to underline the need for change."

Jean - Paul Sartre

"The writer of stories must please or he will be nothing. And he must teach whether he wish to teach or no. How shall he teach lessons of virtue and at the same time make himself a delight to his readers? But the novelist, if he have a conscience, must preach his sermons with the same purpose as the clergyman, and must have his own system of ethics."

Anthony Trollope

By the end of the nineteenth century the Victorians had made a great artistic institution of the novel. (1)
G.C. Grenville in his journal, The Reign of Queen Victoria 1837 - 1852, tells of how writers took up radical and philanthropic themes in an apparent response to the pre-occupations of the public. In 1843 he wrote:

"The condition of the people, moral and physical, is uppermost in everybody's mind, the state and management of workhouses and prisons, and the great question of education. The newspapers are full of letters and complaints on these subjects and people think, talk, and care about them very much." (2)

It was in 1835 that Dickens became reporter of debates in the Commons to the Morning Chronicle and, subsequently,

published Sketches by Boz, Illustrative of Every-Day Life and Everyday People, and, after his humorous publication The Pickwick Papers, his first novel of social concern, Oliver Twist. Already Harriet Martineau had written her Illustrations of Social Economy ⁽³⁾ and, in 1840, in a Manchester manse, Mrs. Gaskell was shaping into a novel her personal disquiet over the appalling conditions she found in the vast sprawling industrial city. Hence, the form of the so-called "social novel" or "social protest" novel coincided with the growth of industrialization and the dismantling of the former agricultural dependency of the rural communities.

Although the "social novel", "novel of social conscience" or "social protest novel" was not identified as such at the time, the writers, in the novels, automatically responded to the preoccupations of their age, to the problems - political, social and personal - which the industrial revolution and laissez-faire policies of the industrial society had brought about. Radical and philanthropic themes were taken up, and a new social awareness of concern over poverty, pauperism, street orphans, "fallen women" and the workhouse system provided the basis of many a story. Consequently philanthropic characters, and especially philanthropic heroines, feature more in the novels of the nineteenth century than at any other time, before or since. Many artists became socially committed to reporting what they saw or knew to be

the true facts of the situation; thus, the novel, as a popular literary medium of "realism", spontaneously grew out of a need to educate, as well as to entertain, the general reading public. Louis Cazamian asserts that, with the challenge of utilitarian ideas, there was a need for propaganda; he identifies a form of "utilitarian novel" which arose from the Godwin school of writers. The school included women writers such as Amelia Opie (1769-1853) (whose best known novel Adeline Mowbray, was suggested by the story of Mary Wollstonecraft) and Charlotte Smith (1748 - 1806), who enjoyed considerable success with her many novels, sketches and poems. Charlotte Smith writes of the Godwin school that, they "pressed imaginative literature into the service of their revolutionary faith so that those who will read nothing if they do not read novels, may collect from them some ideas." (4) The novel was clearly regarded as a popular medium for publicising one's own beliefs and theories. By the 1840's, against a continuing background of political and economic ferment, the novel, because of its expansive form, also had become a most appropriate genre for communicating subjects of social and moral concern. Rapidly it became a very popular form of fiction.

Despite its growing readership, the novel around the first decades of the nineteenth century received a mixed reception. A censorious disapproval of the evangelical wing of the Church and of Dissenters in general was to have a

strong influence. All imaginative literature was treated with suspicion by them because it presented a fantasy life; children were taught that storytelling could lead to the commission of untruths.⁽⁵⁾ The novel was considered to be a medium of improper, false, vain amusement and that as mere entertainment, it was a waste of the time which should more usefully be spent praising God.⁽⁶⁾ Censorship was exercised, at times with good reason, as the form was subject to exploitation by pornographers.⁽⁷⁾ Elizabeth Fry recommended to all prison reformers in Europe that "all novels, plays and other improper books" be excluded from the prison wards.⁽⁸⁾ Despite such fears the popularity of the novel grew. Readership developed to such an extent that circulating libraries were set up and flourished in all parts of the country. Not surprisingly, a great deal of bad fiction was turned out to meet the growing popular demand. On the other hand, there was growing a belief in the potential of the novel as a medium to be taken seriously, as both an art form and voice of propaganda for moral rectitude and against social injustice. As the form developed, writers and proponents of the genre tended to fall into one of two groups, those, who put the novel first and foremost as an art form, and those who regarded the art form as a useful tool for communicating the conditions of English society. Thomas Carlyle initially opposed the reading of novels, but later he acclaimed the potential of the genre as a "very great form indeed", and stipulated that the great novelist

should be esteemed as highly as any other great artist.⁽⁹⁾ Other proponents claimed that the novelist, as artist, could explore the depths of humankind as Shakespeare had in his plays.⁽¹⁰⁾ George Eliot, early on in her novelist's career, viewed the fictional story as a serious art form, which must be "real and concrete".⁽¹¹⁾ Although Eliot, like Charles Dickens, believed that the novel had a social and moral mission, she was the more sophisticated of the two for seeing herself essentially as a committed artist. In her essay The Natural History of German Life she writes:

"The greatest benefit we owe to the artist.... is the extension of our sympathies..... a picture of human life such as a great artist can give, surprises even the trivial and the selfish into that attention to what is part of ourselves, which may be called raw material of moral sentiment." (12)

Whereas Eliot saw the novel as a means for "aesthetic teaching, the highest of all teaching",⁽¹³⁾ Dickens on the other hand, wrote for the popular market using his natural artistry to voice his indignation against the injustices he witnessed around him.

Even before Dickens produced Oliver Twist there was wide acknowledgement that the aim of the novelists should not rest with merely telling a story: there were also available to writers potent didactic possibilities. Louis Cazamian claims that the strong tradition of didacticism in the English novel began with Daniel Defoe's lesson of

active fortitude in Robinson Crusoe, and was continued in Samuel Richardson's Pamela, with his intense puritan lesson of good conscience and sexual rectitude.⁽¹⁴⁾ For the socially committed writer of the industrial revolution, the new art form was, similarly, a respectable and powerful means of correcting social iniquities. Many writers, including Harriet Martineau, took this to mean that the novel could serve to uphold certain standards of social and moral behaviour: the novel had a didactic capacity to drive home a moral, and could be a very effective form of ideological control by the Victorian ruling classes. It is generally acknowledged that middleclass values of chastity, propriety, modesty and even rigid prudery, operated with positive force on the urban lower classes. Steven Marcus writes of how the middleclass ideology of discipline and self-restraint was regarded as a humanization of a class of persons who had been traditionally regarded as almost another species.⁽¹⁵⁾ Mid-Victorian critics were usually in agreement that all novels, in their most elementary form, should conceal "moral or doctrinal instruction under the veil of an apologue or parable to make virtue attractive and to render vice odious and repulsive in the same degree" ⁽¹⁶⁾ Another reviewer pronounced that "the novel writer's desk is used as a second pulpit, to attract a larger and more awakened audience for the author thanthe preacher".⁽¹⁷⁾ Novels such as Uncle Tom's Cabin were as universally popular as Bunyan's allegories, Pilgrims Progress and Grace Abounding. Significantly, the novel was not only

aimed at the literate working classes; another largely perceived audience was middleclass women, for whom it was "a powerful instrument of virtue - teaching by example rather than precept". (18)

seen in retrospect, the "social novel" was instrumental in paving the way towards a new form of democracy for the unenfranchised literate population - the artisans, skilled craftsmen and women. The most obvious expression of this was through the increased circulation of books and the expansion of the circulating libraries, which led to an increase in literacy. Both the lower classes and women highly revered and sought after education which secured for them a higher degree of control over their own lives and destinies. The effect of published literature on the reading public is recorded by Louis Cazamian:

'The 'public' which was to hail the success of the social novel.... were the new middleclass who had achieved political power and were now moving into the world of letters, and the first democratic extension of franchise coincided with an enlargement of the literate public. For the radical's crusade for popular education was starting to have its impact and to bear fruit: popular educational writings were on the increase, and in the Mechanics Institutes the masses of artisans and skilled craftsmen were beginning to acquaint themselves with Dickens's work. The introduction of serialised works in some of the great journals, such as Household Words, and the publication of such novels as Lickwick Papers in parts, brought them within the range of the more modest pockets". (19)

The implication here is that the "social novel", as a

literary form, was symptomatic of the democratic process, and had a liberating force of its own on the minds of the masses, of which women were a substantial number.

When making an assessment of the general impact of the "social novel", one must take into account its dual participation in the affairs of time. On the one hand, it is a form aimed to directly influence human relations and human activity, politically, morally and spiritually. There is no doubt that writers such as Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, Disraeli, and Kingsley aimed directly at the immediate question of influencing human relations or political decisions. On the other hand, it serves to reflect to some extent the mood of that society, mirroring for future generations something of the human condition of the nation, its economy, its conflicting philosophies, its religious fervour, its politics, its standards and values, its vices and shortcomings. The "social novel" is about matters of individual suffering and social injustice which disturb the human and collective conscience; it may merely present the said conditions, be didactic about certain issues, underline the need for change, make damning points of protest or suggest appropriate solutions. It, too, may contribute to a historical and universal view, by means of documentation or an aesthetic reproduction of events in that society. Above all, if in theory the "social novel" must be a work of human engagement, both socially and

artistically, then the female philanthropic impulse of the nineteenth century, mirrored in the medium of the novel, must be intrinsically an element of the literary tradition of the age.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

THE PHILANTHROPIC NATION : A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE

(pp. 25-84)

1.1. ORIGINS AND IDEOLOGIES (p - 4)

1. Modern usage of the word "philanthropic" was originally coined to describe the French humanitarian movement around the time of Voltaire (1694-1718) and the Enlightenment, and meant "actuated by love of one's fellow-man; benevolent and humane". C.E.D.
2. Christianity had long been associated with acts of charity to the poor. Prior to the Dissolution in the sixteenth century, these were mostly performed by the monastic orders, Sisters of Charity and dedicated clerics. Chaucer's humble, poor parson in The Canterbury Tales, who went out in all weathers to dutifully tend to the needy in his parish, is a reminder of medieval benevolence. During the reign of the Tudors when society experienced a troublesome element of unemployed men and unemployable soldiers discharged after the French wars and the Wars of the Roses and other vagabonds, it was gradually recognised that it was incumbent on both the Church and society to provide work for the unemployed and charity for the impotent, and great towns like London and Ipswich organised administrative relief to the poor. At the end of Elizabeth's reign and under the early Stuart Kings, national legislation had been brought for the introduction of the payment of poor rates. See Trevelyan, G.M. English Social History (Penguin ed.) p.128
3. Owen, David, English Philanthropy from 1660-1960 (Cambs. Mass.) 1965, p.121
4. 1. 263 taken from Encyclopaedia Britannica.
5. X f 1. N716 ibid
6. David Owen explains how this was the case with the anti-slavery crusade which raised questions about the boundary between philanthropy and politico-social reform : "Since the aims of Wilberforce and his friends could be achieved only as they mobilized public opinion of a sort and brought it to bear on Parliament, their campaign was more an exercise in reform agitation than an example of the voluntary effort that we customarily think of as philanthropic. Yet the victorious fight to free the black man was the supreme accomplishment of the evangelical reform forces and their allies. In this cause the Clapham men, the 'brotherhood of Christian politicians', were reinforced not only by Dissenters - men of the London Missionary Society, Baptists, Wesleyans, and most signally

Quakers - but later by secular reformers untouched by the Evangelical Revival. The group that in the summer of 1787 formed itself into a Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was composed predominantly of Church of England Evangelicals and Quakers (who for some years had had their own smaller committee).

Granville Sharp, a Claphamite, though not, strictly speaking, an Evangelical, who fifteen years before in the Somerset case had established the illegality of slavery in England, became the first chairman, with Samuel Hoare, the Quaker banker and 'serene philanthropist' * as treasurer." op cit. p 129.

* The phrase is that of his descendant, Lord Templewood, in The Unbroken Thread (New York 1950) p.47

7. A year before George III came to the throne in 1760, the Anglican clergy had been able to commute the payment of tithes and acquire large holdings of land, see p.36. Summer's essay in Fit Work for Women which uses as a source W.R.Ward. Religion and Society in England, 1790 - 1850 (London Batsford 1972) p.9. One only has to scan the novels of Jane Austen to understand the remoteness of her clergymen characters (as well as that of the author herself) from the harsh realities of poor relief and the bread riots and their over-riding concern with dependence on patronage by the gentry; this would not only include such self-opinionated social sycophants as Mr. Collins in Pride and Prejudice but also heroes of integrity such as Edmund Bertram in Mansfield Park. The new age of Benthamite reform demanded that every institution from the "rotten borough" to the Church benefice was subjected to an enquiry of their utilitarian worth. Various measures of administration, carried out by the Ecclesiastical Commission appointed by Parliament exposed many of the anomalies and abuses. One such measure was when Peel appointed a Commission to enquire into Ecclesiastical Duties and Revenues; this resulted in a fairer distribution of revenues, some of which were taken away from the cathedral coffers to set aside a provision for new parishes and other useful measures. See p 68 L.C. Elliot-Binns Religion in the Victorian Era (London 1936)
8. The Anglican Church at this time was morally arid and lacking in religious idealism at a time when it was faced with the ideology of utilitarianism and when many were questioning the time-honoured concepts. Before 1834 poor relief was unevenly spread in the parishes and turned out to be the subject of much criticism because it was outdated and frequently wastefully handled. The old poor law had been based on an ad hoc decision of the justices of the peace of Speenhamland in 1795, although the system of paying poor relief to supplement the wages of the labouring and manufacturing classes in times of economic crises to avoid starvation had been established under Elizabeth after which it had been confirmed by

successive statutes. In these times the wages of farm labourers had been fixed. The results of the old poor law were disastrous: broadly, it discouraged men from working and crowded them into towns and cities, where they swelled the growing unemployed. See pp. 15-16 Thomson, David, England in the Nineteenth Century (Pelican History of England No.8)

9. Summers, op cit p.36
10. Prochaska, F.K. Women and Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century. (Oxford) 1980 p.9 in a reference to The Works of the Rev. John Wesley (4 vols.) (London) 1872, vii, p.123
11. The revival, as initiated by John Wesley and George Whitfield, was basically a reaction against the moral laxity of the age. It produced a large body of opinion demanding punishment of all who fell short of the severe religious and ethical standards preached by the exponents of the religious revival. This remarkably influential national crusade aimed to lift the level of morals and manners, authoritarian and moralistic in many respects, was also extended to embrace the Biblical imperative, to care for the destitute and needy. As Wilberforce put it, the love of one's fellow man was "the indispensable and indeed the characteristic duty of Christians". see Wilberforce A Practical View p.336, quoted by Prochaska op cit p.9
12. Proclamations of condemnation were made by various evangelical pressure groups mobilised by such persons as Wilberforce and Hannah More - to "those responsible for law and order to outlaw all kinds of vice such as swearing, profanity and obscenity and to restrict the licensing laws". Bradley, Ian, "War Against Vice", art. The Sunday Telegraph, May 31st. 1987, p.15
13. Oakley, Ann, Housewife, Penguin Books, (Harmondsworth) 1974; Rowbotham, Sheila, Woman's Consciousness, Man's World, Pelican Books (Harmondsworth) 1973
14. Summers op cit p.33
15. George Eliot's Aunt Samuel Evans was one of their number and was the inspiration for her heroine, Dinah Morris in Adam Bede, see Barber, B. Aquila, A Methodist Pageant, (London) (1932), p.102
16. ibid p.103
17. Coleridge, Samuel T. "The Watchman" (ed) Pattern, Lewis Collected Works of S.T. Coleridge Vol.2 (1970) : p.13
18. Michael 1.446
19. Blake, William, Jerusalem
20. Kelly, Gary (ed) Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary and The Wrongs of Woman (London) 1976 Intro ix
21. Coleridge, Samuel T. Biographia Literaria, ed. Shawcross, J. (1907) 11.6 and quoted by Kelly. ibid
22. Flexner, Eleanor, Mary Wollstonecraft (New York) 1972 p.248
23. Kestner, J. Protest and Reform : The British Social Narrative by Women, 1827-1867 (London and Wisconsin 1985) also see Part 11, Chap.3.1 (below)

24. see Part 11 Chap.3, 2 (below)
25. Houghton, Walter, E. The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870 New Haven and London 1957, pp.265,267
26. Macauley, T.B. History of England 5 Vols. (London) 1849-61
27. McCord, Norman "Poor Law and Philanthropy" Chap.4. in The New Poor Law in the Nineteenth Century ed Derek Fraser, (London) 1976 p.88
28. Bentham, J. Second Treatise on Civil Government, Bentham's ideas, were influential in forming the political philosophy of the founders of the American and French Republics. Locke writes of "the law of nature" being the only viable law, the provision of which is that no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions. He also argues that men will normally create a society by voluntary agreement among themselves erect institutions to do so. An enforceable law and not force or tyranny should be the basis of government.
29. Hardy, T. The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886)
30. Brown, R. and Daniels, C. Nineteenth Century Britain (London) 1980 p.4
31. Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry. 2 Vols.(London) 1847 Vol.11 p.356
32. Owen op cit pp. 128-9
33. Charles Darwin's famous work, Origin of the Species by Means of Natural selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the struggle for Life. (1859) (to give the work its full title) was later adapted in Leslie Stephen's Science of Ethics (1882) to mean the moral fittest, and fuelled the humanitarian scientific movements such as Positivism, which were denying the possibility of any knowledge based on metaphysical assumptions and therefore were making onslaughts upon the strongholds of Christian orthodoxy and contesting the literal interpretation of the Bible.
34. The Positivist philosophy of Auguste Comte (Fr) (1798-57) substituted mystical religious belief and metaphysics with a religion of humanity and sociological ethics. The philosophy was based on a theory that historically the improvement of the human race evolved through three stages, the theological stage, the metaphysical stage and then, with the advance of science, to the stage of positivism. (orig: Systeme de politique positive (4 vols.) (1851-4)
35. The Reform Act 1832 marked the collapse of the former aristocratic principle: the ruling elite opted for reform and relinquished their privilege of hereditary electoral rights, largely because they feared revolution on the scale witnessed in France. The Reform Bill (May) 1832) extended the franchise to include an addition of 217,000 voters to the old electorate of 435,000 by giving the vote to certain householders in the towns. leaseholders, and tenants at will in the counties. The extension of the franchise also led to a redistribution

of the seats among the constituences, taking power away from the rotten boroughs. (p 74 D. Thomson).

However, it did nothing for the labouring poor. Chartism, the working-man's collective movement, was a revolt against laissez-faire individualism of political capitalism and the entrepreneurial giants. Chartism provided a topic of concern for writers like Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell, Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley. Chartism arose in London among the articulate, politically conscious artisan radicals and spread to Birmingham, to the Staffordshire coalmines, and to the textile industries of Bolton and Manchester and other towns of Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire. The Charter, itself, drawn up in 1837, expressed itself in six points calling for, the enfranchise for "every man 21 years of age, of sound mind and not undergoing punishment for crime" and, for it to be made possible for "an honest tradesman or other person" to serve a constituency as an MP by the removal of the property qualification and the introduction of financial assistance to preserve his trade. The climax of the Chartist agitation was the National Convention which gathered in Westminster in the spring of 1839. When presented to Parliament the Charter and its accompanying petition was rejected. Divisions between the Chartists, riots and local strikes, and even insurrection, ensued. The years of 1839 and 1840 became years of persecution and imprisonment for the unfortunate Chartists. Chartism collapsed in 1848. Although the Chartists were defeated in their fight for electoral rights of working men, the spirit of Chartism remained and became the pivot around which the labourer's struggle for social change revolved.

Besides the collective movement of Chartism there was the Anti-Corn League, founded in Manchester in 1839 by representatives from manufacturing and commerce, who resolved that "the agricultural proprietor, capitalist and labourer are benefited equally with the trader by the creation and circulation of wealth of the country". In 1836 the newly founded Anticorn league had blamed the Corn Laws - which restricted the export of manufactured goods in exchange for imported corn - for raising the price of food and the cost of living, and causing widespread hunger. The purpose of the League was to cooperate for the removal of the monopoly which restricted foreign commerce. The historian, D. Thomson, writes of them: "They combined the laissez-faire philosophy of Bentham with the humanitarian philosophy of the philanthropists into one coherent and plausible set of doctrines." See D. Thomson England in the Nineteenth Century (Pelican History) 1972 pp74, 80-81; R. Brown and C. Daniels The Chartists, ^{(London) 1930} and Edward Royle, Nineteenth Century History: Chartism (L n) 1 0.

36. The forceful, Robert Owen, and other Tory activists, and members of the Methodist tradition led the way to collective working-class responsibility through the trade union

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- movement and socialist co-operatives, The radical sociology of Engels was to have little effect in the nineteenth century; Engels and his successors conceived the emergence of the new capitalist industrial society and the coming of the factory system as an erosion of human relationships by the ruthless exploitation of the workers and of their families by dominant entrepreneurs; they wanted to give the power to society's producers, the working-classes. But Engels was too much of an idealist and somewhat ahead of his time for his ideas to be given any credence. See Susan Budd Varieties of Unbelief (London) 1977
37. Prochaska op cit p.21

1.2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PHILANTHROPY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY (pp 44-75)

1. 26th. January 1840, Memoirs Vo.2 p351
2. Brown and Daniels. (1980) op cit p43
3. Fraser, D. op cit. quoted in the "Introduction" p.9
4. Gaskell, E., Mary Barton (Harmondsworth) 1970 pl25-6
5. ibid
6. "Cousin Marshall" a tale from Illustrations of Political Economy 3 vols. (London) 1834
7. Thomson, David England in the Nineteenth Century The Pelican - History of England 1950 8 p.70
8. Paper on "Paupers and Pauperism" given by Dr. Michael Rose Dept. of Economic History, University of Manchester The Cutcast in Victorian Society 3-5 September 1982. Leicester University Adult Studies Conference.
9. Lord Shaftesbury was known as Lord Ashby at the time.
10. Attempts to regulate the employment of child chimney sweeps in 1840 did not successfully end the practice until 1875
11. Mayhew, Henry, art. "Low Wages. Their Causes, Consequences and Remedies", British Quarterly Review, London, May 1st. 1852, pp 309-337
12. ibid p 337
13. Chadwick, E. "Conclusions from the Sanitary Report, 1842" (extract) (eds) Harvie, C., Martin, G. & Schaff A. Industrialisation and Culture 1830-1914 (Open University Press) 1970
14. Owen, D. op cit
15. Prochaska, F.K. op cit.
17. The Quakers and also the Salvation Army under the direction of General Booth and his wife, Catherine, were particularly active in the field of preaching total abstinence in the slums of London.
18. Prochaska, F.K. op cit p98
19. Owen, D. op cit pl45
20. ibid pl44

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21. *ibid* p145
22. Chesney, Kellow The Victorian Underworld (Harmondsworth) 1972 Chap.5 gives some idea of the magnitude of the problems; it describes the world of the gonophs (inferior pickpockets), footpads and the swell mob, the cracksmen and fences, and many others.
23. *ibid* Chap. 7
24. Chesney (*ibid*) describes how in the winter of 1850-51 at the Middlesex Sessions, a police officer gave evidence that he had managed to peep through a window in a lodging house where he saw the accused surrounded by a group of small boys. From a line stretched across the room a coat was hanging, with a number of handkerchiefs tucked in its pockets. Each child in turn tried his skill in removing the handkerchief without moving the coat or shaking the line. The same officer also witnessed boys who did not accomplish the skill "knocked down and kicked". Chap.5 p169
25. Horne, Silvester G. Nonconformity of the Nineteenth Century National Council of Evangelical Free Churches (London) 1907 pp18-9
26. *ibid*
27. Ryder, J. & Silver, H. Modern English Society, History and Structure 1850-1970 (London) 1970 p15
28. Duke, Francis, "Poor Law and Education", *op cit* (ed) Fraser, D. Chap 3 - taken from the Poor Law Commission Fourth Annual Report (1838)
29. *ibid*
30. Haight, G. George Eliot A Biography (Oxford) 1986 Ch.1
31. Bronte, C. Jane Eyre (1847) Chap.30
32. Owen, D. *op cit* p146
33. Hollis, P. (ed) Women in Public 1850-1900 - Documents of the Victorian Women's Movement. (London) 1979, extracts from Mary Carpenter's writings; also see Lord Shaftesbury's "Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes and for Juvenile Offenders" (1851)
34. House, Humphry, The Dickens' World (London) (1941)
35. Owen, D. *op cit* p151
36. *ibid* p147
37. (ed) Slater, M. (Penguin English Library) 1979 "introduction" to Dickens, C. Nicholas Nickleby (1839)
38. HW December 1850
39. Wilson, Angus The World of Charles Dickens (London) 1970
40. Lane, M. The Bronte Story (London and Glasgow) 1969, who adds up to date information to extracts from Elizabeth Gaskell's Life of Charlotte Bronte (1857) Chap.3 "Cowan Bridge".
41. Gaskell, E. Mary Barton (1847) (Harmondsworth) 1848 Chap.5 p75
42. The Mechanics Institutes then spread to London, Manchester, Bradford, Birmingham and Sheffield. Some, like the Andersons in Glasgow were formed as early as 1796 (later Royal Technical College). So rapid was the

development that by 1850 there were well over six hundred institutions. Early night schools where a few men gathered together in a private house for the purpose of exchanging knowledge, similar to that run by Bartie Masey, the lame schoolmaster, described by George Eliot in Adam Bede, were often the seeds of the Mechanics Institutes. Writing in 1859, Samuel Smilc, gave an account of the origins of a "Mechanics Institute in the North in 1844: "It was started by two or three young men of the humblest rank who resolved to meet in the winter evenings for the purposes of improving themselves by exchanging knowledge with each other. Their first meeting was held in a room of a cottage in which one of the members lived; but others shortly joined them, the place became inconveniently full. The men incurred the expense of hiring a room out of their small wages, so anxious were they to seize instruction wherever it was offered." see Bristow, Adrian Inside the Colleges of Further Education (HMO London) 1970 Chap.1

43. Barber, E. Aquila op cit p199
44. Sanders, V. Reason over Passion: Harriet Martineau and the Victorian Novel (Sussex and New York) 1986 p31
45. Wolff, R.L. Gains and Losses of Faith and Doubt in Victorian England (London and New York) 1977 p12
46. Smith, S.M. The Other Nation - The Poor in English Novels in the 1840's and 1850's (Oxford) 1980, p89, who takes as her source C. Aspin's "Lancashire : The First Industrial Society" p 6F
47. Gaskell, E. op cit: "You went down one step even from the foul area into the cellar in which a family of human beings lived. It was very dark inside. The window-panes were many of them broken and stuffed with rags, which was reason enough for the dusky light that pervaded the place even at mid-day. After the account I have given of the state of the street, no one can be surprised that on going into the cellar inhabited by Davenport, the smell was so foetid as almost to knock the two men down. Quickly recovering themselves, as those inured to such things do, they began to penetrate the thick darkness of the place, and to see three or four little children rolling on the damp, nay wet, brick floor, through which the stagnant, filthy moisture of the street oozed up; the fire-place was empty and black; the wife sat on her husband's chair, and cried in the dank loneliness." Chap 6, p 98.
48. pp12-13
49. Since the 1840's under Edwin Chadwick's influence, public health had been treated mainly as an engineering matter of sewage disposal and clean water.
50. Hollis, P. op cit p225; 51
51. Fawcett, E. "Octavia Hill" in National Trust, Autumn 1981 p13
52. Hollis, P. op cit. p199; Prochaska F.K. op cit p184 who cites Meliora, 1858, p76. The "Judicial Statistics"

drawing on reports from English and Welsh police forces, determined that there were about 30,000 prostitutes known to the police in the late 1850's and early 1860's. In London in 1863 there were 5,581 women known to the police as prostitutes, or 1 in 576 persons. P.P.Accounts and Papers "Judicial Statistics", 1864 lvii, p viii-ix

53. Chesney, K. The Victorian Underworld (Harmondsworth) 1972 Chap.10 William Acton's Prostitution (1857) see and Prochaska op cit pp186-7
54. Chesney *ibid* p372
55. Summers, Anne op cit p39
56. Prochaska op cit p184
57. *ibid* p189
58. *ibid* p188
59. *ibid* pp22-3; Owen, D. op cit pp401, 413-20
60. Owen *ibid* p123
61. Kent, John Elizabeth Fry (London) 1962 p100
62. Prochaska, op cit Chap 1. Prochaska's meticulous attention to hundreds of memoirs and journals written by little known women uncovers the phenomenal scale of alms giving and financial support by women to charitable funds and to the institutions. For a sex which was normally financially dependent on husband, father or a male relative, the scale of giving was extraordinarily generous and frequently exceeded that of male giving. Many of the large sums came in the form of bequests. In addition to this, many women seemed to have persuaded their menfolk of the necessity to give to their particular causes. Thousands of others became increasingly involved in fund-raising committees and charity bazaars. As much of this work was inspired by a strong religious conviction of Christian love and was therefore carried out under the auspices of the Church, it was generally considered to be an acceptable pastime for the leisured lady. Prochaska concedes that there must have been a considerable amount of life-time self-denial by these dedicated women.
63. Facts on charity of the poor to the poor were collected in South London at the suggestion of the Bishop of Southwark, London 1908, p6 See Friedrich Engels The Condition of the Working Class in England (eds) W.O. Henderson and W.H. Chaloner, Stanford, 1958 pp102,140 see Prochaska *ibid* "Preface"
64. Prochaska *ibid* p42
65. Dickens, C. Bleak House (1853-3) (Oxford) 1948 Chap Vlll
66. Prochaska op cit p43
67. McCord, N. "Poor Law and Philanthropy" (ed) Fraser D. The Poor Law of Nineteenth Century England (London) 1976 Chap.4
68. Gaskell, E. Ruth (1853)
69. Prochaska op cit.p111
70. There is the famous example of how the good charitable intentions of Angela Burdett-Coutts, the banking heiress philanthropist and friend of Charles Dickens, mis-fired. In 1868 she ceremoniously gave to the poor of Bethnal

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Green, the Columbia Market, a fine architectural edifice costing £200,000. Although it was a well organised scheme to bring cheap and good food within the reach of the marketing poor and unfortunate, with permanent shops, a galleried market hall, a warden on site and no tolls to pay, it remained unused by the impoverished tradesmen, who seemed to prefer the alleys of Covent Garden and Billingsgate and road-side barrows. According to Smith, the scheme failed because of the lack of understanding between the rich and the poor; the reason was not, as was suggested at the time, because of the depravity and ignorance of those for whom it was built, but because of the competitive system; the charitable enterprise could not survive the cut throat competition of the market place, see Smith, S.M. op cit p226

71. Martineau, H. Illustrations of Political Economy 3 vols. (London) 1834 Vol.3 p3872
72. Prochaska op cit p116
73. Davidoff, L. & Hall, C. "Home Sweet Home" in the New Statesman 27th May 1983 p xiv
74. Waugh, Edwin "Friends are few when folks are poor" from Songs of The People - Lancashire dialect poetry of the industrial revolution (ed) Brian Hollingworth (Manchester) 1977 p14
75. Prochaska, op cit p13
76. Dickens, C. "The Ladies Society" from Sketches by Boz. The Sketches were written for the Monthly Magazine the Morning Chronicle and the Evening Chronicle between 1833-5) (Oxford and New York 1957 Chap.VI
77. (ed) Fraser, D. op cit Introduction p14
78. ibid p16

1.3 THE LITERARY RESPONSE (pp 76-84)

1. McEwan, N. The Survival of the Novel (London) 1981 p17
2. Grenville, G.C. The Reign of Queen Victoria 1837-1852 8 vols. (1888) Vol.V (new ed) Chap XIV p138
3. Martineau began writing her Illustrations in 1831 see op cit
4. Cazamian, L. op cit Chap.2
5. Showalter, E. A Literature of Their Own (London and Princetown) 1978, p54
6. As early as 1793 novels were described as "instruments of abomination and ruin" and at the turn of the century they were ranked close to drunkenness and adultery, see R. Stang Theory of the Novel (London) 1972 p5
7. Examples of this exploitation can be found in Stephen Marcus's remarkable book The Other Victorians : Studies in Sex and Society - A Study of Sexuality and Pornography

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- in Mid-Nineteenth Century England (New York) 1964
8. Kent, J. op cit p69
 9. George Eliot sent copies of Scenes of Clerical Life to Mrs. Carlyle hoping that Carlyle himself could be introduced to break his rule against novels and read her work. Stang op cit p212 who cites the Pinney Letters 122-123
 10. Stang op cit p11
 11. Haight, G. (ed) Letters 9 vols. (New Haven) 1954-78 Vol. 11 p362
 12. Westminster Review LXVI July 1856 p54
 13. ibid
 14. Cazamian, L. op cit Chap.2
 15. Marcus, S. op cit p146
 16. North British Review March 1853 pp176-9
 17. NBR July 1855, p153
 18. Stang op cit who cites John Dunlop in History of Fiction (1816) (Philadelphia) 1842 i xx-xxii
 19. Cazamian, op cit Chap.2. p40
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CHAPTER 2. PHILANTHROPIC WOMAN AND THE "FEMININE SUBCULTURE"

"Charity is the calling of a lady; the care of the poor is her profession."

Hannah More (1803)

"I am a woman, with a woman's parts,
And of love I bear children,
In the days of bearing is my body weak,
But why because I do you service, should
you call me slave?

I am a woman in my speech and gait,
I have no beard, (I'll take no blame
for that!)
In many things are you and I apart,
But there are regions where we coincide....
Where law for one is law for both,
There is the sexless part of me that
is my mind....."

Anna Wickham (1884-1947)

Until the twentieth century, history texts have said little about the role of women in past societies. History as a subject for study, has mostly focussed on public happenings - national and international - and on persons in public positions and places in which men, rarely women, have played a leading role in the affairs of running and defending nations, controlling invading armies, involving themselves in international politics, trade, wars and other matters. The history of women's experience has not been relayed to posterity in quite the same overt way, except when a woman has had a significant public role, such as being a reigning monarch or a suitable marriageable prospect

for a prominent male figure, or, as in the case of Joan of Arc, was a warring heroine. The majority of historical heroines began to appear around the turn of the nineteenth century as social reformists of one kind or another: probably the most renowned are Elizabeth Fry for her work in Newgate Prison, and Florence Nightingale who took her personally trained nurses to tend to the injured in the Crimean war. One of the chief reasons for this notable lack of the exploits of women in the annals of history - as with the history of all nations - is that, of the two sexes, women's lives have been more privately conducted, and, many feminists argue, male dominated and suppressed. Not being sufficiently part of the male public world, lives led by women have been considered to be unimportant, and woman herself inferior to men. It is only over recent years that feminists, historians, sociologists, literary figures and others have sought to redress the balance, by way of research, to fill in the gaps in respect of female experience in society, in public places, in the home and in the arts. Today, feminist writers and feminist publishing houses are producing many works of valuable research in these areas. It is from some of these publications, as well as to the more traditional historical and literary sources, material will be assimilated and assessed in order to ascertain the life experience of females in the nineteenth century and how this experience caused thousands of women to turn to philanthropy. It is interesting to note that Brochaska began writing from an

interest in philanthropy as a general topic but, as his searches began to reveal the vast extent of female involvement in philanthropy, he decided instead, to restrict his research to this aspect of the subject. The assumption here is, that the new philanthropic experience of women was at the same time becoming part of the female consciousness, and being assimilated into novels written by women of the period.

Claine Howalter argues that women have shaped their own cultural tradition because they have, throughout the centuries, been cut off from the affairs of men: they have existed in and have developed a sub-culture of their own, based on their own biology - the entire female sexual life-cycle; on their participation and knowledge of child-rearing, home life, religion and "female communality". Historically, she claims, women have been constrained economically and artistically; over the centuries of Judaic Christian civilisation women have been reminded of their inferiority to men, and thus separate gender roles have developed. Women, biologically made to give birth and to suckle their young, were more likely to assume a nurturing role as wives and mothers: men, progeniture and traditionally hunters, take on the role of economic provider and decision-maker.⁽¹⁾ Down the ages, as Ann Oakley has found, there have been some slight modifications to this pattern of gender stereotyping,⁽²⁾ but Elizabeth Longford reminds one that, mostly there has

been a rigid discipline by which the family has been held together, that of "the subordination of children to parents and of women to men".⁽³⁾ According to Showalter the historical subculture of women emerged from this "doctrine of sexual spheres" to which Carol Gilligan gives the label of "gender dynamic".⁽⁴⁾ The "subculture" is defined by Showalter as, "a habit of living ... of a minority group which is self-consciously distinct from the dominant activities, expectations, and values of a society".⁽⁵⁾ The traditional domestic role of women is, of course, intrinsic to the female subculture". Additionally, Showalter claims, that historians have identified the female reform associations, church groups and philanthropic activity, which emerged in the nineteenth century, as public expressions of this same subculture.⁽⁶⁾ With the emergence of many great women philanthropists, social reformers and novelists, one is led to ask, was this a point in history where the experience of women in their so-called "subculture" was re-shaped, so that it received a status equitable with the social and cultural status of men?

Thousands of women - some great, some less known - were involved in the philanthropic movement at some stage during the nineteenth century, women such as Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845); Mary Carpenter (1807-77); Caroline Norton (1808-77); Harriet (Taylor) Mill (1808-58); Sarah Ellis (1810-77-; Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-1908); Angela Burdett-

Coutts (1814-1906); Lousia Twining (1820-91); Anne J. Clough (1820-92); Felicia Skene (1821-99); Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1908); Barbara (Leigh-Smith) Bodichon (1827-91); Catherine Booth (1829-90); Maria Rye (1829-1903); Florence Nightingale (1829-1910); Josephine Butler (1828-1906); Emily Davies (1830 -1921); Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1836-1917); Octavia Hill (1838-1912); Annie Hicks (1839-1917); Sophia Jex-Blake (1840-1917), and Annie Bes ant (1847-1933). It is important to this thesis that a sizeable proportion of philanthropists were also writers or had close contact with renowned women authors. Given the limits of prevailing censorship, it is assumed that the stories and novels of social interest by the women writers would have been influenced to some greater or lesser degree by the impressive experiences and inspiration set by the philanthropists.

It is the aim of this chapter to, first, describe the social conventions and constraints surrounding women which this stereotyping imposed upon them; then, to examine how women philanthropists resisted and reacted against restrictive social pressures by seeking self-realization and a new identity for their sex in their respective spheres of achievement, and, finally, to identify a distinctly feminine ethical concept of care which philanthropists and reformists brought out of the "subculture" of the home and into all kinds of public places. The corresponding artistic contribution of women novelists in reshaping the feminine experience will be given consideration in a later chapter.

2.1. THE DYNAMICS OF GENDER: FEMININE DOMESTICITY - 'THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE'.

"I will describe her as shortly as I can. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was a chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it - in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but prepared to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all - I need not say it - she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty - her blushes her great grace. In those days - the last of Queen Victoria - every house had its Angel."

Virginia Woolf

"We hear of the 'mission' and of the 'rights' of Woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of Man - as if she and her lord were creatures of independent kind, and of irreconcilable claim. This, at least, is wrong."

John Ruskin

Carol Gilligan's behavioural studies on the dynamics of gender indicate the existence of a clear social reinforcement of a division of gender responsibility. Gilligan explains how sexual stereotyping suggests the splitting of love and work, of intuition and reason, and places "the role of moral development and inter-relationships into the private world of the home and into the laps of women, and the role of economic and political responsibility into the public world of the community and into the hands of men." (1)

Her studies on infants, adolescents and adults of both sexes indicate that women and men develop a difference sense of social reality and different ways of imagining the human condition, basically because the two sexes have different sets of values in respect of, relationships, issues of dependency and responsibility towards others. In her studies on infants, Gilligan found that girls develop primarily as "caretakers", they sense an emphatic tie with their mothers, and mothers tend to regard their daughters as "more like and continuous with themselves", whereas boys develop, "a more emphatic individuation and more forming of boundaries"; they are viewed by their mothers as "the male opposite". (2) In play relationships, girl's play tends to occur in small, more intimate groups, whereas boys games incorporate "organisational skills, necessary for co-ordinating the activities of large and diverse groups of people." Because boys learn to deal with competitive situations in a relatively forthright manner, and "in accordance with the rules of the game", they learn more about rivalry and independency than girls. Girls on the other hand, learn more of the role of "the particular other" which tends to foster the development of empathy and sensitivity . In adulthood these two distinct positions become modified and to some extent fused. Even so, argues Gilligan, two versions of maturity remain : maturity of men is generally associated with "adulthood" - usually a synonym for "manhood" - whereas maturity of women is generally termed as "womanhood" - as a condition that is separate. (3)

Hence, the general position remains that boys and men are encouraged to take the initiative, to take responsibility for themselves, and for the world, and to make decisions and solve problems according to their own set of values and own perspective of the world. Their values prevail as the norm for society as a whole. As a result, claims Gilligan, women, and the values of their sex, have become socially subordinated and 'woman's place in a man's life cycle has long been that of nurturer, caretaker, helpmate, and the weaver of those networks of relationships on which she, in turn, relies ... Women have always felt, and men have assumed that women belonged to their father, or husband, to man in some way.'⁽⁴⁾ Consequently, women have come to question the normality of their feelings and to alter their judgement in deference to the opinion of others.⁽⁵⁾ Virginia Woolf considered inhibition in a woman's make-up as an impediment to their literary progress, to her the female mind was "slightly pulled from the straight and made to alter its clearer vision in deference to external authority", but Gilligan challenges Woolf's statement for not being positive enough: the deference of women, she argues, is not a weakness of moral strength, for "it is rooted not only in social subordination but also in the substance of their (woman's) concern".⁽⁶⁾ She writes:

"Sensitivity to the needs of others and the assumption of responsibility for taking care lead women to attend to voices other than their own and to include in their judgement other points of view." (7)

This is surely a criterion upon which the great women philanthropists acted upon, and one that can be characterised in the novels: that part of woman, that men have tended to assume or undervalue, and which they sought to confine merely to relationships in the home. The concept of "womanhood" is incomplete until women are able to make a moral stand and statement of their own and be judged in terms of their ability to care in public places.

This chapter concerns itself with the nineteenth century concept of "feminine domesticity" and also with the resulting constraints and opportunities that were part of their common experience, which eventually led thousands of women to make a choice to do charitable works.

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Although liberation was the key political and economic ideology of the changing "laissez-faire" society, the ideology did little towards the social freedom of women whatever their station in life. In fact, in many respects, women in industrialised Britain became less "free" than their earlier agrarian counterparts. In the new industrial society there developed a shift in family structure, and family relationships as work became separated from family life. A woman's role became exclusively linked with marriage and the home. Sociological studies of Ann Oakley (1974) and

Sheila Rowbotham (1973) reveal how the stereotype of "the lady of feminine domesticity" (colourfully idiomised by Virginia Woolf in her literary critique as "The Angel in the House") was mostly a phenomenon and a direct result of nineteenth century industrialism. The Pre-industrialised housewife had been a productive worker in and outside the home. Marriage had been more of an economic arrangement for both the smallholder and the estate-owner; the husband would not have been expected to provide for his wife. Pre-industrial families had worked together in fields and cottage based industries. As industrialism approached, and the introduction of new technologies, new inventions and large scale factory production brought families into the towns and cities causing man and wife to live separate lives, the man of the urban family unit became in most situations the sole economic provider and the wife was no longer expected to be economically independent. Virtually redundant in the world of work, a woman was expected to stay at home and care for the children and supervise servants where they were hired, whereas formerly, older siblings or a hired girl would have looked after the younger children. The child, too, once part of the family production unit, now became increasingly dependent on the parent at home - the mother, and if not the mother, then the aunt or sister. Oakley records that by 1841, "feminine domesticity" was well-established as a full-time occupation for middleclass women.⁽⁸⁾ Paid work for women became to be considered an affront to the ideal of the home

and family by the middleclasses. Consequently, women's economic dependence on husbands, brothers and other male relatives marked their social subjection to men and their authority in the home. The man, in assuming the role of economic provider, also assumed the role of head of the family and sometimes other dependants; it also meant that he took charge of the decisions affecting them. As for the thousands of workingclass women, there was no choice but to continue to work for the new capitalist employers in the fields, factories, sweatshops and cotton mills. The alternative was extreme poverty. Despite their plight, the middleclass ideology of "feminine domesticity" remained as right and proper for all women.

Although prevailing social disapproval deterred many women from seeking employment or a career outside the home, a substantial proportion were required to work. In her Autobiography, Harriet Martineau accuses Dickens of being one of those who "ignored the fact that nine-twentieths of the women of England earn their bread." (9) It was a time when there was an excess of half a million women to men. (10) Of this number only one fifth was in recorded employment. The most common form of employment for unmarried women and widows was domestic service. By 1881 one in three girls between the ages of fifteen and twenty was a servant and over one and a quarter million women and girls were in residential service. Apart from certain groups of working

women whose employment went mostly unrecorded, the rest of the female population were dependants of one sort or another, mainly as housewives. A substantial section of the female workforce in Victorian England continued to be employed in the cotton industry. At the end of the eighteenth century when the problems of labour recruitment were acute in the cotton spinning factories of Derbyshire and Lancashire, the cotton masters had turned to women and children as a convenient and cheap source of labour.⁽¹¹⁾ By the middle of the nineteenth century when the migrating masses had overpopulated the towns and cities and by which time mechanisation has reached the factories, female labour became in less demand and women tended to move into other industries and factories. In 1851, almost three million women (2,988,600) were in the manufacturing industries. In the textile industries they were employed dyeing cotton and wool, lace-making, glovemaking, and in the factories they made nails.⁽¹²⁾ The conditions under which these women worked were often appalling and insanitary, ill-ventilated, dangerous environments of the mills and factories gave rise to sickness, blindness, lung-infections, accidents and even death. Despite the appalling conditions, many women preferred industrial labour to that of the dressmakers' sweatshops as it provided them with a slightly higher wage. Critics of women's employment in the factory system associated better pay with a more profligate life-style. Even the most liberal of middleclass philanthropists, Elizabeth Gaskell, disapproved of the girl who

worked in the factory for material gain. In 1848, she makes her position clear in the characterisation of Mary Barton's aunt, Esther, whose factory wages, spent on "artificial and fly-away veils" and other such vanities, destined her to become a "street-walker".⁽¹³⁾ One effect was a move by middleclass women to rescue the working woman from the perceived evils of industrial employment. However, social historian, G.M. Trevelyan refutes the common assumption. He points out, "That on the whole, the more regular pay and general conditions of life in the factories tended towards a higher standard of morals....As the century went on the factory pay and conditions steadily improved, the self-respect of the women employed was put on a sounder basis". It was not factory labour but the low wages of the unregulated sweatshops which led many young women into prostitution.⁽¹⁴⁾

Under the new urban and economic conditions emerged an entrepreneurial middleclass, separate from the aristocracy and separate from the mass of wage labourers below them. The middleclass family became a new force in civil society, largely of, or influenced by, the evangelical movement (both Anglican and Nonconformist sections); it promoted its version of the ideal life by presenting a model of manners and morals for the lower classes to follow. The family was central to the evangelical cause: puritan Christianity demanded the religious household to be a base from which to counter the evils of the outside world and a haven from which the souls of young and vulnerable children would be

correctly formed. The notion of the home as a "little" kingdom set apart" (15) caused a new onus of responsibility for middleclass women. In a sermon, Baldwin Brown told them, to remember the need of "world-weary men" and therefore "to pray, think, strive to make a home something like a bright, serene, restful, joyful nook of heaven in an unheavenly world." (16) John Ruskin (1819-1900) romanticised the concept even further. His eulogy of the perfect home as, "a sacred place, a vestal temple of the hearth watched over by household Gods", and, as a place set apart, a "walled garden", might seem to the twentieth century sceptic a piece of pretentious pedantry, but to the susceptible Victorian. Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies (17) was a spiritual, classically inspired proclamation which upheld the home as a shelter from the harsh reality of the impersonal industrialised marketplace. Moreover, the Victorian home was not only idealized as a sacred, peaceful place, by the Christian population but also by agnostics, who, according to Houghton, regarded the home as the "secular temple" where altruistic emotions could be learnt. (18) Ironically, the world of the market of dependency between masters and men was microscopically echoed in the family structure: the family like the world of the market, was structured on a chain of independent relationships, wives on husbands, children on parents, servants on masters. The husband may have been head of the household, but it was the wife who was central to it; woman, especially middleclass woman, was, within the home, spiritual comforter, upholder

of moral chastity and symbol of kindness and goodness. Most accepted and believed it was woman's natural place to serve man and family. This is clearly evidenced in a sermon of the celebrated, Reverend John James Angell, who proclaimed: "To be a good wife is a high attainment in female excellence: it is a woman's brightest glory since the Fall" (19) Current Church dogma was a powerful force in proclaiming and maintaining women's inferior position. It relied on the Judaic and Old Testament myth which describes woman being created out of the rib of man, and the New Testament words of Paul that, "man is not of woman but woman of man". Religion conveniently turned biology on its head and designated woman as a companion to man. Her subordinate place to man often seen to be a punishment for the original sin of Eve. (20) As the Protestants put their emphasis on the sanctity of the family, so did a woman redeem herself of the Eve image by showing herself to be the upholder of family moral standards. Paradoxically, Christianity was also to become the main source of personal inspiration and freedom for large numbers of women who saw philanthropy as a crucial missionary element of their faith. Another powerfully influential voice in the 1840's was that of the housewife's mentor, Mrs. Sarah Stickney Ellis (1810-1872). She was popular for her advice given in a series of books, among which were such titles as Wives and Daughters, The Daughters of England and Mothers of England, in which she reminded her substantial middleclass female readership that, "Love is a woman's all she ever looks up to man as her

protector and her guide." Furthermore, Mrs. Ellis denounced female ambition and selfish pursuits which prevented women ministering to men. Similarly, the journalist, W.R.Greg, in 1852, in a protest against the idea of women working outside the home, reminded his female audience that they were "attached to others" and "connected with other existences which they embellish, facilitate, and serve", that they were "ministers to men", who could not possibly do without them.⁽²¹⁾ Just over a decade later, John Ruskin argued that it was wholly desirable to educate girls not so that a woman should earn her own living but because an educated wife "could sympathise with her husband's pleasures and those of his friends" and, generally, make a more rational, intelligent and agreeable companion than an ill-educated woman."⁽²²⁾ Marriage clearly was deemed to be a woman's ultimate and most natural "profession" in life.

As a consequence of this ethos, middleclass girls received an education which was far inferior to their brothers.⁽²³⁾ Whereas the boys were tutored in mathematics, the sciences and the Classics, the training of girls focussed on the gentler arts - music, water-colour painting, needlework, reading, languages, religion, which taught the message of sacrificial duty and household care. The general assumption was that mathematics, philosophy and politics, and especially the new sciences and technology, were too taxing for the female brain. It was widely argued that, because

of woman's weaker nature and because of the smaller cubic content of her brain, she was intellectually inferior to men.⁽²⁴⁾ Woman's great personal gift was her feminine benevolent nature. She was tutored to excel at the one accomplishment of being "the Angel in the House". Moreover, there was a widespread mistrust of educated, highly intelligent women. George Eliot's skittish scene in Mill on the Floss epitomises well the bigotted attitude that education was wasted on girls: Maggie Tulliver's polite request to Mr. Stelling, her brother, Tom's tutor, to teach her Euclid instead of Tom, is met with the less polite imputation that girls may have quick minds but, as a sex, they only have "a great deal of superficial cleverness."⁽²⁵⁾ Clever and gifted women, like Charlotte Yonge, were positively discouraged from believing that they could be intellectually superior to men.⁽²⁶⁾ Those women who aspired to a classical education were frequently ridiculed because of their unrealistic and pretentious belief that the learning of Latin and Greek would bring them on the path to equal erudition with men. Nonetheless, the reality was that a few women, like George Eliot and Harriet Martineau, defiantly achieved these linguistic heights and were admired by male scholars for their erudition.⁽²⁷⁾

Fortunately many women refused to be stereotyped by Victorian conventions. Notably, all the women writers and philanthropists who achieved greatness in the nineteenth century came from upper and middleclass backgrounds. Most

were suitably educated according to the assumptions of their day. Others, like Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler, Angela Burdett-Coutts and George Eliot, had received a better than average education, but even this to some seemed insufficient to equip them for the world in which they lived, either to earn a living, or to change society's ills. Elizabeth Gaskell received a broad education at the Byerleys establishment.⁽²⁸⁾ Her own four daughters were partly educated by their parents and partly at school, individual schools having been selected for them according to their individual gifts and talents.⁽²⁹⁾ Duthie points out, "Education for Gaskell was primarily education for life and through life".⁽³⁰⁾ The Gaskells were Unitarians and like many followers of the denomination believed in the cultivation of the intellect for both sexes.⁽³¹⁾ Although Gaskell held liberal views in respect of women's education she continued to value the conventional role of women in the home. When in the process of constructing her material for the Life of Charlotte Bronte, she wrote to Ellen Nussey and, when thanking her for her letters, commented: "I am sure that the more fully she (Charlotte Bronte), the friend, the daughter, the sister, the wife is known, where need be in her own words, the more highly will she be appreciated." ⁽³²⁾ One wonders why she, friend and literary companion and mentor to Charlotte Bronte, should omit here the words "writer" and "artist". Perhaps she was sensitive to the mistrust surrounding clever women? Josephine Butler also had enlightened

parents. John Grey, her father, who organised support for reform and for the abolition of slavery, was also a firm believer in women's education and discussed all kinds of social problems with his daughters. Josephine was chiefly educated by her mother, a devout Moravian Christian, and she briefly attended a school in Newcastle. She also married an academic, George Butler, who was an examiner at Oxford. Elizabeth Longford records how Josephine helped her husband with his work - he taught Geography and gave lectures on fine art, which led to a commission to prepare a new edition of Chaucer. This gave her admittance to the Bodleian Library, a hitherto male stronghold,⁽³³⁾ a privilege which Virginia Woolf was hankering after seventy years later in A Room of One's Own.

For many intelligent and determined women writers and philanthropists, the only solution to the lack of the provision of education was self-help. In the spirit of the laissez-faire environment, these women strove to improve their scholarship. Harriet Martineau extended her adequate formal education by reading and writing profusely on a wide range of topics - history, education, theology, political and economic philosophy.⁽³⁴⁾ George Eliot's capacity for self-tuition was quite remarkable: during the years she was caring for her widowed father in Nuneaton, she supplemented her formal education by teaching herself German, Italian and Latin in addition to reading theology, history, science,

fiction, and poetry. Later, in her life, during the period she was socially ostracised for her liaison with George Henry Lewes, she filled the time usefully by reading in Greek and Latin such classics as the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Ajax, the Oedipus and Aeschylus triologies, and works by Horace, Virgil, Cicero Livy and others.⁽³⁵⁾ Among other women who struggled to educate themselves, often in isolation, were Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who, invalided at fifteen, spent the next ten years learning German, Spanish and Hebrew, and Christina Rossetti, with the help of her brother and his friends, was largely self-educated. The Bronte sisters, like George Eliot, had from childhood an insatiable appetite for learning and supplemented their schooling with self-education. Out of financial necessity and because of the sisters' plans to set up a school for young ladies of their own, Charlotte took herself off to Belgium to learn and practise French while she taught in a Belgian lycée. Elizabeth Gaskell wrote admiringly of her "silent and shy" friend that, she was "a very noble, sterling, person" who "scrambled into what education she has had".⁽³⁶⁾ The Bronte sisters read widely among works of literature and held in special fascination the works of Shakespeare, Byron, Sir Walter Scott and German Gothic writers. Florence Nightingale longed for, and tried to compensate for, the same kind of education and opportunities as a man. She was taught classics, philosophy and mathematics by her father and also learnt many modern languages.⁽³⁷⁾ The determination of these women to improve their education is clearly

indicative of the pioneering mentality which was to take hold of them and compel them to do what they did - in both the field of writing and the field of philanthropy and reform.

The general assumption that a married woman was the possession of her husband was also strongly imbued in nineteenth century law, and thus lent legality not only to the notion of "feminine domesticity" but also to the assumption that she was vulnerable to harm and in need of masculine protection. Before the Marriage and Divorce Act 1857, wives were presumed by law to be under the command and control of their husbands. Generally, women were regarded as relative to men and had no real standing of their own. The law clearly upheld the Pauline teaching of the Church that the wife should be subject to her husband as the Church is to the Lord.⁽³⁸⁾ The common law gave the whole of her personal property to her husband and made it his to dispose of unless a trust settlement stated otherwise. Even before marriage, when a woman became engaged, she could not dispose of any of her possessions without her fiance's approval.⁽³⁹⁾ Since the husband was in complete control over his wife's assets and person, he also enjoyed unlimited rights over his children. The mother went unrecognised by law unless her children were illegitimate.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The legal status of unmarried women was less restricted: a single woman had the same rights to property, to protection from the law, and was required

to pay the same taxes to the state as a man. (41) However, in practice, many single women were economically dependent on a male relative or forced to earn a living in low-paid work, consequently they rarely were able to enjoy these relative legal liberties over their married sisters. The one woman exempt from the restrictive laws relating to married women was Queen Victoria, who as Queen Regent, was permitted the same rights, prerogatives and duties as a male Monarch. (42)

Ostensibly the majority of women adjusted themselves to the world in which they found themselves: their inferior social and legal status did not appear to concern them. There were others who found their subjected state generally repressive and unjust for one reason or another: their lives were empty and unfulfilled: they suffered unhappy marriages: they were unmarried and had time on their hands. Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale were among the many lively intelligent women who felt their lives were personally constrained. Florence Nightingale who suffered extreme bouts of boredom and frustration, records the emptiness of her life before she took up nursing: "For how many years I have watched that drawing room clock and thought it would never reach the ten. And for twenty or thirty years more to do thus." Yearning for a more stimulating occupation, she cynically writes that life in a monastery would be more

desirable and interesting than a woman's allotment to a lifetime of domesticity.⁽⁴³⁾ Clearly, the kind of life, gently satirised by Jane Austen, was torturingly claustrophobic for Nightingale. Born in 1820, she grew up in an atmosphere of luxury, culture and idleness, having available to her all the paraphernalia of gentry living - the large country house, the London season, friends, literature and foreign travel. Nightingale resisted marriage, despite the general expectation that marriage was unquestionably the "natural" profession for women. Many other women, compelled to marry for material and economic survival, endured an unhappy marriage, and some young women, being compelled to marry before they were mature enough to consider the consequences of an ill-matched union, found marriage to be a form of bondage and remained desperately unhappy behind the veiled respectability of their "haven home". Whereas society largely ignored the problem, the unrealistic ideology of the family model did not always go unchallenged in literature. It is clear from the novels of Jane Austen, the Bronte sisters, George Eliot, Margaret Oliphant, Dickens, Hardy, Thackeray, and many other writers, that marriage as a state of economic dependency or necessity was likely to prove a disaster. Dickens's Dombey and Son and Samuel Butler's The Way of All Flesh provide blistering contemporary critiques of some aspects of Victorian marriage. Thomas Hardy also portrays many an uneasy marriage such as that of Susan and Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge, and Sue Bridehead and Mallotson in Jude the Obscure. One is mindful that Dickens's

own marriage degenerated into an unhappy partnership which ended with estrangement,⁽⁴⁴⁾ and Hardy's relationship with his first wife, Emma, appears to have taken on a happier appearance after Emma's death than before it.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Notably, the Bronte sisters were, as was Jane Austen, discerning about the quality of marriage: for them it had to be an institution where love and mutual respect were valued - marriage as a social and economical convenience was unacceptable.

The effect of the dynamics of gender stereotyping was that the notion of home and woman's separate place in it became a focus of celebration and idealism in Victorian society. It affirmed the way that society regarded women, in particular, middleclass women - creatures to be protected and dominated, yet classed as the true moral caretakers of the ideal - as a species separate from man and born to serve. The woman of the family, as the catalyst of domestic benevolence, tenderness and affection, was required to give her time and efforts lovingly and willingly. She thus became stereotyped as "the ministering angel" in the house. Also, the subservient role of women and her economic and legal dependence on men fed the widespread belief that women were "the weaker vessels", who as creatures "of instincts, characterised by vanity, instability and lack of judgement", needed to be protected from themselves and therefore should be confined to the home.⁽⁴⁶⁾ This notion led

to the Victorian stereotype of the Victorian lady as "a fragile swooning doll-like creature", given to fits of fainting and subject to hysteria. It is a stereotype that Duncan Crow deplores as grossly misleading. For, although such women doubtless existed, it is regrettable that this stereotype, and that of the "ministering angel" have provided for successive generations a false picture of Victorian womanhood. As Crow argues, historical evidence of determined women reformers, like Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale suggests something quite different.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The psychological implications of the social stereotyping of woman as "the weaker vessel" and the broader concept of personal sacrifice made by women in and outside the home, must have been enormous. The cameo of the fragile, fainting, histrionic Victorian middleclass lady is often seen to be an object of unsympathetic amusement; her tendency to fainting fits being, as Housman wrote in 1932, "largely self-inflicted as a female ploy to gain power over her family", or a "cosmetic sham and scruple to lard themselves with all the weaknesses which are supposed to appeal to man's taste of mastery."⁽⁴⁸⁾ Modern-day feminists are likely to contest such a view as being a sure example of male chauvinism, which revealed a considerable lack of understanding of nineteenth century female experience. They would be prone to question why should women go to such histrionic lengths to draw attention to themselves? In recent years, academic research into the causes of such behaviour has revealed some of the psychological and

physiological effects brought on by the high degree of personal sacrifice expected of Victorian wives, and this includes "bodily" sacrifice in the marriage bed. The young woman was thrust into marriage with little or no idea of the sexual act.⁽⁴⁹⁾ A close correlation between "goodness" and suppressed sexual passion was a strong feature of the Victorian ethos, one which impinged on women rather than men. Thus, there existed for women the enormous responsibility, and personal psychological dilemma, to be on the one hand, outwardly virtuous and chaste, and, on the other hand, exposed to her husband's conjugal rights both morally and legally. William Acton, the nineteenth century medical researcher in these matters, reports:

"A modest woman seldom desires any sexual gratification for herself. She submits to her husband but only to please him and, but for the desire for maternity, would far rather be relieved from his attention." (50)

Edward Shorter's study describes the disastrous effects on the physical and mental health of married women that the constant exposure to their husband's conjugal rights could bring about: an endless series of pregnancies (wanted and unwanted), possibly seven or eight and bearing an average of six live births; associated illnesses and diseases to which men are not subject, for which there is no male counterpart, and which male medics generally failed to understand.⁽⁵¹⁾ The young Victorian bride was also the victim of strict taboos about any open discussion relating to the biological

functions of a woman's body; not only did she often go to her marriage bed in total ignorance of the sexual act, she was also discouraged from discussing the topics of menstruation and the menopause. Euphemisms, such as fainting fits and headaches, were commonly used to explain away these latter states. Genuine fits of fainting and headaches can also be attributed to something as factual as the type of corset the women wore - designed in such a way that it restricted their lungs and breathing. It is reasonable to suppose that these physical constraints clearly gave rise to pent-up frustration and attacks of hysteria. Florence Nightingale, frequently outraged by the effect of the futility and wastage of women's lives on their health, wrote for both the married and unmarried of her day when in Cassandra she wrote:

"They can work for ten hours just as well as two.... What these suffer - even physically - for the want of such work no one can tell. The accumulation of nervous energy, which has nothing to do during the day, makes them feel, every night when they go to bed, as if they were going mad; and they are obliged to lie long in bed in the morning to let it evaporate and keep it down." (52)

Thousands of women, like Florence Nightingale, herself, were determined to suppress hypochondria, and to break through the biological and social limitations imposed upon them. Records have been made of those who strove to defy ill-health and stress-related illness: Elizabeth Fry constantly took laudanum to cure troublesome headaches caused by tension; Harriet Martineau, a sickly child, deaf from her teenage years, was for one-third of her seventy-four years, an invalid with

a liver complaint;⁽⁵³⁾ Josephine Butler, suffered constant ill-health during the whole of her campaigning life after the tragic death of a small daughter,⁽⁵⁴⁾ and Catherine Booth, for all of her relentless preacher and philanthropic life, bravely fought against the intense pain of a spinal curvature and infected lungs.⁽⁵⁵⁾ It is a tribute to the powers of endurance of these women that they, and others like them, could find the energy and resourcefulness to do what they did. Such women cannot, by any stretch of the imagination be classified as "weaker vessels". The general assumption that women should sacrifice themselves in body, mind and soul to those in their household may have led many women to be resigned to their lot, for others it provided a strong identity with those who suffered, and with the impetus to make personal sacrifices for the benefit of the weak and disabled. Prochaska writes of how strongly women philanthropists identified themselves with the sacrificed Christ, who was often their vital source of inspiration for doing good works.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Consciously or unconsciously, these determined and sensitive women epitomised the Christian notion of new life arising out of personal sacrifice.

The dynamics of gender in Victorian England mostly put men into the public world of commerce, industry, politics, the law and the Church, who established their own set of competitive and moral values which prevailed as a norm for society as a whole. These norms for society conversely put

woman, the "weaker vessel" into a private world of the home establishing a set of values for her of servitude, self-sacrifice and moral rectitude. She was meant to be the kindly, compassionate "Angel in the House", there for the physical and spiritual benefit of man and his children. As women were taught and conditioned to believe they were the moral and beneficent caretakers in the home, it is not surprising that many an intelligent, enterprising, bored middle-class woman, with time on her hands, projected this role of "feminine domesticity" out into the community, to serve "the larger family" where poverty, immorality and misery were endemic, and where the need for a good Christian woman's self-sacrificing compassion was infinitely greater. Thousands made this choice when they took on philanthropy, and thus shaped for themselves their own evolutionary notion of Victorian "womanhood". Moreover, this was a period when many remarkable women emerged - Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler, and Octavia Hill among them - who showed by their distinguished careers, that once having broken through the traditional concepts surrounding women, that members of the "weaker sex" were capable of far more than marital servitude. Historically, such women stand out as monuments to the falsification of the standard Victorian stereotype of womanhood.

2.2. THE IMAGE OF SELF IDENTITY: FROM HOME INTO SOCIETY.

"I have almost ever since I have been a little under the influence of religion, rather thought marriage at this time was not a good thing for me; as it might lead my interests and affections from that Source in which they should be centred, and also, if I have any active duties to perform in the Church ... are they not incompatible with the duties of a wife and mother?"

Elizabeth Fry (Memoirs)

"To ease my mind, and to prevent harm as far as I can, I meant to enter on a series of good works. Don't be surprised, therefore, if you see me all at once turn outrageously charitable. I have no idea how to begin, but you must give me some advice."

C. Bronte (Shirley)

Carol Gilligan's findings indicate the presence of identifiable differences in how the two sexes perceive "the self" in terms of social responsibility. Her studies on men and women, situated in similar occupational and marital positions, revealed that the men's description of "self" was tied to a hierarchial ordering and "a qualification of identity" was related to a standard of assessment or success: whereas women were more likely to define "self" in a context of relationships and judge themselves in terms of their ability to care. Male involvement with others was less likely to be so absolute as a woman's, as males displayed more inclination to compromise duty for self-desire,

whereas females showed a significantly greater propensity to sacrifice desire in the interest of duty.⁽¹⁾ These findings appear to endorse Elaine Showalter's own thesis that, historically, men and women have associated themselves with their own world and its own inherent, conditioned "culture".⁽²⁾ The male culture has survived as the predominant one, creating its own set of values and making moral statements on behalf of both sexes.

The Oxford dictionary definition of the word "identity" is, "individuality, the condition of being identified." By "self-identity" one commonly means the individual's own search, acknowledgement and understanding of his or her own personality (i.e. the sum of feelings, interests, intelligence, imagination, intuitions, desires and frustrations). The realisation and establishment of one's self-identity also means being willing to make choices about one's world and one's destiny. Gilligan correspondingly says that, the essence of a mature woman is making a stand, exercising choice, being able to accept responsibility and to be judged accordingly. This sums up the very essence of those nineteenth century women who chose to break down barriers of social convention in order to exercise a wider duty of care than had been given them, to become philanthropists, social reformers and novelists. Female self-development, in both real life and in fiction, often meant defying false, restricting stereotypes of nineteenth century womanhood, and to set up a "public"

system of feminine values of commitment alongside those of men - to be equal to his, or to make them an integral part of his.

This chapter is concerned with the enterprising and assertive spirit of exceptional women philanthropists and reformists which caused them to place the values of "feminine domesticity" (3) out into the world in a concerted aim, to redress the injustices they witnessed around them: by visiting the unhealthy poor in insanitary homes built by entrepreneurial giants who needed a ready source of labour; by assisting and educating families, poverty-stricken by the fluctuations of world trade and the uncertainty of work; by nursing the wounds of war-waging men; by humanising a prison system run by men, and by involving themselves with the plight of the prostitutes defiled and degraded by men. The female philanthropic movement was frequently inexperienced, ill-equipped; it made gross mistakes. Nonetheless, female charity considerably reshaped the moral systems of the day as it imposed its own set of values onto them. As will be argued in a later chapter, it also assisted in establishing a new thematic force in the literary tradition of women.

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In 1803, the profound effect of the industrial revolution on society led Hannah More, evangelical reformer of the

Anglican Church, pioneer of the Sunday School movement and bluestocking author, to pronounce philanthropy as something women could do as a profession.⁽⁴⁾ However, there was no overnight revolution by feminists or by the women's movement. The majority of reforms instigated by women was often exercised in isolation, through various women's committees, by lobbying support through pamphleteering, or if fortunate enough, gaining the support of a sympathetic male Member of Parliament. The development from servitude in the home to "doing good works" in the community and achieving social change was gradual and often compromised. The degree of individual resistance exercised depended a great deal on the initiative and personality of individual women and on their own particular set of circumstances.

Reactions, in and outside the home, to married women becoming philanthropists were mixed. Apart from a few notable exceptions, many women seem to have accepted domesticity as their natural role and found self-fulfilment by integrating their private lives with their chosen public role without too much soul-searching or family opposition. The majority of married philanthropic women were from middleclass backgrounds so they enjoyed freedom from economic necessity; they had the ability to afford the hire of domestic help and wet nurses, and so were able to devote a proportion of their week to worthy pursuits. Much also depended on the kind of relationship

a wife had with her husband and his disposition towards community work and his wife's involvement in it. Both Josephine Butler and Elizabeth Gaskell enjoyed long, happy marriages, and both women received the support and co-operation of their husbands. In fact, George Butler must have been one of the most exceptional husbands of all time for loyalty to his wife's causes. It was not uncommon for the Butlers to take into the shelter of their home women rescued from the streets and, at one time, a girl from Newgate Prison who had murdered her bastard child.⁽⁵⁾ Josephine Butler's long campaign defending the rights and welfare of the destitute and prostitutes was not a generally admired activity, but George Butler braved the fiercely hostile public onslaught as resolutely as his dogmatic wife. He was criticised for not controlling his wife as husbands should, and put his own career at risk. As Elizabeth Longford comments in her brief biography of Josephine Butler, in the Butler household there were two equals.⁽⁶⁾ Equality almost reigned in the Gaskell household. The Gaskells, as Unitarians, shared a more liberal view of marriage than was commonly the case, and while William was busy as minister and lecturer, his wife occupied herself in a number of contrasting ways - bringing up her family, involving herself in philanthropic activity in the Manchester slum and assisting her husband with his church work, writing novels and short stories, and being with friends either at home or abroad. Of her mother, Marianne Gaskell (later Mrs. Holland) is reported as saying: "It was wonderful how

her writing never interfered with her social and domestic duties. I think she was the best and most practical house-keeper I ever came across, and the most agreeable hostess, to say nothing of being everything, a mother and friend." Such a tribute by a daughter reflects how Elizabeth Gaskell put before all else the raising of her four daughters. Her biographer, Winifred Gerin, basing her conclusion on the personal letters of Gaskell, (7) writes that neither novel writing, nor social injustice, nor concern for friends ever filled her "heart and mind to capacity" as did the welfare and upbringing of her daughters. Whether one accepts this conclusion or not, there is sufficient evidence from Gaskell's letters to show that her philanthropic concern was strongly and genuinely felt. She appears to have possessed the rare gift of being able to organise her life and to balance her sympathy and understanding to family with all class of outsiders alike. It has frequently been a criticism levelled against her skill as a novelist that she was unable to devote herself fully to her creative art because she was a wife, mother and clergyman's helpmate, but one might argue, that without this variety of "human experience" upon which to draw, the content, if not the techniques of style of her novels, would have been impoverished. It is an odd co-incidence that both Josephine Butler and Elizabeth Gaskell were spurred on into their respective careers - Josephine as a social worker and campaigner and Elizabeth as a novelist - by the death of a child. The Butler's' one daughter plunged down the stairs

to her death one evening when she ran out to greet her parents, and the Gaskells lost their only son through illness. Both women were deeply affected by the tragedy of losing a beloved child and bravely faced up to their grief by putting aside despondency and turning to dedicate their lives to their particular calling. In her Autobiography, Josephine Butler tells of how in their new home in Liverpool, with George out all day, she missed her dear daughter dreadfully: "I suffered much during the first months ... Music, art, reading, all failed as resources to alleviate or to interest. I became possessed with an irresistible desire to go forth and find some pain keener than my own, to meet with people more unhappy than myself (for I knew there were thousands such).⁽⁸⁾ Other wives, particularly from the evangelical wing committed themselves totally. Catherine Booth, the evangelical missionary, enjoyed very little "feminine domesticity": she devoted much of her life, working in close partnership with her husband in rescue work in the East End slums.⁽⁹⁾ In many cases the personal conflict between marriage and answering a specific philanthropic calling remained a serious problem. Elizabeth Fry experienced such a conflict both before and during her marriage. As a Quaker, she believed that the product of the inner experience meant more to her than conventional practices. John Kent, her biographer,⁽¹⁰⁾ tells of how the young Quaker deliberated whether she should marry or not, in the face of her strong religious commitment. In the Memoirs, her daughter writes of, "The communings between

God and her own soul", and how, when she was very young, she had an extraordinary desire to visit a prison and eventually persuaded her father to take her to one.⁽¹¹⁾ Like the fictional Dinah Morris, in Adam Bede, she, believing herself to be a vehicle of the Divine Spirit, was faced with the dilemma of having to chose between serving God in the depressed cities and prisons and taking a husband. Like Dinah Morris, she decided to marry and children came quickly; unlike the fictional character, she found marriage and motherhood a "careworn" experience. Such was the strength of her calling that Elizabeth Fry would not allow married life or motherhood to stand in the way of her life long ambition to become a Quaker "minister of God" - a privilege that very few Victorian women would have been permitted, or would themselves have deemed a proper course. Although she never neglected her children and was deeply grieved when her daughter died, she was criticised by both family and society for farming out six of her nine living children to relatives to look after while she fulfilled her missionary work in Newgate prison. In her diaries she explains how she was torn apart by her own feelings of guilt; she discloses and questions her own startling ability to feel free and content when working with the women prisoners - an experience she never felt at home with her husband and children.⁽¹²⁾ Despite some uncertain periods during the marriage, the Frys' relationship appears to have been a fairly happy and loving one, mostly because Joseph Fry was a patient and long-suffering husband. In general, Prochaska's

research makes it clear that it was not uncommon for many other, less known, married women to engage in philanthropy with the approval and support of their husbands.

Sadly this was not the case for thousands of other, less happy wives. According to Prochaska thousands of women found personal relief from a stifling marriage, and a new identity for themselves, through an involvement in philanthropy. It became an adventure from the routine of family existence. In his semi-autobiography, William Hale White, writing under the pseudonym of Mark Rutherford, tells the story of such a marriage, deemed to be socially right but which turned out to be a life of humiliation and degradation for a lively, intelligent, young woman who was a lover of poetry and literature. When she attempted to speak up for and support those who had fallen on hard times, he scorned, ridiculed and suppressed her efforts.⁽¹⁴⁾ Prochaska also records how some married women, whose spouses resisted their philanthropic pursuits stood their ground to the extent of having to choose between their husbands or leaving their associations.⁽¹⁵⁾

There was virtually no legal protection against cruelty to wives: it was only the woman of means who could afford to extricate herself from such a marriage.⁽¹⁶⁾ Whereas many wives suffered an unbearable marriage, and an undermining of their personal identity, in silence, others were prepared to voice their protest against this paternalistic "hierarchical

ordering" of the sexes by challenging the unjust laws which held them virtually in a degrading state of serfdom. Prior to 1857, the wife could only present a petition for separation where there had been adultery and cruelty to her person, even so, this was very difficult for her to obtain, and when it was, it was met with severe social approbation. When the Court of Equity did oblige the husband to make her a settlement of some proportion upon her, the decision would rest upon her being "unprovided for and virtuous" - a woman's sexual morality frequently being a determining factor where a woman's legal position was in dispute. The outcome often was that many women were compelled to endure an unhappy and violent marriage. Thus, a series of philanthropic campaigns were unleashed to establish better justice and security for married women. One outstanding campaigner was Caroline Norton, a wife who suffered cruelly because of the preferential bias of the law towards the interests of men. Her long struggle for more equitable divorce law and property rights for wives received considerable publicity and contributed, indirectly, to bringing about greater economic and legal independence for women. Caroline Norton suffered the indignity of brutal treatment from her ill-disposed husband, Richard; her unhappy marriage resulted in Richard Norton carrying off her three children and refusing her all access to them. The law placed her in an intolerable position: being a married woman she had no rights ~~to~~ her children, she had no money and was unable to keep any she earned,

and she could neither sue nor be represented by counsel in trial. Because the law offered her no recourse to her dilemma she began to stir up public sympathy for her cause and for other women in a similar position to her own by writing pamphlets for private circulation which illustrated cases of particular hardship. The pen proved to be mightier than the existing law; eventually the M.P. for Reading, a Mr. Telford, assisted her in the championing of her cause and in 1839 a Bill was enacted enabling her to claim the custody of her children. Tragically, by the time she had won her legal battle, one of her sons had died. Caroline Norton continued to live alone with her surviving children and endeavoured to earn a living by writing novels and poetry, but the story of her hardship does not end there: Norton brought a new suit against her for debt and took all her copyright interests. This prompted her to campaign further in favour of a Divorce Bill and the first Married Woman's Property Bill.⁽¹⁷⁾ Richard Norton died before the law was made available. In fact, equal legal guardianship was not achieved until the passing of the Infants Custody Act in 1925. Another woman philanthropist, who sought to change discriminatory laws against women, was Barbara Leigh Smith, a first cousin to Florence Nightingale, and taken by George Eliot as the model for her heroine in Romula. She took upon herself the business to alter and amend the laws of property. A vigorous, talented and intelligent woman, she began by mastering the case-law and drew up and published an extremely lucid statement entitled

a Brief Summary in plain language of the most important Laws concerning Women. She then drafted and circulated petitions which were put before both Houses of Parliament. As a result of her efforts a Bill reached its second reading in 1857, but just at this time another Bill was being presented to Parliament, the Marriage and Divorce Bill, which was given greater consideration and was passed in 1857. The 1857 Act was no part of the women's movement inspired by Barbara Leigh Smith's campaign, and still gave women few rights: to the grounds of cruelty and adultery was added desertion for two years or more. A suit for divorce still remained easier for the wealthy and for a man than for a woman.⁽¹⁸⁾ Another campaigner for changes in legislation was Maria Rye, who helped to promote the Married Women's Property Bill, introduced in 1852. Despite the statutory changes, certain female indignities in matrimonial law remained: up to 1884, a woman could be imprisoned for denying her spouse his conjugal rights. Even the right of a husband to prevent his wife by force from leaving him was not successfully challenged until 1891.⁽¹⁹⁾ The marital laws of the nineteenth century clearly reflect the double standards of the day towards sexual behaviour of men and women, and the degree of control men had over the lives of women. For women the social stigma of separation and divorce remained strong well into the twentieth century. John Stuart Mill's assertion that, "The legal subordination of one sex to the other is wrong and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other",⁽²⁰⁾ was too radical for

his contemporaries to accept it: it was met with an appalled uproar of masculine protest.

William Landels, writing in 1859, on the subject of work spheres for women, comments on how active benevolence was a very attractive alternative for unmarried women to the drudgery of working for a living as a governess. He adds, that spinsters in particular were said to regard themselves "married to every creature of the race".⁽²¹⁾ Certainly for unmarried women, who were adequately economically endowed, philanthropy was often a welcome alternative to domestic idleness. In Victorian society spinsterhood was mostly regarded as a misfortune. Any woman who did not conform to the married state and domestic role patterned out for her - the unsupported spinster, the divorced, separated or deserted woman - was regarded as unnatural. Yet many a "maiden aunt" played a crucial part in family life, despite her dependence on male relatives. Charitable work provided for these unpartnered women, a vocation of their own and new personal fulfilment; for others, less dedicated, it gave them something they could usefully do. Giving out to others served an emotional as well as a functional need for these frequently despised women. In spite of the enormous conventional pressures upon women to marry, if possible, it is surprising to discover that some women freely chose not to marry in preference to carrying on their vocation. Although Harriet Martineau was denied marriage by the untimely death of her fiance, in her Autobiography there are indicators that,

after this tragic event, she made up her mind not to restrict her life to the married state.⁽²²⁾ Florence Nightingale, once embarked on her career, appears to have given up all thoughts of marriage even when proposed to by a man for whom she felt a deep affection.⁽²³⁾ She was more unequivocally outspoken against the idea of perpetual domesticity for upper and middle-class women than Martineau.⁽²⁴⁾ Despite her family protestations and resistance to her attempts, she felt a strong call from God to devote her life to useful purpose. Florence Nightingale remains perhaps the greatest example of a suppressed Victorian "lady" who overcame all the obstacles of prevailing notions held about women in her day. She succeeded in turning the domestic "Angel in the House" into a tough-minded, highly trained and skilled new woman by creating a universally accepted profession for women. She epitomises the spirit of many a nineteenth century philanthropist, who, through her determined struggles, reorganised male hierarchies and found a new self-identity not only for herself but for womankind as a whole. She, and other women of her ilk, were the true nineteenth century philanthropic heroines.

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Like Hannah More and Florence Nightingale, many women philanthropists were personally inspired by a mixture of

Christian belief and social conscience. They identified themselves with Christ and with their neighbour, both of whom were regarded as an integral part of their own destiny. By the 1850's this noble belief was firmly ensconced in the Victorian mind; a journalist eulogised in the British Quarterly review:

"Women of lofty intellect, and high character, were among the old Romans and the older Greeks: but their virtues were not of the kind that prompted the Women of Christianity to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken. It is to women in the history of the Church whose piety bore such fruits of active charity." (25)

Prochaska tells of how his extensive researches among ladies' memoirs and charity records brought home to him the inescapable importance of religion in the lives of nineteenth century women. In the scriptures, philanthropic women found a Christ with whom they could readily identify. He writes:

"To women Christ was, above all, a martyr of love. If there was a conviction peculiar to the nineteenth century philanthropic women it was their belief inspired by Christ, that love could transform society.")

The scriptures portrayed Christ as the atoning saviour of the innocent and caring heart; he gave and demanded love as one "Who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son"; he also uplifted the downtrodden and the weak to whom he gave a new self-respect. (27) Motivated by the emotional force of a strong religious conviction and a desire to imitate Christ, many thousands of women saw their own mission in life as helping their needy neighbour, and making society a better place.

The question of how far Christianity assisted womankind to achieve a more liberated role and a fuller sense of self-identity has long been a topic for debate. The doctrinal attitude of male clergy towards motivating women towards an obedience to God's Word was, and continues to be, an ambivalent one. On the one hand, women have always been kept in their place, either excluded from high office or generally belittled because of their "female-ness", thus their vocational or missionary propensities have always been restricted. On the other hand, as a sex, they have been urged to sacrifice themselves for others, an activity, which paradoxically, when carried out in the community on a large and organised scale in the nineteenth century, was hailed by reformers as an emancipating factor for intelligent and educated women. (28)

The liberalisation of women by the Church came mainly from the Broad Church sector of the Anglican Church, the Christian Socialists and from many Dissenting denominations. The Christian Socialists not only assisted in improving the education of women, they also believed that men and women should join together to attack class distinction based on wealth, and they should be concerned with society as a whole. The humanitarian concepts they held accorded with the later aims of the women's cause in as far as the Christian Socialists tried to improve the conditions of tailors, dressmakers and milliners. They believed in and opened co-operative workshops. Not all of the Broad Church schemes were successful, but from the Anglican Church a number of women had emerged, and were

emerging, to give a public expression to their faith. These included, Hannah More, who assisted the early Sunday School movement; Mary Thorne, who one Sunday morning in Shebbear Parish Church, startled the congregation by publicly testifying her faith, and from that time, led the foundation of Bible Christians and the movement of many saintly women evangelical ministers. Octavia Hill, who established housing schemes for the poor, and others like Florence Nightingale and Angela Burdett-Coutts. Mrs. Boyd Carpenter praised the work of many Anglican women as "almost limitless" for such organisations as the Church Missionary, the Waifs and Strays, the Mothers' Union, the Girls' Friendly Society, and the Church Penitentiary Association.⁽²⁹⁾ The Methodist, Unitarian and Quaker women probably enjoyed more philanthropic opportunity than most women of other denominations: it is believed that they opened up more spheres of charitable work than any other group, assisting the poor, the sick, the imprisoned, and the orphans. They also fought against the evils of drink, and rescued the "fallen women" in the cities, setting up countless committees, societies and associations to deal with the social evils of their time - often taking a protelysing stance. Unlike women from the Anglican congregations, Methodist and Quaker women had been permitted since the eighteenth century - if so called - to preach the Gospel, as part of their charitable work.⁽³⁰⁾ In 1818, Jane Brown became the first female to preach in the Caenan Street chapel and to travel on circuit. B. Aquila Barber names many more women who were preaching in the 1820's -

Elizabeth Johnson, Mary Owens, Mary Porteous, Mary Crossley and Mary Birks being among them. From the 1830's onwards, women, such as Dinah Maul (an inspiration for the name of George Eliot's heroine Dinah Morris⁷) and Eliza Richardson became renowned in Methodist circles as preacher philanthropists. Another young Wesleyan Methodist, Catherine Mumford, came to London in the 1840's and gave fervent addresses in the West End which, it is recorded, evoked applause from pious peers, as well as from persons who were excited by the singular spectacle of a woman preaching sermons. In 1855, the same woman married William Booth. The pair withdrew from the Methodist communion to set up the East London Mission, from which the Salvation Army evolved. Between them this pair of peripatetic preachers did the most indefatigable work, speaking out against the social evils of drink, the causes of poverty and prostitution, and helping the starving thousands in the slums, often suffering hostile insults and violence perpetrated by hooligans paid by the brewers and publicans to form a counterforce. St. John Irvine writes of Catherine Booth that, although she was a home-loving woman, her restless husband made her "God's gypsy" as the pair took to careering around Britain on their missionary work. She was a driving force, and some suggest that it was she who made the Army what it was.⁽³¹⁾ The most outstanding pioneer preacher philanthropist was the Quaker minister, Elizabeth Fry, whose social work in the slums and prisons was solely inspired by deeply-held religious motives. Quakers were especially prominent in their

ready acceptance of women ministers among their numbers.⁽³²⁾ Fry frequently encountered . keen hostility and suspicion of women who posed as "a minister". She writes disparagingly of a meeting with "a hundred persons in the Assembly Room" in Ireland: "It was very much like being surrounded by those whom we should suppose knew little or nothing of religion; as for Friends and women's preaching, it was a marvel indeed to them; I never was in a place apparently so dark." She claims, perhaps with a degree of self-misconception, to have won the assembly over.⁽³³⁾ The Congregation^{al}ists and Unitarians exercised more liberal attitudes towards women, although they did not permit them to speak from the pulpit until the next century.⁽³⁴⁾ Roman Catholic women remained less socially free than their Protestant sisters. A Roman Catholic woman's religious vocation was normally exercised through a Religious Order, and revival of the Roman Church in England made this type of work more prominent. The establishment of Sisterhoods and Deaconesses' Institutions in England were revived in 1845 by the agency of Dr. Pusey who introduced the first Sisterhood at Christ Church, Albany Street.⁽³⁵⁾ Towards the end of the Victorian era the number of Sisterhoods had increased enormously, and many of the Sisters are known to have joined Florence Nightingale as nurses in the Crimean war. The self-sacrificing labours of these devout women were felt not only in war but also in the slums of the towns and cities at home. Anna Jameson writes in 1855 of a Sister of Charity "Who had been sent off at half an hour's notice to a district where

the cholera was raging among the most squalid and miserable poor." (36) A Mrs. Layton, a former Vice-President of the Women's Co-operative Guild, born 1855, spent her childhood in Bethnal Green. She recalls, in an account of the hardship her family suffered in those dark days, the kindness of the Sisters of Mercy attached to a church nearby. Although first treated with suspicion and mistrust, the Sisters soon won the respect of the nine-year-old child when they heard of her family's distress and came out to give food to the starving family and to nurse the grandmother and two sisters who were all ill with smallpox. The Sisters, selflessly stayed until the infection was over. (37) Lady Georgiana Fullerton, as a Catholic philanthropist and writer of novels and religious tracts, gave her support to the Sisters of Mercy. Felicia Skene, the Anglo-Catholic philanthropist and novelist, though she never became a Sister herself, laboured heroically visiting and nursing the poor, the prostitutes and imprisoned for a Sisterhood of St. Thomas the Martyr in Oxford. (38) The Sisters had next to no status in the hierarchy of the Roman and Anglo-Catholic Churches, their devotion to mankind stemmed solely from their strict religious sense of duty and devotion to the Bride Church and the Bridegroom Christ it represented. Although the evangelical Protestants led the way in enabling women a degree of religious freedom, women of all denominations, inspired by the example set by Christ, emulated him by turning to philanthropy. It heightened many a woman's self-esteem and gave her a sense of place and personal direction. Indeed,

for many women, involvement in Christian work was a significant step towards more equality with men and eventual emancipation. Elizabeth Bulwar a Methodist of the Norfolk area, conveyed to her church Conference that, "The gifts of the Spirit were without distinction of sex"⁽³⁹⁾ and Ellice Hopkins, the writer and rescue worker, declared of Christianity that it was "The one great historical religion that enshrines the sanctity of womanhood", also arguing that, as Christianity advanced, the inequalities between the sexes would disappear.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Faced with ecclesiastical mistrust and opposition, female Methodist ministers met a reluctance to admit them to the pulpit, and were frequently the subject of condemnation and ridicule.⁽⁴¹⁾ There is the story of a certain male preacher who in a sermon at the funeral of the Reverend Joseph Taylor, a Wesleyan president, solemnly declared: "God works by strange instruments; Balaam was converted by the braying of an ass, and Peter by the crowing of a cock; and our lamented brother by the preaching of a woman one Good Friday."⁽⁴²⁾ It was inevitable that women preachers should be regarded as an oddity in a society where women were not expected to speak publically. In any case the dissenting sects were ranked low socially and therefore were not regarded very seriously by the Established Church, which would not permit a woman to speak at all. Many women of the Anglican faith would have doubted the propriety of a woman addressing others on the subject of religion, let alone officiate in church. Women were barred from the annual general meeting of the Church Missionary Society until 1813 and the Bible

Society did not admit them until 1831.⁽⁴³⁾ when the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was holding meetings in Chester, as late as Bishop Blomfield's days - well into the second half of the century - the presence of a few devout, if daring, ladies threatened to cause embarrassment until it was decided they could sit behind the organ hidden from view.⁽⁴⁴⁾ On the whole, as far as women with a religious vocation were concerned, they diverted the expression of their religion into deeds: in the world beyond their homes. In obedience to the Word of God, they made charity their calling. Philanthropy remained a strong religious commitment for many women - it gave them space in which to assert themselves.

Significantly, there is evidence to suggest that Christianity assisted women in creating an ethical culture of their own. Prochaska points out that women found in the scriptures different things to what the men found: in the New Testament they discovered a Christ whom they firmly believed was sympathetic to their condition, who "treated women with the utmost respect and tenderness," a Christ, who was, above all, a martyr to love, and that through such a love as his, society could be transformed.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Expected to be the preservers of giving and morality in the home, of right conduct and moral fervour in society, they felt that philanthropy was their reserve. Lord Wilberforce himself, similarly observed in A Practical View that women were more favourably disposed to religion and good works than men and

encouraged women to measure their spiritual progress by their improvement "in love to God and men".⁽⁴⁶⁾ Philanthropy became a personal vocation for many women. Family prayers were said daily with all the family and servants present and the Bible was a central feature of the drawing room. Not only were girls given more religious education than was given to boys, but also as home-bound young women and wives with time to fill, they had more access to the Bible than men who were away at work for a large part of the day. It is possible that these women in the privacy of their own homes, formulated their own personal interpretation of the scriptures, one which might not have strictly complied with publically declared and accepted doctrines and dogmas of religious orthodoxy, though remaining, ostensibly, obedient and dedicated as worshippers. With time on their hands to indulge in a perusal of the Bible and other popular religious works of the day, such as John Bunyan's popular allegory, Pilgrim's Progress, it seems not unreasonable to suggest that, in the deep privacy of their own souls - or even within their own shared "feminine subculture"⁽⁴⁷⁾ middle-class women with independent, receptive minds were forging a separate identity with Christ, framing for themselves their own individual concept of Christian mission, which was to give to them a renewed sense of spiritual direction, satisfying their suppressed passionate natures and the need to be useful human beings beyond their own hearths. After all, did not Jesus, himself, relay to his followers that, "He who loveth mother and father more than me is not worthy of me, and he

that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me".⁽⁴⁸⁾ And did he not himself go beyond his own immediate family and neighbours, beyond "his own country" where he was undervalued,⁽⁴⁹⁾ to help, heal and to preach to the stranger wherever he happened to be? These were dicta which ran contrary to the Church's ordinance, that women were inconstant creatures who must pay patient obedience to man whom God had ordained to look after woman. For those women, who were adherents to religious sects away from the main stream of religious orthodoxy, it was possible to express their own views more openly than was usually the case. For instance, the views of Elizabeth Fry are recorded by one of her daughters:

"Elizabeth Fry was persuaded that every woman has her individual vocation, and in following it, that she would fulfil her mission She considered domestic duties the first and greatest earthly claims in the life of woman; although in accordance with the tenets of the Society to which she belonged, she believed in some instances, her own amongst others, that under the immediate direction of the Spirit of God, individuals were called to leave for a time their home and families, and devote themselves to the work of the ministry." (50)

Josephine Butler closely identified her religion with the feminist cause. A message of love sent to a prostitute said:

"You remember how sweet and lovely Jesus always was to women, and how He helped their womanly diseases, and how respectful He was to them, and loved them and forgave the sins of the most sinful. And he was born of a woman - a woman only. No man had any hand in that! It was such an honour to women." (51)

Josephine Butler, as did many other women philanthropists, identified herself first with Christ's humanity, then with his divinity. Her campaign on behalf of human rights for

prostitutes was, by implication, a defiance of the Church's dogma surrounding "The Fall", which, historically, has been linked to women's sexuality and the sin of sexual temptation. It was a dogma that led to the cruel condemnation of unchaste women. Like the philanthropist novelists, Elizabeth Gaskell and Felicia Skene, Josephine Butler was wont to remind the Church theologians of their prejudiced oversight, that the all-loving Christ forgave the sinful Magdalene and that society's double standards towards sexual behaviour of men and women was totally inequitable.

The notion of a personal "subversive" humanitarian credo existing in the minds of some women may essentially explain the strength of the personal resolve of many a philanthropic woman who fiercely defied convention, the dictates of the clergy, and in some cases, husband or father, in order to give her time, her personal talents and energy to the cause of social welfare. They, and their sister novelists, ransacked the Bible for insights into female character and used women from the scriptures as examples of exemplary womanhood. Prochaska provides a considerable list of these biblical women, and explains how their actions were interpreted:

'Mary Magdalen at Calvary was the model of fidelity; Pheobe of Cenchreae, 'a servant of the church', compassion incarnate; Dorcas of Joppa, who made clothes for the poor, synonymous with good works; Rebekah was the personification of industry and piety; Lydia an example of benevolence and self-sacrifice; Priscilla an active Christian; Mary a contemplative one; Esther a patriot; and Ruth a friend. Biblical women, whose names were so

commonly given to nineteenth century children, became powerful images in the female mind, in the minds of everyone in the Christian world." (52)

The Scriptures confirmed for a woman a rightful and important place in the charitable world; she belonged to the sex endowed with a better heart and a truer intuition of what was right. By nature, as the bearer of children, she was the gentler, more patient, more forbearing, more compassionate, more benevolent, sex. Her sex was closer to life itself; birth, child-rearing and often death. It was the way God ordained it - "the meek shall inherit the earth" and the Word of God was sacrosanct above all else.

Although women were hedged in by religious doctrines and conventions, and faced much opposition as evangelists, it was also the case that Christianity and women's immediate personal identification with Christ caused many of them to experience a deep emotional affinity with God, which had to be expressed both in word and by deed. The Scriptures gave credence to the felt experience, thereby providing for many women believers personal spiritual freedom and increased self-assurance to cope with what lay beyond her doors. The experience manifested itself in philanthropic work and in the image they had of their own sex. Women set out not to serve "man" alone, but God's children, they being mankind as a whole.

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Intelligent and resourceful nineteenth century women may have been highly conversant with the scriptures but were often severely ill-educated for any kind of public life. Yet, many recognised that, if they were to realise their full potential, as philanthropists, novelists, educators, or in some area of self-accomplishment, they must do something about their personal education. In 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft had articulated a protest against the prevailing attitude of her society which automatically denied women a formal education and equal career opportunities with men. She clearly had recognised that the educated woman had something special to offer society, when she wrote:

"Yet, if love be the supreme good let woman be educated to inspire it, and let every charm be polished to intoxicate the senses; but if they be moral beings let them have a chance to be intelligent; and let love to man be only a part of that glowing flame of universal love, which, after encircling humanity mounts in grateful incense to God." (53)

Despite Mary Wollstonecraft's protestations nineteenth century women of the upper classes were slow to receive any general or university education and very few careers were open to them. Consequently, philanthropy and writing for many middle-class women became substitutes for a career. The absence of formal training in social welfare matters did not seem to deter them: to some it did not seem important, others were determined to learn - even if, by trial and error. Women seeking better education for themselves fell approximately into two groups; those, like Wollstonecraft, who strove for a more rounded form of education equal to that of men, and

those who saw the necessity for organised training programmes in certain specialised skills as a professional prerequisite to helping the poor, the sick, the fallen and other deprived and criminal members of society.

Equal education for men and women was boldly proclaimed by many eminent women. Harriet Martineau resented the way that girls were frequently denied studying subjects such as Latin and mathematics, especially as she had witnessed the two sexes making comparable progress.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Charlotte Bronte was generally outspoken in her novels about the educational and career opportunities denied to unmarried women who had to earn their own living. Harriet Taylor (later Mrs. Stuart Mill) deplored the educational subjection of women and argued forcefully for the best education for women "in the struggle for employments and disciplines of life".⁽⁵⁵⁾ Florence Nightingale despaired about the way society "fritters away the intellects" of those in her charge,⁽⁵⁶⁾ and Catherine Mumford (later Mrs. Booth) was moved to being outspoken on the subject, when, in 1853, she wrote a terse, feminist reply to a sermon of her pastor, Dr. David Thomas, in which he had implied that women are both intellectually and morally inferior to men:

"That woman is, in consequence of her inadequate education, generally inferior to man intellectually, I admit. But that she is naturally so, as your remarks seemed to imply, I see no cause to believe. I think the disparity is easily accounted for Never yet, in the history of the world, has woman been placed on an intellectual footing with man. Her training from babyhood, even in

this highly favoured land, has hitherto been such as to cramp and paralyse, rather than to develop and strengthen her energies, and calculated to crush and wither her aspiring after mental greatness, rather than to excite and stimulate them". (57)

As a woman religious preacher in some of the roughest areas of the London slums, Catherine Booth proved to be very much the equal to her male partners, as did other women in this particular sphere. However, the most ardent campaigner in this field of women's education was Emily Davies, who fiercely attacked society's blind determination to stereotype education needs along lines of gender, admonishing the division as false and unnatural.⁽⁵⁸⁾ University education for women remained unavailable until Emily Davies and her fellow feminists, after a long struggle, succeeded in setting up higher educational institutes for women as well as Girton College at Cambridge in 1869.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Emily Davies' campaign received the considerable support from women in all walks of life: philanthropists and writers, including George Eliot and Charlotte Yonge - both gave generously to her cause.

When it came to careers, women were hardly considered at all. All occupations requiring sound training and instruction were closed to middleclass girls and women were not expected to embark on a career of their own. Enlightened people like Harriet Martineau, Emily Davies, Catherine Booth, Harriet Taylor, and her companion, John Stuart Mill, firmly believed that, given a chance, women could succeed in professions and

other suitable occupations such as medicine and design. Only a few established themselves in non-feminine careers.⁽⁶⁰⁾

Harriet Martineau, herself, and George Eliot were two rare examples of women who did succeed in what was then considered to be a male profession, journalism. Both women were obliged to begin their early writing careers by presenting themselves to the reading public as men. There is the interesting story, recorded by Sanders, of Harriet Martineau's rejection of a job as editor of a new economics magazine, on the grounds that she regarded the post as a man's job, requiring "manly" discipline and the male characteristics of "prudence, independence, serenity, earnestness, and good humour".⁽⁶¹⁾

One wonders how far the reasons she gave for her decision were due to the influence of her brother, James, who opposed the suggestion that she should be an editor. It was another brother, Thomas, who eventually encouraged her to write for a living.⁽⁶²⁾ Nonetheless, Martineau admired and gave support to women who established themselves in non-feminine careers: she admired George Eliot's achievements and contributed to the Westminster Review when she was editor.⁽⁶³⁾ She gave support to Florence Nightingale, Mary Somerville, the mathematician, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell for her medical work in America, and female Abolitionists, such as Maria Weston Chapman.⁽⁶⁴⁾

The plight of many women forced into governessing in the nineteenth century in order to maintain a level of subsistence, has been the subject of many writers of nineteenth century

social history and literary critiques. The subject has been substantially covered by them. It will be dealt with only briefly here, in so far as the plight of governesses, itself, became a subject for public concern. Official figures, given in 1850, put the number of governesses in employment at, at least, 21,000. Governesses invaded the homes of the families of the lower middleclasses, - the tradesmen, farmers and industrialists. All the evidence there is, suggests that it was one of the most exploited of occupations. It is well known that Charlotte Bronte hated and abhorred governesship, although her sister, Ann, accepted her lot more readily; Harriet Martineau fervently hoped that her younger sister would avoid the "cold, dark sphere of governessing",⁽⁶⁵⁾ and both George Eliot and Florence Nightingale deplored the effect it had on women. Governesses were often emotionally and educationally ill-equipped for the task, poorly paid, and more often than not, socially scorned and isolated, being neither servant nor equal to their employers. They were often burdened with diverse and ill-defined tasks, many of which ought to have been the province of a nurse or chambermaid than a domiciled tutor. Material problems were bad enough, but in addition there were all kinds of psychological pressures too. The frequency of mental disorder and anxiety illnesses was attested by many. The author of Eliza Cook's Journal despairingly relates how "Governesses constitute the largest clan of tenants in our lunatic asylums."⁽⁶⁶⁾ Florence Nightingale also observed the mental and physical disorders of governesses: when writing on

the subject of the Institution for the Cure of Sick Gentlewomen in Distressed Circumstances, she commented on how the patients were chiefly governesses and the cases "almost invariably hysteria and cancer". She attributed their distressed state to the miserable position of half-educated women in England.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Other philanthropists stepped forward to alleviate the plight of governesses; they began by founding a friendly society, the Governesses' Benevolent Institution in 1843, after which, the Christian Socialists set about giving governesses a better standard of education in an attempt to increase their pay and status.⁽⁶⁸⁾ In 1841 the Governesses' Benevolent Institution was founded, to assist the all-round education of governesses. The object of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution was to give annuities and assistance, privately and discreetly, to women in temporary financial difficulties. Ray Strachey writes in her book, The Cause, how the Institution was flooded with hundreds of pitiful applications, and cites how, for one annuity of twenty pounds, there were one hundred and fifty applicants, over 50, of whom eighty-three previously wealthy women had not one penny in the world. These women had been thrown onto charity as a result of the bank failures of the preceding decade.⁽⁶⁹⁾ One of the philanthropists who was helping in the Institution was Frederick Maurice's sister, Mary, herself a teacher. Greatly influenced by her tales of heart-breaking experiences, Maurice and his fellow Christian Socialists came to the conclusion that financial palliatives

were not enough to combat the enormity of the problem of the exploited and dejected governess: they decided that the problem was better resolved by improving the educational standards of the women so that they could teach better and then command higher salaries. A committee of professors of Kings College, London, came together with the intention of granting certificates of proficiency to governesses and Charles Kingsley began a series of Lectures to Ladies in 1847. At once, the lectures were a resounding success. They developed into a regular institution and Queen's College for women came into existence in 1848. Although the College was set up by enlightened men of charity who were anxious to improve women's education, women were also ready to help their own sex. A certain Miss Murray, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen, a member of the women's movement, and friend and helper of Elizabeth Garrett (then a student of medicine), raised money for the improvement of the education of women. Her scheme was absorbed into the Governess's Benevolent Association. The objective of Queen's College was to teach "all branches of female knowledge", this meant that conventional subjects were taught alongside, history, languages and some elementary mathematics. Greek was not taught.⁽⁷⁰⁾ A year later, in 1849, Bedford College for women was set up, this time not by a man but by a woman, Mrs. Reid. The College was run by a mixed board of managers - a revolutionary phenomenon in the mid-nineteenth century. Other philanthropists took an even more determined and positive step towards the problem of the lack of professional training and

occupations for women. Bessie Sparks, Anna Jameson and Barbara Leigh Smith sponsored the English Women's Journal which began publication in 1858, ⁽⁷¹⁾ to discuss the problems of women's employment and their educational destitution, and in 1859, Jessie Boucherett organised the Society for Promoting the Employment of women with the aim of establishing industrial and occupational training for women in those areas hitherto occupied by men. ⁽⁷²⁾ However it needed a World War, in the next century, to communicate to society, in general, that, given the opportunity, women are able to turn their hand to any manner of "male" employment. Not unexpectedly, there were those middleclass fathers who begrudged spending money on a fuller education for their daughters: Harriet Martineau, in an article in the Daily News (1859) reproached such parents who were reluctant to spend a guinea on their daughter but who spent freely on their sons at Eton or Rugby, or at Oxford or Cambridge. ⁽⁷³⁾ The long slow haul of campaigns by philanthropists to give women a better education, and career structure, clearly was one factor, among others, which gradually enabled nineteenth century women to take stock of their own position in society and led to the reshaping of their own experience, away from the claustrophobic pronouncements for the education of their sex made by Ruskin and Sarah Ellis. ⁽⁷⁴⁾

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Historically, the philanthropic image that women had of themselves underwent a gradual transition over a period of approximately one hundred years, from the "Lady Bountiful" era of visiting cottagers in the late eighteenth century to paid welfare work in the cities in the 1880's and 90's. Within this time, women transferred their particular feminine domestic skills out of the home and into society by way of charitable work and social reform. In the old rural order, the rich had patronised the poor: the eighteenth century "Lady Bountiful" figure was an integral part of village society, complementing parish relief and the varying whims of generosity by the squirearchy and other prominent members of the community. She provided a ready precedent for upper and middleclass women - many among the latter being wives and daughters of the new entrepreneurial class. They took their cue from their rural predecessors to visit their poorer neighbours and to provide them with food, clothes, simple medical care and other wants where the need was apparent along with the Scriptures. In many circles, it became a fashionable duty of the rich to give to the poor and for young ladies to "dabble" in cottage visiting and Sunday School teaching of an intermittent and amateur kind.⁽⁷⁵⁾ The early nineteenth century "Lady Bountifuls" have since been regarded as a legitimate subject of literary satire and popular resentment, but, as Anne Summers rightly points out, such an attitude overlooks the reality of the situation: visiting as a social practice was not always, "a dilettante fashion of passing free time but an engagement of

the self which involved the sacrifice of leisure and the development of expertise". These women effectively were the early pioneers of the female philanthropic movement.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Both Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale began by making rural visits. As a young woman, in 1809, Elizabeth Fry, was known to circulate with missionary zeal around the neighbourhood, to maintain a depot of clothes and drugs for the poor and to hand out soup in the cold winters.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Florence Nightingale, during the period of the "Hungry Forties" visited the rural slums around her father's estates of Embley in Hampshire and Lea Hurst in Derbyshire, Elizabeth Longford records how in these early days, "Florence was permitted to make only conventional visits of the 'Lady Bountiful' variety. She was forbidden to enter cottages when the need was greatest....." It seemed that her family feared the risk of infection, but already the young woman was beginning to realise that her true vocation lay somewhere among the poor and oppressed.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Obviously, the personal dedication of early women visitors varied according to their individual strength of purpose and domestic circumstances. Women, like Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale, found local visiting insufficiently satisfying: they became convinced that their personal destinies lay elsewhere in more collectively organised work. The scale of social problems brought about by industrialism was in need of a concerted response by women as well as by men. While philanthropy by ladies was done on an amateur, personal and neighbourly basis, it required very little organisation, was

easy to conduct and was unlikely to arouse much resistance to its practice, but as visiting the poor and other forms of neighbourly charity took on a less "domestic" and more systematic and organised form that resistance to its practice by upper and middleclass ladies became apparent. One of Elizabeth Fry's daughters describes her mother's early recognition for the necessity for organised and collective philanthropy and her personal regret that more people could not take it on board:

"She appreciated to the full the usual charities of gentlewomen; their visits to the sick and the aged poor, and their attention to the cottage children, but she grieved to think how few complete the work of mercy, by following the widow or disabled, when driven by necessity to the workhouse; or caring for the workhouse school, that resort of the orphaned and foresaken, less attractive, perhaps than the school of the village, but even more requiring oversight and attention." (80)

Elizabeth Fry spent a substantial part of her life efficiently organising her Ladies' Committees for prison work and visiting work in the slums along collective lines. As time went on, individual charity became inadequate to meet the changing social needs. Well before the introduction of the new Poor Laws, the developing charities were becoming more systemised. Collectivism became more common among charitable organisations. Women volunteers were absorbed into these institutions which, disturbingly for some critics resembled more closely male places of work than family homes. Some charities were set up and entirely run by women. Prochaska believes that the first auxilliary establishment by women was the Female Missionary

Society in Northampton, which contributed 10s.6d to the Baptist Missionary Society in 1805. By the 1840's most charities were supporting female branches of varying sizes and support. Anna Jameson issued a cautionary note of warning to those adventurous ladies who should dare to take on such ventures, that, "They should be restrained from actions which would be considered unladylike and would, therefore, do the cause more harm than good." (81) At their most extreme the critics of "public" female philanthropy regarded the activity as a threat to family life, ecclesiastical efficiency and an ordered society. It was argued that there were certain places of corruption and degradation, such as the slums, gin houses, brothels, streets of crime, where no self-respecting young lady should go. Young ladies should be protected from their own instinctive follies. The criticism was backed up by doctrinaire notions of snobbery, which ordained that : "Young ladies did not work, women did."

Eventually charitable work by "ladies" became socially acceptable once biblical texts became identified with the virtuous woman, and so long as good work was not done for financial reward, but for the "highest moral reasons". (83) Women identified with such texts as Matthew 25.36 : "Naked, and you clothed me: I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me." An early verification of this is when, in 1818, Hannah More presented Elizabeth Fry with a copy of her *Practical Piety*, with this inscription on the first page:

"To MRS. FRY
Presented by HANNAH MORE
As a token of veneration
Of her heroic zeal,
Christian charity,
And persevering kindness,
To the most forlorn
Of human beings.
They were naked and she
Clothed them;
In prison and she visited them;
Ignorant, and she taught them,
For His sake,
In His name, and by His word,
Who went about doing good." (84)

Philanthropy, initially accepted as a suitable unpaid activity for young ladies with homely skills and Christian idealism to dabble in, (85) was not taken seriously as a career requiring special skills for some time. Some of the earlier philanthropists, like Elizabeth Fry, created Ladies Committees for purposes of administration and organisation, but they regarded their religious commitment and their knowledge of the Biblical Testaments as more important than medical or social welfare skills and knowledge - apart from those learnt in the home. The time of the Crimean War (86) was the watershed, which brought home to the general public that educated women were capable of entering male professions if given a chance, or if not given that chance, were equally capable of creating professions of their own. G.M. Trevelyan writes in his social history, that "The idea of nursing as a serious profession, thus advertised by the sensations of the Crimean War, spread fast in civil life and soon made a new era in public health and medical practice", (87) Florence Nightingale's personal initiative to train women as professionals soon spread. Florence

Nightingale, Sophia Jex-Blake, the pioneer doctor, and Octavia Hill had each recognised the dire necessity for specialized training for women in social welfare. Early on in her work, Florence Nightingale deplored her own educational inadequacies: "I have had no education, myself," she wrote "... and when I began to try (to teach) I was disgusted with my impotence".⁽⁸⁸⁾ She was as equally disgusted with the educational impotence of others who dared to practise philanthropy:

"Were the physician to set to work at his trade as the philanthropist does at his, how many bodies would he not spoil before he cured one? Women long for an education to teach them to teach, to teach them the laws of the mind and how to apply them They long for experience, not patchwork experience, but experience followed up and systemised to enable them to know what they are about." (89)

As Florence Nightingale pioneered the way for women to become professionally trained nurses, so did Sophia Jex-Blake pioneer the way for women to become trained as doctors in the medical profession, and writing in The Lancet (1879) she accentuates the dire necessity for women to receive equal training to that given to men. In the English Women's Journal,⁽⁹⁰⁾ two other women pioneers in medicine, Drs. Elizabeth and Emily Blackwell argued that the profession should no longer be exclusively male, that there should be women doctors for women patients.⁽⁹¹⁾ These female assertions to train women as if they were men and moreover in traditionally male professions, were met with vigorous opposition from many quarters. The outraged reaction of a Dr. H. Bennet, in a letter to The Lancet 18th. June 1870, well epitomises the general entrenched attitudes to such

suggestions:

"The principal feature which appears to me to characterize the Caucasian race, to raise it immeasurably above all other races, is the power that many of its male members have of advancing the horizon of science I am not aware that the female members of our race participate in this power, in this supreme development of the human mind.... What right then have women to claim mental equality with men? " (92)

Octavia Hill, who campaigned for better housing, also complained about the curse of amateurism and the fact that women were expected to dabble in charity and to remain free from excessive zeal and commitment: Hill makes the point that, while women were encouraged to do good, they were positively prevented, through lack of training, from affecting real change. (93)

Florence Nightingale, Sophia Jex-Blake, Octavia Hill and other serious women philanthropists set about by improving the situation: they wrote their own "notes" and "guides" to bring about improved standards in nursing and medicine, in visiting the poor and in institutions, and in the management of housing corporations. (94) In fact, in the second half of the century there was a plethora of advice written by Victorian philanthropists, men and women, mostly aimed at females, on how to go about certain works of charity, chiefly because of the growing recognition that it was vitally necessary. Female philanthropists took over role of caseworker when societies began to be influenced by social science. This often created a "professional" gap between them and their recipients - despite such advice to visitors as "Remember it is a privilege and not a right to enter the poor man's cottage": "Be sympathetic and not

patronizing"; "Be a friend and not a relieving lady", and "Avoid giving money".⁽⁹⁵⁾ However, the advantages of "professionalism" outweighed the disadvantages. In the last half of Victoria's reign, a new idea began to gain ground, namely that unmarried upper and middleclass women should be trained to support themselves and be of some use to the world. In 1889 Octavia Hill reflected on the changes that had taken place:

"Long ago hardly a woman I knew had any opportunity of devoting time to any grave or kindly work beyond her own household or small social circle. Now there are thousands who achieve it, in spite of interruptions and difficulties in settling to steady work; and there are comparatively few parents who do not recognise for their daughters the duty of sympathy and of rendering such service as other claims permit. With the different ideal of life, customs have altered in a marked manner; it used to be difficult for a girl to walk alone, and it was considered almost impossible for her to travel in omnibuses or third-class trains. The changes in custom with regard to such matters have opened out fresh possibilities of work." (96)

The transition from unpaid to paid social and welfare work was still slow. Women were appointed to public positions, as paid inspectors of midwives or boarded-out children and as paid inspectors or secretaries of voluntary organisations. But before the First World War, such public appointments were limited by the exigencies of national and local budgets; and since voluntary women workers were available in such large numbers, there was no great incentive to increase the number of paid posts. In this respect, philanthropy acted

against the career prospects and high paid professions for women. Many women preferred a host of functions on a voluntary basis which nowadays would have a wage attached to them, such as school-meals supervisors, visitors for School Care Committees and health visitors for nursing mothers. Nonetheless, large numbers of middleclass spinsters and widows left without independent support, who were formerly castigated for working for anything but family love, could now be usefully employed and discover for themselves a degree of economic independence as well as a personal satisfaction. Although one cannot overlook the positive contribution made by men in the revolutionary field of social work, the contribution made by women must be acknowledged as quite remarkable in view of the domestic and social restraints laid upon them. Thus, altruistically motivated women struggled to bring a new and fuller meaning to their lives. In fact, many women genuinely believed that their sex was more suited than the male to the work of caring for others. By the 1850's and 60's thousands of women were involved in a multitude of charitable organisations or embarked on exceptional feats of philanthropic concern, which were to provide careers in social welfare - paid and unpaid- for many of their antecedents.

To summarize, the moral potency of "feminine domesticity" and the power of the cross were determining factors in propelling women into the most amazing missionary and welfare work of all times. In many ways women helped themselves, with the assistance of sympathetic men, by campaigning to improve the

laws relating to marriage and by bettering their own educational and career prospects, and thereby achieved a new growing self-realisation of their worth, both at home and in society. However, they did not restrict their efforts solely towards the advancement of their own sex and social class; they also became "mothers of mankind" by way of the philanthropic movement. It seems that women from all walks of life became caught up in the emotional tide of doing good. Prochaska writes "Virtually all women, evangelical or atheist, rich or poor, felt the pressure to contribute. It was unrelenting. It came from the pulpit, the platform, the reports and pamphlets of the charitable societies and women's magazines, and from millions of penny tracts pumped out by the religious publishing houses."⁽⁹⁷⁾ The vitality of the new "self-identity" of women emerging at this time signified, to many for the first time in their lives, the opportunity to make a choice about their own personal and professional destiny and to discover a new kind of maturity and freedom for themselves; to defy, under the cover of ethical considerations, not only the oppressive authoritarianism of pater familias and the Ruskinian code of "Queen of the Hearth", but also, to challenge, in the name of reform, the domination of such masculine institutions as the Law, the Church and Parliament itself. This philanthropic woman did, and, in doing so, put the feminine stereotype in jeopardy of collapse. Hannah More's prediction at the beginning of the century, that "charity" was a possible profession for "ladies" had clearly become a widespread practical reality, doubtless, the outcome developing far beyond her wildest aspirations for womankind.

2.3 A CONCEPT OF ETHICS: PHILANTHROPIC WOMAN - AN EXPERIENCE RESHAPED

"Our Parish is very prolific in ladies' charitable institutions. In winter, when wet feet are common, and colds not scarce, we have the ladies' soup distribution society, the ladies' coal distribution society, and the ladies' blanket distribution society; in summer, when stone fruits flourish and stomach aches prevail, we have the ladies' dispensary, and the ladies' sick visitation committee; and all the year round we have the ladies' child's examination society, the ladies' bible and prayer-book circulation society, and the ladies' childbed-linen monthly loan society. The two latter are decidedly the most important; whether they are productive of more benefit than the rest, it is not for us to say, but we can take upon ourselves to affirm, with the utmost solemnity, that they create a greater stir and more bustle, than all the others put together."

Charles Dickens (Sketches by Boz)

"We want woman's practical service. We want her genius for detail, her tenderness for age and suffering, her comprehension of the wants of childhood to complete man's gigantic charities."

Frances Power Cobbe

In her studies on the respective ethical judgements of men and women Carol Gilligan found that childhood experiences generate two different absolutes of "right" for males and "responsibility" for girls. These result in different moral ideologies for the two sexes. The morality of "right" for males is centred on the understanding of fairness and manifests itself in equal respect, balancing the claims of "other and self". The morality of "responsibility" for females centres

on "an ethic of care" which focusses on attachment and connection with others. In maturity, both sexes move away from the two absolutes and will make judgements by merging the "two contexts for moral decisions".⁽¹⁾ However, Gilligan claims, the dilemma of choosing between "self" and "other" remains. The difference, based on thematic rather than the biological distinction, arises as a consequence of the age-old split between thinking and feeling: because men have social power, they reason and are instrumental because women's knowledge is derived from the private world of domestic interchange, it is intuitive and instructive.⁽²⁾ Gender stereotypes are based on splitting work and love, thus the capacity for autonomous thinking, clear decision-making and responsible action is associated with masculinity, whereas universal affection, more often than not, depicted metaphorically in pictures of mother and child, is associated with femininity.⁽³⁾ Men are more likely to see themselves against the background of the wider, competitive world, and are more likely than women to find a politically rational answer to human problems. The female ethic of responsibility relies on the concept of equity and the recognition of differences of individual need and manifests itself on an understanding which gives rise to sustaining the community through compassion and care.⁽⁴⁾ The "maturer" woman would be expected to transgress in the male preserve of political debate and social reform, in order to achieve a stronger, more egalitarian "voice" for dealing

with social injustices.

Society's acceptance of the philanthropic role of women gradually came about by their own determination to combat the evils they saw around them. In 1803, Hannah More had pronounced philanthropy as an activity which would enable a lady to find her "parish". She told her audience that it was a lady's "appropriate field of action" to minister to her charges and nurture their morality and their minds. She believed that charity was a profession more suited to the personality and temperament of women than to that of men. Men, she had declared had "little time and taste for details".⁽⁵⁾ Elizabeth Fry fervently believed women were better understood and served by their own sex. She wrote, "Women ought to take a larger place in English society, that they should not accept uncritically the masculine assumption that a woman's potentialities were fully expressed in the roles (all of them in some sense flattering to men) of daughter, sister, wife and mother" ⁽⁶⁾ Although she was aware that women could not yet hope to engage in philanthropy on a truly professional basis, she believed that women of good social position and morality might take effective control of the feminine side of hospitals, workhouses, asylums, prisons, and other institutions. The growing notion that the running of a philanthropic society compared with the running and management of a home coupled with the popular ethical commitment to Christian mission, lead

thousands of zealous charitable women to sweep away conventional protocol by taking up "unlady-like work" in the reformatories, hospitals, asylums, workhouses and prisons. Even worse, many determinedly invaded the male ground of politics as they began to campaign for legal and social reforms in a war against poverty, ignorance, homelessness, disease, pestilence, public insanitation and prostitution. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the extent to which philanthropy was turned into a female "professional" activity by women's own determined effort.

Apart from fund-raising and alms giving, the practice of visiting was the obvious first step for the majority of women. In the cities and towns where the suffering was the most concentrated, urban communities were divided into small districts for the purposes of systematised visiting. Prochaska suggests that the ratio of female visitors to male in most of the visiting societies was quite high and by the mid-century had increased considerably.⁽⁷⁾ In 1802, the Friendly Female Society, patronised by the Princess of Wales, was formed in London to relieve infirm and aged women on small incomes; in Liverpool in 1810 a Ladies Benevolent Society began to supply food and clothing to the needy poor of the city, and, two years later, a similar society in London began to investigate the conditions of the poor there.⁽⁸⁾ Some of the first visiting societies such as the Lying -in Charity

of Cheltenham, specialising in lying-in and sick visiting were being established as early as the 1820's. These small parish charities, initially limited to supplying poor women with midwives and linen in their confinement, soon found it essential to their role to provide money, food, coals and medicines as well. By the mid-century visiting societies, managed by women such as deaconesses, Catholic sisterhoods and other dedicated women had become commonplace. Prison visiting took place very early on. It would be impossible to put a date on the first female visit to a hospital, workhouse, or prison, although an early example of prison visiting is quoted in Wesley's Journals: a woman, Sarah Peters entered Newgate in October 1748, "sometimes alone, sometimes with one or two others, visited all that were condemned in their cells, exhorted them, prayed with them, and had the comfort of finding them, every time, "athirst for God than before". She died of gaol fever (typhus) in November 1748.⁽⁹⁾ The priority given here is on saving the soul of the sinner rather than in providing material needs of the body. The emphasis survived well into the next century, although the prison reformer, Elizabeth Fry and others became far more concerned than their predecessors with improving prison conditions for women and with the prisoner's general welfare. The setting up of workhouses under the Poor Law provisions of 1834, meant that during the 1840's and 1850's individual women began to seek admission as visitors of the workhouses. At first it was not easy to gain access

to visit those inmates that individual women had known and patronised as part of their former outdoor relief. Louisa Twining (1820-1911) was one determined woman who broke through the officialdom, the "inaccessible fortress", when one of her elderly protégés died before she was able to visit her.⁽¹⁰⁾ Once inside she was appalled to discover the mixed wards of sick and well, idle and aged, the unwashed, the ill-fed, the infected and the verminous in "unreformed" workhouses.⁽¹¹⁾ The squalor which women visitors found in many workhouses horrified them. They were also moved to pity by the enforced, utilitarian regimented separation of husbands and wives, and mothers and children. As time went on, attitudes towards women visitors to the workhouse changed quite considerably. In fact, the Christian Socialists openly welcomed them. In one of a series of lectures, Reverend J.S. Brewer made a passionate appeal for "the good offices of gentlewomen" as workhouse visitors. He gave as his reason, that,

"They offer advantages of female administration of every kind....Whilst to young ladies, and to all who from great sensitiveness are anxious to become acquainted with the poor, and to minister among them, without knowing how to proceed, the workhouse offers exactly the opportunities required."

He goes on to emphasise the special contribution that ladies, who have had practice with "household servants" can bring to the workhouse:-

"The female servants in your household, who you have taken and instructed in their respective duties - where manners have softened - who have learnt from you insensibly, lessons of cleanliness, lessons of management of children, of household comfort and tidinessLadies have been drawn to see that they have a mission - a deep and solemn one - to perform and preach." (12)

The ladies went one step further. The Workhouse Society was formed in 1860 to generalise the practice, and this was followed by a Society for the Promotion of Women as Poor Law Guardians.⁽¹³⁾ By the end of the century there were to be nearly a thousand women guardians sitting on over half the country's boards.⁽¹⁴⁾ Although some of these reforms did not rely solely on female pressure, the women, once organised, agitated in every sphere for the more humane treatment of children and the elderly, for the separation of sick and healthy inmates, the creation of a workhouse infirmary system and many other reforms. They clearly were bringing their "home" managerial skills and "ethic of caring" to bear on the utilitarian workhouse system. In 1879 Lousia Twining and her lady guardians, greatly influenced by the trained nurses of Florence Nightingale, founded the Association for Promoting Trained Nursing in Workhouse Infirmarys, and the guardians trained and placed some eight hundred women in twenty years.⁽¹⁵⁾ Frances Lower Cobbe (1822 - 1904), an Irish-born evangelical Protestant reformer, became involved in several welfare causes. Not only did she help her friend, Mary Carpenter, in the Bristol "ragged schools", she also advocated special care for the

insane and the incurably sick in the workhouses and infirmaries. She was, too, an early suffrage campaigner, and held many radical views of the women's position.

The education of children, especially moral education - commonly perceived as the responsibility of mothers - became largely accepted as a legitimate philanthropic pursuit for women. Women like Hannah More, Lady Byron, Harriet Martineau, Angela Burdett-Coutts and Mary Carpenter all involved themselves in the creation of charity schools. In 1858, Mary Carpenter (1807-77), a member of the reformatory movement, called on "Christian women, who are not bound by their pecuniary circumstances to work for their own living and those who are mothers in heart, though not by God's gift on earth to bestow their maternal love on those who are more to be pitied than orphans those most wretched moral orphans..." (16) Mary Carpenter also took the innovatory step of advancing education theory. Although remaining unmarried, in 1858 she adopted a daughter and, from the outset, took an enthusiastic interest in children's development and advanced innovatory theories of education. As was the case with many single women, she began her career as a governess, and then opened a girls' school in Bristol. But she was not content to leave it at that. Later in the 1830's, influenced by the work of the American philanthropist, Joseph Tuckerman, she turned to working for poor children, founding the Working and Visiting Society in 1835. In 1840,

she took over the work of her philanthropist father: after his death, and in 1846 opened her first "ragged school". Mary Carpenter's concern for "moral orphans" developed and she devised a network of agencies for the children of "the perishing and dangerous classes".⁽¹⁷⁾ She swept up the children from the slums, from the adult penal systems, and vagrant children from the streets and tried to re-create for them the family life they had been denied. She was of the opinion that without the care and concern of good Christian women, these children would lose their self-respect and fall into crime, prostitution and worse. A tolerant, patient woman with liberal ideas about punitive measures for children, she influenced Parliament and many of her progressive ideas were incorporated into the Youthful Offenders Act 1854. She then took up the cause of industrial schools opening two herself and she played a large part in lobbying Parliament over the passing of the Industrial Schools Acts of 1857, 1861, and 1866. She also opened a workman's hall and published a book on the convict system of 1864. Her work on education of women and penal policy took her to many other parts of the world, to India, Europe and North America. Elizabeth Gaskell, also a believer in the right of every child to an education involved herself with teaching the Manchester poor, especially "fallen" and destitute girls. Other philanthropic novelists who assisted the education of the poor were, Charlotte Yonge, who spent many years teaching rural ragged children near her home in Hampshire; Elizabeth Sewell, who, like Yonge, was a member of the Oxford Movement, and Frances Power Cobbe, who

also was interested in promoting "ragged schools".

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Women were also relied upon in the "domestic" areas of sanitary reform and public health. Their concentration was on sanitary homes and sanitary families. The Ladies Sanitary Association circulated 140,000 tracts in four years on housing, dress, vaccination and child care, lectured teachers and lady visitors, and financed lady missionaries.⁽¹⁸⁾ Octavia Hill (1838 - 1912), who worked for the Ladies Guild in London, a Christian Society co-operative association managed by her mother, taught slum children and earned money by copying pictures. Having witnessed at close quarters the effect of poor slum housing and sanitation on health and unemployment, and influenced by F.D.Maurice, the reforming clergyman, she founded the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in 1869, which sought to apply the Benthamite methods of business and principles of political economy to philanthropy in the belief that, "The mass misery of the great cities arose from spasmodic, indiscriminate and unconditional doles."⁽¹⁹⁾ The Society tried to eradicate casual almsgiving, to insist on the responsibility of personal service from the donor, and to rationalise the relation of charities to each other and the Poor Law. Applicants for any kind of relief were warned that the workhouse was the alternative choice to the improving advice they were given.

Ruskin, an ardent supporter of philanthropy, financed the purchase of Octavia Hill's first property, a rundown court, Paradise Row, in Marylebone, and two other properties, where she, as landlord, helped to make her tenants' lives healthier and happier.⁽²⁰⁾ Slowly the scheme worked. The rents were paid, and the tenants' self-respect returned as Octavia Hill had the banisters replaced, the water-butt repaired, the windows re-glazed and the passages scrubbed.⁽²¹⁾ Dogmatic and single-minded, she triumphed over drunkenness, fighting and filth. The scheme was authoritarian in its concept as it ran contrary to collectivism and the working class movement. Octavia Hill, giving credence to the Gilligan theory on different ethical concepts of the sexes, extolled that her work was "The great human ground, older than theories of equality, safer than our imaginings of fresh arrangements for the world".⁽²²⁾ The concept of care was firmly humanitarian: Octavia, as landlord, prescribed her own boundaries with marked Victorian matriarchial counterpoise:

"I should treat them (tenants) with the same courtesy as I should show towards my other personal friends: there would be no interference, no entering their rooms uninvited, no offer of money or the necessaries of life, but when the occasion presented itself, I should give them any help I could." (23)

Besides being "strict mother" to her tenants, she also proved to be a match for any businessman or economist; her schemes expanded rapidly, their success due to the knowledge of

building, finances, rates and legal matters with which she backed her idealism. Her work on housing management spread to Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester and later to Europe, Russia and America. By 1878 she had become a public figure. She had given evidence to the Royal Commission of Housing and a letter of hers was read out in Parliament. Ultimately, COS was to be defeated by its sheer financial inability to provide aid, especially to the sick and the elderly. Although Octavia Hill remained unmarried ⁽²⁴⁾ and had no children of her own, she recognised the human necessity for green open space around town dwellings where children could play and their parents sit. She, indeed, displayed a sensitive taste for the kind of detail which improved the quality of life and which essentially put people and their environmental needs before all else. As she wrote in one of her guides for voluntary workers, "Our ideal must be to promote the happy and natural intercourse of neighbours."⁽²⁵⁾ Her campaign for open space and recreation areas culminated with her being co-founder of the National Trust in 1895. In the twentieth century a Housing Trust for the homeless still operates under her name.⁽²⁶⁾

This catalogue of philanthropic activity recorded so far in this chapter is indicative of to what extent many women, throughout the century, transferred the ethos of Ruskinian domesticity into a broader responsibility of personal commitment towards the wider family. The outcome of their philanthropic "connection with others" (to use the Gilligan terminology) ⁽²⁷⁾

was to emphasise the necessity to improve the quality of life of the less fortunate, and also to step into the public political arena and create a new female ethic of care and subsequent consciousness towards social deprivation. Yet, the three women who probably historically made the most significant impact and irreversibly reshaped the female experience for all time were, Elizabeth Fry towards the beginning of the century, and in mid-century, Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler.

In the examination of the achievements and character of these great women, some reference will be made to the kind of influence they may have had on the social novelists of the time, as this is to be a crucial theme of the subject of the second half of this thesis.

Elizabeth Fry (1780-1845) led the way to prison reform by her compassionate response to the degrading conditions she saw there. Although the most impressive years of Elizabeth Fry's work fall outside the given time-span of this research, the reformer's influence on women's role in nineteenth century philanthropy was so far-reaching that it would be unwise to disregard it. The young Quakeress, inspired by her religion, had long devoted herself to philanthropic work. After 1809, up to which time she had been circulating around her country home, organising the distribution of clothes, drugs and food, she increased the scope of her benevolence by organising libraries

for the coastguards of Britain, but it was between 1817 and 1835, as a Quaker minister and philanthropist to Newgate Prison, she did her most important work. After her husband's bankruptcy in 1828 her public activities were curtailed but she continued her personal visiting for most of her life. At Newgate, she had long been involved as a member of the Ladies' Committee which guaranteed proper religious treatment of prisoners. John Kent, in his biography, explains that as a Quaker minister at the age of twenty-nine, she was a most impressive preacher. She was equally successful as a reformer, who brought order into the cruel and chaotic regions not only of Newgate but also of other prisons. As a reformer, she was confronted with an increase in crime, inadequate prison buildings, and the barbaric treatment of many prisoners, who were still often chained, flogged or punished by long periods of solitary confinement in dark, rat-infested underground cells⁽²⁸⁾ Among her practical and highly influential achievements was the formation of an association for the improvement of female prisoners in Newgate and the establishment of a school for the women prisoners and their children. On giving forceful evidence to the 1818 Royal Commission, she was the first of a long line of nineteenth century women who were successful in persuading government to initiate reforms, in her case to regulate the appalling conditions under which convicts were transported to New South Wales. During the 1820's she toured the country inspecting prisons, demanding reform, and founding women's associations and pressure groups. Her persistent endeavours

were not confined to work at home; she also toured Europe and was sympathetically received at the courts of France, Prussia and Russia. She also made attempts to alleviate the miserable state of London vagrants by campaigning for employment and housing for the poor. She instituted a nursing order, the Protestant Sisters of Charity, so that respectable women could receive medical training. By 1857, ninety nurses had been trained in Elizabeth Fry's institute. It is interesting that when in the 1850's Florence Nightingale was looking for nurses to take to Scutari she took some from this very institute.⁽²⁹⁾

Kent, the biographer, explains that the biggest reason why Elizabeth Fry's work in the prisons attracted so much public notice, was the sharp rise in criminal activity after 1815 to which it was hoped she would provide an answer. She did much that the organised Church was too complacent to bother about. The men of the Church spoke warmly of her work but showed no practical interest in prison reform at all until the Church took some official steps in 1860, nearly fifty years after Elizabeth Fry entered her first women's prison.⁽³⁰⁾ Even then the prison chaplain grudgingly saw her in terms of a rival rather than a fellow helper. A critic of Elizabeth Fry was Walter Clay, an Anglican, whose sympathies lay with the Newgate prison chaplain, Dr. Cotton; he believed that the Chaplain held the key to the reformation of prisoners and both clergymen saw Elizabeth Fry as an amateur rival. Kent comments on Clay's attitude, that his dislike of her was probably coloured by a shrewd suspicion that she normally regarded herself as the professional in the case, and dismissed almost any Anglican

chaplain as the amateur.⁽³¹⁾ This suggests that the rivalry was as much one of denominational difference as one of sex. Clay was also scathing about her system of Bible classes which he considered to be ephemeral, superficial in its success in reforming the prisoners and an impediment to the work of the prison chaplains. The young Quakeress was an example of the new 19th century phenomenon, the lay-evangelist, who was not popular with the Anglican clergy. As a Quaker minister of God, Elizabeth Fry was concerned that moral sensitivity and leadership were lacking in the organisation of the prisons, and that crime prevention could only be brought about by the example of the wealthy classes to lead honest Christian lives.⁽³²⁾ Although, a religious visionary and evangelist, she was also a very practical and humane woman: she believed there were areas of nominally masculine territory which a woman might seize control. More than once she denounced male penal reform methods and, in quiet defiance, stood up against trenchant male prejudice: her own more humane penal philosophy was often at variance with those views held by the establishment. Kent records her opposition to the views of Sir Edmund Duncan, the first Chairman of the Prison Committee, who firmly believed in the primitive virtue of punishment, and patronizingly dismissed her as "an irregular reformer who worked outside proper channels."⁽³³⁾ Attacks on her radical views and her religion did little to deter the Quaker reformer. Nonetheless, there were those who grudgingly held Elizabeth Fry in high esteem: the Reverend J. Field, the Chaplain of Reading Gaol,

although criticising her Quaker choice of religious expression in terms of a discipline "so grievously unscriptural and defective" - nonetheless praised her for the universal love she displayed. (34)

As Minister and friend it was to the women inmates of Newgate Gaol Elizabeth Fry directed her evangelical and feminine concern. In 1817 she had found appalling conditions and "crowds of half-naked women struggling together for the front positions at the railing with boisterous violence and begging vociferously like a den of wild beasts." She set about limiting the crowded conditions and the indiscriminate putting together of the "respectable and criminal" classes of women. Her Association for the Improvement of the Female Prisoners in Newgate, provided clothing, instruction and employment of the women, and, by a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, to form in them as much as possible, "those habits of order, sobriety and industry which may render them docile and peaceable while in prison and respectable when they leave it" (35)

To the twentieth century mind, such a philosophy of penal reform may appear to be paternalistic and moralistic, but as John Kent points out Elizabeth Fry did not fall into the nineteenth century middleclass trap of trying to improve these aims on the prisoners by authority alone; her ethic of care focussed on the belief that the prisoners should be treated as human beings with human feelings. She did not allow criminals

to irritate her but remained serenely confident, and thus won their willing cooperation. There is no evidence which might suggest that Elizabeth Fry acted with the enraged feeling of recrimination of the patronizing bourgeoisie towards the prisoners. Her personal philosophy about punishment correlates closely with the Victorian stereotype of the mother - virtuous, benevolent, loving and a moral example. One is drawn to point out how "domestic" was her description of the new conditions - fought for by her Ladies' Committee - of the female convict ships, which she examined at Dagenham in 1826 (29th. July). "Their order, cleanliness and general appearance delighted me: I was struck with the wonderful change, since we first undertook them".⁽³⁶⁾ The principles that she upheld reveal she possessed "time and taste for details" those qualities that Hannah More considered to be especially feminine.⁽³⁷⁾ Without such "feminine" details, her principles for reform would have borne little weight. Interestingly, Elizabeth Fry's personal philosophy on punishment and prison reform anticipates those twentieth century principles adopted by the Statutory Rules of 1948, and by the Universal Convention of Human Rights concerned with the human dignity of prisoners, with the necessity not only to punish but also to rehabilitate those who have been in prison towards reconstructing their lives. The principles that she upheld and fought for were far ahead of her time. Kent, writes of her unequivocal determination that : "she was quite unshaken, (she was) egoism and philanthropy beautifully combined".⁽³⁸⁾

The majority of Elizabeth Fry's philanthropic achievements in prison reform were virtually over and common public knowledge before the main upsurge of nineteenth century novelists. Yet there is very little overt evidence in the novels written after the 1830's that the fictional philanthropic heroines were modelled on her or members of her Ladies Committee. Commentaries about prisons and prison life and visiting in the Marshalsea and Newgate appear in many of Dickens's novels, but he mostly prefers to draw on his own experiences and those of his family when making his protest. His most obvious "prison" heroine is Little Dorrit, but as "Child of the Marshalsea" his depiction of her is one of a good, innocent, young lady whose assistance is mostly directed at her own unfortunate family.⁽³⁹⁾ She bears a minimum of resemblance to Elizabeth Fry. George Eliot's character, Dinah Morris in Under Two Trees is possibly a closer realisation of Elizabeth Fry insofar as she is a devout young woman who is religiously inspired to save souls and to dedicate her life to humanitarian work for others. However, her visits to city prisons are enacted off-stage; aesthetically direct descriptions of dark, filthy, unsavoury city prisons would have disturbed the bucolic tone of George Eliot's novel. Nevertheless, her heroine visits her cousin, Hetty Sorrel, in the local gaol, in order to recover the soul of Hetty as she awaits retribution for her act of infanticide. There is, however, no description of filthy or degrading conditions, as one might find in Dickens, or reference to possible prison reforms as stated in public

documents of the time. Eliot concentrates solely on Dinah's attempted conversion of her "fallen" cousin, and the overall question of personal Nemesis.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Similarly, a lesser known and lesser skilled novelist, Felicia Skene, herself a prison visitor at the Oxford prison, depicts a scene in her novel, Hidden Depths, in which her heroine visits a prison for a "fallen woman" she wishes to trace. Although she too, eschews graphic details of the conditions in the prison that her heroine visits, Skene is bold enough to reproduce factual scenes, which occurred in the Oxford prison when she was a visitor there.⁽⁴¹⁾ However, the purpose of nineteenth century novels was mostly for entertainment, and the realities of the lives and accomplishments of women such as Elizabeth Fry would have been unlikely to have met publishers' approval.

Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), was a woman who broke down many established barriers and pioneered feminine independence. Through her own indomitable determination and unique powers of organisation, she converted nursing into a profession for respectable middleclass women and thus established a new career for women in medicine. Her philanthropic work began when, as a teenage girl, she visited the poor and sick with her mother. When she was twenty-four years old, her parents resisted her wish to become a nurse at Salisbury hospital. A decade later, at the age of thirty-four, she broke from the frustratingly dull home ties of an upper middleclass home and the persuasions of a mother, whose force of character and

power of will was equal to that of her own, to run an institution for Sick Gentlemen in London. The correspondence of Elizabeth Gaskell to Catherine Winkworth in 1854, reveals how Mrs. Nightingale, once hostile to her daughter's career, now proudly recalls young Florence's propensity towards nursing:

"Mrs. N. tells me that when she was a girl of fifteen or so she was often missing in the evening, and Mrs. L. would take a lantern and go up into the village to find her, sitting by the bedside of someone who was ill..." (42)

Influenced by visits to the Lutheran hospital at Kaiserwerth, in Germany, Nightingale used her £500 allowance from her father to run the Institution, and in doing so amazed all those who were in contact with her, with her natural aptitude for running committees and being an efficient administrator. She put her vocation before all else, the wishes of her dear, if obstructive, family, and-even more unusual for a Victorian lady - marriage to an eligible young man: Richard Monckton Miles, later Lord Houghton, fell in love with Florence and proposed marriage. He too, was dedicated to humanitarian work, especially with young criminals. Despite her feelings of genuine affection and respect for him and their common interest in philanthropy, marriage to Florence would have meant a continuation of the social way of life which she knew was not for her. In a private note dated 1851, she expressed something of her search for self-fulfillment in "a profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my

faculties,"⁽⁴³⁾ and five years earlier, in a letter to Hannah Nicholson, she had summed up what was essential to her: "I feel my sympathies are with ignorance and poverty".⁽⁴⁴⁾ Nursing before the 1850's was highly disorganised, the nurses were mostly slatterns with a reputation for coarseness, drunkenness, and promiscuity. Mrs. Jameson described the horror of the workhouse room where the sick women were in the hands of human wrecks, outcasts, old, invalid, wooden-legged, one-eyed, who extorted money from patients for the slightest attention. Basch also points out that the working conditions for these "Mrs. Gamps" was scandalous: with no room of their own in the hospital, they slept in the wards with the patients, men or women.⁽⁴⁵⁾ When Florence Nightingale set up her first hospital for women in Harley Street, her nurses she took from respectable families and she proceeded to train them with surprising proficiency, surprising because she herself was without training and proper qualifications. Practical, honest, intelligent, efficient, given to direct action she disregarded or overcame any form of officialdom which was to stand in her way. She was said to have a harsh tongue and there was in her character something hard, inflexible and quietly ruthless; she spared neither friends nor foes. Although hailed sentimentally as an "angel of mercy", the reality was she was "more masterful than merciful".⁽⁴⁶⁾ Although one cannot discount the deep compassion she clearly felt for her patients, Florence Nightingale was as untypical of the stereotype of the feminine Victorian lady as anyone could be. Evidence of this comes in

her unequivocal instruction to her nurses in 1875 when she told them:

"A woman who takes a sentimental view of Nursing (which she calls 'ministering', as if she were an angel) is, of course worse than useless. A woman possessed with the idea that she is making a sacrifice will never do: and a woman who thinks any kind of Nursing work 'beneath a Nurse' will simply be in the way. But, if the right woman is moved by God to come to us, what a welcome we will give her, and how happy she will soon be in her work." (47)

To Nightingale the dictates of God were stronger than either social propriety or obstructive officialdom. She believed that God put evil in the world to teach men what to avoid. Law and order were the appointed means for bringing His Kingdom to earth.⁽⁴⁸⁾ With such beliefs as these it is not surprising that she should have developed a strong will, a disciplined personality and an abnormal driving force. If Florence Nightingale had her opposition, she also had her admirers and supporters, one of the most prominent was Sidney Herbert, described by Elizabeth Longford as "the catalyst of her genius". Herbert assisted her breakthrough against standard prejudices when he established her as Superintendent of the Sanatorium of Sick Governesses run by a Committee of Fine Ladies in Harley Street.⁽⁴⁹⁾ In 1854, when the Crimean War was in progress, Miss Nightingale, after reading an account in The Times of the conditions at Scutari, volunteered to go there. Sidney Herbert, who now was Secretary of War, bowed to her request and established her as Superintendent of the female nursing establishment to attend to the sick and wounded

in the war zone. Accompanied by thirty-eight nurses, she attacked the filthy and verminous conditions and established medical organisation in the British army, and dealt with the supplies and welfare of the men. Within a few months, she had reduced the death rate from 42 per cent to 2.2 per cent.

Florence Nightingale's unwarranted intrusion in the affairs of men were not always readily welcomed by the Colonels and Generals who regarded her as "a damned nuisance".⁽⁵⁰⁾ On many an occasion she fought her own battles against male bureaucracy in the War Office, so much so that Queen Victoria said of her, "I wish we had her in the War Office".⁽⁵¹⁾ Florence Nightingale experienced the greatest difficulty in overcoming the military establishment when trying to get supplies through to the sick and wounded. Elizabeth Longford explains why :

"No official would risk infringing one of the interlocking antiquated rules for fear of dismissal, and so orders were never carried out promptly. Better seven thousand soldiers dead than seventy bureaucrats out of a job ! According to these rules, the shiploads of stores which did arrive could not be unpacked and distributed until the appropriate Board had 'sat on them' Miss Nightingale instead sat on the officials What Miss Nightingale had witnessed was the destruction of a British Army not by enemy action but by male inefficiency and obscurantism." (52)

With untiring energy, but often under considerable personal mental stress, Florence Nightingale persevered, writing reports and requisitions, visiting the wards, and attending patients' operations, which were given without an anaesthetic. According to Longford, she would sit "with compressed lips until the operation was over", giving the patient "courage and

sharing as far as possible his pain. She allowed no man to die alone."⁽⁵³⁾ This masterful "ministering angel" was resoundingly popular with her patients at Scutari and with the Queen and public in Britain. Consequently, male jealousy broke out among some of the officers: Dr. John Hall, the hostile Inspector-General of Hospitals, particularly made life difficult for her when a proposed visit to a hospital on the Russian mainland took her into unauthorised territory beyond her authorised territory in Turkey. When, after recovering from the dreaded Crimean fever, she made an attempt to return to Scutari, he tried, unsuccessfully, to kidnap her and send her home. Others, on returning to England, began circulating adverse criticisms of the medical practices operating in the Crimea which raised further hostilities among the officers. Florence Nightingale also suffered criticisms of her nurses, and a few, she discovered, could not be relied upon, some got drunk and others got married. On returning to England, she expressed her disappointment, when practically all of her Scutari nurses resumed a normal Victorian lady's life and were no longer interested in continuing a nursing career at home.⁽⁵⁴⁾ In 1861, the Reverend J.S. Brewer held up the hospital labours of Miss Nightingale and her associates at Scutari as, "a measure as a striking example for all women of England", declaring that, "A new region has been laid open to female labour in the cause of humanity by Miss Nightingale."⁽⁵⁵⁾

The indomitable spirit of the heroine nurse never flagged. Florence Nightingale returned to England in 1856 as a popular heroine, but this was only the beginning to her career: she began to use the principles of hygiene she had practised abroad in public health work at home. At the invitation of William Rathbone, she became adviser to the first district nursing service, established in Liverpool and set up trained nurses there to assist the poor and organised an appointment of women health commissioners. In gratitude for her achievements in the Crimea, the public raised £44,000 which she used to endow the Nightingale School of Nursing at St. Thomas Hospital. Miss Nightingale's achievements are many in respect of raising the standards of nursing care, hospital and medical establishments and public sanitation. In 1859 she produced her Notes on Nursing and, for the first time, a new professional criteria, embracing teaching, training, hospital practice and a fair wage.⁽⁵⁶⁾ If she did not display the conventional "good" wife and mother qualities expected of her generation of women, she displayed a far greater degree of self-sacrifice in a very public way and an abundance of mercy for mankind in general. Her "taste" for "womenly details" was enormous in respect of hygiene, medical care, discipline, administration and the keeping of medical reports. She gave great gifts of organisation and common sense wherever she directed her efforts, in the hospitals, workhouse infirmaries and district nursing. She revolutionized public health for her own age and for posterity.

Housman pays tribute to her "towering ability" to break the mould of the model of the Victorian lady, to make female independence respectable and to awake the women's movement into strength - although it must be said that she personally was indifferent to "vociferous ladies" who campaigned for women's rights.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Florence Nightingale, nonetheless did what many women in any age would not achieve; she later in her career became a political expert on imperial India and architect of the massive Indian Sanitary Commission. She was the first woman appointed to the Order of Merit by Queen Victoria.

There can be no fictional version of Florence Nightingale - female novelists would not have known or experienced matters of war nursing and few would have experienced the affairs of public administration in the way Miss Nightingale understood them, and male novelists would have known or experienced little about the intricacies of nursing. In Ruth (1853), Elizabeth Gaskell's fictional heroine nurses the victims of a typhoid epidemic.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Elizabeth Gaskell greatly admired the work of Florence Nightingale and corresponded with the Nightingale family (now converted in their attitude about their daughter's work).⁽⁵⁹⁾ A year after the novel was published, Florence Nightingale experienced her first cholera epidemic at the Middlesex hospital. Neither woman could have been a stranger to cholera in those times of urban insanitation. Mrs. Gaskell's heroine establishes no career for herself in nursing, her fictional purpose is a moral one of self-sacrifice and

redemption for being "a fallen woman". Gaskell makes no reference, as Dickens does, to wretched conditions and course, corrupt harridans, who exploit their charges in dismal charitable establishments. These were the kind of nurses that Florence Nightingale's ladies ultimately usurped. Dickens, as with the majority of writers of the time, confined the majority of middleclass sick-bed and death-bed scenes to the home, and a few who had fallen on hard times to the institutions. In Ruth, however, Elizabeth Gaskell does what Dickens fails to do, and that is, through the philanthropic act of her heroine, she gives respectability to the activity of hospital nursing, possibly because of her personal feminine admiration and support for the work that Florence Nightingale was engaged upon about that time. Dickens, however, was not without admiration for Nightingale: as a journal editor, he encouraged writers to eulogise about her in their articles.⁽⁶⁰⁾ In his fiction, as possibly a sign of male superiority of female achievement, he appears to have transposed the Nightingale qualities away from his female nurses to his male character, Doctor Allan Woodcourt in Bleak House, who is symbolic of the new doctor found in fiction after the events of the Crimean War.⁽⁶¹⁾ Florence Nightingale's achievements clearly influenced some contemporary novelists.

Unlike Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler (1828-1906) received no honours or public acclamation for her ardent and long-fought campaign. The answer is simple, her "ethical" concept of care", her cause, the rights of the destitute and

prostitutes, was not a respectable one. Like Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale, she was intensely religious: at the age of seventeen, she claimed to have experienced a vision, which took the form of God appearing and standing at His side "a woman who was a sinner in the city"; this she interpreted as a "call to serve God".⁽⁶²⁾ She was also impressed by the biblical stories in which Jesus displayed kindness to the harlots and women sinners. Before her marriage to George Butler, an academic clergyman, she did not involve herself to any great extent in philanthropic work. Although very happily married, she was unhappy at Oxford where George was a university examiner, finding herself excluded in an all-male stronghold. Shortly after moving to Chelmsford, the Butlers witnessed the death of their beloved daughter, Eva;⁽⁶³⁾ The tragic event had a profound effect on her mother: she became ill and at first lived the invalid existence of a "delicate Victorian lady, breathless at night and needing much fresh air", but Josephine Butler had the good sense to follow the advice of Miss Garrett, the first British woman doctor, who prescribed strenuous work instead of the normal male doctors' remedy of rest and quiet.⁶⁴ By this time the Butlers were living in Liverpool where George held the appointment of Principal of Liverpool College. It was not difficult to find misery among the hideous squalor of the northern sea-port, and Josephine Butler made the strenuous work of philanthropy among the half-starved cellar dwellers of the city her prescribed cure. In the city was an estimated 9,000 prostitutes, women and children, and, because of what she

saw of their plight, the compassionate Mrs. Butler found her vocation. Like Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale and Elizabeth Gaskell, she was not afraid to make personal contact with the destitute and to be with them in their appalling conditions: she found her way to the Brownlow Hill Workhouse and prayed with the inmates and picked oakham with them, sitting on the stone floor (their means of earning a few untainted pence) and comforted the sick in their dark dens.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The saddest cases, the dying, often "fallen women", Mrs. Butler took into her home, where her husband is said to have courteously received them. When the Butlers' house became too small to receive the numerous destitute women, Mrs. Butler acquired a Home of Rest for them. After an appeal for practical and financial help, two doctors gave their services free, an evident sign to Mrs. Butler that God meant the rescue of "fallen women" to be her vocation.⁽⁶⁶⁾

Josephine Butler's fame - and notoriety - spread as she began to seek employment for the girls she rescued. Despite the horrified critics, she stood her ground, making it decidedly apparent that the cause of female depravity was underpayment and over-exploitation of female labour, many being forced into prostitution so as not to starve. She was always bitterly outspoken about the double standards in sex for women and men, that what was "a vice" in one was "a necessity" to the other.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The achievement, for which she is most renowned is her successful campaign for the repeal of the Contagious

Diseases Acts 1864-69. In 1864 licensed prostitution, similar to the French system set up by Napoleon in 1802, had been introduced in England at certain garrison towns and ports, after quiet moves by the medical profession and government to counter the spread of venereal diseases among the armed forces. Licensed prostitutes were compulsorily examined at regular intervals with crude instruments and often by brutal nurses and surgeons. The surgeons also formed a new special police, whose instructions were to arrest any woman in the town suspected of being a prostitute, and the suspect, usually homeless girls, were carried off to hospital for a compulsory examination. If the suspect refused, she could be imprisoned with hard labour without trial. Many disastrous mistakes were made, and many women activists were horrified by the evil and degrading discriminatory practices which the law allowed but which, they claimed, did nothing to reduce the spread of venereal disease.⁽⁶⁸⁾ In 1869 Josephine Butler was persuaded to take the leadership of the Ladies' National Association in the campaign against the state regulation under the Contagious Diseases Acts. It was a difficult battle and considered as equally "unladylike" task as Florence Nightingale's earlier proposal in 1854, that women should nurse the bodies of males who were not their husbands. Josephine Butler, supporter of women's franchise, developed a new style of militant campaigning, taking direct action at the by-elections in Colchester (1870) and Pontefract (1872) at considerable physical risk. At one Colchester hotel where she was to spend the night, the manager

was compelled to ask her to leave as a gang of brothel keepers and hooligans were threatening to burn it down. She escaped by a window and lodged with a working class family. Both she and her husband, who gave her complete freedom for her work and uncomplainingly stood by his indomitable wife, bravely withstood an onslaught of barbed verbal attacks accusing Mrs. Butler of indecency and other defamatory onslaughts. She was viciously vilified as "impure", "an unfitting woman", and as being "beyond redemption".⁽⁶⁹⁾ Dale Spender (1982)⁽⁷⁰⁾ points out that Josephine Butler offended the general public so much because she broke all the accepted rules: a "lady" was supposed to be unobtrusive, to attract no attention to herself and to be innocent of sexual passion and issues of sexuality. At the forefront of radical reform for forty years she placed herself defiantly beyond the pale of men's protection, except that of her husband. Dale Spender writes of how she, and her fellow women campaigners, incensed William Acton, the medical practitioner, a specialist in venereal disease, editor of the Lancet, who was a "scientific man" who waged war against prostitutes. Acton like many men feared that the uncontrolled prostitute was a fearsome menace to public health.⁽⁷¹⁾ He was, according to Spender, outraged by the so-called "ladies" who were critical of the measures being introduced to control immoral women, and he was at his most vindictive when condemning "the impure and knowledgeable women" who were sufficiently brazen and depraved to write and distribute literature (as well as make speeches) about sexual economics and who were

spreading their noxious ideas through the population at large.⁽⁷²⁾ Distressed, but undeterred by the vitriolic abuse meted out by influential persons like Acton, Josephine Butler persisted in her efforts to make the legal sexual exploitation of women a humanitarian issue of national importance. In 1871, she gave her evidence to The Commission; in 1872, she opposed a conciliatory Bill, making a determined stand on principle and finally, in 1886, after a seven year battle, her campaigners won repeal of the Acts. Like Elizabeth Fry, she also argued her campaign on the Continent; she visited France, Italy and Switzerland during the years 1874 and 75. In Brussels in 1880 her exposure of under-age prostitution eventually prompted W.T. Stead's article against the white slave trade in 1885.

Josephine Butler had her admirers and practical supporters during her arduous campaign: these included Florence Nightingale, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell, Felicia Skene, Annie Besant, and many from the women's movement, as well as some prominent men.⁽⁷³⁾ Josephine Butler was never without her fierce opponents, and it can only be due to her compassionate dogmatism, fired by her firm religious conviction, that she, a woman without either a voice in parliament or a vote, won long political battles on behalf of exploited members of her own sex - to quote her own words - "God and one woman make a majority."⁽⁷⁴⁾ This maxim somehow epitomises the potency of Josephine Butler's concept of care for these women who were

deemed the lowest of the low.

To look for a fictional equivalent of Josephine Butler, would be a futile effort. One would mostly expect to find those pale, sentimentalised shadows of the "good, saintly women" - the "Rose Maylies" whose fictional role would be to listen to the confession of the "Nancys" - "forever fallen", irredeemably lost to God's Grace.⁽⁷⁵⁾ George Eliot's heroine, Dinah Morris, is a more humanly realised and unsentimental embodiment of the saintly lady, but perhaps one of the most astonishing "rescuer heroines" in Victorian fiction is Felicia Skene's heroine, Ernestine Courtenay, in Hidden Depths (1866). The young heroine attempts to rescue young women who have been betrayed by their profligate lovers, one being Ernestine's own brother. Felicia Skene, who expressly sets out

to tell the truth as she knew it to be, draws from her own philanthropic experiences among prostitutes and even goes so far as to take her readers, albeit with cautious intrepidity, into the walls of a penitentiary for "fallen women".⁽⁷⁶⁾ Unfortunately, Skene was not a skilled writer and the impact of her novel is slight despite its innovatory boldness.

Certainly, the Josephine Butler story, often dramatic, full of exciting and tragic incidents, would not have been a fit subject for nineteenth century fiction.

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Attitudes towards women in charity work gradually changed. Thought as a sex to be more sensitive to personal relations and more morally endowed than men, women were increasingly called upon to be agents of social improvement. Men on committees gradually drafted female associations onto their auxiliary committees. In many instances women were found to be exceptionally good at their work, whether it be raising money or visiting. Enthusiastic and with more time on their hands than their male counterparts, they commonly took over men's auxiliaries and made them more profitable, but, as Prochaska points out, the men remained in control: as women were absorbed into the organisations, the men took over the administration and decision-making while the women, numbering a third more than the men, were mostly taking on the fund raising activities in the parishes or the work of face-to-face visiting.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The conventional role of pater familis and the complimentary role of the subservient benevolent mother-figure had firmly imprinted themselves outside in the community.

In common with many other women, Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler believed that their womanly qualities gave them a peculiar superiority over men in philanthropic work and although many men resisted this feminist stance, some came to be of the same opinion. In the prisons the Quaker reformer found "a woman's tenderness absent" and that women prisoners and outcasts needed to hear the voice of kindness and sympathy of their own sex,⁽⁷⁸⁾ and in 1818, she gave

forceful evidence to the Royal Commission on the appalling plight of women and children in Newgate prison.⁽⁷⁹⁾ She intensely disliked the punitive methods of the male prison officers. In 1851, Mary Carpenter's essay on reform schools, displayed a similar dislike for contemporary punitive methods usually endorsed by mostly male educationalists at a Birmingham conference which met to discuss her ideas. Independently, she established a Reformatory for Boys at Kingswood to publicise her liberal ideas. Such schools became legally recognised by the Youthful Offenders Act 1854, and she soon opened a separate school for girls at Red Lodge.⁽⁸⁰⁾ The pioneering of careers for women in nursing and medicine by Florence Nightingale largely came about because of her firm belief that men were largely indifferent to the proper healing of the sick and wounded soldiers. Through her own indomitable determination and unique powers of organisation, she did what no man dared do. The sexual constraints were such that no man would have been in a position to train women to nurse the bodies of strangers, men and women. Nor would he have obtained the social and political support to take a group of middleclass women into the war-ridden Crimea to nurse men in lice-ridden hospitals where previously only sluts and prostitutes had dared to venture. Only a woman, with Florence Nightingale's courage and calibre, could have advanced such achievements, despite the entrenched attitudes of her own family and the prejudices of the generals. Louis Housman writes of her: "Florence Nightingale discovered for women in general the

crying need for some public means of striking a balance against the incompetence and indifference of men in certain departments of life which to women mattered considerably."⁽⁸¹⁾ Josephine Butler perceived women as superior to men and wanted to have complete equality to men in respect of power and resources. Above all, like Elizabeth Gaskell, she abhorred the double standards of her time which illogically condoned the sexual indiscretions of men but labelled women who dared to engage in extra-marital sex as evil and vile. In her long and daring, hard-fought campaign for destitute women and prostitutes, she, too, succeeded where a man would have been unlikely to succeed. She felt she understood better than they the feelings and the plight of exploited "fallen" women.⁽⁸²⁾ Although she gained the support of many male reformists such as Sir Henry Storks, the Quakers, Alfred Dyer and George Gillet, and eventually the Anglican reformer, F.D. Maurice, it was she, a woman, and her woman's movement, who had to convince Parliament that a harlot was no less a person than a middle-aged man, and that gentlemen of the upper classes were frequently as highly immoral as the harlot for exploiting them. By the time Josephine Butler achieved her goal, the rescue of prostitutes had become regarded by the more enlightened, and also by men who found the work repugnant to their puritan tastes, as a more suitable role for women than for men. One of the leading authorities on rescue work, Arthur Brinckman, Chaplain of St. Agnes' Hospital, argued that men ought not to do it at all. As he put it : "Women can, will, and must do the greater part of this work amongst women".⁽⁸³⁾

Ellice Hopkins describes how it was even possible for a friendship to develop between a woman rescuer and rescued, and for the "fallen" girl to be taken to the visitor's house and treated with "simple human fellowship".⁽⁸⁴⁾ Effective rescue work depended a great deal on the hardness of the prostitute and the tenderness or the religious severity of the visitor. The majority of those "saved" were sent to the penitentiary. As with their own children, many women rescuers believed that severity was essential to produce good out of evil: it was a vital part of their conception of love: they regarded themselves as "physicians of the soul".⁽⁸⁵⁾ These unfortunate outcasts rarely had the advantage of a happy home and a mother's love.

By the end of the century the female charitable reformers had broken down a considerable amount of prejudice that had previously impeded their energies and aspirations. Frochaska explains that the women achieved "through persistence, tact, the persuasiveness of their financial contributions, and a willingness to do work which men found disagreeable or for which they were ill-equipped".⁽⁸⁶⁾ As time went on an observable usurpation of the hitherto philanthropic role of men by women gradually took place. So that by 1874, Charles Bosanquet, the first Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, was lamenting the number of gentlemen doing very little in proportion to their numbers, and by 1882, Charles Lock, writing a guide for visitors to those in distress, was noticeably,

using the pronoun "she" in place of the conventional "he".⁽⁸⁷⁾ By this time many women, rebellious to the "lady" ideology, had made their mark in fields of philanthropy where previously men had little interest or inclination to help. However one must see the whole matter in proportion. Whereas it is true that some men conveniently conceded the role of charitable work to women, or masculine officialdom often remained a formidable obstacle to the progress of women in organised philanthropy, it would be a distortion of the truth to suppose that female philanthropy succeeded without any support whatsoever from men. It has already been observed how women like Josephine Butler and Elizabeth Gaskell received encouragement from their husbands. Many men, who were not husbands, also gave support, particularly of a political kind, to enable a woman to achieve her end. Elizabeth Fry received encouragement from fellow Quaker, Samuel Hoare, who prompted her to return to Newgate after the sad death of her four-year old daughter, and also from her brother-in-law, Thomas Fowell Buxton, who as a Member of Parliament, contributed to her interest in juvenile crime.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Florence Nightingale enjoyed the long and indefatigable support of Sidney Herbert. He was responsible for setting her up in Harley Street, and eventually instrumental in helping her to break through the red tape of bureaucracy so that she could take herself and her band of nurses to Scutari. Unfortunately, towards the end of their relationship there were some bitter disagreements between them but the story goes, Herbert's commitment was such that on his death bed her name was on his lips - "Poor Florence poor Florence, our joint work is

unfinished."⁽⁸⁹⁾ Other men who admired and supported Nightingale were Lord Raglan and William Rathbone, a Liberal Member of Parliament and Liverpool merchant, who sought her to aid the supervision of a workhouse infirmary for the poor and illiterate in 1865. Octavia Hill's work in slum housing reform received the support of John Ruskin, despite his views on women's place in the home, and F.D. Maurice and other Christian Socialists. Alongside Charles Lock and his colleagues from the Social Science Association, she founded the Charity Organisation in 1869, which sought to apply methods and principles of economy to philanthropic enterprises.⁽⁹⁰⁾ These men were clearly drawn to the personalities and indomitable spirit of these women recognising that they had a considerable part to play in society towards alleviating ignorance and immorality and assisting humanitarian causes. These efforts of mutual understanding give support to Gilligan's claim about the merging of masculine and feminine ethical absolutes of "right" and "responsibility".⁽⁹¹⁾

One must also acknowledge, as Charles Dickens did in his notable caricatures of Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardigle in Bleak House,⁽⁹²⁾ that not all women who aspired towards "professional charity" were as exceptional as those women mentioned above. Those who considered philanthropy as an antidote to boredom, as a means of self-aggrandizement or as something to be fitted around the household routine, were likely to be ineffectual philanthropists. John Stuart Mill feared that the education most women received - "of the sentiments, rather than one of

understanding"-would be an impediment to them^(92a) and Florence Nightingale and her companion, Sidney Herbert, were also concerned about the problem of egress into the hospital world of socially-conscious women who were rarely equal to the job. Although driven by good intentions, many of these candidates were unused to institutional discipline and accustomed to giving and not receiving commands.⁽⁹³⁾ These and other over-protected young women were ill-prepared for dealing with the rougher realities of the common crowd of patients, among whom obscene language, alcoholism, prostitution and general promiscuity were common. Furthermore, as Basch points out, she was suddenly exposed to the most repulsive aspects of the human body in sickness during operations and treatment.⁽⁹⁴⁾ Sheila M. Smith finds many other reflections of "ineffectual angels" in the literature and other art forms of the period. She highlights particularly, the gap of understanding which existed between the rich and the poor, the flaws in charity provided by Utilitarian philosophies, the condescending patronage and moralising to the poor, and the dangers of self-seeking benefaction.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Such themes will be given further attention in the second half of this thesis.

More positively, philanthropy propelled many women into new experiences, many of which went beyond the conventional experience of "feminine domesticity". They established themselves in the public service on local government boards, on committees of all kinds and were put in positions of Poor Law

guardians, inspectorates for schools and workhouses.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Others formed their own branches in existing charities and some set up charities entirely run by themselves. They began to learn "undomestic" skills of business management, planning and administration. Where they were concerned with massive fund-raising projects and the use to which those funds could be put, they acquired book-keeping and accountancy skills, although the latter was often supervised by men. Philanthropy introduced thousands of middleclass women to the accoutrements of running a business. It gave to women the opportunity to prove they were as capable of conducting business affairs as men - on committees, with Ministers and Government Departments, and in the keeping of invaluable records and reports on matters of social reform. As noted earlier in this chapter, many men assisted the women; these men were clearly drawn to the personalities and indomitable spirit of the women they helped. They, and others more grudgingly, had come round to acknowledging that womankind had a considerable part to play in society, towards alleviating ignorance and immorality and assisting humanitarian causes in a business-like fashion. The women found for themselves a stake in public life, hitherto denied to them. Philanthropy was a wedge that prised open the closed door of the female subculture; it gave to women the freedom to hold opinions of their own and to make decisions of a public nature, as Elizabeth Fry said of her own experience of managing her Ladies Committee, it provided a "new stimulus to the assault of masculine domination of society".⁽⁹⁷⁾ In a later

age, Elizabeth Fry might have found fulfilment as a politician: like Nightingale she had the capacity for leadership. Kent writes of how religious opportunity satisfied the young woman instead:

"She was seeking only half-consciously for the kind of opening which would give her a chance to combine her capacity for leadership with the expression of strong moral feeling; she lived in a period where women could not enter politics, and it had begun to look as though she would never find a more public way of using her talents than of speaking at a Quaker meeting"(98)

As women began to realise their worth in the public sphere, many immersed themselves in pressure group activity. The feminist movement was spurred on in the glow of this self-knowledge. A feminine experience reshaped eventually opened up the way towards emancipation, as women, such as Elizabeth Fry, Caroline Norton, Barbara Leigh Smith, Harriet Taylor and Josephine Butler, campaigned particularly for their own sex.

In nineteenth century Britain, the first stirrings of the feminist movement began alongside political reform. Ray Strachey writes, "As the philanthropic and humanitarian movements advanced, this (feminist) revolution extended".(99) It extended into the realm of political agitation, as little could have been achieved by the women without Parliamentary intervention. Some female philanthropists agitated Parliament as part of the feminist cause, others either disassociated themselves from the feminist movement or were indifferent to

it. It is one of the most striking things about the endeavours of the politically active women, feminists or non-feminists, was that they did not always confine their efforts to merely improving their own lot in society; they also, alongside many male reformers and politicians, directed their concern towards others - the labouring poor, the sick and wounded, the outcasts and the orphans. Denied the vote and prevented from standing as a Member of Parliament, many notable women exercised a political voice and managed to influence political decisions in Parliament either to enforce changes in what they regarded as obnoxious laws or to create new laws. This was particularly remarkable when one bears in mind that women were also fiercely discouraged from speaking in public.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Undaunted by such constraints many women philanthropists displayed their ethical sense of responsibility by becoming politically active. Undeterred by their limited legal status - or because of it - women campaigners like Carol Norton, Barbara Leigh Smith, Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler, boldly and defiantly presented their political points of view, relying on pamphleteering, lobbying members of Parliament and holding public meetings.

Concurrent to the campaigns for social reforms, the question of women's suffrage was being raised. In the first draft and third edition of the Charter of Rights and Liberties: a cabinet maker, William Lovett included a reference to women's suffrage but it was later struck out in case it might retard the suffrage of men. Although the Chartists removed

women's suffrage from their objects, they did not reject women's help and a large number of women's political associations came into existence to further the aims of Chartism.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Harriet Taylor wrote an article about women's subjection and franchise in the Westminster Review, and in 1851, the first petition of women for the franchise was unsuccessfully submitted to the House of Lords. The women's movement grew more vociferous. In the 1880's and 1870's Josephine Butler, as crusading leader of the Ladies National Association was one of the most outspoken feminists and she fervently gave support to women's enfranchisement. She is known to have claimed: "If women had possessed the franchise the Contagious Diseases Acts could not have been passed."⁽¹⁰²⁾ In her book on male oppression of women's ideas, Dale Spender (1982) relates how Josephine Butler's search for employment for women in Liverpool cemented her alliance with the women's movement; she writes:

"To Josephine Butler every woman had four rights, each leading to the next: the right to learn; to be educated in order to do so; to decide the conditions of her life by exercising the vote; to own money she earned".⁽¹⁰³⁾

Not only was she appointed Secretary, and later, President of the North of England Council for Higher Education of Women, by 1868 she was signatory to a petition for women's suffrage and was commissioned to edit for the Macmillan publishing house a book entitled, Women's Work and Women's Culture.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Frances Cobb Power was one of the earliest suffragettes. The woman's movement, however, was not always supported by the most

successful, philanthropic women of the day. Florence Nightingale, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot were mostly indifferent to it, although each one of these women, in her particular capacity, paved the way to new careers for women - in nursing, journalism and literature.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Other women, like Mrs. Humphry Ward, a supporter of women's education, was, nonetheless, among a group of highly distinguished ladies to sign an Anti-suffrage appeal in 1889. Prior to this event, the first petition to Parliament was made in 1866 by Emily Davies and a Miss Garrett. In the year following John Stuart Mill unsuccessfully tried to get votes for women included in the Reform Act. Women did not receive the vote until the next century in 1928.

It is clear that the over-riding ethical concept of these remarkable women philanthropists and reformists rested on a strong sense of responsibility towards humankind in general. In their understanding of human misery and need and putting others before self, they discovered for women in general a new self-respect, not in the home but in the public sphere. They took the male-dominated world by storm by transgressing into male preserves of political debate and social reform. In such instances, these women were prepared to make moral statements in public places. Gilligan claims that the essence of a mature woman is the ability to make a

moral decision and to make choices, to have to judge and to be judged. This these women did and consequently defied the timeless assumptions of masculine authoritarianism over their lives. They put into balance the two "different voices" of moral ideology, posing the female one of "responsibility" against the male one of "right"; they not only focussed on the female attribute of "attachment and connection with others" but also on the male notion of fairness and equal respect.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ It needed a great deal of personal courage and determination.

2. 4. SUMMARY: PHILANTHROPIC WOMAN

It cannot be denied that despite the social, educational, marital and biological restraints imposed on women, the nineteenth century gave witness to some of the most remarkable and indomitable women in the history of Great Britain.

Under the heading of "The Dynamics of Gender" it was seen that it was not easy to break out of the stereotyped life-style dictated for women. The formality and enforced idleness of upper and middleclass life and the endless round of entertaining and being entertained, exasperated women such as Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale. The "real lady" complied with the Ruskinian ethos of moral enforcer in the home; she had little education to broaden her interests and no activity outside the home except for "a trickle of lady-like philanthropy".⁽¹⁾ Women, living as a minority group existed in and developed a subculture of her own based on a knowledge of child-rearing, home life, religion and female communality.⁽²⁾

Noted in the section on "The Image of Self-Identity" re the lives and achievements of women philanthropists and social reformers who reacted against the restraints put upon them by taking their experience of "feminine domesticity" out into the wider community. In doing so, they assisted in breaking down age-long gender-based assumptions that a woman's place must be confined to a self-sacrificing role in the privacy of her own

home, and the public world of business and political affairs was only for men. Spurred on by a sense of Christian mission and a belief in their own superiority to men in matters of morality, caring and community welfare, these women discovered for themselves a role in society which previously men had overlooked, a role which, enabled them to discover, acknowledge and understand their own feelings, interests, intelligence, intuition and desires; to judge themselves in terms of their ability to care and to make choices about their own destiny in the world. Often compelled to rely on self-education and the humiliating experience of trial and error, women discovered that they were not without business or professional acumen as they involved themselves in matters of management, organisation, fund-raising and political activity. Mistakes were made and many women lacked the appropriate dedication and skills. Nonetheless, they determinedly prised open new avenues of experience for their own sex.

The section headed "A Concept of Ethics" illustrate the extent to which philanthropic woman reshaped her own destiny by playing a leading role in woman's transition from charity work to social work and reform in education, medicine, community work and social welfare. Despite their monumental achievements, these women were mostly untypical of their sex and not the models whom public opinion accepted as typical and correct. They were the female revolutionaries of their day. Poorly educated, unenfranchised, with no formal political voice, and

very little status allotted to them by Church or the Law, they faced up to an often antagonistic and bigoted world in which, despite the presence of a reigning female Monarch, rules and decisions were most exclusively made and practised by men. They, wittingly and unwittingly, contributed to an upsurge in feminists' movements and the struggle for female enfranchise. Historically, the genuinely dedicated philanthropic women, famous and unknown, were the true heroines of the Victorian age.

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If it is to be assumed that the philanthropic novel, as part of the literary tradition of women, arose out of a female ethical and emancipated consciousness which was shared by both female philanthropists and women novelists in the nineteenth century, then it is likely the consciousness manifested itself in the fictional depictions of philanthropic heroines by women writers. In order to substantiate this proposition, it would first be necessary to search for an evolving interest in social injustice and the philanthropic theme within the literary tradition of women, and then, to identify in the fictional philanthropic heroines certain features and attributes of character, and moral and altruistic behaviour which were comparable to the real women philanthropists and reformists. These are the related topics of research in Part 11.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2 : PHILANTHROPIC WOMAN AND THE

"FEMININE SUBCULTURE"

(pp85-207)

1. Showalter, E. A Literature of Their Own (London and Princetown) 1978, p14-15
2. Oakley, Ann Housewife (Harmondsworth) 1974
3. Longford, Elizabeth Eminent Victorian Women (London) 1981 p11 Longford cites Lawrence Stone's book, Family Sex and Marriage 1500-1800
4. Gilligan, Carol In a Different Voice (Massachusetts and London) 1982
5. Showalter, op cit p4
6. ibid p17 Showalter is convinced that Victorian novelists "showed a covert solidarity" with the subculture, amounting to "a genteel conspiracy", which, she argues, strove many of them to counteract the novels of eighteenth century novelists who "exploited a stereotype of helpless femininity" in order to win chivalrous male protection and to minimise their unwomanly self-assertion. It is an interesting theory which suggests a discreet but determined consciousness among nineteenth century women philanthropists and writers to undermine the widespread practice of social stereotyping on lines of gender.

2.1. THE DYNAMICS OF GENDER : FEMININE DOMESTICITY -
"THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE" (pp90-113)

1. Gilligan's studies reveal that in adulthood these two distinct positions become modified and to some extent fused. Even so, argues Gilligan, two versions of maturity remain: maturity of men is generally associated with "adulthood" - usually a synonym for "manhood" whereas maturity of women is generally termed as "womanhood" - as a condition that is separate. op cit. p17
2. ibid p7
3. Gilligan's studies on children show that boys' games incorporate "organisational skills, necessary for coordinating the activities of large and diverse groups of people". Because boys learn to deal with competitive situations in a relatively forthright manner, and "in accordance with the rules of the game", they learn more about rivalry and independency than girls. Girls on the other hand, learn more of the role of "the particular other" which tends to foster the development of empathy and sensitivity. ibid p11

nt. 2. 1.

4. *ibid* p158. Rosalind Miles also points out how, nineteenth century society, itself, accepted all kinds of masculine authority - the church, the law, school - masters, and pater familias himself. Even God and the Devil were perceived in terms of fear and punishment as masculine. See The Fiction of Sex (London) 1983 p15
5. Gilligan, *op cit* p16
6. *ibid*
7. *ibid* p19
8. Oakley *op cit* Chap 2 is an account of how pre-industrial women worked alongside their husbands and were producers of the bulk of the country's food supply; they managed the dairy, took responsibility for the flax and hemp, for the milling of the corn, and for the care of the pigs, poultry and orchards. They might also be engaged in the provision of trades as fishwife, butcher miller and even innkeeper. Even the spinning and weaving of cotton, and to a lesser extent, wool, was conducted along the lines of family production until the machine took these industries to the factory and the mill; also see Hamilton, R. The Liberation of Women - A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism (London 1978); Trevelyan, G.H. English Social History : A Survey of Six Centuries, Chaucer to Queen Victoria (Harmondsworth and New York) 1949 Chap.17 and 18
9. Martineau, H. An Autobiographical Memoir (1877) (London) 1983
10. The 1851 census indicated that 42 per cent of the 20-40 age group were spinsters, and estimates that between 1851 and 1881 adult women comprised something close to one third of the entire population. S.G.Checkland The Rise of Industrial Society in England 1815-1885 (1964) p216
11. In 1833, 65,000 women and 60,000 men were employed in the cotton factories, of which more than half the number of both sexes were under the age of 14 and no more than one sixth of the women were married. See Richard, Eric "Women in the British Economy since about 1700: An interpretation" an extract from his History, Vol 9 no.197 (London) 1974 pp337-57, in The Woman Question (ed) Mary Evans (Oxford) 1982 p236.
12. Crow, D. The Victorian Woman 1971 p72
13. Gaskell, E. Mary Barton (1848) (Harmondsworth) 1970 p43 The majority of women who worked in factories were unmarried and under 26 years. Although factory women was an anathema to respectable Victorian thought, of the few occupations open to women in 1841, factory workers were by far the best off; they worked the shortest hours, and received the same rate of wages as men where they were employed in the same work. see Oakley, Ann.*op cit* p4
14. Trevelyan *op cit* p504
15. The puritan notion of the home as "a little kingdom" was transformed into the Victorian concept of the home as

- "a haven" set apart as a solace from the harsh externals. see Davidoff, L. and Hall, C. "Home Sweet Home" in the New Statesman 27th. May 1983 pxx
16. Young, C.M. Men and Maidens : a Pastoral for the Times (London) 1871 pp 38-9
 17. Ruskin, J. Lecture 2 "Of Queens and Gardens" in Sesame and Lilies (London) 1865, 1871
 18. Houghton, W.E. The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-70 (New Haven and London) 1957 p347
 19. The Victorian Protestants with their emphasis on the sanctity of the family, gave new and prominent status to the concept of motherhood. By drawing their inspiration from the Old Testament accounts of patriarchal families, who in a spiritual crisis held themselves responsible before the righteous wrath of God, they gave precedence to the family as a unit of spiritual comfort and responsibility, with the husband the head of the family, and the wife, the symbol of Christian care and personal morality. See Hamilton, R. op cit pp50-2
 20. Mistrust between Roman Catholics and Protestants over the spiritual control of women in society has been noted by Robert Lee Wolff. Roman Catholics clung fervently to the doctrine of the Virgin Mary, the beatified mother of Christ. The Roman Church was looked down upon by the Protestant majority and its doctrine, which upheld celibacy and regarded sex as a necessary evil for the purposes of procreation, operated strongly against women. Roman Catholic "good women" entered Sisterhoods. Wolff explains how priestly celibacy was disliked by Victorian Protestants on the ground that it denied these men, wives and families and therefore set them apart from society. Often without valid foundation, Protestants questioned the chastity of the priests, who were in a unique position to hear private confessions of women and give them a penance for their sins. To them the institution of the confessional could not be easily reconciled with the notion of a duty of a father to keep his womenfolk undefiled and under his authority. Unfounded accusations against priests for seducing nuns were not uncommon. Whichever way one regards the prurient imaginings, priests and ministers of the churches, whatever their allegiance, were almost without exception, unanimous concerning their own authoritative superiority over women, be they nuns, wives or daughters. See Gains and Losses : Novels of Faith and Doubt in Victorian England (London and New York) 1977 p31
 21. Ruskin, J. op cit p118
 22. Greg, W.R. National Review V11 1852
 23. Those males whose parents could afford it went to public schools, the others to grammar schools or to private schools of varying degrees of efficiency. Whatever the opportunities for girls, they rarely could expect the kind of education given to a boy. Middleclass girls received limited academic education whether they went to

private or charity schools. Most parents were anxious to encourage the traits believed to be feminine in the education of their daughters. The variations in female education ranged from virtually none at all, through what might be picked up at home or at a Dame, or Sunday School, to the rigours of academic life at an institution like Cheltenham Ladies' College, opened in 1854. Religion and care of the household was more pronounced in the training of girls, whereas boys were tutored in mathematics, the sciences and the Classics. Outdoor games and activities played a large part in the activities of boys; girls were occasionally permitted to try a little light gardening.

24. The popular science of phrenology, which measured the size and shape of the cranium, assisted the belief that because women's brains were smaller than men's, women therefore, were unable to reason or pursue a connected line of thought as well as a man could.
25. Eliot, G. The Mill on the Floss (1860) (London) 1972 p 139-40
26. Charlotte Yonge's father and her friend John Keble, taught her to accept that where girls were concerned, the claim of education must always be subordinated to domestic duty. See Part 11 Chap.4 Introduction (below)
27. Haight, G.S. George Eliot A Biography (Oxford and New York) 1968; Sanders, V. Reason Over Passion : Harriet Martineau and the Victorian Novel (Sussex and New York) 1986
28. Elizabeth Gaskell was taught French, drawing, music, dancing and literature, and continued to value the arts as enrichments to life.
29. Duthie, E.L. The Themes of Elizabeth Gaskell (London) 1980 p113
30. ibid p118
31. ibid p7
32. Gaskell, E. Letters of E.G. (eds) Pollard and Chapple (Manchester) 1966 L.267
33. Longford, E. op cit p110
34. Sanders, op cit
35. Haight, G.S. op cit p195
36. Gaskell, E. op cit Letter 78, 25th. August 1850
37. Longford, op cit p87
38. The law clearly upheld the Pauline teaching of the Church that the wife should be subject to her husband as to the Lord - "for the husband is the head of the woman as Christ is head of the Church". The legal profession and the courts closely observed the famous Commentary on the Laws of England 1765 by the notable jurist Sir William Blackstone which stated that, because of the "disabilities" of a woman, the "laws of England are for the most part for her protection and her benefit". Wives were classified with minors and idiots in that they had no legal responsibility under the law. Marriage meant for women that their legal existence was suspended, or incorporated and consolidated into, that of their husbands. A wife was referred to as a femme Covert, which in layman's language meant "my wife and I are one and I am he" and in practice that meant the woman's

property, earnings and liberty. Even the criminal "conscience" of a wife belonged to her husband; murder and high treason were the only crimes that a wife was considered able to commit on her own in her husband's presence, a presumption not abolished until 1925. see Oakley, Ann op cit, and Crow, D. op cit pl40. Harriet Taylor raised a fierce protest against male-made unjust laws, which were male-conducted and biased against women in all aspects of their lives. She wrote in her work, Enfranchisement of Women (1851 and 1855) : "Even under the laws which give the wife's property to the husband, there are many unmarried women who pay taxes. It is one of the fundamental doctrines of the British Constitution, that all persons should be tried by their peers: yet women, whenever tried, are tried by male judges and a male jury. To foreigners the law accords the privilege of claiming that half the jury should be composed of themselves; not so women." see p9 Virago ed. First pub. anonymously (ed) West, R. J. S Mill collection, Dissertations and Discussions. 1851; Oakley, Ann op cit; Crow, D. op cit pl40; Strachey, R. The Cause (London) 1928

40. Chesney, K. The Victorian Underworld (Harmondsworth) 1972 p370-2
41. The courts would only in rare instances regard a wife as a legal person in her own right. She could not bring an action herself unless the husband's name was joined in the suit. By contrast her seventeenth century counterpart was responsible for her own debts; she could have been appointed executrix of a man's will, often with the sole responsibility for the final management of the business or estate, which she was capable of inheriting with the same rights and responsibilities as a man. In respect of inheritance of real property i.e. freehold land and houses, the male line and their issue were preferred to females: however, a single woman was permitted an equal share with her brothers and sisters of the personal property. i.e. chattels, leases for years of land and houses, stocks and shares etc. If a single woman was an only child with no parent surviving, she was entitled to all the intestate real and personal property. She could also act as an agent or trustee and as an executrix under a will, whereas her married sister could only expect an executorship with her husband's consent. see Oakley, Ann op cit; Hollis, P. op cit. pl74
42. (no reference)
43. Cassandra published in Strachey, R. op cit p400
44. Charles Dickens' marriage to Catherine Hogarth, survived twenty-two years and ten children, but it ended in divorce: when Dickens fell in love with an actress, Ellen Terran. See Note 15, Part 11 Chap.4.1 (below)
45. Thomas Hardy's first marriage to Emma Gifford underwent many unhappy episodes, but much of the lyrical poetry he wrote after Emma died in 1912 reminisces on their love

- relationship. See Florence Hardy Life of Hardy (2 vols) (London) 1954
46. In a treatise written in 1831, Mrs. Sandford explained that women as "the weaker vessel" needed to be protected from herself, as a creature of instincts, characterised by vanity, instability and lack of judgement, she should be prevented from coming to harm by confining her to the home. Orig. The First Epistle General of Peter 111: "Giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel" In a later work she suggested that women were suspended between a brief and selfish butterfly existence and an altogether nobler Christian vocation - to exercise a beneficent influence on her neighbour. See Mrs. John Sandford, Woman in her Social and Domestic Character p 13 pp23-25 quoted by Basch, F. Relative Creatures : Victorian Women in Society and the Novel 1837-67 trs Anthony Rudd (London) 1974 pp3-4
 47. Crow, D. op cit p140
 48. Housman, L. "Florence Nightingale" in The Great Victorians (eds) Massingham H.J. & Hugh (London) 1932 p362
 49. Before marriage a young girl was brought up to be perfectly innocent and sexually ignorant. The predominant ideology of the age insisted that she have little sexual feeling at all Normally she was left untested and kept under the watchful eye of her mother in her father's home. Although permitted few emotional outlets such as family affection and the desire for motherhood, the young woman was thrust into marriage with little or no knowledge of the sexual act.
 50. Acton William "The Functions and Diseases of the Reproductive System" (London) 1857, quoted by Stephen Marcus, The Other Victorians (New York) 1964 p31 and Patricia Stubbs Women and Fiction (Sussex and New York) 1979 p9
 51. Shorter, E. A History of Women's Bodies (London) 1983
 52. Nightingale, F. Cassandra op cit Interestingly, in The Castle Builder, Charlotte Yonge vividly portrays her understanding of the terrible boredom to which a well-to-do naturally curious, extroverted young woman was liable: her sketch of the heroine Emmiline Berners shows recognisable signs of what later generations would call neurasthenia and depression. Charlotte Yonge, the Tractarian, believed that solace, strength and true wisdom could be found in Anglo-Catholicism. Wolff, R.L. op cit
 53. Sanders, V. op cit pp83,85 \ p. 129.
 54. Butler, J. An Autobiographical Memoir (Bristol and London) revised 1928 p39; Longford, E. op cit p111-2
 55. Ervine, J, essay on "Catherine Booth" in Massingham (ed) op cit p17
 56. Prochaska, F.K. op cit pp38-45

2.2. THE IMAGE OF SELF-IDENTITY : FROM HOME INTO SOCIETY

(pp115-157)

1. Gilligan, C. see premise "Introduction" supra. p22
2. Showalter, E. see premise "Introduction" supra.p20
3. A term coined by Ann Oakley in her book Housewife op cit
4. Moore, H. "Coelebs In Search of a Wife"(1803) quoted in Women in Public 1850-1900 (ed) Hollis, P. (London) 1979 p234
5. Longford, E. p111
6. ibid p115
7. Gérin, W. Elizabeth Gaskell : A Biography (Oxford) 1976 Gérin makes use of the more personal letters of Elizabeth Gaskell which were not released until 1965
8. Butler, J. op cit p44
9. Ervine essay op cit p28
10. Kent, J. Elizabeth Fry (London) 1962 pp27-28
11. Fry, M. Memoir of the Life of Elizabeth Fry 2 vols. Vol.2 p521
12. B.B.C. radio play on The Story of Elizabeth Fry, Feb. 28th. 1987
13. Prochaska op cit p11
14. Autobiography of Mark Rutherford and Mark Rutherford's Deliverence 2 vols. bound together 1881, 1885 p68
15. There is the interesting example of early philanthropy carried out by Lady Noel Byron: in 1818 William Friend wrote a letter to the widow of the poet, in which it praises her establishment of a village school. While she remained a tragic figure in the glare of publicity to which her husband's genius and stormy exploits exposed her, it is said of her that she was "a woman whose rare personality aroused among those who knew her intimately something akin to worship". She was deeply interested "in every movement which made for the betterment of social conditions and for the wiser and kindlier treatment of the under dog". J. Aitken (ed) English Letters of the XIX Century (Harmondsworth) 1946
16. Out of two hundred divorces adjudged before 1857, roughly six were at the behest of the wife. Ironically, seven-~~teenth~~ century wives could have sued out of Chancery to correct her husbands behaviour if she was "threatened, beaten or mischieved" by him. see Basch, F. Relative Creatures Trs. Anthony Rudolf (London) 1974 p23
17. Norton, C. English Lawes For women in the Nineteenth Century.
18. On suing for divorce on account of adultery, the new law stipulated that the man could request a divorce on account of his wife's adultery, but the woman could only do so if she could prove adultery aggravated by desertion, cruelty, rape, buggery or bestiality. This double standard remained until 1929, when grounds for

- divorce became the same for both partners. see Basch, F. op cit p24
19. Crow, D. The Victorian woman (London) 1971 p140
 20. quoted by Vicinus, M. Suffer and Be Still : Women in the Victorian age (London and Indiana) 1972 p127
 21. Landels, William Woman's Sphere and Work, considered in the light of the Scripture (London) 1859 p142-4
 22. There is evidence to suggest that by the mid 1850's and 1860's Harriet Martineau as a woman writer displayed a degree of ambivalence between subscribing to the conventional view that a woman's role was not to forget her domestic duties and recognising the necessity for "intellectual exercise" for a woman. On later reflection, Martineau seems to have regarded marriage as a form of bondage for most women. She writes in her Autobiography: "The older I have grown, the more serious and irredeemable have seemed to me the evils and disadvantages of married life as it exists among us at this time". Vol.1; p 101 See Sanders, V. Reason over Passion (Sussex and New York) 1986 147 and Spender, D. Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done To Them (London, Boston and Melbourne) 1982
 23. Longford, E. op cit p89-90
 24. Suggestions for Thought to Searchers after Religious Truth was revised and privately printed. It contained the fragment, Cassandra since published which bitterly and impassionedly comments upon the position of women in F.M.'s time, besides her protestations are about her own wasted energies and resourcefulness and of her family's resistance to her attempts to put them to good use.
 25. British Quarterly Review Feb-May 1852 in a review of Julia Kavanah's book The Women of Christianity (London) 1852
 26. Prochaska, F.K. op cit p15
 27. ibid Preface
 28. ibid p12
 29. Elliot-Binns, L.E. Religion in the Victorian Era (London) 1936 p438
 30. Barber, B. Aquila A Methodist Pageant (London) 1932: Owen, D. English Philanthropy 1660-1960 (Cambs. Mass) 1965 pp24-5
 31. Housman, L. (ed) op cit p28
 32. The title "ministers" as used by the Quakers at this time was used to describe private individuals, men and women, who were regarded as singled out by God to speak on his behalf.
 33. Fry, E. Memoirs op cit Vol.11 p39
 34. Congregational Year Book 1946: The first woman to become a Doctor of Divinity and to have charge of a parish was the Reverend Maude Royden. She was ordained in 1923 and became a minister of North Bow Congregational Church and then Minister of the City Temple, London, from 1927 to 1929. Miss Royden, originally an Anglican, remained in communion with the Church of England; she came into Congregationalism because there she would be allowed to

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- preach. She was also a member of the Institute of Women Journalists and published books and stories. Like Catherine Booth, before her, much of her energies were devoted to the furtherance of total abstinence in the East End of London.
35. The establishment of Sisterhoods was anticipated in Germany, where, in 1833, Pastor Fliedner, the founder of the Kaiserwerth Institution, had revived the work of Deaconesses. Fliedner's establishment, in which the women were not required to take vows, was visited by Florence Nightingale when she was gathering information about nursing. See Elliot-Binns op cit pp438-9
 36. "Sisters of Charity" pp92-3 in (ed) Hollis, P. Women in Public 1850-1900 (London) 1979, p263
 37. An extract from the story of one Mrs. Layton, b 1855, Later, member of the Co-operative Movement and Vice President of the Women's Co-operative Guild, she gives an account of her childhood years spent in the slums of Bethnal Green, in (ed) Davies, Margaret Llewelyn Life As We Have Known It (London) 1977
 38. Wolff, R.L. op cit p114-5
 39. Barber, B.A. op cit p109-10
 40. Prochaska op cit p12
 41. Wesley, himself, seemed to have taken a somewhat ambivalent stance: he urged his women helpers to do all the good they could do in other ways and more than once put a stop to the preaching of women, before he ultimately permitted it. See Barber, B.A. op cit p102
 42. ibid
 43. Prochaska op cit p14
 44. The Christian Observer (January 1861), p 40. Attendance at public meetings might have brought discomfort to their neighbours from the habit of women in that age of fainting on every occasion. When a memorial service was held at St. Andrew's, Well Street, for Adrian Beresford Hope, a friend of the family sat on the women's side of the Church "to look after the fainters": H.W. and I. Law, The Book of the Beresford Hopes p195, taken from Elliot-Binns op cit p44
 45. Prochaska op cit p15
 46. ibid p16
 47. Term used by Showalter, see premise in "Introduction" p20
 48. Matt 10, 17
 49. Matt 13, 57
 50. Fry, E. op cit Vol 11 p561
 51. Longford, E. op cit p115
 52. Prochaska op cit p.16
 53. Wollstonecraft, M. A Vindication of the Rights of Women (London) 1792 p75 The work challenges Rousseau's notions of female inferiority and argues for equality of education employment for single women, and companionship with men.
 54. Martineau, writing for Once a Week brusquely repudiates the idea that women should be educated merely to be "the

- companion of men and the mothers of heroes" and pointedly adds, "The boys are not encouraged to study for such reason as becoming the fathers of great men"; she herself, liberally educated alongside boys and encouraged to read and think about complex philosophical questions, resented the way that girls were frequently denied studying subjects such as Latin and mathematics, especially as she had witnessed the two sexes making comparable progress in their intellectual development. See Sanders, V. op cit 172.174
55. Taylor, Harriet Enfranchisement of Women (London) 1983 pp19-20
 56. F.N. Cassandra op cit p26
 57. Booth, Catherine (née Mumford) to her pastor Dr. David Thomas (1853) See Hollis, P. op cit
 58. Emily Davies wrote with heartfelt rhetoric, on the "Ideals" in higher education for women: "We make the world even more puzzling than it is by nature, when we shut our eyes to the facts of daily life; and we know, as a fact, that women have a part in the world, and that men are by no means ciphers in the home circle". Higher Education of Women 1866
 59. The setting up of higher education institutes for women was accelerated by the 1867 report of a commission inquiring into schools and secondary education, before which Emily Davies, Frances Buss and J.S. Mill gave evidence.
 60. John Stuart Mill shared similar views to Harriet Taylor: both attacked the stifling ethic of wifely subjection and the debilitating education given to women. Mill attributed blame for women's subjection, to the influence and the "instinct of selfishness" of men for whom "the object of (women) being attractive to men had.... become the polar star of feminine education and formation of character", while Harriet Taylor's lucid essay for the enfranchise of women, argues forceably for the best education for women "in the struggle for employments, and the disciplines of life". Nonetheless, Mill had reservations about whether a woman's genius would ever equal that of a man. See Mill, J.S. The Subjection of Women Chap.1 and Taylor, M. American Convention p5
 61. Sanders, V. op cit p183
 62. ibid
 63. Haight, G.S. G.E. Biography (Oxford) 1968 p102
 64. Sanders, V. op cit pp177-9
 65. Martineau, H. Autobiographical Memoir 1877 (London) p149
 66. Basch, F. op cit p112
 67. ibid
 68. The striking irony surrounding Victorian attitudes towards the education of women is that the one paid career permitted to middleclass single women was teaching and governessing; these women, because of their limited educational opportunities, were half-educated educators of both middleclass and poor children. This was partially rectified as charitable movements began to assist women governesses and teachers.
 69. Strachey, R. The Cause (London) 1928 p60

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70. In the main, the College gave to many eager ladies of all ages, and to governesses of many years, who were deplorably ignorant of the rudiments of grammar and arithmetic, an adequate grounding in elementary subjects. In addition, it provided for the more acquisitive ladies advanced lectures on English Literature, sociology, philosophy and even on the popular sciences. see Strachey op cit p61
71. Seven years later The English Women's Journal was amalgamated with the Alexandra Magazine
72. Crow, D. op cit p159
73. Saunders, V. op cit p173
74. see supra 2.1.
75. Strachey op cit p76-7
76. Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century in Fit for Women (ed) Sandra Burham (London) p33
77. (no reference)
78. Kent, J. op cit pp18-9
79. Longford, E. op cit p88
80. Fry, E. Memoir (1845) Vol.11 p522
81. Crow, D. op cit p71
82. ibid
83. Vicinus, M. op cit Intro, pxi
84. E.F. Memoir Vo 2 p3 Barley Wood, June 16th.
85. Strachey, R. op cit pp76-7
86. The Crimean War ended in 1855
87. Trevelyan, G.M. English Social History (Harmondsworth) 1964 p562
88. Nightingale Papers, MS "Autobiographical and Other Memoranda by F.N. (1845-1869) No. of MS 43402 (c 1851) pp81-2,7 quoted by Basch op cit p111
89. Housman op cit p3
90. EWJ May 1860
91. Hollis, P. op cit p100
92. ibid p101
93. Vicinus op cit pxi
94. Nightingale, F. Notes on Nursing (1859); Hill, Octavia A Few Words to Fresh Workers (1889) Hill also published Homes of the London Poor and Our Common Land
95. Prochaska op cit p113 Taken from Charlesworth's The Female Visitor to the Poor p194
96. Hill, O. A Few Words to Fresh Workers Sept. 1889 p43
97. Prochaska op cit p39

2.3 A CONCEPT OF ETHICS : PHILANTHROPIC WOMAN - AN EXPERIENCE

RESHAPED

(pp 158 - 204)

1. Gilligan, Carol, In a Different Voice (Massachusetts and

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2. *ibid* p17
3. *ibid* p42
4. *ibid* p17
5. More, H. "Celebs in Search of a Wife" (1803) quoted in Hollis, P. Women in Public : The Woman's Movement (1885-1900) (London) 1979 p234 In 1840 an unknown woman author, writing on the topic of women's rights and duties, reinforced the words of Hannah More nearly forty years earlier. She argues that, "Men engaged in the active affairs of life, have neither time nor opportunity for those innumerable little acts of consideration which come within the sphere of female duty, nor are they by nature so fitted as women for entering into the peculiarities of personal feeling, so as to enable them to sympathize with the suffering or the distressed". See A Woman, Woman's Rights and Duties considered with relation to their influence on Society and on her own Condition London, 2 vols. 1840 *passim*. See also The Edinburgh Review lxxiii April 1841 pp189-209, cited by Prochaska, F.K. Women and Philanthropy in the Nineteenth Century (Oxford) 1980 p6.
6. Fry, E. "Observations" quoted by Kent, J. E. E. Biography (London) 1962 p97
7. Prochaska, F.K. *op cit* p98
8. *ibid* p101
9. There is an early example of prison visiting quoted from Wesley's Journals in R.S.E. Hinde, The British Penal System 1773-1950 London 1951 p19. A woman named Sarah Peters entered Newgate in October 1748, "sometimes alone, sometimes with one or two others, visited all that were condemned in their cells, exhorted them, prayed with them, and had the comfort of finding them, every time, more athirst for God than before". She died of gaol fever (typhus) in November 1748
10. Summers, Ann "A Home from Home- Women's Philanthropic Work in the Nineteenth Century" Chap 2 in (ed) Burham, Sandra Fit Work for Women (London and Canberra) 1979 p47
11. Hollis, P. *op cit* p224
12. Brewer, J.S. Lectures 274 and 278 from (ed) F.D. Maurice's Lectures to Ladies on Practical subjects (London) 1855
13. Summers, A. *op cit* p47
14. Hollis, P. *op cit* p225
15. *ibid* p225
16. Carpenter, M. "Women's work in the reformatory movement". English Woman's Journal July 1858, quoted 8.4.1. ed P. Hollis *op cit*.
17. Carpenter, M. "Reformatory Schools for the Children of the Perishing and Dangerous Classes and for the Juvenile Offenders" 1851 cited Hollis, P. p224
18. *ibid* p224
19. Webb, E. My Apprenticeship (1926) Chap.4
20. John Ruskin, himself an ardent supporter of philanthropic causes, qualifies his celebrated ideal of woman

as "Queen" in her own household, by expressing his approval of a woman taking her domestic skills out into the community: "Generally, we are under an impression that a man's duties are public, and a woman's private. But this is not altogether so. A man has a personal work or duty, which is the expansion of the other, relating to the state. So a woman has a personal work or duty, relating to her own home, and a public work or duty, which is also the expansion of that as the member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state". Clearly, Ruskin's notion of charitable woman is that of the lovely, "ministering angel" who stays within retrievable distance of "the House". Yet in reality, he gave considerable support to the housing and sanitary reforms of Octavia Hill, an unmarried woman, who was hardly an embodiment of Ruskin's idealism, a contradiction to his view that woman had a "guiding not determining function". see "Sesame and Lilies" op cit p130

21. Fawcett, E. "Octavia Hill" in National Trust Autumn 1981 p13
22. Many Victorian men and women, were inclined to define social problems in utilitarian rather than moral terms. Early on in her career Harriet Martineau shared the view that the critical social evil was not mass poverty but pauperism, and this was often ascribed to individual weakness; the working classes, once educated to acquire the essential virtues of thrift, temperance, industry and family responsibility, would be capable of helping themselves. She had little time for over-compassionate philanthropists who persisted in bestowing alms or effort on those who should be compelled to rely on their own efforts. In her Illustrations of Political Economy her general theme is that the idle and profligate must maintain a willingness to work, and that working men should support not only their families but their elderly as well - the provision of almshouses, for example, should not assist young people to evade the responsibility of helping their parents. ((London) 1832-34) To some extent Octavia Hill, was partly party to this belief, but as a practising philanthropist, she regarded matriarchial encouragement of self-help as part of her own caring ethic. Notwithstanding these views, thousands of other women gladly gave themselves unconditionally to assisting the poor and paupers. See Hill, O. "Trained Workers for the poor" from The Nineteenth Century Jan 1893, p38 cited by Summers, A. op cit p56
23. Fawcett, E. op cit
24. Octavia Hill was engaged to be married to one of her helpers. The engagement was broken off which alongside pressures of work, caused her to suffer a breakdown for a period of her working life. See Ann Summers essay, op cit
25. Hill, O. "District Visiting In Our Common Land" p26 quoted by Summers op cit p56
26. Octavia Hill and Rowland Housing Trust (London)

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27. Gilligan, C. op cit: also see the premise. "Introduction", p22 supra.
28. Kent, J. op cit p34
29. Basch, F. Relative Creatures (London) 1974 p116
30. Kent, op cit p36
31. ibid p58
32. She and her ladies put emphasis on "giving the poor a Christian education" and reading the Holy Scriptures to poor families. See Fry, M. Memoirs Vol.11 306-7
33. Kent, op cit p56
34. ibid p59
35. ibid p66
36. Memoirs op cit p6
37. See More, H. op cit
38. Kent op cit p100
39. Dickens C. Little Dorrit - published in one volume May 1857
40. Eliot, G. Adam Bede (1859) for discussion of the novel see Part 11 Chap.4 below
41. Skene, F. Hidden Depths (1866) for discussion of the novel see Part 11 Chap.4 below
42. Gaskell, E. Letters op cit October 11-14th. 1854
43. Longford, E. Eminent Victorian Women (London) 1981 p91
44. Letter dated 24th. September ibid p90
45. Basch op cit p118
46. Housman essay op cit p364
47. ibid Housman writes of how Nightingale exercised strong self-discipline in prayer and would not let her thoughts wander. She believed evil was a necessary ingredient in the creative scheme: God put it there to teach men to avoid: it was educative. p365
48. ibid p360
49. Longford, E. op cit pp90,99
50. Housman op cit p365
51. Longford, E. op cit p99
52. ibid pp95,98
53. ibid p98
54. ibid p99
55. Brewer, J.S. Lecture : on "Workhouse Visiting" (3rd. August 1855) The lecture was an appeal to gentlewomen to give their unique womanly talents to workhouse visiting. Brewer tells his audience: "The last twelve months have added much to our experience as a nation and developed labour and talent in ways untried before. Not the least striking of the functions which appear to have developed upon the ladies of this country by a kind of common consent. The hospital labours of Miss Nightingale and her associates at Scutari do not begin and end with her alone; they are in measure the common property of all women of England..... a new region has been laid open to female labour in the cause of humanity by Miss Nightingale." - see: Maurice, F.D. (ed) Lectures to Ladies on Practical Subjects (London) 1855
56. Basch, F. op cit p121

57. Longford, E. op cit p108
58. Gaskell, E. Ruth (1853)
59. Gaskell corresponded with Parthenope Nightingale.
(Letter 279, 18 Jan.1856, also see Letters, 211 and 255)
She also stayed with the Nightingale family at Lea Hurst, near Matlock, and there met Florence before the time of the Crimea War, and remained in close touch with the family at the most important period of Florence's life. She wrote a considerable part of her novel, North and South at Lea Hurst (see L's 220,225) In October 1854 Elizabeth Gaskell wrote to Catherine Winkworth of the noble work Florence was doing in the Middlesex Hospital coping with the cholera epidemic then raging. see Chapple & Pollard (Manchester) 1966
60. Henry Morley, one of Dickens's permanent staff on the journal, declared, "We English ...have among us the best nursing for love and the worst nursing for money that can be got in Europe" and he quoted approvingly from a pamphlet by Miss Nightingale describing the training of nurses in Germany. He also praised a Church of England training-school for nurses which had just been opened under the auspices of King's College, London; it was, he said, an excellent effort "to supplant Mrs. Gamp". Another article in All The Year Round (31 March 1860) took the line that nursing was "a gift, not an acquirement" but warmly recommended Florence Nightingale's Notes on Nursing for study by all who had to minister to the sick. - taken from Slater, M. Dickens and Women (London) 1983 p331.
61. The events of the Crimean War and Nightingale's intervention in them, brought the science of nursing and hospital management and the necessity for sanitary reforms and public health to the forefront of public thinking. Bleak House like Elizabeth Gaskell's Ruth, was written between the two national epidemics of cholera in 1849 and 1854. Tom-all-Alone's represents, rather than documents, the awful insanitary, overcrowded conditions in every town - contaminated water, poor drainage, bad ventilation. Current reports of corpses kept unburned for a fortnight, festered with maggots, and sleeping dens afloat with sewage in parts of London during the hot August months of one cholera epidemic give the true picture. (R.H. Mottram, Early Victorian England, note ft.p194) Elizabeth Gaskell, too reports more factually and graphically the insanitary conditions of Manchester. Humphry House is critical of Dickens' stance in Bleak House because the novel offers nothing but the ministrations of a good doctor, Allan Woodcourt, backed by the brow-soothing Esther and a genial John Jarndyce . . . (p 194). He considers it is a tame solution and the novel's message is a feeble one compared to the speeches and journalism of Dickens' in the fifties which are filled with questions on public health (p195). . . . House points out, Allan Woodcourt makes no attempt to campaign or to introduce public

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legislation and that Dickens' novels fail in this respect although, at the close of the novel he is appointed a public health doctor for the medical service. The symbolic function of Allan Woodcourt as a doctor of the poor and a ship's surgeon in Bleak House is an interesting innovatory one. He is one of the first in a line of fictional doctors whose creation was inspired by Florence Nightingale's scientific approach to nursing and hospital management during the years of the Crimean War and by the subsequent necessity for sanitary reforms and public health services in England in the event of the cholera epidemics produced by the overcrowded industrial slums. George Eliot's ambitious young doctor, Lydgate, is a similar creation with a social conscience, although his personal and professional fortunes run far less smoothly than Woodcourt's do because of his egotism. Charles Kingsley in Two Years Ago (1857) also produced the doctor as a modern-day hero: Tom Thurnall, with a vocation for medical practice as well as a generally scientific bent, has also a strong social conscience. Though tough-minded and a rolling stone, he stays in Cornwall to fight a cholera epidemic. Prior to these creations, the medical man in fiction was generally a stock figure, whose chief asset was his bedside manner: he was often portrayed as either "a wise family friend or humourously as a self-important humbug". Appendix A: "The Symbolic Function of the Doctor in Victorian Novels" to chapter entitled "Bleak House": A Chancery World" in Dyson, A.E. (ed) Dickens: A Casebook (London) 1969, pp179-80; and House, H. The Dickens' World (London) 1941, pp194, 195

62. Longford, E. op cit p110
63. When running to greet her parents on their arrival home one evening, the child fell downstairs and was killed.
64. Longford, E. op cit pp111-2
65. ibid p112
66. ibid pp112,113
67. ibid p.117 Also, in her Autobiographical Memoirs, Josephine Butler writes of her determination to go ahead with her campaign despite the fact that "Neither they (the working men and women) nor I have had legal training, but we maypossess a measure of that plain English common sense". pp135-8
68. See pp62-3 (above) for estimated figures of prostitutes
69. Spender Dale, Women of Ideas and What I en Have Done To Them (London and Melbourne) 1982 p334
70. ibid pp334-5
71. Chesney, K. The Victorian Underworld (Harmondsworth) 1972 Chap.10 "Prostitution"
72. Spender, D. op cit p335
73. see p below
74. Longford, E. op cit p128
75. See Part 11 Chap.4 (above)
76. See Part 11 Chap.4.3 (above)

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77. Prochaska, F.K. op cit p26-27 Also, Chap V "In Public and Charitable Institutions"
78. Fry, M. Memoirs Vol.11 p522
79. In his biography John Kent writes that in 1827 Elizabeth Fry saw the survival of her Ladies Committee (formed for the overseeing of the proper treatment of women prisoners) as a positive step towards a greater feminine share in public life op cit p97
80. Hollis, P. op cit p225
81. Longford, E. op cit Chapter on Florence Nightingale
82. There is the incident of Josephine Butler's chance conversation with a young Oxford don over the merits of Elizabeth Gaskell's controversial novel Ruth. The moralistic young man had remarked that he would not allow his mother to read Ruth because of its portrayal of an unmarried mother. Later Josephine Butler spoke of the conversation, despairing of the high-minded attitude of the young man: "A moral lapse in a woman was spoken of as an immensely worse thing than in a man.....A pure woman, it was reiterated, should be absolutely ignorant of a certain class of evils, albeit those evils bore with murderous cruelty on other women." This was one of many incidents which led her to believe that God had called her to oppose the Contagious Diseases Act. See Longford, E. *ibid* p110
83. Prochaska, F.K. op cit
84. Hopkins, Ellice Work in Brighton or Woman's Mission to Women (London) 1877 p98
85. Prochaska, F.K. op cit p157
86. *ibid* p222
87. Lock, C.S. How to Help Cases of Distress (London) 1883 pp16-7
88. Kent, J. op cit p
89. Longford, op cit p106
90. Fawcett, E. op cit
91. Gilligan, C. op cit p107
92. See Part 11, Chap 4.2. and 5 supra
- 92a. Mill, J.S. The Subjection of Women (London) 1869 Published by Virago Press Ltd. (London) 1983 from the offset from the Longman, Reader and Dyer ed. of 1869 p47
93. When Sidney Herbert made Florence Nightingale responsible for organising the nurses in the Crimea, it is clear that he also recognised the problem of feminine inexperience: "I receive numbers of offers from ladies to go out, but they are ladies who have no conception of what a hospital is or of the nature of its duties;..... and they would either recoil from the work or be entirely useless, and consequently - what is worse - entirely in the way. Nor would these ladies probably ever understand the necessity especially in a military hospital, of strict obedience to the rule " - quoted by Basch, J. op cit p119
94. Basch, J. op cit p119-20

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95. Smith, S.M. The Other Nation - The Poor in English Novels of the 1840's and 1850's (Oxford) 1980
96. For a discussion of the activity of women in teaching, nursing, shops, the civil service, and clerical occupations in the late nineteenth century. see Lee Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at work (Newton Abbot) 1973
97. Kent, J. op cit p96
98. ibid p39
99. Strachey, R. The Cause (London) 1928 p440
100. Carol Gilligan records the story of how in 1840, two American delegates, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, were excluded from participation in the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. The two enraged ladies were relegated to the balconies to observe the proceedings in which they had come to take part. (See op cit p128)
101. Woman had also taken part in the demonstration to defend the men's cause at Peterloo and some of them had been killed. As time went on, women attended the annual congress of the Chartist bodies and eventually meetings for women only were formed, but as Chartism faded away so did these women's organisations. see Brown, R. and Daniels C. The Chartists (London) 1984 p31
102. Longford, E. op cit p117
103. Spender, D. op cit who relies upon Butler, J. An Autobiographical Memoir, originally published 1909, revised 1928 (eds) George and Lucy A. Johnson (London and Bristol)
104. Spender, D. op cit pp346-6
105. Florence Nightingale firmly believed that women should take an interest in social and political affairs, and was disappointed when the women she took to the Crimean War reverted to their original stereotyped non-political roles when they returned to England. She complained in a letter to Harriet Martineau: "They don't know the name of the Cabinet Ministers. They don't know the officers at the Horse Guards. They don't know of the men who are dead and who is alive. They don't know which of the Churches have bishops or not.....(13th Dec 1861) Despite her disillusionment with members of her own sex for not holding opinions similar to hers, she, nevertheless, persevered for a better life for women. It was her religious faith rather than her interest in feminism that prompted her fight for equality of the sexes. She believed that God had better things for women than to waste the gifts he had given her. Harriet Martineau took a life-long interest in politics. Before the Reform Act 1832, she had written her Conversations which were popular accounts on the theory of political economy, and for much of her writing life was concerned with political matters. Before George Eliot's liaison with George Henry Lewis, she earned her living in a man's world by working at translations of Continental works and by journalism; thus she practised "feminism" and unintentionally inspired other women by her example, even though she was mostly

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indifferent to the woman's cause. Often scornful of the empty minds and conversations of the average woman she was inclined to argue for better educational opportunities for women; this was probably why she was prepared to give financial support to feminist, Emily Davies, and her campaign for better higher education for women.

106. Gilligan, C. op cit p67

2.4. SUMMARY : PHILANTHROPIC WOMAN (pp205-207)

1. Strachey, R. op cit p45
2. See Showalter's theory p20-2 (above)

PART 11.

THE LITERARY TRADITION OF WOMEN

AND

THE PHILANTHROPIC NOVEL

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AND THE PHILANTHROPIC NOVEL.

"Literature is commonly seen as affecting its own unique insights into a period. More than simply another source of opinion, literature, in any age, provides access to deeper levels of consciousness, liberating its own truth in fiction."

Pauline Nestor (1985)

In the two related stages of this Part is first, a survey of the literary tradition of women as a genitive source of the philanthropic novel, and then an examination of the philanthropic heroines in a selection of novels by male and female authors, the aim being to define a gender difference of "voice" by the application of the research on this subject by Carol Gilligan. If the "voice" of the philanthropic heroines depicted by women novelists correlates more closely to the actual philanthropic heroines than those heroines by male writers, then the conclusion is that the "philanthropic novel" is a species of social novel which played a crucial contribution to the continuing literary tradition of women, freeing women from former literary constraints of social convention, and, therefore was a step towards their eventual emancipation.

CHAPTER 3. THE NOVEL AND THE WOMAN WRITER - A TRADITION OF HER OWN?

"To you I am neither man nor woman - I come before you as author only. It is the sole standard by which you have the right to judge me."

Charlotte Bronte

The aim of this chapter is to determine whether women effectively formed a literary tradition of their own by means of the novel, and, if they did, to see how far the female philanthropic consciousness of the nineteenth century was an element of it.

While philanthropists were actively engaged on charitable visiting, educating the working classes and outcasts, alleviating poverty, improving poor sanitation and housing, rescuing the prostitutes, and generally registering their protest against what they saw as social injustice, writers, as already indicated, were similarly registering their own form of protest through the written word - in journals, reports, religious tracts, and above all, by means of the novel. There was an enormous explosion in the popularity and production of the novel in the nineteenth century, and, as noted in an earlier chapter, this age of the industrial revolution has long been associated with the concept of "the social" or "social protest novel".⁽¹⁾ Both Louis Cazamian (1973) and Joseph Kestner (1985) find much in the nineteenth century novel that reflects the prevailing spirit of philanthropy and radical reform of the

tine. (2)

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As a literary form the novel was a fairly recent innovation. Conceived in the seventeenth century, it grew from infancy to "adolescence" in the eighteenth century and, by the nineteenth century, had achieved a peak of maturity. Between 1830 and 1850 the new spirit which revitalised the novel coincided with the emergence of the nation's philanthropic impulse towards social injustices and the rise of remarkable women of the philanthropic movement. Significantly, too, many of the novels of greatest eminence that emerged at this time came from the pens of women - Jane Austen, Fanny Burney, the Bronte sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot. Previously, women had made no measurable impact on the development of the literary arts: the tradition had been developed almost exclusively by men. One is led to question this historical phenomenon. Why, all of a sudden, did women become particularly attracted to the novel as a literary form, in preference to poetry, for example? How were they able to produce many of the creative masterpieces they did? Were there any common features of interest to women, or expressions of strong affinity between female philanthropists and the woman writer, which particularly manifest themselves in the social novels written by women? An extraordinary phenomenon of the day is that no fictional female heroine, either

from the pen of man or woman, appears to have been obviously or directly modelled on the actual philanthropic heroines who, currently, were making public headlines for themselves for making political disturbances in high places, often being rebelliously defiant of many fiercely held conventions. Even more curious, is that none of the more frankly outspoken women writers, such as Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte, produced in their fiction an overtly recognisable model of the dynamic, determined, energetic, strong-minded, resourceful, sometimes bombastic women, who fought with missionary zeal against appalling injustices in some of the most degrading places. One obvious reason for this was the closely observed rules of censorship which upheld the stereotype of pious femininity and the high esteem given to the "real lady". However, it is the aim of subsequent chapters to uncover a more covert expression of the actual philanthropic heroine in women's fiction with the intention to illustrate a significant common set of values and feminine outlook among female philanthropists and women novelists.

Discussion will follow one of the premises of this thesis, based on the theories of Virginia Woolf and Elaine Showalter, that women have developed and will continue to develop a literary tradition of their own. The premise will be more fully and relevantly explained in a later section. ⁽³⁾At this point, it suffices to state that, women by experiencing a cultural environment apart from men, have developed a different view of life and regard for their fellow humans, which evolve around

the maternal, nurturing role - which for centuries has been allotted to them. Elaine Showalter assesses certain 'feminine values' in the subculture of women which generations of women writers have reflected in their writings.⁽⁴⁾ Taken together, these propositions have an important bearing on the proposal, that women, in perceiving they have a different responsibility of care to the world than men have, were producing a "philanthropic" form of the social novel, which played a crucial phase in the development of the literary tradition of women.

Of significant interest is that a large proportion of women, like Elizabeth Gaskell, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, Charlotte Young and Felicia Skene, indulged in both activities of philanthropy and novel writing. As philanthropists, and as writers, they held concepts of their own sex as moral educators, healers, figures of tenderness and ministrators of good works. It must be presumed that women writer-philanthropists discovered a new dual identity of self-fulfillment of which female altruism was a vital objective. The intimate link between women novelists and women philanthropists therefore, cannot be ignored. In the absence of an overt modelling on the great women activists of the day, one must assume that the gradual social revolution which the women philanthropists and reformers were bringing about for women, as well as for the disadvantaged classes, was implicitly, if not explicitly, reflected in the social novels being written at the time,

especially by women. Taken in chronological order, the number of female philanthropic authors is quite impressive.⁽⁵⁾ One of the first women to write tales about poor families was Harriet Martineau (1802 - 1876). She involved herself in political and social issues, Poor Law reform, feminist issues such as the Married Women's Property Bill in 1857 and women's employment, and opposed licensed abortion, and was author of the novels, Deerbrook (1839) and The Hour and the Man (1841) as well as children's literature and journalism. Her early short tales, Illustrations of Political Economy (1832-4) anticipate the social novel as a genre. Mary Howitt, Quaker teacher and visitor of hospitals and prisons, militant member of the anti-slavery committee in 1852-3, and supporter of the Married Women's Property Bill, was the author of many articles, novels and stories which highlighted the individual working person's plight. Her book, Hard Work: Low Wages gives an account of a young maid's various placements in middleclass homes, from the mean and exploitive to the pleasant and moralistic. Caroline Norton (1808 - 1877), campaigner and pamphleteer for married women's property rights, divorce and child custody, also wrote novels, including Lost and Saved to earn a living during the years she was estranged from her first husband. Lady Georgiana Fullerton (1812-1885), a Catholic convert, was a philanthropist and novelist, her best known work probably being Grantley Manor: A Tale (1847). Elizabeth Geraldine Jewsbury (1818 -81) was a talented writer whose social novels, The Half-Sisters (1848) and Marian Withers (1851) have been praised by modern critics for their realistic portrayal of working class life.⁽⁶⁾

Charlotte M. Yonge (1823-1901), author of novels such as The Daisy Chain, The Clever Woman of the Family, and The Heir of Radcliffe, was a leading apologist for the Oxford Movement and actively involved herself in parish work as teacher, Sunday School teacher and fundraiser for missionary work. Elizabeth Rundle Charles (1828-1896), novelist and poet, devoted herself to hospital and hospice work and to the National Association for Befriending Young Servants. Although Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot were not active philanthropists, they were constantly drawn to the questions of social morality and responsibility and were, at various times during their lives, in contact with women philanthropists. Charlotte Bronte knew Elizabeth Gaskell and admired her friend's social novels, Mary Barton and North and South. Some similarities between these novels and Shirley and their respective portrayals of industrial strife seem to exist.⁽⁷⁾ Besides admiring the efforts and achievements of Caroline Norton, Barbara Leigh Smith, Florence Nightingale and Emily Davies, George Eliot also, appears to have admired genuine philanthropy as much as she appreciated good writing. In a letter written in 1841 to Martha Jackson she recommends that she read Thomas Carlyle's book, Sartor Resartus, adding "His soul is a shrine of the brightest and purest philanthropy".⁽⁸⁾ Like Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot depicted philanthropic heroines in her novels. These two writers, like the eminent philanthropists, were untypical of the conventional "Victorian lady"; each strove to realise her own independent genius despite contemporary opposition to women's achievements beyond the

domestic scene. One may justifiably be able to refer to any of these writers as "social", or even "philanthropic novelists'.

Writers, however, are not merely concerned with drawing inspiration from their experiences and impressions of their lives. They must, as artists, also perceive, assimilate and interpret the world, to envelop and develop their experience of it through the imagination, and also with the requisite skills and techniques of a writer's craft, execute their final creation. Although the nineteenth century was an age which affirmed sexual stereotypes, room for artistic innovation and enterprise did, nonetheless, prevail. It is, therefore, very likely that women writers were drawing artistic inspiration from their own lives and acquaintances as well as from the established literary tradition of men to convey aesthetically in their novels their own impression of life and that of their sister philanthropists. A number of questions need to be answered if these notions are to be upheld. First, how did the novelists see themselves and their contribution as writers: did they specifically adopt the form of the "social" novel and convert it in a form of their own? Did they, like the philanthropists consider themselves temperamentally and morally more suited to the task than the men were, more likely to display "time and taste for details" than their male counterparts? Above all, did they conceive a philanthropic tradition for women, and in doing so, propel their philanthropic heroines away from the private sphere of the home and into the sphere of public life with a particular rôle to play?

3.1. THE NOVEL AS A LITERARY FORM.

"The utmost they (good novels) do is to enlarge somewhat the charity of the kind reader."

John Ruskin (1865)

"The novel has been the primary agent of the moral imagination of society. Whatever is occurring even peripherally in individual or cultural consciousness at large, we should expect to find in the novel".

Rosalind Miles

The role of the social novel and its democratic force on society has been mentioned in an earlier chapter.⁽¹⁾ Here, it will be examined as a literary innovation to which women were attracted, and into which they implanted their own philanthropic interest.

The novel was a literary form that the Victorians developed and made their own during a period of change and transition. Walter Allen writes of the early nineteenth century novel as "something new".⁽²⁾ The word "novel" - derived from the Old French word "nouvelle" meaning "a novelty; a piece of news or 'a story" - itself suggests change. Although works of prose

fiction were being written in England from about 1670, such as the allegories of John Bunyan.⁽³⁾ The genre began to develop and be recognised as a literary form in its own right from the time of the eighteenth century with works such as those of Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson, and reached its artistic peak in the nineteenth century with writers like Jane Austen, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, the Brontes, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy. It soon became clear that the aim of these writers was not restricted to merely telling a good and entertaining story; they made a more didactic and aesthetic use of the form as a means of exploring and reflecting certain conditions and events of the society they saw around them.

For many reasons the novel as a literary form is not easy to define. The Oxford English Dictionary describes the novel as "a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length, in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity." The novel is more than a transcript of ordinary life; it is not an account of an historical event as it is capable of simplifying, expanding and distorting a serious actuality. G.K. Chesterton refers to the novel as a "fictitious narrative" written for "the sake of some study of the difference between human beings." He assessed the novel's usefulness as a close representation of life of both humankind and "a visual appearance of the world."⁽⁴⁾ Certainly, the novel has a capacity to mirror - by means of the

explicitness of the writer's craft - the character and motives of men and women, details of their practical affairs, their human vices and virtues, their inner thoughts, their morality and spirituality. The novel can probe at two levels of human perception: the conscious and subconscious. This is made possible by a literary form, unlike any other, which is expansive, adaptable and malleable. E.M. Forster recognised this when he refers to the novel as "a formidable mass so amorphous".⁽⁵⁾ Likewise, Valentine Cunningham describes novels as "loose baggy monsters, mixed media, which have had more overt intercourse with society, with..... the economic and social base, than any other literary mode", and adds of Victorian novels, that "They were looser, baggier, more monstrously spacious, and more mixed as a rule, than novels before or since".⁽⁶⁾ Taken together these descriptions indicate something of the enormous scope, the depth and breath, of the novel as a literary form. It allows considerable space for any artist, man and woman, to represent and imitate life and to present a philosophy of life, as he or she perceives and experiences it, and make conclusions about it. The fabric of the work would be largely woven by the subjective aspiration, imagination and expression of the one who creates it. The culminating result would be an integrated network of events, situations, characters and the characters' thoughts and activities, determined towards a certain statement the individual writer wishes to convey. A survey of the history of the novel illustrates how the individual purpose of the writer may vary considerably. Fielding

set out to reform the manners of his age; Thomas Arnold highlighted the brutality of the public school; Trollope took a whimsical delight in highlighting the internal political intrigues of provincial clergy; Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell were more seriously concerned to reveal the squalor, impoverishment, social injustice and hypocrisy of the time, and George Eliot examined in minute detail the scientific, psychological questions of human frailty and individual moral responsibility. The nineteenth century novel, alongside the widely published journals of the day, became a focus for discussion: its subject matter was something that could be questioned, analysed and forced to explain itself. The "amorphous" form could serve either as a means of propaganda or as an expression of personal prosaic or mystical experience of both man and woman.

The extent to which nineteenth century writers regarded the novel as an Art form with a social and moral mission clearly varied from author to author. Literary tradition has long depended on the way different artists, men and women, have viewed their own commitment to their Art. There are the "pure" artists who see art as serving its own end and putting the emphasis on the "neutrality" of the activity, seeing it as an expression of truth, beauty or whatever they as artists of integrity, feel the need to express. Jane Austen and Emily Bronte may be regarded as "pure" artists: they viewed the novel as an art form requiring a close and exacting discipline and

generally ignored the possible social effects of their work. The "socially committed" artist sees his or her art as serving some cause or aim in that it is required to have a certain effect of social conscience on those who read it. Elizabeth Gaskell's novels of social concern, Mary Barton and North and South clearly fall into this category, as do Charles Kingsley's works, Yeast and Alton Locke. It is, however, unsatisfactory to define the two divisions of creative outlook in simple black and white terms, for few "pure" artists will disclaim a sense of social responsibility and committed artists do give detailed attention to the necessary techniques required of their chosen art form. George Eliot believed, as Dickens did, that the novel had a social and moral mission, but George Eliot was the more sophisticated of the two and her art and "aesthetic teaching" had a priority. On the other hand Dickens made masterly use of literary skills to create atmospheric scenes of suspense and menace and also voice of indignant satire in order to bring home to his generation the social injustices around them. Hardy was first and foremost a poet, whose novels display a strong interest in plebeian matters; Kingsley and Disraeli, with less artistry than either Dickens or Hardy had, as socially committed writers, used the novel as an instrument of political persuasion. In the social novel there is scope for both kinds of artistry - the pure and the "socially" committed, although one is bound to find the boundary between the two frequently fused and indistinguishable from each other.

The Victorian "social" novel has many features which associate it with historical reality. There is a consistency of social interest among a variety of recurring topics and themes, including the struggle of the individual against the System, class differences and discrimination, evangelical Christianity, urban deprivation, exploitation of working children, and the value of education as a release from poverty and social deprivation. Examples of popular fictional stock figures are the outcast, the fallen woman, the solitary figure, the orphaned child, the lunatic, people of gentility in reduced circumstances, the lover spurned because of class discrimination, the doubting Christian, characters of evil and corruption, the benevolent gentleman, and the good lady. Juxtaposed to these apparent "social" topics and themes, are "paranormal" happenings and events to do with, unexplained mysteries of the world, the irrational and supernatural. Such phenomena are portrayed in dreams, hallucinations, Gothical manifestations, folklore and other strange happenings. The novels of Bronte sisters, Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy are imbued with such events and happenings. Notions of Chance, Fate, Coincidence and the question of Free-will also predominate. This contrasting counterbalance between "the natural" and "unnatural" is an interesting feature of Victorian fiction. It was as if, through Art, the Victorians needed to counterpoise the uncertainty of their rapidly changing, materialistic world with some more rewarding form of escapism which perceived an unknown metaphysical dimension to existence. (7) Generally speaking, the Victorian novel displays two predominant areas of interests: the keeping

alive and reaffirming its own human and industrial world, and, despite movements of religious doubt, a moral display of Christian concern with the social problems of the day. Literary commentators mostly identify nineteenth century Art with "Realism" - although, as indicated here, some mystical dimension to existence was often seen as a component of this reality of human experience. "Realism" in nineteenth century literature was a method that was adopted as a way of representing an experience, either of normal every day criteria through the depiction of a scene or readily perceived dialogue to denote what life in that society was like.⁽⁸⁾ Realism was frequently associated with the representation of social concerns and injustices. It is well known that authors, like Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley, drew on official Blue Books for their source of material. The novels are also sprinkled with reminders of Revivalist Romantic literature. Nineteenth century writers, although innovative in their own time, were still attracted to the Romantic tradition of "sensibility". Although there is no definition of the word "Romantic" in eighteenth century literature, it is traditionally used to characterise the kind of romantic love that is associated with chivalric adventures. It is also associated with the appeal of the imagination, with intuition and the finer feelings of which man has infinite possession. In the work of the Lakeland poets, "Romanticism" grew to envelop pantheism and humanitarianism. In terms of "sensibility", the poetry of William Wordsworth exercised a dominating influence over the nineteenth century

as "Nature" became a refuge from religious doubt, the distractions of materialism and the fears surrounding mass deprivation, all of which beset society at the time.⁽¹⁰⁾ The influence of the Revivist Romanticism is easily detectable in many nineteenth century novels: in popular allusions to Nature as a corrective force, and in the portrayals of childhood innocence, which were meant to act as examples of purity against society's ills and corruptive forces. The characters Oliver Twist and Elizabeth Gaskell's Ruth are two prominent examples. In the Victorian novel, "Romanticism" is present in the context of general human development and potentiality, where human values and aspirations are linked to the phases of the development of the heroes and heroines. Most of the protagonists act as a focal point of sympathy ; serving as a repository to certain values, they provide a guiding point from which the reader can evaluate, and take his or her moral bearings. The rest of the novel and other characters are assessed in relation to the central hero or heroine. Naturally, not all heroes and heroines fit this traditional pattern: Heathcliffe, Pip, Henchard, Lydgate and Becky Sharp, are among the most notable of the anti-heroes and heroines. Nonetheless, even these characters fulfil an important role in the overall expression of human values and aspirations. Despite the literary exceptions, the Victorians owed to the Romantic Revivalists who had perceived the dangers of contemporary developments towards industrialisation and away from rural living.⁽¹¹⁾ Overall, the novel had become a most potent form of social commentary.

In 1869, by which time many of the best "social" novels of the nineteenth century had been written, Matthew Arnold reflected on the role of culture in society. He wrote in a collection of essays:

"There is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it - motives eminently such are called social (my italics) - come in part of the grounds of culture, and the main and eminent part."(12)

Although Arnold was writing of culture in general, his reflections may well have been focused on the novels of his age and on the motivations of their creators. The novel is commonly seen as providing its own unique insights into a period, and thus, is a valuable focus for any study of contemporary culture.

In more recent times, the definition of "a social novel" as a literary form, has been under debate. Whereas one may construe Matthew Arnold's words to be an adequate summary of the general aims of what is generally understood as "a social novel", there are those, like Arnold Kettle, who see it differently. Kettle claims not to recognise a specific form of novel, which might be termed as a "social novel". According to Kettle, all novels are social novels, whatever a novelist may think or however he or she may attempt to classify the genre. His theory is that novelists, by the very nature of their art,

cannot exclude reference to the vision of a changing society, connecting past to present and present to future; that the novel includes among its definitive concerns a conscious attempt to solve what are seen as problems. Kettle sees the novel's integrity as an art form under threat when human beings and their lives are reduced to a scheme. He asserts that, the exploration of characters, their lives and inter-relationships and the demands of these, as well as political commitment, must be part of the living complex of the problem. In the light of his own argument, Kettle rates Elizabeth Gaskell as superior to Kingsley and Disraeli as a "social problem novelist" and his reason is, that the latter two fail to deal honestly with the social experiences their novels are intended to portray; they rely too heavily on stock political attitudes and their failures, whereas Elizabeth Gaskell writes about Chartism and factory workers with imaginative honesty. He, however, blames Gaskell for not being sufficiently radical to suggest changes.⁽¹³⁾ In her own day Gaskell received similar appraisal of her work from the critic G.H. Lewes, who wrote in The Leader (1853), of the novel Ruth, that it was, "A moral problem worked out in fiction, her lesson was suggested not preached", and that her novel succeeded because it dealt with "human nature" and not with "ideal abstraction". Kettle may not have upheld Ruth, quite so willingly, but the two critics share a similar sentiment over the compelling immediacy of Gaskell's work. For Kettle the novel must take into account the quality of the author's social awareness and response to change. The

writer must also assess what are the true values by which a society lives and how these relate to past values. This, he says,^{is} how literary tradition is shaped.

Matthew Arnold is concerned that culture assists individuals in mass societies to preserve a certain quality of living, and Arnold Kettle with the honest portrayal of social values and problems and the shaping of literary tradition. Both men make significantly important assessments about art and the condition of society, but what both men do not consider is that, historically, men and women have mostly known the experience of separate roles, and, as a result of this, have possibly experienced different "cultures". Consequently, the respective values that men and women uphold and their assessment of them, and the way they relate to the past and to social problems may all be assessed differently. The two standpoints may be distinguishable from each other, and different traditions shaped accordingly.

Although, of the nineteenth century women writers, Elizabeth Gaskell is currently regarded as an innovator of the social novel, Joseph Kestner (1985) provides ample evidence to suggest that from the 1830's, other women were initiating and advancing the tradition of the "social problem" novel well before Gaskell. Challenging the presupposition that the "social" novel of the nineteenth century arose predominantly from a male cannon of writers, he argues the tradition was already established by some women writers. Kestner looks at a neglected group of authors,

Hannah More, Elizabeth Stone, Frances Trollope, Charlotte Tonna, Camilla Toulmin, Geraldine Jewsbury, Fanny Mayne, Julia Kavanagh, Dinah Mulock (Craig) as well as more prominent writers, such as Maria Edgeworth, Harriet Martineau, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot. He also considers the output of male writers such as Dickens, Disraeli, G.M.W.Reynolds, John Galt and Charles Kingsley. He uses evidence such as Parliamentary investigations and earlier social reporting by James Kay, William Cooke Taylor, Peter Gaskell and others, to assess the validity of the protests of these novelists. He discovered that the "impassioned novels" of some of the earlier female authors supplemented the legislative findings of male-dominated Parliamentary committees and reached an audience which was often specifically addressed as female - something that Government documents could not. By galvanizing readers through their narratives, the socially conscious female writers gained new political influence which, in turn, contributed to legislative progress. Kestner's claim is that, at the time, these writers won artistic ground, commanding a serious literary attention and respect never before accorded to women writers and argues they have since been unjustly neglected for so long.⁽¹⁴⁾ Kestner traces the continuity of a developing tradition to include writers like, Hannah More, whose novels, The Lancashire Collier Girl and Village Politics, are concerned with lower class participants, and Maria Edgeworth, whose works, Castle Ruckrent and Suffering Irish, criticize absentee and profligate

landlords and the abuse of their tenants. In the process, he claims to establish a new basis for assessing major writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot. One might also perceive the process as part of the evolutionary process of the "philanthropic novel", a topic which will be discussed more fully below.⁽¹⁵⁾

3.2. WOMEN AND THE NOVEL

'No sooner does a woman show that she has genius or effective talent, than she receives the tribute of feeling moderately praised and severely criticised."

George Eliot (1852)

'Literary women are becoming more freespoken, and more willing to express their sentiments."

John Stuart Mill (1896)

When presented with a heading alluding to women novelists of the nineteenth century, names such as Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot, and, perhaps, Charlotte Yonge, Margaret Cliphant, and Ann Bronte, immediately come to mind. These are the names of those writers whose works are best remembered for having survived a century to be included in the annals of classical literature. Women, however, began writing novels in the second half of the seventeenth century almost as soon as the form had been begun to be

established and throughout the eighteenth century. As early as 1796, a writer in The Times, scornfully commented on, "Four thousand and seventy-three novels are now in the press from pens of young ladies of fashion." (1) The ladies undeterred by criticism continued to write. By the time of Jane Austen, thousands of upper and middleclass women were writing novels either to earn a living or to occupy their day. The early years of the nineteenth century saw a further proliferation of women writers. Fiction not only offered an imaginative outlet, but also the opportunity for earning a living in a world where the single woman had the meagre choice of being a governess or a lady's companion. As the education of women improved, their leisure and entertainment pursuits increased. A large section of the readership of novels were women. Some among the better educated also took an interest in book publishing.(2) It is not surprising that countless women turned to novel-writing, and eventually made a "respectable" leisure pursuit of it.

By the 1830's and 1840's, hundreds of ladies found writing a convenient occupation in the privacy of their homes: they turned their minds to writing children's stories, poetry, hymns, religious tracts but, above all, the novel appears to have been their most preferred medium. It is perhaps notably ironic that this literary medium - once described by the philanthropist Elizabeth Fry as "improper", and regarded by those guardians of moral rectitude, the evangelicals, as capable of corrupting the mind and wasting time which might be more usefully served

on God— should now be considered suitable reading for young ladies. But then, if young ladies, themselves, were producing much of this "questionable" form of literature, so, some thought, the pastime must be a fairly innocuous one. However some members of society, including Florence Nightingale, continued to regard the novel in an unfavourable light.⁽³⁾ Initially, women were encouraged to write for a more "private" female audience and thus were permitted to write diaries, articles for women, children's stories and novels. Writing on the upsurge of women writers in the eighteenth century, Jane Spencer explains that women were only accepted as novelists at the end of the eighteenth century if they stayed off male preserves and stuck to conventional notions of womanhood to inculcate a due regard for modesty, purity and submissiveness. Women novelists were expected to be educators in manners and sensibilities and they were not expected to address male audiences on public or erudite matters.⁽⁴⁾ Harriet Martineau was one outstanding example of a woman who trespassed in the literary preserve of men to become a political economist writer. She resisted the counsel she was given by deducing that: "Political economy is to do with the poor: women are traditionally charitable to the poor: therefore a woman may express interest in political economy".⁽⁵⁾ With her Illustrations of Political Economy, written in the 1830's, she proffered a woman's solution, albeit^a didactic one, to the problems of family poverty, by means of fictional tales. Joseph Kestner writes of the interest that women in the 1830's had in the process of intervention. Interventionalism was the

central preoccupation of the early and developing phases of industrialism in Britain.⁽⁶⁾ Similarly, it preoccupied the minds of altruistic women: in her family cameos, Harriet Martineau was anxious to communicate ways of adapting to the economic transition; Gaskell's emphasis in the 1840's was on the rapid increase in the manufacturing population and the effect of unpredictable trade fluctuations on family life. Ironically, Harriet Martineau and Elizabeth Gaskell, like hundreds of other women writers, began their writing careers on politically sensitive issues under the protective cloak of a male sounding pseudonym.⁽⁷⁾

Social strictures surrounding women writers remained well into the 1860's and beyond. It was the custom for women to publish their first novel anonymously. The reasons for anonymity were two-fold: public bias which was accompanied by varying degrees of ridicule and scepticism against women writers, and the author's personal fear against the unpredictable and frequently harsh glare of publicity. Anonymity also gave to some women a great sense of freedom and enjoyment. Fanny Burney published Evelina (1778) for a "frolic" without the knowledge of her family and her father was not told until the novel was a success.⁽⁸⁾ Although this sense of personal freedom remained, the social and moral pressures on women in the nineteenth century, to be modest, withdrawn and not to seek the limelight, became enormous. Geraldine Jewsbury claimed to have used a pseudonym for fear of discrimination and anxiety about causing pain, offending friends, or betraying affection.⁽⁹⁾ Elizabeth Gaskell published anonymously during the first years of her authorship and was wary of having her literary works made known even among

intimate friends. Such was the case with other, less-known women writers: Elizabeth Furlong Shipton Harris, Roman Catholic tractarian and novelist, wrote her novels as if she were the male protagonist. Felicia Skene, Anglo-Catholic novelist and philanthropist published as "A Lady Witness" to the events in the novel; and Sarah Smith used the asexual name of Hesba Stretton. More famous are the ambiguous names of Acton, Currer, and Ellis Bell, adopted by Ann, Charlotte and Emily Bronte, because, wrote Charlotte, "We had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked upon with prejudice." Her comment is well based on her own experience. The short correspondence between Charlotte Bronte and Robert Southey towards the end of 1837, in which he advised her not to "day dream" and to attend to "her proper duties," saying that, "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be", highlights the kind of unhelpful attitudes female writers were likely to meet.⁽¹⁰⁾ Eva Figes comments that Charlotte Bronte felt her sex made her inadequate as a writer as her letters are full of her feelings of inferiority to the male writers, Dickens and Thackeray, because of their broader knowledge of the busy scenes and affairs of the world.⁽¹¹⁾ Like Fanny Burney before her, Charlotte's self-inhibition was such that she did not disclose to her father her authorship of Jane Eyre until she was able to hand him the printed copy.⁽¹²⁾ Mary Ann Evans tried to keep her private life with Lewes out of the glare of publicity: she retained her male name of George Eliot, if not her anonymity, for the whole of her working life. Her determination to conceal her identity was so powerful that, for a time, it led her to permit the popular belief that the author of Scenes of Clerical Life was the son of a baker at Nuneaton,

and, also, to her emphatic denial that she was the creator of Adam Bede.⁽¹³⁾ Even when women succeeded in publishing anonymously they lived in fear of their true identity being discovered. A popular game played by Victorians of trying to spot a female hand at work was likely to cause them a further anxiety. M.F. Hopkins, Gaskell's biographer, relates how W.R. Gregg, the journalist and Thomas Carlyle detected the feminine hand of Elizabeth Gaskell in Mary Barton⁽¹⁴⁾ and a Miss Edgeworth had hazarded the hand of Harriet Martineau. The implications of the game that women writers were the subject of amusement caused considerable distress to those who wanted their writing to be taken seriously as a respectable and dignified occupation. In fact, there is sufficient evidence that conflict between art and self-exposure brought about many apparent stress-related illnesses among women authors: Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot both suffered frequent headaches and bouts of depression: George Eliot was often whisked away by Lewes from the London she found so oppressive either to the country or to the Continent to write her novels. He, too, was frequently ill under the strain of protecting his beloved Marian from her harsher critics.⁽¹⁵⁾ Geraldine Jewsbury fell ill each time she completed a book and finally gave up writing fiction on her doctor's orders,⁽¹⁶⁾ and Harriet Martineau battled against a life-time of internal disorders.⁽¹⁷⁾

Paradoxically, women were assisted in the pursuit of novel-writing by the low literary status given to the novel. Novels, presumed to be a form of entertainment for the masses, were considered to be a very easy medium to read: they did not require specialized knowledge or the mental exertion required

of poetry, essays or sermons. Thus, it was assumed that they could be beamed as equally at women as at the working classes. This is clearly evident when W.R.Greg in 1849, grudgingly gives his reasons for the exasperating numbers of women writers on the literary scene:

"There are vast numbers of lady novelists, for much the same reason that there are vast numbers of sempstresses. Thousands of women have nothing to do, and yet are under necessity to do something" (18)

Greg felt that novels by women would be "inherently defective" because of women's "lack of intelligence" and experience. John Stuart Mill and George Eliot shared Greg's anxiety over the standard of the literary output of women but recognised that the main contributory factor was not the size of their brain⁽¹⁹⁾ but a lack of proper education. Mill, fully aware that men, like Greg, felt threatened by the educated woman, was outspoken about it: "Women who read much more, women who write, are in the existing constitution of things a contradiction and a disturbing element." He accused men who left women with little choice but to be domestic servants of practising a law of despotism".⁽²⁰⁾ In fact, almost without exception, the more accomplished of the women novelists were better educated than the majority of women of their time.⁽²¹⁾ George Eliot, the most erudite among them, despised uninformed women, with literary pretensions.⁽²²⁾ Novels, too, unlike the great ancient Classical literature, were written in English, an inferior language to Latin and Greek. To the upperclass, male academics

of the period, English Literature was, says Terry Eagleton, "The poor man's Classics (providing) a cheapish, liberal, education for those beyond the charmed circles of public schools and Oxbridge".⁽²³⁾ In 1877, a Royal Commission witness put forward the suggestion that "English Literature might be considered a suitable subject for women..... and the second and third-rate men who became schoolmasters".⁽²⁴⁾ Notably, the rise in status given to English in England ran parallel to the gradual, grudging admission of women into higher institutions of education. Moreover, women writers who did publish also had to learn to live with the frequent condescension of male editors, who took it upon themselves to edit material which they thought to be improper coming from the pens of ladies.⁽²⁵⁾ A further impediment suffered by women was unfair prejudice from male literary critics who adopted the tendency to down-grade any piece written by a woman. G.H.Lewes was fully aware of the current practice: he noticed that when Jane Eyre was finally known to be a woman's book, the tone of criticism noticeably changed.⁽²⁶⁾ There is also the more humiliating story of how Charlotte Tonna, at the request of the Committee of Christian Influence Society, wrote a study, The Perils of the Nation (1843) of conditions of Britain's labouring classes using information from Parliamentary reports, correspondence and other factual sources. As it was an unusual assignment for a woman to do, it had to be published anonymously on the ground that legislators and those for whose perusal it was intended would not have paid much attention to the subject had they known it had come from the pen of a

woman. (27)

Ironically the intellectual downgrading of women, and of novels, was to work to women's advantage; it enabled the more serious writers to discover and exploit a new literary form to which it was possible to apply their own unique experience and imaginative skills. Moreover, spurred on by, innate genius, imaginative prowess, a love of writing, or simply an urge to fill in the long days, many women writers remained undeterred by the onslaughts to disparage them. Like the philanthropic women - or perhaps because many of them were also philanthropists as well as writers - they appeared to have shared their same determined, rebellious spirit to succeed and make their "voice" heard. The commonly shared circumstances of the lives and struggles of these intelligent, resourceful and energetic women suggest the existence of a common affinity and also of a shared psychological reaction against the conventional barriers of social constraint.

An emerging consciousness of a female tradition coincided with the unprecedented concentration of talented women writers. Elizabeth Fry and Florence Nightingale may have been nervous about novels as empty distractions for the mind, but Elizabeth Gaskell admired the work of Florence Nightingale, and Josephine Butler was inspired by the novels of Elizabeth Gaskell. Harriet Martineau admired the independent spirit of Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, and Barbara Bodichon, a

radical feminist was delighted to hear that the novel, Adam Bede, was by a woman and that it should take a place by the works of Thacker^{ca}y. Anne Mozley, a reviewer of Bentley's Quarterly Review, also rejoiced in the authorship of successful novels by women. She praised Adam Bede for its objectivity, displaying: "The knowledge of female nature is feminine..... the position of the writer towards every point of discussion is a woman's position, that is from a stand of observation rather than more active participation."⁽²⁸⁾ This open acknowledgement of the literary prowess of women by women, as well as by men who championed the women, implies not only a common affinity and goal, but also a recognition of a female literary culture worthy of preservation. . Pauline Nestor

noticed how earlier movements of individual insight and professional self-consciousness gave way to a sustained and articulate assessment on the part of women writers and their relations to each other and to the literary endeavour. Whereas previously male writers had long gathered at court, in the coffee house, club and university, women were now banding together and finding mutual support in many professional, educational and philanthropic societies, which were beginning to spring up, societies such as the Governesses Benevolent Institution, the Society for the promotion of the Employment of Women, schools for the training of nurses and the Catholic Sisterhoods.⁽²⁹⁾ The time had come for the female sub-culture to emerge into the public sphere; moreover, the time had come, as Lewes had noted, when "a new element of experience in

literary discourse", had emerged.

One is next led to ask, why once having the additional experience of philanthropy available to them upon which to draw, did the eminent women of literature emerge as accomplished novelists and not as eminent essayists, dramatists or poets? Dale Spender has suggested that women became accepted as writers provided they did not address themselves to a male audience through the media of essays, plays and poetry. These were the public literary preserves of male writers.⁽³⁰⁾ Did women writers, therefore, come to perceive the novel as a literary form of their own?

Women's experience was mostly outside the ambit of both essay-writing and writing for the theatre. Essay-writing is largely about ideas and requires a certain depth of philosophical and political knowledge to execute. Women knew little of the world of politics, revolutions, wars and public life: however, they assumed a great deal of personal knowledge about religious ideas. They, therefore, substituted the religious tract for the essay. Two women who did write successful essay articles on a variety of social, political, religious and philosophical subjects were Harriet Martineau and George Eliot, but without disclosure of their identity. Writing for the theatre could not have been done anonymously as its execution could not be confined to the privacy of the home. Also, women writers could not have associated them-

selves with the theatre without risk to their personal reputation.⁽³¹⁾ The low social status of the theatre, more often than not, was associated with the "fast" and the raffish. Attendance at the old patent houses, Drury Lane and Convent Garden, and the Princess Theatre was all that society would permit. The writing of plays remained a popular past-time for men.⁽³²⁾ It was not until the late 1860's that the originality of plays and the social status of the theatre improved its respectability, even then, a woman's association with it would have been frowned upon. Because of the general approbation towards the theatre by the powerful evangelical movement of the first half of the century, writers of worth were inclined to eschew the writing of plays, although the works of Shakespeare were admiringly upheld for the quality of their poetry.⁽³³⁾ Charlotte Bronte's novels, Jane Eyre and Villette are inspired by the poetry of place and dramatic symbolism of Shakespeare's plays as well as by many more recent writers.⁽³⁴⁾ Dickens, as a novelist, was attracted to the theatre. The depictions of many of Dickens' characters are often commented on for their theatricality, and his fascination for the theatre is evidenced in scenes like that of Crumbles and his group of performing players in Nicholas Nickleby, and in the circus scenes in Hard Times. Dickens enjoyed a close acquaintance with the theatre through his father and his friends. Such an experience was not so readily available to women as the implications were that only low or "fallen women" would be thus acquainted. Clearly, the contemporary

social and religious ethos of refinement and respectability surrounding the theatre excluded it from the experience of the educated, middleclass "lady".

On the other hand, one cannot say that the writing of poetry was not outside the scope of the experience of women, yet few women excelled at poetry as they did the novel. Like the novel, it could be written in the privacy of one's home, and topics of love, courtship, religion, the mystical aspects of life and Nature were open to them. It was also a medium through which the protest voice of woman could be expressed as Elizabeth Barrett Browning did in her long narrative poem, Aurora Leigh (1857). There were successful poets, like Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-61), Christina Rossetti (1803-94), and, to a lesser extent, Emily Bronte (1818-48). There were many less-known, such as: Sarah Flower Adams (1805-48), who also wrote hymns; Sara Coleridge (1805-52), daughter of Samuel; Dora Greenwell (1821-1882), also a philanthropist and interested in suffrage; Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1793-1835), reported to have "a genuine gift"; Alice Meynell (1837-1920) who was considered capable of fine sonnets and lyrical verse, and Adeline Proctor (1825-1864), a Catholic who worked in women's refuges.⁽³⁵⁾ Yet, neither the eighteenth nor nineteenth centuries produced a female poet of the stature of Coleridge, Keats, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Browning, or Hardy. The reasons for this may be many and varied. There was the lack of a broad educational and public life experience: Elizabeth Barrett

Browning, on her life in art and books, writes, "I make great guesses at Human nature in the main. But how willingly I would, as a poet, exchange some of this lumbering, ponderous, helpless knowledge of books for some experience of life." (36) She, like Christina Rossetti, was additionally encumbered by illness. Nonetheless, Elizabeth Barrett benefited from the politically lively Barrett household in which anti-slavery, social reforms and democratic dissent were included in the family debates.⁽³⁷⁾ Christina Rossetti was less constrained by society than most writers, being both poor and foreign, she and her painter brother, Dante Gabrielle, remained, for the most part of their lives, unaffected by the customs and conventions of middleclass England.⁽³⁸⁾ Christina, as did Emily Bronte, preferred self-imposed isolation and only the companionship of those near to her. Unlike the women "social" novelists, neither Rossetti nor Emily Bronte desired to be part of the abundance of activity in the world at large. Their lines of enquiry, their artistic, acquisitive natures did not lead them to direct their thoughts sufficiently outwards to consider matters which affected humankind in general and the effects of the industrial revolution on society around them. Clearly the writing of novels, at this time, required this altruistic dimension for the work to be popularly received by the common readership. Women were also less likely to succeed as poets because they were denied knowledge of the Ancient Classical tradition basic to much of the poetic language and technique of English poetry. Poetry has certain boundaries for the exercise of the critical

imagination: it abstracts from life and mirrors it in a highly condensed and symbolic form. Poetry is concerned with prosody, form and the messages of Classical literary allusion.⁽³⁹⁾ Women who have attempted to write poetry had long been tabooed and ridiculed by men for their lack of educational refinement: the poet, Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea (sic) (1661-1720), bitterly commented that "a woman who attempts the pen" is "an intruder on the rights of men".⁽⁴⁰⁾ Linguistically and structurally, poetry is a form which historically has been developed and cultivated almost exclusively by male writers and dramatists from the times of the ancient civilisations, and, in more recent centuries in English literature, by men such as Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Coleridge, Keats and Wordsworth. These literary giants have kept the language of poetry alive by interlacing the language metric patterns and poetic allusion from the Ancient Classical and Christian traditions with contemporary vernacular speech forms and customary symbolism. They have inherited through their access to education forms of structure and made innovations with style, syntax and metre. Thereby, they have enriched English literature and the English language. Thus, for centuries, they have possessed the power of the mainstream cultural expression. Women have also been historically excluded from the "male" experience of the world, from the world of scholarship, philosophical enquiry, politics, exploration of new continents. In wars and revolutions, women have been mostly victims and not perpetrators of events. Similarly, women's own response to love and romantic

passion would have been prohibitive topics especially when expressed in the condensed graphic or symbolic language of poetry. As Elizabeth Barrett Browning was fully aware, no good art can proceed from the superficial or artificial mind: an intense and broad life-experience is an important ingredient. Human vision arises from the imagination which has been evoked by the individual's experience of the world. It is little wonder that any poetry written by women has been fairly insignificant and lacking in depth, when measured against the historical output of the great male literary poets.

Although the majority of women writers turned to the novel, it is clear that they, like their fellow male novelists, often made effectual use of the language and technique of poetry. The novels of both Charlotte and Emily Bronte have been praised for their poetic descriptive passages. To Charlotte Bronte the position of the novelist was as important as poetry was to the great Romantic poets. Through the medium of prose, she and her more talented sister adopted the techniques of the poet of sympathetic symbolism, metaphor and syntactical arrangements to create a sense of time and place, to dramatize events and to activate and relax the momentum of the action and to arouse a variety of responses and feelings ranging from puritan sobriety to heightened passions, natural and unnatural. Emmeshed into the narrative prose, these devices of the poet, convey all nuances of human feeling, emotions and passions dramatized by descriptions of Nature and of place, craggy moorland bleakness, wintery lanes, leafy valleys and

summers gardens.⁽⁴¹⁾ Harriet Martineau's innovatory fiction - written mostly by 1846, when the Brontes were still contemplating the publication of their first novels - was highly praised in the Edinburgh Review for its poetical quality. William Empson compared her descriptions of national scenery and domestic incident with the paintings of Callcott and Wilkie; he found her stories, A Manchester Strike and the two Garvelock stories "so beautiful in their poetry and painting, and so important their moral...."⁽⁴²⁾ George Eliot in an essay written in a notebook and later published in Pinney's collection, distinguishes between the limits of poetry and prose. Explaining her choice of prose for the tale, Silas Marner, she writes "I have felt all through as if the story would have lent itself best to metrical rather than prose fiction but, as my mind dwelt on the subject, I became inclined to a more realistic treatment."⁽⁴³⁾ George Eliot, who only wrote poetry for private amusement, patterned her earlier pastoral novels with Wordsworthian rural landscapes. She made truly effective use of extended metaphor to create a sense of place and to provide thematic unity and order in all her novels.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Such devices heightened Eliot's sensitive and carefully balanced portrayal of the human individual and the multifaceted aspects of the human psyche. Elizabeth Gaskell was less talented in this respect, she was more the teller of stories than poet; she relied more heavily on the straight narration to describe the activities and thoughts of her characters and makes considerable use of vernacular dialogue to humanise her characters.

Nonetheless, there are signs in her novels that she was capable of some fine poetic expression. In North and South, metaphoric inferences to rural "leafiness" and industrial "smoke" accentuates the vast social divide in nineteenth century Britain. In Ruth, although a less successful novel, are some well-drawn metaphors, - of white blossom glens and sea beaches - to remind her readers of Ruth's continuing innocent guilelessness. These skills, employed by women novelists, are basically drawn from the male poetic tradition. Like Hardy and Dickens, they drew upon them to enhance the novel as a new literary form.

The novel, this "loose baggy monster" - expansive, adaptable and malleable⁽⁴⁵⁾ could comfortably absorb an integrated expression of both the feminine subculture and the masculine tradition of linguistic, poetic and theatrical techniques. Rosalind Miles, a modern-day critic, writing on the popularity of the novel over plays and poems, sees the novel as "the primary agent of the moral imagination of society Whatever is occurring, even peripherally in individual or cultural consciousness at large, we expect to find in the novel".⁽⁴⁶⁾ With female minds turned towards the particulars of home and family, human relationships, moral behaviour, and in many instances philanthropy and intervention in social reform, it is not surprising that the novel provided the basis for some of the deep thinking and social conscious women in nineteenth century, industrial Britain. Carol Gilligan's thesis may throw an additional light on why women preferred the "amorphous" form

of the novel in preference to the more precise structure of poetry, plays and essays. The female concept of "ethic of care" would have been severely restricted by any other literary form. The novel, with its chapter format and prose narrative, offered more scope for the depiction of community life and for the exploration of a vast mix of human inter-relationships. There was unending scope for the inter-play of characters, for dialogue, for descriptive exposition and psychological analysis. The form of the novel also permits free movement between different social groups and places: the nineteenth century social novel allowed more scope for movement between social classes for its middleclass female characters, especially philanthropists, like Margaret Hale, Dinah Morris and Shirley, than to the drawing-room ladies of either Jane Austen, Fanny Burney or Samuel Richardson. The poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, may have meritoriously espoused the rights of working women and the rights of maternity, but, because of the constraints of form, they lack the considerable scope and impact of novels such as Jane Eyre, Middlemarch, and North and South. The novel offered new scope: by its very nature it can force a writer to imitate transitory details; it can expound rhetorically on a variety of issues, and, simultaneously, project a precise field of vision for the critic. Moreover, the serious nineteenth century novelist saw no need to sacrifice the aesthetic element found in poetry. The novel gave to the Victorian writer, men and women, less stylistic constraints: it enabled women in particular, an opportunity to exercise their imaginations along new channels and to experiment stylistically. Writers like the Brontes and George Eliot, primarily recognised the novel as an

art form and not merely a record of history or a religious tract. They saw the important connection between experience and the imaginative skills of the writer which communicated: "All life, all feeling, all observation The very note, trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life".⁽⁴⁷⁾ George Eliot, described the power of the imagination as "an intense inward representation, and a creative energy', as not a flight from reality but as a capacity for further penetration into it."⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is because of Eliot's deep artistic strength that Simon Dentith finds her very much a realist writer, he writes : "I offer her as a model; as a writer who, in terms and categories available to her, attempts to understand and make sense of social history of her time and the possibilities for individual fulfilment made available by that history." ⁽⁴⁹⁾

Unfortunately, as with the practice of philanthropy, the literary standards of women novelists varied considerably. Inspired by the novels of such as Fanny Burney, Samuel Richardson, and Jane Austen, many women concentrated on the only topics with which they believed they were conversant, namely courtship and marriage.⁽⁵⁰⁾ In general, the restricted middleclass female experience in Victorian society and female education, confined to fine arts, matters of social decorum and wifely usefulness, did little to assist the technical skills and worldly knowledge for accomplished novel-writing. Unless a woman was able to convey a sense of the wider experience of life beyond her immediate drawing room, she was almost inevitably doomed to compare unfavourably with male writers.⁽⁵¹⁾ George

Eliot roundly condemned "silly" novels written by pretentious literary women, who knew little about the world and even less about what constitutes good writing technique:

"It is clear they write in elegant boudoirs with violet coloured ink and a ruby pen; that they must be entirely indifferent to publisher's accounts, and inexperienced in every form of poverty except poverty in brains. It is true that we are constantly struck with the want of verisimilitude in their representations of the high society in which they seem to live; but then they betray no closer acquaintance with any other form of life. If their peers and peeresses are improbable, their literary men, tradespeople, and cottagers, are impossible; and their intellect seems to have the peculiar impartiality of reproducing both what they have seen and heard, and what they have not seen and heard with equal unfaithfulness."
(52)

George Eliot's article preceded her own era of novel-writing. She despairingly believed that the intellect of women was unfairly represented by the mass of feminine literature, that "silly novels" threatened, "the sacredness of the writer's art". (53) On the other hand, she was ready to praise those whom she considered were fine women authors. She and Lewes took pleasure in reading aloud to each other the novels of Jane Austen. (54) She enjoyed enormously the works of Elizabeth Gaskell and wrote to her explaining how she read and re-read The Life of Charlotte Bronte and also the beginning of Mary Barton - the latter clearly enthralled her. (55) As critic and editor of the Westminster Review she had developed a discerning eye for literature of worth. She was one of those inventive women who recognised that the women novelists of the nineteenth century had at their disposal a fresh dimension of material

worth exploiting artistically: the experience of public benevolence and charitable work which few eighteenth century women had had. There were also those women who chose the novel not because of its artistic opportunities, but because of its common popularity and because it gave them a public voice, a platform, not hitherto given them. Dinah Mulock (1861) understood its enormous impact when she wrote:

"The essayist may write for his hundreds, the preacher for his thousands; but the novelist counts his audience by millions. His power is threefold - over heart, reason and fancy." (56)

A possible correlation between a zeal for philanthropy and a "missionary zeal" for writing is suggested by Prochaska. He writes:

"Women's philanthropy had by the 1850's developed with missionary zeal, and like all missionaries they were compelled to communicate their cause. With the discouragement of women in public speaking, it is not surprising that the articulate and educated women turned to communicating her cause in writing." (57)

The "writing" referred to here encompasses, reports, pamphlets, family and women's magazines, "the millions of penny tracts pumped out by the religious publishing houses" and also, novels. However, for a large proportion of women writers (and also male writers), the didactic potential, the novel, as an instrument of social and moral mission, served as a highly attractive alternative to the religious tract or hymn. Among the women crusading writers were, Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, Harriet

Martineau, Julia Kavanagh, Elizabeth Stone, Fanny Mayne, and later in the century, Anna Jameson and Ellice Hopkins. The popularity of the novel and its widening circulation gave them a large and immediate audience. Women's conditioned role as moral educator in the home was an added stimulus; the novel was capable of being a kind of "moral" pulpit for the larger, wayward "family". Many of the well-meaning ladies put to paper an imitation of the "proper" life as they perceived it and how they understood God's promise of the Kingdom was to be realised. Consequently, the didactic content in many of the lesser novels is very strong indeed, making them, on the whole, poor, uninteresting reading. On the other hand, there were those novelists who were able to draw on their own philanthropic experiences and powerfully intergrate religious and moral didactic themes into the general aesthetic fabric of their tales of courtship and marriage without any significant detriment to the literary merit of the novel. Thus many women proved themselves to be skilled and competant novelists. A few, like George Eliot and Charlotte Bronte, as committed artists, produced works of undoubted genius. Not surprisingly, as with philanthropy, individual dedication and aptitude varied enormously, ranging from uninformed amateurism to true professionalism.

Inevitably, because of their moral and domestic association with children, some of the first fiction that women wrote was for children. Up to 1780 the writing and compilation of

children's books had been either a leisure occupation of the publisher himself or of commissioned hack-writers. Gillian Avery, writing on heroes and heroines in nineteenth century children's fiction, tells of how the first writers to take up writing for juveniles professionally were women; they included women such as Mrs. Barbard, Mrs. Pilkington, Mary Hughes, and Mrs. Trimmer. They were usually women who ran educational establishments and supplemented their incomes by earning an extra guinea or two by writing tales aimed at improving the minds and education of their youthful audience. The evangelical public ensured that the stories were not fanciful, but factual and moral. Filial piety was taken for granted; bad-tempered, unsmiling, greedy, inattentive children were criticised; acts of cruelty, cowardice, pride, selfishness were condemned.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Maria Edgeworth wrote some of the better children's fiction of her time. Charlotte Yonge, an Anglo-Catholic Tractarian, was particularly dogmatic towards her young readers. Yonge wrote children's stories at a time of prevailing prejudice about the laxity of fiction, and like other writers of fiction for the young, protected her reputation by presenting them as "A moral tale".⁽⁵⁹⁾ These writings for children contrast sharply with Yonge's delightful, lively and more successful novels aimed at a maturer audience.⁽⁶⁰⁾

By mid-century when the great women novelists had emerged, a notion was being put forward that women were establishing

a discernable literary tradition of their own. George Henry Lewes firmly believed that the appearance of women in the field of literature was a significant fact, and was often discerningly appreciative of the literary skills of women. In his essay, The Lady Novelist, he theorised on the novel as "a correlate of her (woman's) position in society", and writes:

"The advent of female literature promises women's view of life, women's experience: in other words a new element. Make what distinctions you please in the social world, it still remains true that men and women have different organisations, consequently different experiences." (61)

On the subject of female creativity in The Subjection of Women, (1869), John Stuart Mill displays less optimism. He is sceptical of women being able to overcome the influence of the male literary tradition in order to create "an original, primary and independent art." Nonetheless, he recognised that women could never be content with being mere imitators of the literary heritage of men. He believed that, if only women lived in a different country, then they would have been innovators of their own literary tradition.⁽⁶²⁾ It can be argued that Mill was too close in time to the great women novelists of his day to appreciate the future impact of their literary output. These comments indicate that women writers were beginning to explore more fully than ever before the freedom to express their concerns, thoughts and view of life in general through their own private world of the imagination in much the same way that their philanthropic sisters were evolving a more public world

for themselves through the work of community welfare. Worth-while fiction proceeds from the magnetic force of the imagination as it feeds on the concrete experiences of life and the values held by the individual writer. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the existence of a developing female tradition would manifest itself in a discernible correlation between the subject matter of female novelists of this period and the female philanthropic activity they witnessed around them. The question remains, how far did the literary women thus perceive or develop a tradition of their own?

3.3. WOMEN : A LITERARY TRADITION AND THE PHILANTHROPIC THEME.

"The female literary tradition comes from the still-evolving relationships between women writers and their society".

Elaine Showalter

"The greatest want to me is not having a little working-room to myself.....
The poor mother of a family learns to be patient."

Mary Howitt

"Our images create the world for us; they shape our consciousness."

Patricia Stubbs

The aim of this chapter is to identify those literary characteristics which have been specifically associated with the literary tradition of women and to correlate them with features of the female philanthropic movement.

It was Virginia Woolf, in A Room of One's Own (1929) who first promoted the idea adopted by modern-day feminists that a female tradition of writing should be a subject for serious research. Of modern-day feminists, Elaine Showalter has probably produced the most widely read and one of the most convincing arguments for the existence of such a tradition, which, she claims, in her well-researched book A Tradition Of Their Own (1978), is based on a evolving female sub-culture. Despite the commonality of mind of the two writers, there are a number of respects in which they differ in their examination and approach to the subject.

Virginia Woolf's brief satirical polemic, is often witty, sharply penetrating, and, at times, a caustic commentary on the social reasons why women have not achieved the same greatness as men have. Woolf comes to the conclusion that, historically, women have been biologically encumbered, excluded from most educational establishments and male-dominated institutions, and generally socially belittled. Consequently, they have had very little opportunity to display their innate genius: for example, a female Shakespeare would not have been permitted to enter a stage-door or act a part in a play, let alone write great drama. Woolf gives account of her own indignity of being barred "like a curse" from a renowned Oxford library simply because she was a woman.⁽¹⁾ Virginia Woolf succeeded in awakening the awareness of the literary public to the educational and occupational bars suffered by

women. Woolf's remedy, given in a subsequent lecture on "Professions" for Women" (1931), is female self-assertiveness: women, who are torn between achieving self-fulfilment as a writer and meeting demands made upon her by house and family should develop a sufficiently strong will to "kill off" the "Angel in the House". Thus, she vigorously denounced the middleclass ideology of feminine domesticity, which prescribed women as the Perfect Lady, "strong in inner purity, submissive to men and Queen in her own realm, the home".⁽²⁾ Woolf admits that she, like other women, was haunted by the "phantom" of stereotyped expectations of women, which had preyed on her conscience and had come between her and her work as a writer. Historically, women have suffered the perpetual inner conflict between female self-assertion and feminine inhibition. Women needed space of their own away from the stereotype forced upon them: a room of their own, to separate them for some of the time from family commitments and interruption. In a Room of One's Own she described the kind of family pressures with which many women have been confronted - Aphra Behn, Mary Wollstonecraft, Charlotte Bronte. Woolf asserts that the female tradition of writing began with Aphra Behn (1640-89) who, because of widowhood and a series of unfortunate circumstances, decided to earn her living by writing, and, as a consequence, faced insults heaped upon her for her sex. Woolf wrote admiringly of her as a "middleclass woman with all the plebian virtues of humour, vitality and

courage". Less concerned about the quality or content of Behn's literary output - about fourteen plays, some poetry and a few novels - and more concerned with the early writer's capacity to endure a life-time of accusations of plagiarism and lewdness,⁽⁴⁾ Woolf praises Behn's tenacious "freedom of the mind" which enabled her to prove that "money could be made by writing at a sacrifice so, by degrees writing (by women) became not merely a sign of folly and a distracted mind, but was of particular importance".⁽⁵⁾

Elaine Showalter's book, A Tradition of Their Own, is a more meticulously researched project than Virginia Woolf's satirical polemic. Showalter starts with the assumption that British women have always lived a different life to that lived by British men: this she terms "subculture". The female "subculture", which has remained peripheral to the main "male" culture, has unified the values, tastes, conceptions, experiences and behaviour of individual women as daughters, wives and mothers, and developed its own literary tradition in much the same way as other sub-cultures - black, Jewish, Canadian, Anglo-Indian - have developed.⁽⁶⁾ Consequently, there is in the British and American tradition, a permanent, a "deep, basic and inevitable difference between male and female ways of perceiving the world". The female literary tradition arises from, "The still-evolving relationships between women writers and their society" - identified by the way "the self-awareness of the woman writer has translated itself into a literary form in a

in a specific place and time-span".⁽⁷⁾ Showalter defines three arbitrary stages of the time-span in the developing tradition - the Feminine, Feminist and Female. The Feminine phase - "a prolonged phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles" - is the period from the male pseudonym in the 1840's to the death of George Eliot in 1880; the Feminist phase - "a phase of protest against these standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights and values including a demand for autonomy" - as 1880 to 1920 (or the winning of the vote), and the Female phase - a phase of "self-discovery, a turning inward, freed from some of the opposition, a search for identity" - as 1920 to the present day, but entering a new self-awareness about 1960.⁽⁸⁾ Showalter explains that the spirit of "protest" and "rebellion" has somehow been tempered by incidents of feminine reserve and sacrifice. This suggests that these women writer pioneers, like the philanthropists, were either unable, or reluctant, to kill off the "Angel in the House", instead, they transposed her elsewhere or presented her in some other form. Clearly, this thesis concentrates on the "Feminine phase", but, as the foregoing section on philanthropy has already indicated, some embryonic features of the Feminist and Female phases may well be found to be present. What is of significant interest here is that Showalter identifies the manifestation of the literary tradition with emerging professional activities of Victorian women as "social reformers, nurses, governesses, and novelists, either based at home, or (who) were extensions of the feminine

role as, teacher, helper and mother of mankind."⁽⁹⁾ This certainly confirms the hypothesis of this thesis that there was a strong link between the feminine philanthropic spirit and the women writers at this time, and that the "philanthropic novel" contributed to the development of a female literary tradition. It is not difficult to associate the qualities of self-assertiveness, rebelliousness, tenaciousness and independence of mind which Woolf admired not only in Behn but also in her successors like Mary Wollstonecraft and Charlotte Bronte to the great nineteenth century women philanthropists and reformers, like Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Caroline Norton, Mary Carpenter, Josephine Butler, Octavia Hill, and others as described earlier in this thesis. Also, Showalter's definition of the "Feminine" phase of literary development, of imitation and internalization, correlates closely with the philanthropic development of women from the stage of "self-identity" when they took the "Angel in the House" out into the community and became philanthropically involved in the community.

Both Woolf and Showalter link the literary tradition with women who were compelled to write to earn a living. These, they consider, are the true professionals.^(10a) It is a precarious premise which appears to place economic necessity before excellence and artistic worth. There have been many leisured ladies - Jane Austen, Fanny Burney, Maria Edgeworth and Elizabeth Gaskell - none of whom were forced to earn a living by writing, yet who have proved their worth as novelists. It is true that the novels by Elizabeth Gaskell do not fall into

the same class as those written by the Brontes or George Eliot, possibly because of conflicting family demands. Nonetheless, despite her own protests that her family and philanthropic activities took priority over her writing, it cannot be doubted that her dedication to the creation of her novels was far from unprofessional. In a letter to Mrs. Greg in 1849, she wrote of her compelling preoccupation with the subject matter for Mary Barton:

"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 reality, was the seeming injustice of the inequalities of fortune." (11)

Another time she communicated her recipe for writing a good novel to a young would-be author.⁽¹²⁾ Basch writes of how she valued "the priceless hidden world of art, which fortified her against the wear and tear of a thousand daily cases". Like many a dedicated philanthropist-writer she made a "profession" out of her chosen activity, yet remained a devoted wife and mother. In fact, one might argue that happily married novelists, like Elizabeth Gaskell, who produced fiction because she enjoyed telling a story, are superior to those hastily prepared works produced by many an independent woman, compelled to write for money alone and not for artistic reasons. Many a hack writer writes for a living. "Professionalism" in writing may essentially rest on the necessity to earn a living, it must also depend on the inner urge to produce something of artistic worth, to satisfy an intellectual and emotional self-fulfilment, or

to make a forceful statement on the environment. Virginia Woolf's argument that women writers can only be taken seriously, if they kill off the "Angel in the House", turn their backs on domesticity, become "Professionals" and find "a room of their own" in which to write undisturbed, is still far from its full realisation.

It is possible that the conflict which many nineteenth century women suffered between domestic love and duty and Art or philanthropy, enhanced their own determination to succeed. As both Woolf and Showalter point out conflicts between love and art, duty and self-fulfilment, self-assertion and reserve are not normally regarded as "male" conflicts. Historically, men, unlike women, have been expected to put their art or profession before domestic love and duty. Women, on the other hand, have lived lives often torn between the deep psychological need for self-assertiveness and the social requirement of feminine servitude and self-effacement. Anonymity of authorship⁽¹³⁾ was only one symptom of their dilemma. The relationship of early women writers to their profession or art was uneasy: an assertive woman would have been frowned upon and ignored as being brash or brazen. However, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the particular conflicts, which women have historically suffered because of their sex must have been internalised down the centuries and somehow received expression in what women have done and written. It is possible that the concept "feminine domesticity" - whether it finds its expression

in the home or in the community - has been absorbed into the continuing tradition created by the serious woman artist. Even the most liberated of women writers, George Eliot, who wrote in isolation when society ostracised her for her unconventional liaison with Lewes, set time aside to look after and nurse Lewes' three sons. The solitude of the ~~Haworth~~ moorland vicarage and its ^{ori}merit_hous effect on the fiction produced by the Brontes is well recorded: on the other hand, although unmarried, the sisters mostly kept house for their father and gave it priority when demands were made of them. Elizabeth Gaskell had no such privacy. Mary Howitt frequently complained of having to work in the dining room exposed to interruptions, and suffered the effects of overwork when combining the tasks of wife, mother and woman of letters.⁽¹⁴⁾ Other writers, like Charlotte Yonge, an unmarried, devoted and obedient daughter, took time off from writing for local works of charity, and Margaret Cliphant, as sole provider of a dependent relative and her own children, was an example of the women who had to write to keep them all from starving.⁽¹⁵⁾ The woman writer was obliged to compromise, in both life and fiction, the stereotype of womanhood - "the Angel in the House" - and this could well be mirrored particularly in the philosophy of their novels. Carol Macmillan, writing on the timeless philosophical assumptions surrounding the supposed inferior reasoning powers of women, raises an important point in respect of the internalisation of the conflict. She says that, it is no mere accident or silly prejudice that women, who have always been associated with the rearing of children, have rarely made great philosophers;

they have been "inhibited from learning to respond and deal with situations at the level of the rational and universal", and adds, "Indeed, it is crucial that, for the most part, women are taught to think at the level of the particular and the affective, because the relationship between mother and child is a relationship between two human beings."⁽¹⁶⁾ Philosophy in common with poetry, was mainly an acquisitive response to the timeless search for rational and universal truths, whereas the form of the novel lends itself more readily to the communicating of "the particular and the affective" aspects of life, namely the daily working of human relationships. In fact, Virginia Woolf claims that women were trained to be novelists and not poets simply because they lived in "a common sitting room" surrounded by people; woman was trained to use her mind in observation and upon the analysis of character. She lived mostly in her home, with her emotions, excluded by her sex from those kind of experiences open to men.⁽¹⁷⁾ Fiction is about life and reflects what ordinary people think, do and say, and the novel, technically elastic, required no boundaries. Likewise, the daily intercourse which philanthropists had with people in the community and public places was also centred on domestic skills and family relationships and human needs. For both writers and philanthropists it entailed a widening of the personal affective vision of the universe.

Virginia Woolf, reflecting on the difference of vision between men and women writers, argues that it is up to women to establish their own cultural identity in a different order

of values. Because women are "more interested in autobiographical experience and in their neighbours", they can establish a different order of values by exploring their own sex.⁽¹⁸⁾ When Kestner compares the social fiction of Hannah More with that of her male contemporary, William Paley, he noticed that More, like other women of the time, were more concerned with domestic situations and with reproducing local dialects - the dialogue in her novels was couched more strictly among the lower classes.⁽¹⁹⁾ Elizabeth Gaskell's novels are full of everyday minutiae, with careful attention given to local speech forms.⁽²⁰⁾ All her novels, whether based in industrial or rural England are about families, friends and neighbours. Similarly, Charlotte Yonge's stories centre on rural people of Otterbourne she knew so well. Margaret Oliphant's Chronicles of Carlingford are about good and troubled neighbours in a provincial community setting: the Chronicles were inspired by George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life, and Trollope's novels about "Barset". Like George Eliot's earlier novels, they contain strong ties with autobiographical experience.⁽²¹⁾ George Eliot creates the definitive provincial community in her novel, Middlemarch. She, like Charlotte Brontë, portrays in detail deep feelings and emotions and reveals the infinite complexity of human relationships in a way that neither Disraeli or Kingsley and even Dickens, seem able to do. W.A. Craik in her book of the provincial novel, says of these women that they wrote "Of the individual in relation to his fellow-men in a changing, developing society with new and changing

ideas, not merely about social problems of the day but about the human spirit, and the universe it inhabits".⁽²²⁾ She observes that, apart from Trollope and Hardy, it was women who were mostly associated with the "provincial novel". Notably, too, many of these provincial novelists were also involved in or interested in the philanthropic movement in the provinces - the industrial North and Midlands. Male writers, and also philanthropists, like Dickens, Disraeli and Kingsley, who were at the "centre of the world", wrote "with a more metropolitan or cosmopolitan audience in mind". Thus, each group of authors promoted their particular "norm against which character, ethics and society can be measured". Craik argues that the "provincial novelists" have in common that they wrote of "a life as they knew it from living in it and sharing in it themselves"; their novels "are a primary interpretation and explanation of the human predicament". The novel was their vehicle to explore injustice and wrong. What the "provincial novelists" had in common was to cling to what they regard as "real" and "truthful".⁽²³⁾ Clearly, one can deduce from Craik's observations that differing sets of "values" would exist relating to character, ethics and social mores. It then follows that, against a background of wide philanthropic awareness nationally, local philanthropic activity would play its own role within the diverse fictional communities. Artistically, the novel is at its best when it is a free, individualistic and unconditioned response to experience. On the whole, the most impressive of the nineteenth century women novelists

valued the implications of both social morality and the psychological condition of individual characters in their fiction, as did the female philanthropists. They were writing at a time when pre-Freudian psychology and the Rationalist's conception of human behaviour was providing a challenge to Christian fundamentalism and the doctrine of Pre-determinism. One may expect to find a balance of all or some of these philosophical values infiltrating the philanthropic consciousness in all Victorian novels, but in the provincial novels, in the main written by women, perhaps one would find something more of a female vision and autobiographical values of which Virginia Woolf writes, a vision and a set of values based on a moral system which is essentially female. Here one is also mindful of Carol Gilligan's two different moral systems based on gender differences: the male moral system which views the world in terms of rights and principles which can be defended and used as the basis of decision making, and the female system which perceives life as a network of social relationships, in which the woman plays the central role, and in which the concepts of right and wrong become relative and pragmatic, depending on the situation.⁽²⁴⁾ The "male system" one may associate with the more "political" novels of the metropolis written by Dickens, Disraeli and Kingsley, and the "female system" with those novels Craik terms as "provincial" which centre on matters of inter-community relationships. The literary tradition of women, however, rests on more than telling woman's version of life's story from their particular standpoint

of perception. Virginia Woolf also saw the necessity for women to identify, cultivate and criticise their own art: she writes of the nineteenth century women novelists of having had no cultural tradition because of the "scarcity and inadequacy of tools". She wrote:

"They had no tradition behind them For we think back through our mothers if we are women. It is useless to go to the great men writers for help, however much we may go to them for pleasure. Lamb, Browne, Thackeray, Newman, Sterne, Dickens, De Quincey - whoever it may be - never helped a woman yet, though she may have learnt a few tricks of them and adapted them to her use. The weight, the pace, the stride of a man's mind are too unlike her own for her to lift anything substantial from him successfully Moreover, a book is not made of sentences built, if an image helps, into arcades or domes. And this shape too has been made by men out of their own needs for their own uses." (25)

Virginia Woolf is suggesting that there is a gender difference of style and structure, that the shape of the novel, previously built by men and for men, would not greatly assist the female writer. She must find her own footing in her own cultural tradition, which was still in its embryonic stages in the nineteenth century. George Eliot reflected in her Notes on how much humankind gets interested in past and present history of a stranger - "In the stories life presents to us". Both she and Virginia Woolf, in theory and practice, displayed that the mode of telling a story, must be more than an orderly autobiography from childhood upwards; it must be founded on the processes of outward and inward life, and as Eliot puts it: "The telling of a story lies in its originality, yet told in

familiar and commonly used language" and, with the use of "primitive, masterly instruments of thought images and pictures," the story will grasp the attention of its audience.⁽²⁶⁾ George Eliot also held the view that the supreme social function of Art was the "communication of feeling", and that this depended on the artist's own ability to experience "admiration, hope and love".⁽²⁷⁾ Dale Spender pays a tribute to George Eliot as, "The chief constructor of a heritage to which women writers could attach themselves in the absence of an established tradition of creative, intellectual and respected women philosophers and writers".⁽²⁸⁾ On the whole, up to the time of the mid-nineteenth century, women writers were more innovative in respect of form and gave more meticulous attention to structure than the male writers did: Jane Austen's novels were more refinedly structured than the picaresque novels of Henry Fielding.⁽²⁹⁾ Even Dickens did not achieve a really well-structured novel until he wrote Great Expectations in 1860. One probable reason for this was that the majority of nineteenth century novels were initially written for serialisation,⁽³⁰⁾ and women like the Brontes and Elizabeth Gaskell, (latterly in her career) resisted the publication of their novels in serialised form. George Eliot appeared to master the technique but not without a great deal of personal anxiety, but she rarely had the problems of Hardy who re-wrote large portions of his serialised novels for publication. Finally, a possible sociological reason for the more precise arrangements of their novels, may have been the domestic life pattern defined for

them in a very pronounced manner so that this organised structured upbringing, with its moral strictures, became transposed into whatever else they did, be it novel writing or philanthropy. Certainly the prominence of didacticism both in women's literature and in much of their philanthropy suggests this may have been the case.

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Woolf and Showalter differ over the historical source of the female literary tradition. Woolf claims the tradition began in the seventeenth century with Aphra Behn. Showalter makes no mention of Aphra Behn and gives scarce coverage to Mary Wollstonecraft, tracing the development more recently from the Brontes to the present day author, Doris Lessing. This raises the question of whether one is able to trace signs of Showalter's phases, of imitation and internalisation, protest and advocacy of minority rights, and self-discovery in women writers prior to Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell.

Aphra Behn, Restoration dramatist, writer of poems and novels, was one of the first women to achieve independence as a writer. The known facts about her all indicate that she was a woman of forthright and rebellious spirit. Even though her world was "freer" for women than that experienced by women in the nineteenth century, her various activities suggest she was outrageous even by seventeenth century standards.⁽³¹⁾

Like the Brontes, George Eliot and many other women writers, Aphra Behn began by concealing her sex. Unlike them, Behn mostly wrote comedy plays which evolved around themes of ill-consequences of arranged and ill-matched marriages. In her twenties she travelled to Surinam in the West Indies, where she may have picked up material for a remarkable novel about slavery, entitled Oroonoko, or the History of the Royal Slave⁽³²⁾ In it she upholds for admiration the nobility and honour of its African hero and displays her own opposition to the slave trade and racism. In deploring the slave trade, Behn simultaneously denounces the cheating white owners and their Christian hypocrisy. The slave is barbarously tortured to death, which he accepts, making it into a noble suicide. Behn writes "The slave's misfortune was, to fall in an obscure world ", adding her own womanly sympathetic rider, that, it afforded only a female pen (my italics) to celebrate his fame."⁽³³⁾ At one level the novel makes political comment; at another it reveals a defiant love and admiration for one of society's underdogs. Margaret Drabble (1985) describes the work as, "Perhaps the earliest English philosophical novel".⁽³⁴⁾ It has been placed as a forerunner of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, Uncle Tom's Cabin⁽³⁵⁾ Although there is no obvious forerunner of a philanthropic heroine in the novel, the work is an early tenuous female expression of political humanitarianism.

Of eighteenth century women writers, the most impressive was surely Mary Wollstonecraft (later Godwin) (1759-97). In the Age of the Enlightenment, as a lone female voice in the

wilderness of male opportunism and endeavour, she spoke out on the wastage of women's lives and pioneered women's rights, particularly in the field of education. Her biographer, Eleanor Flexner, describes her as "the woman who first effectively challenged the age-old image of her sex as lesser and subservient human beings." (36) Mary Wollstonecraft possessed as much of the feminine rebellious spirit as Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler, George Eliot and other nineteenth century women of their ilk, and was as equally remarkable. The daughter of a profligate and wastrel, she left home and poverty after the death of her over-fraught and ill-used mother and two years later had set up a school with the help of her sister. Her best known work is Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792) which is more of an angry and despairing protest than a work of philosophy. In it she hotly challenges Rousseau's notions of female inferiority, arguing for equality of education, employment for single women and companionship with men. She articulates her ideas on what advantages these changes might accomplish, not just for women, but for society as a whole. Her voice was one before its time and went unheard for many years. The powerful influence of her book was not recognised until John Stuart Mill and his companion Harriet Taylor wrote on the subjection of women and advocated women's enfranchise, although a few women, like Harriet Martineau and George Eliot, were acquainted with the writings of Wollstonecraft and were personally influenced by what she wrote. (37)

Mary Wollstonecraft is less-renowned for her fiction, yet there are indicators that she anticipated the Victorian "social"

novel and a heroine sensitive to class-based divisions.⁽³⁸⁾ Wollstonecraft's first novel, Mary, A Fiction (1787) describes the world as a series of widening social spheres, from family to friendship, to marriage, to "polite society" and finally to humanity in general. Her heroine notices how some live in selfish luxury, while the majority of mankind wallow in misery and ignorance. She suffers an inner conflict between self-prudence and benevolence in social relations. However, unlike the Victorian heroines, Mary, overcome by the enormity of the circumstances, succumbs to gloomy egotism, yearns for death and rejects society all together. The novel anticipates Romantic narrative art, in so far as the novel offers no solutions and apportioned no blame; it focuses on the sensibility of the heroine rather than on personal moral responsibility. Wollstonecraft's other novel, The Wrongs of Woman, which coincided with the author's death, focuses on poor women, those at the bottom of the heap. The novel argues that they have never had a chance for education, health and a decent way of life for carrying out the simplest and most basic responsibilities of motherhood. They were the worst sufferers from the inhuman debtor's law which trapped women into prostitution and complete moral disintegration. Eleanor Flexner comments that one of the characters, Jemina, who is Maria's servant and "nurse" in an asylum to which Maria has been committed by a brutal husband, was something new in English fiction and did not reappear again until Dickens.⁽³⁹⁾ Mary Wollstonecraft's novel will never rank high in fiction, the characters are

lifeless and Mary Wollstonecraft was unable to create characters through action and conversation. All she was able to do was to give first-person accounts and make use of reported flashbacks. Nevertheless, despite her lack of a novelist's talent, she made unprecedented statements about divisions in society and about the plight of poor women of the eighteenth century something which the social novelists, like Gaskell, Dickens, Disraeli, and Kingsley and Yonge, did with greater effect half a century later, moreover, she introduced in Mary, a predecessor of the philanthropic heroine, one who was "a keen student of society".⁽⁴⁰⁾

Perhaps the true feminist subculture began in the eighteenth century with the initiation of the Blue Stocking Circle, an informal group of learned and intellectual women which included such names as Mrs. Vesey (the Chairwoman), Sarah Austin, Fanny Burney, Lady Montagu and Hannah More. The Circle was part of the rebellious move by women to reassert themselves as intelligent beings; it enabled women writers in the second half of the eighteenth century to enter into polemic and to break down some of the barriers which existed at that time between men and women.⁽⁴¹⁾ The "bluestockings" as they were affectionately termed conjured up in London a mixture of admiration and derisiveness.⁽⁴²⁾ The Circle were not only proud to assert themselves intellectually, they also involved themselves in matters of educating the poor. Mrs. Chapone denounced the eighteenth century for becoming "stale" as long as it confined itself to "the educated and urbane"; "it must"

she declared, do "something original" by educating the "poor and ignorant classes"⁽⁴³⁾ It is not without its significance that Hannah More, not only acclaimed philanthropy as a profession for ladies, she also practised it by pioneering the Sunday School movement, and assisted in bringing to the working-class children some elementary knowledge of reading and writing, albeit religiously biased and somewhat authoritarian in delivery. Moreover, she wrote some of the earliest "social" fiction with her moral tracts, such as "Village Politics by Will Chip (1793) and The Lancashire Collier Girl (1795). Joseph Kestner (1985) points out how both stories illustrate qualities of later local fiction, and focus on "A single protagonist whose story is a success fable about the lower classes".⁽⁴⁴⁾ Hannah More imposes subjective political views, with a conservative bias, into both stories. Village Politics takes the form of a dialogue between Jack Anvil, a blacksmith, who holds these views opposing rioting and radicalism, and Tom Hod, a mason, who is in sympathy with the notions of the French Revolutionists and Thomas Paine's The Rights of Man. Tom Hod desires liberty and equality and condemns taxation. Once converted to Jack Anvil's views, he agrees there should be "no drinking, no riot and no bonfires".⁽⁴⁵⁾ Interestingly, the story anticipates the argument of Harriet Martineau in The Rioters (1827) of "The more we riot the more we have to pay" and is indicative of much of the ideology of 1830's social fiction,⁽⁴⁶⁾ when the British still feared class revolution in their own country.⁽⁴⁷⁾ The Lancashire Collier Girl is subtitled A True Story and thus conforms with the

growing demand for realism in fiction. The tale also indicates another direction in social fiction, the heroine of "good character" and the value of Christian endurance. It recounts the rise to respectability of a young girl, Mary, who at the age of nine, works in the mines hauling corves for her father. When he is killed in an accident, she agrees to work a double shift and as a consequence she succumbs to fatigue and over-work, and is taken in to be a domestic servant. Mary's continuing faith in God enables her to ride all her calamities and also, narrates Hannah More, inspires a set of coarse miners towards decency and propriety to young women". Although Hannah More makes a fable of the story, she is realist enough to admit, during her narration of the story, that girls in Mary's position would be unlikely to maintain their respectability and would be unlikely to make the transition to domestic servant.⁽⁴⁸⁾ Kestner points out how More's stories establish some of the elements of succeeding social fiction: her focus on lower-class characters, the emphasis on dialogues of conflicting ideologies and the promulgation of the gospel work.⁽⁴⁹⁾ She also uses as a main protagonist the character of the "good, respectable, strong-minded Christian young woman" - a forerunner of the philanthropic heroine. The Blue Stocking Circle had the knock-on effect of encouraging women to write on matters of social conscience.

Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) is another woman of this period which preceded the great novelists of the nineteenth

century. She gives far more detailed treatment than Hannah More did to social questions. She raises the all-important scandal of the abuse of tenants by spendthrift, profligate and absentee landlords in her novels - written between 1793 and 1812 - Castle Rackrent, Suffering Irish, and The Absentee. (The latter was written in the year of the food riots in Bolton, Manchester and Oldham.) Later in the century, Thomas Hardy writes along similar lines, in Tess of the D'Urbervilles, of Flintcomb Ash estate which, too, is owned by an absentee landlord. Edgeworth focuses on both good and bad landlords, and the different environment each creates for their tenants: the social abuses anticipate the hardships caused by some of the brutal master-servant relationships half a century later. Among her "philanthropic" landlords are Lord and Lady Oranmore, who represent the conscientious Anglo-Irish landlords who remain to supervise their estates. Lady Oranmore is a kind of "Lady Bountiful" on the properly supervised estate of Colambe; Catholic and Protestant children are educated together, learning from the same books and associating with each other.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Thus, Edgeworth advocates the teaching of religious and social harmony between sectarian groups. Edgeworth's concern with good rented or tied accommodation in Ireland also anticipates the kind of environmental enterprise taken up by the later housing philanthropist, Octavia Hill, in London.⁽⁵¹⁾

Harriet Martineau's Illustrations of Political Economy (1832-4) are more directly descended from the moral tracts of Hannah More than the novels of Maria Edgeworth, and stand as a literary

sign-post pointing in the direction of the social novel as a genre. As novelist, author of stories, and mainly as a journalist, Martineau preached and prophesied on matters of reform and philanthropic concern rather than put either into personal practice. She involved herself in a wide range of political and social issues, the plight of the family in industrial Britain, Poor Law reform, licensed prostitution, feminist issues such as the Women's Property Bill in 1857 and married women's employment. In her Autobiography, Martineau describes her strong compulsion to write, "not for amusement or for money", but because, "I could not help it. Things were pressing to be said, and there was more or less evidence that I was the person to say them".⁽⁵²⁾ All her innovatory fiction was written between 1827 and 1846, the period immediately before Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens and Charles Kingsley produced their most important fiction.

Martineau's early series of fable-like tales, entitled Illustrations of Political Economy, were designed to educate the poor towards an appreciation of the new industrial science and, in the new economic climate, to bring about a tie of mutual understanding between masters and men.⁽⁵³⁾

Martineau believed in human progress and felt that an effective education system would spread wisdom, contentment and peace throughout the nation, and that a steady employer had it in him to bring about a rational and stable society.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The Illustrations were written about the time of the first Reform Bill of June 1832, prior to which time, the nation had suffered Ludditism, social disorder, bread riots, misrule

and corruption. Like other conservatives, Martineau feared revolution among the English poor of the kind which had devastated France, and her tales are a conciliatory attempt to map a way forward in a drastically changing society and to offset such an event occurring this side of the Channel. Her biographer, Valerie Sanders describes her as "the first imaginative writer of the age to express the fears and beliefs of the middleclasses about what was a disturbing new force in society."⁽⁵⁵⁾ Like Behn, More, and Edgeworth before her, she was a woman who, through the medium of fiction, proselytized about political questions because she was concerned not only about what was in the interest of the nation as a whole but also about the effects of the economy on ordinary households.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In the Preface to Illustrations, Martineau likens the political economy as managed by governments to the household economy as managed by heads of families. She blames governments for not recognising this fact and for not giving sufficient attention to the teaching of basic economics to the poorer families. She writes:

"If it ~~concerns~~ all that Political Economy should be understood. If it concerns all that the advantages of a social state should be preserved and improved it concerns them likewise that Political Economy should be understood by all ." (57)

Here, Martineau, like the visiting philanthropists in the first half of the century, adopted the traditional "feminine" teaching role of proper management towards the poor; she also

brought matters of domestic economic interest into the public arena. Like, Elizabeth Gaskell, but unlike the male political novelists, Benjamin Disraeli, and Charles Kingsley, who drew on the Blue Books, Martineau wrote mainly from first-hand experience: she visited factories and saw them in operation, and families to witness their way of life. Sanders claims, that she was "The first nineteenth century novelist to draw serious attention to the influence of daily, and especially adverse, conditions on the lives of ordinary men and women". In her tales - The Manchester Strike, about the struggle between masters and men; The Turn-Out, about a failed strike, and Cousin Marshall, about a pregnant girl from the workhouse - she anticipated both Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens in their respective concern with urban dreariness and squalor, filthy streets and overcrowded, cramped, damp, insanitary living conditions of the poor.⁽⁵⁸⁾ From these tales emerged her ideal of the virtuous, frugal, working-class family. The good people in the majority of the tales are men - manufacturers, teacher-figures and clergymen, who try to enlighten the poor in their local community.

Interestingly, in Harriet Martineau's fiction one may also find early examples of a philanthropic woman. In the tale, The Hill and the Valley (1832), she emerges in the form of Mrs Wallace, an industrialist manager's wife, a good middleclass woman, who visits and comforts the distraught mother of a boy who is killed by machinery, despite the mistrust and bitterness of the villagers towards her class.⁽⁵⁹⁾ In Cousin Marshall she is more predominant in the person of Miss Louise Burke. Miss Burke, sister to the surgeon who officiates

at the Dispensary and Lying-In Hospital, is both workhouse visitor and fund raiser for the relief of pauperism. However, the moral of the tale is not to give to the poor "medicine and advice gratis all their lives" but to "prevent the poor becoming indigent".⁽⁶⁰⁾ The economical solution of Louise Burke and her brother is to spend the money on education and labourers' subsistence funds so that the poor, even the blind, deaf and dumb, will be able to provide for themselves and their families. They are of the opinion that charitable institutions do more harm than good by encouraging unconditional assistance on the ground that it encourages charity to be taken too much for granted, thereby increasing the numbers of the poor and the demands they make on the system. The paternalistic pair uphold the actions of the "sensible" Cousin Marshall and his clever and practical wife, distant relatives of the poor orphaned Bridgeman, who decide that the youngest children should be cared for and educated by themselves and the older should earn his own living rather than be a burden on the workhouse.⁽⁶¹⁾ The blend of fact and fiction, didacticism and entertainment, the principles of laissez-faire economics and homely detail, which characterizes Illustrations looks forward to Martineau's only successful novel, Deerbrook, published in 1839. Deerbrook, tells the story of two Birmingham sisters and their precarious relationship - tempered by duty and passion - with the doctor hero, Edward Hope. The novel provided a unique precedent in the portrayal of women characters. Deerbrook, according to Marien Shaw (1987) in her essay,

Victorian Women Prose Writers, was published at the threshold of a new age in women's fiction (and some men's) (sic). She gives as her reason:

"It places a particular emphasis on female character and experience both as intrinsically important and interesting and, in the case of the heroine, Margaret, as a register of the social conditions and moral qualities of the community. Thus an ordinary woman - Margaret is the orphaned daughter of an obscure Birmingham businessman - becomes the conscience of the novel in the superiority of her moral sense and in the fictional weight this is given." (62)

Among the crucial ingredients for Elaine Showalter's separate female literary tradition are, "imitation" and "internalisation", "the still-evolving relationships between women writers and their society" and the translation of "self-awareness of the woman writer within her time-span."⁽⁶³⁾ Deerbrook appears to be an epitome of this tradition, particularly with its emphatic message of the moral superiority of women over men. It also develops a current social attitude about women of the time, and gave new confidence to women in general as the novel portrays the idealism of female social usefulness during an outbreak of cholera,⁽⁴⁾ and portrays women not merely as objects of domestic affection but also as an influence for the common good. Marion Shaw acclaims Martineau as "A woman who exemplified the trends in women's writing of the early Victorian period" and Deerbrook as having a powerful influence on her successors.⁽⁶⁵⁾ It is curious that, whereas Deerbrook disappointed the Victorian readership, the three renowned writers, George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte

were immensely impressed with it ⁽⁶⁶⁾ - an indication perhaps of a female affinity with the theme and content chosen by Martineau for her novel.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Bronte's heroines, Jane Eyre, Caroline Helstone and Lucy Snowe are each torn between duty and passion in much the same way as Martineau's heroines. Similarly, and perhaps more sophisticatedly handled, George Eliot's heroines are often misguidedly led by reason of duty or a mixture of passions and a compulsion toward self-sacrifice. More conventionally, Elizabeth Gaskell's heroine, Ruth, nurses her former lover during a cholera epidemic, and he is thus morally chastised. The signs of Martineau's influence are evident.

Martineau's fiction has often been criticised for its prudish didacticism, flat characterisations and a uniformity of dialogue, she, nonetheless, was no mean narrator of stories, she aimed to present the facts and accurate dialogue and avoided emotional language and sentimentality. Aesthetically, too, she displayed signs of accomplishment, the depiction of some of the industrial passages reminds one of the paintings of Wright of Derby, in which the fascination with new inventions and the new science is always present. This is evident in A Manchester Strike, where, with a mixture of stark reality and transferred epithets, she describes the working conditions of the mill at day-break:

"When a bright sunbeam shone through the window, thickened with the condensed breath of the work-people, and showed oily steam rising through the heated room, the lamps were extinguished, to the great relief of those who found the place growing too like an oven to be longer tolerable." (68)

Like George Eliot, and Wordsworth before her, she recognised the value of artistic principles in writing about the unromanticised poor. Here was new and valuable material, and like Eliot, she saw in authorship the power to educate:

Despite some signs of ambivalence over the subject, Martineau was, in the main, drawn towards feminism.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Her first literary publications were "Female Writers on Practical Divinity" and "On Female Education" for the Female Unitarian Monthly Repository in 1822 and 1823. In the first of these she outlined the successes of past women, one being Hannah More, whom she admired for promoting virtue and the spirit of religion; in the second she displayed her belief in the intellectual capabilities of women. She, herself, led a more "masculine" than "feminine" life-style as an unmarried, independent woman who earned her living by her pen, yet, by means of her pen, she frequently attempted to promote and make public those matters which affected women or with which women were concerned. She did not kill off "the Angel in the House", but politically aired her presence in public, and offered to the public a fresh dimension of her social worth. The writings of Harriet Martineau also heralded for many nineteenth century women a means and opportunity to voice a political opinion or grievance, and many women reformists and philanthropists made use of the novel to promote a particular cause or make a particular protest, women like Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, Caroline Norton, Geraldine Jewsbury,⁽⁷⁰⁾ Elizabeth Stone, Felicia Skene, and Mrs. Mary Humphry Ward. Harriet Martineau's fiction,

undeveloped as it was, can be regarded as something of a watershed in the history of women's literature.⁽⁷¹⁾

Notably, Jane Austen has been omitted from this list of women authors. Although Jane Austen was the most outstanding of the female novelists born before 1800, she cannot be said to have contributed to the stream of philanthropic or social novels. She was more concerned with the antics of middle-class Regency society, and makes a gentle, feminine, satirical comment on the social hypocrisies she, herself, had witnessed in the drawing rooms and large estates of rural England and Spa towns, such as Bath; nonetheless, she was very much intrigued by male and female relationships where self-respect and individual love mattered. Sensibly, she avoids those subjects with which she was mostly unacquainted, such as the Napoleonic wars and widespread rural poverty. It is true she scorns the haughty arrogance of patronesses such as Lady Catherine de Bourgh,⁽⁷²⁾ and there is a passing mention of Jane Fairfax's visits to a poor family, but there was no positive intention in Jane Austen's novels to write of social matters which troubled the conscience.

Harriet Martineau's fiction may have provided the watershed for women's "social" fiction, but it was the social novels of Elizabeth Gaskell which epitomised the tradition of feminine concern for the poor, labouring masses in industrialised Britain. Surprisingly, it is not with Elizabeth Gaskell but with Charlotte Bronte that Showalter sees the manifestation of

the female literary tradition. Gaskell is cautiously classified separately by her as "The heroine of a new school of 'motherly fiction'".⁽⁷³⁾ However, one cannot overlook the contribution of philanthropic writers, such as Elizabeth Gaskell, to the female humanitarian theme set in motion since the time of Aphra Behn. The ethical voice of care of these nineteenth century women novelists will be the subject of Part 11 of this thesis.

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The question that finally remains to be asked in this section is, how far did nineteenth century women, themselves, believe in their own literary tradition and sought to promote it? One woman who did was George Eliot, who made her views known on the subject:

"Fiction is a department of literature in which women can, after their kind, equal men. A cluster of great names, both living and dead, rush to our memories in evidence that women can produce novels, not only very fine, but among the very finest; novels too, that have a speciality, lying quite apart from masculine attitudes and experience." (74)

Such was the strength of Eliot's belief that she felt that **not** even women's restricted education need necessarily shut them out from "the materials of fiction". She adds, "There is no species of art so free from rigid requirements we only have to pour in the right elements - general observation, humour

and passion."⁽⁷⁵⁾ To Eliot a woman's own life experience was more important for good novel writing. Two years earlier in an article, entitled "Woman in France: Madame Sable", she praised the more liberated attitudes she found in France where French women authors were admitted to "the common fund of ideas, to common objects of intent with men", which let the whole field of reality be open to women as well as to men: they deplored the narrow life-style of the majority of English women writers which led them to imitate and absurdly exaggerate the masculine style - "like the swaggering gait of a bad actress in male attire".⁽⁷⁶⁾ The "whole field of reality" was seen by her to be relevant to the general literary tradition of women, and she felt that women had something special to contribute: woman, under every "imaginable social condition.... will necessarily have a class of sensations and emotions - the maternal ones - which must remain unknown to man." This statement clearly gives support to the central idea of the importance of motherhood to the female tradition - not only within the home but also outside it, to the concept of motherhood of mankind. This was central to the special philanthropic consciousness of women. Even more significantly, Eliot continues:

"And the fact of her (woman's) comparable physical weakness, which however it may have been exaggerated by a vicious civilization, can never be cancelled, introduces a distinctly feminine condition into the wondrous chemistry of the affections and sentiments which inevitably gives rise to distinctive forms and combinations." (77)

It seems she also believed in a particular "feminine" style of writing, recognizable by "distinctive forms and combinations" of language, syntax, content and general presentation of the material. Such an idea gives considerable weight to Carol Gilligan's thesis that men and women speak "in different voices."

PART 11

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3 : THE NOVEL AND THE WOMAN WRITER -

A TRADITION OF HER OWN?

(pp209-286)

1. The terms "the social novel" and "the social protest novel" were suggested to modern literary critics by Walter Allen's critique, The English Novel. The former term is generally associated with novels written from the 1840's to around about 1860 which were concerned with, and interested in, the constitution of society and the problems presented by it, and the latter term with those novels written after 1860 which were stronger in their protests. In Chapter 4 "The Early Victorians" he writes "They (the early Victorians) identified themselves with their age and were its spokesmen. The later novelists, however, were writing in some sense against their age: they were critical, even hostile, to its dominant assumptions." (Harmondsworth) 1958 p139
2. Cazamian, L. The Social Novel in England 1830-50 (London) 1973 and Kestner, J. Protest and Reform: The British Social Narrative of Women 1829-1867 (London and Wisconsin) 1985
3. See pp.254-8
4. See pp.256-7
5. See The Macmillan Dictionary of Women's Biography (ed) Jennifer S. Uglow (London) 1982 and Appendix to this Thesis.
6. Kestner, J. op cit gives substantial coverage to the works of Geraldine Jewsbury, stressing the important role she played in highlighting the reality of the social issues which concerned women. In the notes of her text in Marion Withers (1851), Jewsbury writes: "If the personages in this story do not appear equal to the true heroic or romantic standard, let the reader recollect that 'there is no dressing in them'....and that they really were such as they are shown", 1:268 MW 3 vols. (London and Colburn), quoted by Kestner p151
7. See Part 11 Chap.4. 3 below
8. G.E. Letters 1. 122-3, 7 vols.(ed) Haight, G. (Yale) 1954-5 Also in an article, again on Thomas Carlyle, she reveals her belief that he was, "yet more of an artist than a philosopher" giving as her reason, "He glances deep down into human nature, and show the causes of human actions." Leader VI Oct.27th 1855 pp 1034-5
9. See Appendix for fuller list.

3.1. THE NOVEL AS A LITERARY FORM (pp216-227)

1. See Chapter 1 below
2. Allen, W. op cit p13
3. Walter Allen careful to emphasise that, not all works of fiction that "tell a story" may be classified as necessarily "a novel". He describes the resemblances between allegories (such as those written by John Bunyan) and the novel, which, in many respects, anticipated the novel.
op cit p13-4
4. Chesterton, G.K. The Victorian Age in Literature (London) 1913, p90
5. Forster, E.M. Aspects of the Novel (Harmondsworth) 1927 p13 E.M. Forster also alludes to the succinct definition of M. Abel Chevelly: "une fiction en prose d'une certaine entendue" (a fiction in prose of a certain extent), and sets the "entendue" as "bounded by two chains of mountains neither of which rises very sharply - the opposing ranges of Poetry and History - and bounded on the third side by the sea". (p14) One assumes the latter boundary to be the artist's natural urge to explore the world which he or she sets out to imitate.
6. Cunningham, V. Everywhere Spoken Against - Dissent in The Victorian Novel (Oxford) 1975 Introduction p27
7. The new sciences and philosophies brought about a revival of religious intensity as well as religious doubt, and for some a great void in the place of the existence of God. Consequently there prevailed a search for something to replace Christian faith. Theosophy, mesmerism and other such explorations were popular activities of the day.
8. Richard Stang, in Theory of the Novel 1850-70 (London) 1959, points out that Realism was not a matter of subject-matter but a matter of the artist's own attitude towards the treatment of his or her subject-matter. p145
9. Pauline Nestor writes: "The repeated connections in literary reviews between novels and public morality, the merging of fact and fiction in the 1840's with novels drawing on the blue-books for source material, and the blue-books incorporating the popular literary feature of woodcut illustrations... All this attests to the profound relevance of fiction to reflect happenings and to deepen contemporary debate." see Female Friendships and Communities (Oxford) 1985 pp2-3
10. By 1832 literature had reached its lowest ebb for many years, although glamorised Gothic historical novels were still popular. Byron, Keats and Shelley were dead, and Sir Walter Scott was dying. Coleridge and Wordsworth had written their greatest poems. In discountenancing literal interpretations of the Bible, Coleridge had managed to place religious truths beyond the assaults of scientific

nt 3. 1, 2.

sceptical scholars. For him religious truths were the objects of intuition rather than mere reasoning. Bellinger and Jones, cite Samuel Coleridge as an important catalyst of emotion and rationality; he was, they argue, the provider of the intellectual stimulus insofar as his arguments transformed emotional convictions of "the existence of God, the force of conscience and the grip of sin" into practical ideas which "gave order and direction to life". see The Victorian Sages (London) 1975 p ix

11. The Romantic Revivalists had previously seen the danger of Reason and its catastrophic failure in the progress of the French Revolution, and, as a consequence, had founded their trust in "feelings" as expressed in family affections, local attachments, patriotism, and love of Nature. The Revival, then gave way to a wider outlook which recognized the claims of passion, emotion, and the sense of the mystery of life; it led to championing the traditional sense of community found in the village and the rural parish, assisted by the religious revival of Wesley and other evangelicals, and became an active force for social good and a symbol of higher unity, later to be applied to the industrialised cities. These same social forces of "sensibility" of feeling, emotion and pity, which had become attendant to individual philanthropy and then channelled into positive collective and political action, became, too, part of the expressed cultural ethos in the nineteenth century social novel. See Allan, W. op cit p140
12. Arnold, M. Chap 1 "Sweetness and Light" in Culture and Anarchy (Cambs) 1971
13. Kettle, A. "The Early Victorian Social Problem Novel" in The Pelican Guide to English Literature (Harmondsworth) 1969 pp160-187
14. Kestner is of the opinion that the women writers of social novels must be "reclaimed" today as the twentieth century rethinks and revises its view of Victorian fiction. op cit p3-16
15. See Chap 3.4

3.2. WOMEN AND THE NOVEL (pp228-252)

1. Source untraced, quoted by Laurence Stone in The Family Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (Harmondsworth) 1979
2. Eagleton, T. Literary Theory : An Introduction (Oxford) 1983 p27
3. Spender, D. "The Lady without the Lamp: Florence Nightingale" in Woman of Ideas and What Men Have Done to

- Them (London, Boston and Melbourne) 1982, p290
4. Spencer, J. The Rise of women Novelists from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen (Oxford) 1988
 5. Stevenson, Anne "Writing as a Woman" one of a series of lectures given at Oxford during the summer of 1978, in Women Writing and Writing About Women (ed) Mary Jacobus (Oxford) 1979
 6. Nestner, J op cit p7
 7. In her earlier days Harriet Martineau disguised her female identity by use of the pseudonym, Diogenes. see Sanders, V. Reason Over Passion : Harriet Martineau and the Victorian Novel (Sussex) 1986
 8. Figes, E. Sex and Subterfuge : Women Writers to 1850 (London) 1982 p23
 9. Geraldine Jewsbury wrote of her novel Zoe that she would "rather not have my name stuck to the thingbecause there are so many things in it that I don't want to talk about amongst some of my reputable friends of being guilty of holding". Showalter, E. A Literature of Their Own (London) 1982 p59
 10. "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell" in 1850 ed of Emily Bronte's novel "Wuthering Heights"
 11. Figes, E. op cit p32 At the end of 1837 Charlotte had written to Robert Southey enclosing some of her verses and asking for a frank opinion as to their worth. Southey's answer, although honest and kindly expressed, does, nonetheless, reflect the strong sexual bias that prevailed towards women writers at the time. Admitting that Charlotte possessed "in no considerable degree what Wordsworth calls the "faculty of verse", he encourages her to write for a past-time, cautioning her thus: "The day dreams in which you habitually indulge are likely to induce a distempered state of mind; and in proportion as all the ordinary uses of the world seem to you flat and unprofitable, you will be unfitted for them without becoming fitted for anything else. Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in her proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation. To those duties you have not yet been called, and when you are you will be less eager for celebrity". Interestingly Charlotte interprets his answer as a warning, not against the activity of writing but against "the folly of neglecting the real duties for the sake of imaginative pleasure of writing for love of fame", she assertively hints that she does not always succeed in this, "for sometimes when I'm teaching or sewing, I would rather be reading or writing." pp151-155 English Letters of the XIX Century (ed) J. Aitken (Harmondsworth) 1946
 12. Even in her intimate letters to her friend, Ellen Nussey, Charlotte Bronte refuted she was the writer of books. Letters pp158-9 and Helen Black, Notable Women Authors of the Day, Glasgow: David Bryce & Son, 1893 pp49-50 and Showalter p59 Showalter E. A Literature of their Own (London) 1982 p59

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13. The articles that George Eliot wrote for the Westminster Review and other journals during her years of journalism were published without the disclosure of her identity.
14. The editors of The Atheneum and The Inquirer had assumed Adam Bede to have been written by a man. Elizabeth Gaskell also enjoyed the challenge of guessing unknown authorship and joined in the popular belief that Scenes from Clerical Life had been written by a baker. Dickens astutely recognised the work of a "feminine hand". see Hopkins, A.B., Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work (London) 1952 pp 68, 208-9 and Haight, G. George Eliot (Oxford and New York) 1978 p251
15. Haight, G. op cit General references throughout.
16. Showalter, E. op cit p82
17. Sanders, V. op cit pp83,85
18. Greg, William Rathbone "Mary Barton" in the Edinburgh Review 89 pp402-35 and "False Morality of Lady Novelists" National Review 7 1959
19. The prevailing popular study of phrenology which was concerned with the various mental powers of the individual and their specific location in the brain, gave rise to the belief that women were less capable than men because the size of their brains were smaller in cubic capacity than men's brains were.
20. Mill, J.S. The Subjection of Women (Virago ed) 1983 p53
21. See Chapters 2.1., pp99-101, and 3.2. pp102-5 (below)
22. Eliot, G. Silly Novels by Lady Novelists W.R. LXVI (October 1856) 442-461
23. Eagleton, T. op cit p27
24. ibid p27
25. Spender, D. op cit "Introduction"
26. Haight, G. op cit p268 Marian Evans, G.H.Lewes and their publisher, John Blackwood agreed between them not to disclose the gender of the true author of Adam Bede even more so because that same author was living with Lewes as his wife.
27. Kestner, J. op cit p91
28. Showalter, E. op cit p94
29. Nestor, P. op cit pp1-2
30. Spender, D. op cit p129
31. Price, C.L. "The Victorian Theatre" in The Victorians (ed) Pollard, A. (Harmondsworth) 1988 p483
32. ibid Cecil J.L. Price points out, the output of plays was enormous - straight plays, dramas, melodramas, punning farces and the music-hall sketch. A large urban population and improved public transport led to far more theatres being in existence than had ever been known before. Nonetheless, financial rewards had to be supplemented by acting ^{of} poor quality, hastily-written plays lacking in originality - they were frequently crude versions of novels and French dramas, or dramas by hack writers with stock scenes and characters.

33. One gets a forceable insight into Charlotte Bronte's own feelings of puritanical abhorrence for the dramatic excesses of the Belgium theatre in the scene in Villette where the heroine, Lucy Snowe, is taken to the theatre to see the great Vashti: "It was a marvellous sight: a mighty revelation. It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral." The same evening, the theatre is engulfed by fire and the horrified Lucy and her party escape a panic-stricken audience. The fire is, simultaneously, a grotesque replica of Hell on earth and a symbolic cleansing of the demoniac event. p234 Dent (ed)
34. Charlotte Bronte's literary taste is indicated in a letter written to Ellen Nussey: "If you like poetry let it be first rate, Shakespeare, Thomson, Goldsmith, Pope (although I don't admire him), Scott, Byron, Campbell, Wordsworth and Southey....." quoted by Marion Lochmead in The Victorian Household (Chap.8 "The Victorian Parsonage"). (London) 1964 p112
35. Showalter, E. op cit "Appendix" (eds) Batho, Edith C. and Jobres, Prof. Bonaby, The Victorians and After 1830 - 1914 Introduction to English Literature Vol IV (London) Revised 1950 p217
36. Quoted by Woolf, V. Women and Writing (ed) Michele Barrett (London) 1979 Orig. published in The Common Reader (London) 192
37. Foster, Margaret Elizabeth Barratt Browning: A Biography (London) 1988
38. Christina Rossetti was a shy woman with only her brother's artist and poet companions as friends; she developed a life-long absorption in Anglo-Catholicism and her belief regulated her life in the smallest particulars in much the same way as Emily transfixed, her senses, emotions and feelings, in a more primordial mystical way, in the wild moorland landscape around her Yorkshire home. Consequently, both women narrowed down their horizons, and developed an intense, strange, internalized world of the imagination. Virginia Woolf writes of Christina Rossetti, "She dwelt in some curious region where the spirit strives towards an unseen God - in her case, a dark God, a harsh God, - a God who decreed that all the pleasures in the world were hateful to Him.....everything radiated from that knot of intensity in the centre." Of the two women, Christina Rossetti is probably most admired for her poetry today, and Emily Bronte, more so for her prose poem, Wuthering Heights. Common to both women was their self-imposed privacy. See Woolf, V. op cit pp162-5 on Christina Rossetti.
39. Cora Kaplan in "Language and Gender" promotes the idea that the language of poetry has largely remained a "male domain". See Women and Writing (ed) Barrett, M. op cit p29
40. Anne Finch aired her views on male dominance in poetry in an

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ironic verse of her own:

"Did I my lines extend for publick view,
How many censures, wou'd their faults persue,
Some wou'd, because such words they do affect,
Cry they're insipid, empty, uncorrect,
And many, have attain'd, dull and untaught
The name of Witt, only by finding fault,
True judges, might condemn their want of witt,
And all might say, they're by a woman writt!"

reproduced by (ed) Michelle Barrett op cit p194

41. Both novels, Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte and Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte are particularly endowed with these aesthetic qualities.
42. Empson, W. "Mrs Marcel-Miss Martineau" ER 57 (April 1833) pp 1-39 quoted by Valerie Sanders in the Preface to her book, Reason Over Passion (Sussex) 1986 p xi. Martineau, in her formative years, had enjoyed the poetry of Milton, Shakespeare and Wordsworth. Although she continued to respect the Lakeland poet's ideas about simplification of poetic language, she later, once faced with the political and social realities of the industrial advance, grew sceptic about his "fancy pieces" of local peasantry. (Sanders p5) Curiously, she was troubled by George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life: she criticised it for its "moral squalor" and "coarse satire" and summed it up as being bad art, feeling that her colours were too harsh for a sketch of an English country town twenty-five years earlier; however, she approved of the later "fable" novel, Silas Marner. (Sanders p22)
43. Eliot, G. "Notes on Form in Art" (1868) essay written in a notebook (ed) Pinney, T. Essays of George Eliot (London) 1963 pp431-36; and (ed) Haight, G. Letters 111 382
43. The "river" imagery in Mill on the Floss the multifarious references to "gold" in Silas Marner, the "web" imagery in Middlemarch and the "sea drowning" apparition in Daniel Deronda. See Bennet, J. George Eliot: Her Mind and Art (Cambs) 1948; Hardy, B. The Novels of George Eliot (London) 1959, and Harvey, W.T. The Art of George Eliot (London) 1961
45. See reference to Cunningham, V. Chap. 3.1. p218 (above)
46. Miles, R. The Fiction of Sex (London) 1983 p13
47. James, Henry essay on "The Art of Fiction" (1884) in House of Fiction (ed) Leon Edel (London) 1962 pp31,38
48. Eliot, G.'s essay "Theophrastus Such" (ed) Pinney, T. op cit
49. Dentith, S. George Eliot (Brighton) 1968 pp4-5
50. Even the so-called Gothic Novel was a covert, if bizarre means used by women writers to describe the powerful force of sexual passion.
51. Jane Austen was also the victim of the ideals of the age demanded of Scott and Byron that she should prove her ladyhood by the beauty of idleness and touching dependence upon her male protectors.

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52. Eliot, G. "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists" op cit
53. ibid When George Eliot took up novel writing herself, she was meticulously careful. See Haight, G. George Eliot, A Biography (Oxford and NewYork) 1968
54. Haight, ibid p225
55. Haight, G.E. Letters 111,193 op cit
56. Mulock, D. "To Novelists" - and A Novelist", Macmillan's Magazine April 1861 p442
57. Prochaska, F.K. Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England (Oxford) 1980 "Introduction"
58. Avery, G. assisted by Angela Bull , Nineteenth Century Children: Heroes and Heroines in English Children's Stories 1780-1900 (London) 1965
59. ibid p17
60. Curiously, when male writers took up writing for children at a later date, they mostly produced superior works: Thackery's pantomime, Rose and the Ring (1855), the "Alice" books by Lewis Carroll (1865), Tom Hughes' Tom Brown's Schooldays" (1857) and then, the imaginative stories of Stevenson, and Barrie. Perhaps women writers were too narrowly conditioned in respect of their domestic duty of moral superiority towards children and, thus, the lighter, more "playful" aspects of their imaginations remained perfunctorily constrained. Like Charlotte Yonge many found a greater freedom for communication and self-expression in the adult novel. see Part 11 4.3
61. Lewes, G.H. "The Lady Novelists" WR 1852 Art VI p129-131
62. Mill, J.S. op cit (Virago ed) pp45-7

3.3. WOMEN : A LITERARY TRADITION AND THE PHILANTHROPIC THEME

(pp253-85)

1. Woolf, V. A Room of One's Own (London) 1977 pp9-10
2. The phrase "The Angel in the House" originated in a sequence of poems by C. Patmore, which were published in four parts and were popular with the Victorian public. The Betrothal (1854) and The Espousals (1856) Faithful for Ever (1860) and The Victories of Love (1861). The work is a celebration of married love, with lyrical and reflective passages linked by a narrative in which Felix courts and weds Honoria, and Frederick, a rival for Honoria's hand, marries Jane and learns to love her before her early death. Virginia Woolf, in a lecture on "Professions for Women" (1931) spoke of the need for women writers to "kill off" the high-flown sentimental image of women depicted by Patmore.
3. Woolf, V, Women and Writing (ed) Barrett op cit p59 Originally published in Woolf's essay "The Death of a

Moth', and based upon a speech she gave to the London National Society for Women's Service on 21st. Jan. 1931

4. Aphra Behn's play, The Rover was produced anonymously in 1677, and only a few close friends knew that this bold, fast-moving, sexually explicit, highly acclaimed comedy was the work of a woman. Behn faced accusations of plagiarism. The Rover was closely based on a drama by Kelligrew, but with no female writer forebear on whom to look for inspiration, she had available to her only the writings of her male fellows, whose works she imitated and used as models. It was probably the only method she could learn her art. Article, "The Shakespeare Succession" by Anne Barton, published in The Guardian May 5th. 1986
5. Woolf, V. A Room of One's Own (London) 1977 p62
6. For her definition of "sub-culture" Elaine Showalter draws upon that given by the two American historians, Christine Stansell and Johnny Faragher. She writes: "By 'subculture' we mean simply 'a habit of living'.. of a minority group which is self-consciously distinct from the dominant activities, expectations, and values of a society. Historians have seen female church groups reform associations, and philanthropic activity as expressions of this subculture in actual behaviour, while a large and rich body of writing by and for women articulated the subculture impulses on the ideational level. Both behaviour and thought point to child-rearing, religious activity, education, home life, associationism, and female communality as components of women's sub-culture. Female friendships, strikingly intimate and deep in this period, formed the actual bonds." See Christine Stansell and Johnny Faragher, "Women and Their Families on the Overland Trail, 1842-1867" Feminist Studies 11 (1975): 152-153. For an overview of recent historical scholarship on the "two cultures", see Barbara Sicherman, "Review: American History", Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society: (Winter 1975): 470-484
7. Showalter, E. op cit p12
8. ibid ; "First, there is a prolonged phase of imitation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of protest against these standards and values, and advocacy of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of self-discovery a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity. An appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages, Feminine, Feminist, and Female. These are obviously not rigid categories, distinctly separable in time, to which individual writers can be assigned with perfect assurance. The phases overlap; there are feminist elements in

feminine writing, and vice versa. One might also find all three phases in the career of a single novelist. Nonetheless, it seems useful to point to periods of crisis when a shift of literary values occurred. In this book I identify the Feminine phase as the period from the appearance of the male pseudonym in the 1840's to the death of George Eliot in 1880; the Feminist phase as 1880 to 1920, or the winning of the vote; and the Female phase as 1920 to the present, but entering a new stage of self-awareness about 1960." p 1 .

9. *ibid* p14
10. See chap.2.2 *supra*
- 10Ca. "Professionalism" meant writing from economic necessity, so the first nucleus of "professionals" were unmarried women, widows, and women of failed or unhappy marriages. Happy wives and mothers did not become writers. Women who had to write for a living found themselves changed by the discipline and rewards of the profession..... they were more organised, more businesslike, more assertive, more adventurous, more flexible and more in control of their lives. Such sweeping generalisations do contain in them an element of truth, as George Eliot recognised when she wrote, "There is something so anti-septic in the mere healthy fact of working for one's bread, the most trashy and rotten kind of feminine literature is not likely to have been reproduced under such circumstances." "Silly novels" were the result of busy idleness. - G.E. Essay, "Silly Novels" *op cit* Interestingly Gordon Haight relates that Marian Evans, as editor of the Westminster Review received no more than the cost of her board and additional fees for the articles she contributed. G.E. Biography (Oxford) 1965 pp 91, 133
11. Chapple, J.A.V. and Pollard, A. (ed) The Letters of Mrs Gaskell (Manchester) 1966 L42 (mid-1849
12. *ibid* (1859). To a young novelist who wrote for her advice, Elizabeth Gaskell made the following points about novel writing; to write as a result of experience is better than writing as a result of introspection, which she considered was "unhealthy"; to observe what is "out of you, instead of examining what is in you"; to allow the plot to grow and culminate in crisis and not to introduce a character "who does not conduce to this growth and progress of events"; to imagine yourself "a spectator and auditor of every scene and event"so that the reader "may have it equally before him" not to intrude oneself into the description, and to cut epithets short. She also advocated the value of structure - from skeleton, then muscle and flesh - and the necessity for connecting chains of events with the maximum of clarity. She gives less emphasis to moral and intellectual considerations, and tells her young enquirer that the "novelist is a string-puller". pp540-2

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13. See pp232-3 (above)
14. Basch, F. Relative Creatures: Victorian women in Society and The Novel 1837-67 (London) 1974 p44
15. Williams, M. "Introduction" to The Doctor's Family and Other Stories by Margaret Cliphant (1828-97). (Oxford and New York) 1986
16. Macmillan, C. Women, Reason and Nature (Oxford) 1982, p52
17. Woolf, V. "Women and writing" op cit p17
18. ibid p197
19. Kestner, J. op cit p26
20. Elizabeth Gaskell was indebted to her husband the Reverend William Gaskell for much of her knowledge of etymology and dialect. To the fifth edition of Mary Barton (1854) she appended his two lectures on the Lancashire Dialect.
21. Williams, M. op cit p ix
22. Craik, W.A. Elizabeth Gaskell and The English Provincial Novel (London) 1975
23. ibid p24
24. Gilligan, C. op cit Also see p22-4 above.
25. woolf, V. A Room of One's Own (London) 1977 pp73-4
26. Eliot, G. "Leaves from a Notebook" in Essays of George Eliot (ed) Pinney, T. (London) 1963
27. ibid
28. Spender, D. op cit p174
- 29.
30. One of the most popular forms of launching a novel into public life at this time was by serial publication: brought out in monthly or weekly parts it involved a plot of rapidly moving incidents where the end of each portion comes to an exciting climax leaving the reader hanging in suspense until the following instalment. Serial publication also had its disadvantages insofar as the episodic pattern of events could often lead to loose structure and a disorganised plot. Elizabeth Gaskell specifically experienced difficulties in writing her novel, North and South, for serial publication. Her resistance to Dickens' editorial requirements caused a rift between her and Dickens, who had previously published Lizzie Leigh and Mary Barton in Household Words. While she continued reluctantly to write for Dickens after North and South she eventually succeeded in breaking away from his hold. See Hopkins, A.B. Elizabeth Gaskell: Her Life and Work (London) 1952 Chap VIII
31. Aphra Behn is reputed to have been a scandalous woman, an exponent of sexual freedom, and a spy for Charles II in Antwerp in the war against the Dutch.
32. Aphra Behn claimed that her hero, Oroonoko, was based on a real African prince.
33. Sage, Lorna in her review of Aphra Behn's work, Oroonoko or the History of the Royal Slave See "Breaking the rules of sex", The Observer (? 1968)
34. The Oxford Companion to English Literature (5th.ed) Drabble, M. p81

35. Sage, L. op cit
36. Flexner, E. Mary Wollstonecraft (New York) 1972
37. Mary Wollstonecraft regretted her own lack of a full education and because of it was unable to produce the kind of philosophical works which were being written by John Locke, George Berkely and David Hume. It was not until she encountered William Godwin did she encounter anyone with a mind equivalent to her own who willing to discuss her work with her in detail and offer her constructive reappraisal. The Augustan Age of the literary giants Fielding, Swift, Richardson, Defoe, Smollet and Goldsmith, had come to an end with the death of Samuel Johnson in 1784, yet, thanks to the advent of the bookseller and publisher and a growing middleclass which combined literary pursuits with leisure, Mary Wollstonecraft had access to a wide variety of books on travel, theology and moral and philosophical speculation. Like her later admirer George Eliot, she was an insatiable reader and began her writing career by translating French and German books, although unlike George Eliot, her knowledge of French was largely self-acquired.
38. Wollstonecraft, M. Mary and the Wrongs of Woman (ed) Kelly, G. (Oxford and London) 1976
39. Flexner, op cit p248
40. Wollstonecraft, M. Mary, A Fiction (1787)(ed) Kelly, G. op cit p xi
41. The aims of the Blue Stocking Circle succeeded up to a point. The aristocracy both in Britain and the USA showed signs of tolerating the clever, strong-minded woman, especially if she had literary talent. See Kent, J. Elizabeth Fry: A Biography
42. One finds in George Crabbe's sprightly Augustan poem Arabella a slightly mocking suggestion that the intellectual brilliance of the bluestocking ladies was a mixture of "deliberate virtuous cultivation and self-regarding pride, a commodity for public display." See The Pelican Guide to English Literature No.5 From Blake to Byron (ed) Ford, B (Harmondsworth) Reprint 1967 p86
43. ibid
44. Kestner, J. op cit p23
45. ibid p24
46. ibid p23
47. Both Hannah More and Harriet Martineau upheld the belief of "each according to his place", that high and low born, master and servant, should be respectful to each other and each be satisfied with their ordained place in society.
48. See Kestner, J. op cit pp24-5
49. ibid p25
50. ibid p26-8
51. see pp 154, 167-9 (above)
52. (ed) Weston, Maria Harriet Martineau: Autobiography with Memorials 3 vols. (London) 1877 p188 Also see

- Sanders, V. Reason over Passion (Sussex) 1986 p1
53. Sanders, V. ibid Valerie Sanders writes that Harriet Martineau a disciple of the philosophers, David Hartley and Joseph Priestley, she was exhilarated by the prospect of reform; Martineau's beliefs seem to embrace "an idiosyncratic compound of whig, Saint-Simonian and Necessarian ideas ", p31
 54. ibid p30
 55. ibid. Valerie Sanders describes her as "the first imaginative writer of the age to express the fears and beliefs of the middleclasses about what was a disturbing new force in society", p38
 56. Harriet Martineau was soon to turn away from fiction and expound her views through alternative political philosophical and journalistic enterprises, which probably suited better her didactic approach.
 57. Martineau, H. Illustrations of Political Economy 3 vols. London 1832-4
 58. Sanders, V. op cit p32
 59. Martineau, H. op cit Vol.1 (1832)
 60. ibid Vol 111 (1834)
 61. ibid p40-3
 62. Shaw, Marion essay "Victorian Women Prose Writers" in The Victorians (ed) Pollard, A. (Harmondsworth) 1969 p205
 63. Showalter, E. op cit p12
 64. Shaw, M. op cit p205
 65. ibid p204
 66. Sanders, V. op cit. Introduction, pix
 67. Charlotte Bronte admired Martineau because of her ability to combine "the highest mental culture with the nicest discharge of feminine duties". (Letter to Emily) quoted Shaw essay op cit p204. However, when Charlotte Bronte actively approached Martineau for an informed opinion about Jane Eyre, she did not receive the response she was hoping for from Martineau, who was highly critical of the novel for its equation of women's rights with the writer's incessant tendency to describe the need to be loved. Not unnaturally Charlotte Bronte was severely hurt by the reaction of a woman she had long admired, and allowed the incident to terminate their friendship. B.L.1V 55 quoted by Pauline Nestor op cit p90
 68. Martineau, H. Illustrations op cit. Vol.3 p61
 69. Sanders, V. op cit The main theme of Valerie Sander's book concentrates on the many instances of Martineau's ambivalence towards the status of women in society and public life.
 70. By the fifties women novelists, such as Geraldine Jewsbury and Charlotte Tonna, became more concerned with the consequences of associationism (the doctrine that mental and moral phenomena may be accounted for by association of ideas) on the individual. Kestner points out how in the next decade the "female social

- novel" thus broadened its context of enquiry beyond specific occupation. See Kestner, J. op cit p141
71. Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna (1790 - 1846) wrote a similar fictional documentary to Martineau's Illustrations, entitled The Wrongs of Women (1843-4) as a work of protest on behalf of thousands of women who were driven out of the home and into low-paid occupations such as millinery, dressmaking and screw-makers, but she is mostly associated with her pioneering and highly influential novel, Helen Fleetwood (1841), which followed the fortunes and misfortunes of an impoverished widow and her family, who are dispossessed of their cottage by the Poor Law Commissioners and find themselves victims of the factory system in Manchester. Tonna's fiction had none of the sophistication of Martineau's Deerbrook. A Low-church evangelical and driven by religious fervour, Tonna's overt objective was, "To aid the cause which we avowedly embrace" without recourse to conjuring up "phantoms of a heated imagination". The "cause" was the need for adequate legislation to regulate the employment of women and children in the manufacturing industry; she also attacked the Poor Law Commissioners and the luring of rural families into factory work, degradation and poor health. Joseph Kestner includes Tonna in her list of pioneer women writers who advanced the concept of the social novel; he writes that her strength her first-hand descriptions of actual miserable conditions of the time. Perhaps her personal weakness was her pronounced acceptance of female inferiority and her repudiation of "all pretensions to equality with men." She firmly believed that a woman's proper sphere was in the home both by Divine injunction and as a necessary stabilising influence. See Shaw, M. op cit, Chap.4 p206-7 and Kestner J. op cit, p60
 72. Austen, J. Pride and Prejudice (1813)
 73. Showalter, E. op cit p17 Also see Nt.10a above.
 74. Eliot, G. op cit (ed) Pinney p324
 75. Eliot, G. ibid p324
 76. Eliot, G. WR LX11 (Oct 1854) op cit (ed Pinney) pp 448-473
 77. ibid

CHAPTER 4. THE PHILANTHROPIC HEROINE - TWO DIFFERENT VOICES

4.0 INTRODUCTION

"The writer must convert the very pulses of the air into revelations to produce the illusions of life from impressions of the reality, and imagination to convey the meaning of things, to catch their colour, the relief, the expression, the surface and the substance of the human spectacle."

Henry James

"Novels show the current of its (society's) social morality, and what the learned would call the psychological condition"

Eliza Lynn Linton (1883)

The philanthropic heroine in the novel must capture to some degree the ethos of the actual philanthropic reformers, that is, "a love towards mankind; practical benevolence towards men and women in general, and the disposition to promote the well-being of one's fellows", ⁽¹⁾ as well as the assertive will to bring it about. The promotion of this ethos is a predominant theme of the "philanthropic novel".

In the following study on philanthropic heroines produced by male and female authors, it is to be expected that the heroines portrayed by male writers will, in the main, conform to the stereotype of the "good" Victorian lady, the "ministering" angel" of the household; whereas those depicted by women authors will show clear indications of dismantling the Ruskinian

image of "feminine domesticity". Also, if the women novelists were being inspired by the lives of actual philanthropic women of their day, then one may expect to hear the ethical "voice" of these women more pronounced in novels by women than in the novels by the men.

It is important to note that to the social historian, certain general assumptions in the literature in any age persist, like the behaviour of characters, the precise facts of interest about the structure of that society, and the conventions against which drama, irony and humour may be understood in the light of current assumption. However, it is also necessary to caution against any imputations that an institution or a habit was characteristic of that society or era as a whole. The interest in the novels selected for this research is in what they reveal about the opinions and attitudes of the men and women who wrote them. A novel helps to show not so much the facts and social conditions of the age but the mind of the novelist who portrays them.

If one is to draw significant conclusions about the differences in the "voices" of men and women novelists, one must include some reference to the possibility of a difference of language, style and approach to content. According to Gilligan the female sense of "the ethic of care" lies in the responsibility that comes through human relationships, the male sense of the ethic is equated with a sense of what is right and just.

The two concepts communicate themselves in specific voices of their own.⁽²⁾ In the novels, this caring ethic must be portrayed in the voice and actions of the philanthropic heroine and also be contained in the author's own voice. The stereotyping or otherwise of language styles to explain the female experience will also be of interest here, for language may operate at more than one level of perception. Language may operate at "surface" and "deeper" levels, through textual features, such as tone, sequence and spacial arrangements, affiliations, impressionism, obliqueness, double entendre and imagery. Effective use of these techniques may convey certain perspectives of meaning, and distinguish the inner reality from the outer world view. Richard Stang, theorizing on the novel, explains that the novelist is not only able to perceive and organise his experience and report his own conception of reality from his point of view, but is also a visionary who can "see through the heart of things" and is capable of cummunicating his vision to his readers.⁽⁴⁾ The novelist, by the exercise of his or her own imagination and by means of the literary techniques he or she may employ, can unify the many disparate facts of experience and the many levels of the consciousness. Thus the writer is able to relay a personal meaning or message to his or her readership, to explore a universal truth, or to ramify the mystery of these events. Hence there is scope for both subjectivity and objectivity.⁽⁵⁾

A study of the heavily censored and controlled "social novels" written by nineteenth century women - in which no replica

of Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale or Josephine Butler is apparent among the philanthropic heroines - may nevertheless reveal an underlying sympathy, empathy or affinity between those brave women who rebelliously defied many of the conventions of the day in the interest of humanitarian causes and their writer counterparts. G.M.Trevelyan, writing on English Social History, makes an interesting point of connection between the eminent writers and great women philanthropists of the day when he says of the Bronte sisters that the "rights of personality" represented in their writings were no less than in the life's work of Florence Nightingale.⁽⁵⁾ These women shared the common denominator of perceived "feminine" standards and values which they stretched beyond the general assumptions for women of their day.

4.1. HEROINES IN FICTION AND THEIR NOVELIST CREATORS.

"She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise - wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation".

John Ruskin

"Men have established their values in life and its conventions; since fiction is about life and its conventions, women must find a different set of values.

Virginia Woolf

In fiction there has always been a historical tendency to categorise women into "good" and "bad" characters. For example, a common feature of medieval literature was the contrasting images of, the idealised "patient", quietly spoken, lady of the "courtly love" theme and the ridiculed or despised, brazen, "nagging shrew" of the morality plays.⁽⁶⁾ These early prototypes - mostly modelled on the early Christian concepts of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the "fallen woman" Eve - have permeated down through the ages of fiction in one form or another. Thus the sexual stereotyping of women into "good" or "bad" has become rooted in the predominantly male tradition of literature. The habitual stereotyping of women in literature is the subject of Patricia Stubbs' book, Women and Fiction: Feminism and the Novel 1880 - 1920. She argues that no matter what part in society individual women in fact play, the traditional images focus on their domestic and sexual roles. This effects the notions that women have of themselves. Also such images create

the world for women and shape their consciousness accordingly.⁽⁷⁾ Moreover, Eva Figes, in Sex and Subterfuge: Women Novelists to 1850, writing on the subject of the structure of women's novels, identifies two main themes in novels written by both sexes, in the eighteenth century and inherited by the nineteenth century - the novel of conduct in courtship and the novel of misconduct, seduction, betrayal and ruin, one being "exemplar for young ladies to follow", the other "a dreadful warning".⁽⁸⁾ Not surprisingly, the women depicted in the novels are neatly categorised into two groups, namely, the "good lady" and the "bad woman". Invariably the "good" (charitable) lady saves the bad (usually "fallen") woman from her sin.

Both Stubbs and Figes blame the eighteenth century novelist, Samuel Richardson, and particularly his novel, Pamela (1740) for the inflexible stereotyping of women and for establishing structurally a "moral centre" for women and about women.⁽⁹⁾ Richardson, a pious Christian, wrote Pamela in counterpoise to Fielding's picaresque novel, Tom Jones, objecting to that novel's bawdy content and immorality.⁽¹⁰⁾ The novel was also written as a literary antidote to Richardson's own earlier work, Clarissa (1748), the subject of which was the heroic suffering virgin.⁽¹¹⁾ Pamela is the epitome of the virtuous womanhood, bravely and morally resisting all sexual temptation put in her way. Figes alleges that Pamela provided for the Victorian novel the inspiration for the ideological cult of "the innocent young girl, affectionate not passionate", well-regulated, gentle,

submissive, de-sexed, chaste, self-sacrificing heroine. Stubbs claims that it is from this association that all familiar images of women in fiction are derived, continuing even into the twentieth century - the virgin heroine, the wife and mother, the prostitute, the spinster, the mistress and the redundant middle-aged woman.⁽¹²⁾ The dual influence of the Romantic Revival and evangelical Christianity also played a vital role in the stereotyping women into "good" and "bad" characters. The association of the "good" charitable lady with Rousseauan childlike innocence, is an overwhelming feature of nineteenth century literature. The Victorian heroine was expected to display childlike innocence reflecting the Revivalist Romantic notion of the child, its perceptions and sensibilities untrammelled by the ugliness of the industrial world and the unsightly poverty it created. Rosalind Miles describes the Victorian fictional stereotype of womanhood as: "The lady with the lamp, the guardian of true values, ceaselessly and unobtrusively (going) about her task of disseminating sweetness and light."⁽¹³⁾ Miles' description may also be regarded as the stereotype for the philanthropic heroine.

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The Selected Novelists and Heroines

As noted in Part 1 many of the novelists who responded

to matters of social deprivation and injustices caused by the industrial revolution were themselves either philanthropists or keen sympathisers to philanthropic causes. Hence, the selection of philanthropic authors selected for this thesis, include the male writers, Charles Dickens (1812-70), Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81), and Charles Kingsley (1819-75); the well-known female writers, Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-65), Charlotte Bronte (1816-55), and George Eliot (1819-80), and the less-known novelists, Charlotte Yonge (1823-1901), Lady Georgiana Fullerton (1812-85) and Felicia Skene (1821-99).

Charles Dickens' philanthropic activities were as prolific as his journalism and writing of fiction. In 1846-7 he planned and launched Angela Burdett Coutts' reformatory for women, Urania Cottage, which he was mainly responsible for overseeing until 1858. He regularly supplied Miss Coutts with advice and guidance on a number of her philanthropic projects. Concurrently, he assisted in the establishment of Ragged Schools in London and education reform, making a point of visiting, inspecting, and writing of his findings about the various institutions in Household Words. Through speeches, charitable readings and subscriptions, he gave various donations to ben~~ev~~olent and provident funds. He was also listed for such diverse bodies as the Metropolitan Drapers' Association, the Poor Man's Guardian Society, the Orphan Working School, the Royal Hospital for the Incurables and the Hospital for Sick Children. He gave various kinds of aid to mechanics institutes, adult education, soup kitchens, emigration schemes, health and sanitary bodies and

recreational societies. Norris Pope also points out that Dickens was notably generous to friends and families he knew when they suffered bereavement or some other calamity.⁽¹⁴⁾ He also, accompanied by a police officer for protection, walked the poverty-stricken and crime-ridden streets of London in order to see the grim reality for himself. Memories of his humiliating childhood days, labouring in a shoe blacking factory and seeing his hapless family in the debtor's prisons of Fleet and Marshalsea, never left him, and are incorporated in such novels as David Copperfield and Little Dorrit. When his family were reduced to penury, he found himself an abandoned small boy, ill-lodged, under-fed and wandering the streets aimlessly. Accounts of his marriage to Catherine Hogarth vary in their sympathy, but it is generally accepted by modern researchers that Dickens - although to his public a benevolent and dedicated philanthropist - was towards his wife, a difficult, moody and often aggressive man.⁽¹⁵⁾ For the purposes of this research, the selected philanthropic heroines of Dickens are Rose Maylie of Oliver Twist (1839) and Esther Summerson of Bleak House (1853)

Benjamin Disraeli was a politician as well as a novelist. As a Tory politician he became leader of the opposition in 1847, a minister in 1852 and Prime Minister in 1868. Although brilliant, gifted and determined to succeed, Disraeli lacked the normal public school and university education which was common to the majority of male public figures of his day.

Instead his father preferred to tutor him at home with the ambition he should enter the law. In the dedicated pursuit of success, Disraeli first turned to literature and then to politics. Although he was born outside the aristocracy, in 1876, he accepted the title of Lord Beaconsfield. As a converted Jew, he had always been deeply interested in the Christian Churches and much drawn to the mysticism and venerable aestheticism of Roman Catholicism. So, in the novels of his earlier years, Disraeli had shown himself sympathetic towards the Catholics. Later, he came to view the Roman Church in a less favourable light, probably because, in the events of the anti-Popery movement of 1850, he realised that any such Catholic allegiance would be a threat to his political career. He then joined the more acceptable Anglo-Catholic faction of the Anglican Church. In his novels and politically, Disraeli concerned himself with the widening gap between the rich and the poor. In Sybil he writes, with some sympathetic understanding, of the discontent which led to the Chartist riots. Correctly, he foresaw the failure of the Chartists, although over the next century the working man achieved the Chartist's aims. Disraeli's allegiance to the idealism of the High Church Oxford movement, of Henry Newman was a reaction to Evangelicalism. It advocated a return to kindly paternalism in the medieval monastic tradition of providing the poor with, as Disraeli expresses it in Sybil: "a point of refuge for all who need succour, counsel and protection to guide the impoverished to relieve the suffering and to protect the oppressed."⁽¹⁶⁾

Despite the hope that the tractarian movement of the High Church gave to some Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics, that the Church of England was about to return to Catholic unity, the retrograde stance it took ran contrary to the liberalism of the growing class of entrepreneurs. Disraeli's heroine of Sybil will be the subject of discussion here.

Charles Kingsley, after a period of religious doubt, was ordained curate of Eversley in Hampshire in 1844, a living he continued as rector until his death. A sensitive man with a stutter, he was a conscientious minister, who furthered the education of the working man and generally declared war on poverty and vice. From 1860 he was Professor of Modern History at Cambridge for nine years and also was Canon, first at Chester, and then Westminster. Suspicious of feudal socialism and the Oxford Movement, he was profoundly influenced by Frederick Denison Maurice's ideas of practical Christianity. It was a mixture of religious convictions and Liberalism which led F.D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley and their friends to produce their series, Tracts for Priests and People (1854), and to give birth to the Christian Socialist movement. The movement concerned with current social problems in which religious fervour was directed towards social and material improvement, was a mixture of evangelical humanitarianism and liberal radicalism. It presented a kinder view of the Deity and the "after life" than the more formidable traditional picture of a judgemental God and eternal punishment for the wayward in

Hell. The movement also tried to "Christianise" education by sponsoring the causes of better education for women, adult schools and working men's institutes. Christian Socialism was not only a reaction against the Oxford movement, it was also in opposition to laissez-faire politics. David Thomson, the historian, has commented on the value of the close harmony of the Christian faith with Liberalism, claiming that the combination affected a powerful force to offset the oppressive materialistic forces of mid-Victorianism.⁽¹⁷⁾ Philanthropic work and campaigns by women such as Florence Nightingale, an Anglican devotee herself, Louisa Twining, and Josephine Butler, whose activities with the "fallen" frequently outraged the orthodox Church and its clergy, were publically supported by Christian Socialists. Kingsley wrote three problem novels, Yeast - A Problem (1848), Alton Locke (1850) and, a few years later, Two Years Ago (1857). Alton Locke, which covers more than the other two novels what Kingsley stood for as a radical sympathizer, was a natural development from Yeast. All three novels of the trilogy contain examples of good Christian women who serve as a spiritual inspiration to all: in Yeast there is Argemone Lavington, a selfless Sister of Charity; in Alton Locke, Lady Eleanor Ellerton, "a Lady Bountiful" and "priestess" of Christian Socialism, and in Two Years Ago, the non-conformist schoolmistress, Grace Harvey, who converts the much travelled doctor, Tom Thurnal, to Christianity, and whose love she wins by the end of the novel. Particular attention, however, will be given here to the philanthropic

heroines of the two more closely related novels, Yeast and Alton Locke, Argemone Lavington and Lady Eleanor Ellerton respectively.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell is the most obviously outstanding of the philanthropic women writers. After the death of her mother, during her childhood, she spent her formative years in Cheshire and Stratford Upon Avon, brought up by an affectionate aunt, who assured for her beloved niece an all-round education. In 1832, the intelligent lively-minded, generous-natured Elizabeth Stevenson married the Reverend William Gaskell who was to become the well-known minister of the Unitarian Chapel in Manchester's Cross Street. Elizabeth Gaskell led an astonishingly varied life; she was the mother of three daughters and a baby son who died, and she intermingled various travels to Europe with assisting her education-~~alist~~ and philanthropic husband in the Cross Street Sunday and Day Schools connected to his Church.⁽¹⁸⁾ During the 1839-42 depression, she often visited the sick and dying with her husband.⁽¹⁹⁾ Before long she became a highly popular novelist and dedicated philanthropist in her own right, working with a team of philanthropists, Catherine Winkworth, Thomas Madge and Kay Shuttleworth, and many others who strove to alleviate the misery of the masses in the Manchester slums, factories and prisons. She gave evening classes to working-class girls and came to the aid of the weaving widows and daughters by giving them sewing lessons so that they could earn a living.

It was from these experiences and her knowledge of industrial relations and Chartism that she drew her material and inspiration for her "social novels" Mary Barton and North and South. Her novel Ruth was similarly inspired through her involvement in the rehabilitation of "fallen women".⁽²⁰⁾ Literary critics have praised the courage of Elizabeth Gaskell for writing Mary Barton, a novel which aroused some fierce public protest by those who did not like to see the masters prejudiced against in favour of the working-man's cause.⁽²¹⁾ Ruth received outraged protests of another kind this time because of Gaskell's sympathetic treatment of the accursed "fallen woman".⁽²²⁾ However, in this thesis, it is the philanthropic heroine of North and South (1855), Margaret Hale, who will be a key subject of these chapters.

Charlotte Bronte, was not an active philanthropist, neither is there any substantial evidence to suggest she visited the sick and needy of her father's parish, although she was acquainted with the local rural people. . . . Possibly the internal domestic demands of the Howarth vicarage; her own shy nature; the family proneness to ill-health; family problems concerning Branwell's drunkenness and adultery;⁽²³⁾ family deaths; the sisters' need to earn their own living, and above all, their compulsive obsession with writing, left Charlotte or her sisters little time for such past-times as parish visits. Nonetheless, Charlotte Bronte deserves a place in this selection of philanthropic authors because of her novel, Shirley, which

not only addresses itself to matters of Yorkshire social history and past tales of frame-breaking riots, but also explores the central relationship between its two philanthropic heroines, the dynamic Shirley Keeldar and the quieter, but equally positive, Caroline Helstone. Shirley, appeared a year after Elizabeth Gaskell had published Mary Barton. Charlotte Bronte had been deeply impressed with Elizabeth Gaskell's novel and was possibly influenced by it in the development of her themes. She also requested an opinion about the merits of Shirley from Gaskell. In 1850, the two women met and this was the beginning of a vital friendship culminating in 1857 in Gaskell's biography of her friend, The Life of Charlotte Bronte. Clearly the philanthropic tradition interested Charlotte Bronte although in her novels it becomes merged very much so with the love and courtship interest. Moreover, Charlotte Bronte's voice of protest is still of interest. Through her previous novel, Jane Eyre, widely acclaimed as a work of genius, Charlotte Bronte, to some extent unwittingly, had caused a public outcry over two "social" issues. One was the struggle of the unmarried, independent, intelligent woman to earn a living. She opened up the debate about the indignities suffered by educated women who had little choice of a career; it is a theme which is also powerfully carried in Shirley. A demeaning career as a governess or schoolmistress was all that was available to them. The other was, the scandal surrounding the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, founded and supervised by the Reverend Carus Wilson, to which

Charlotte and her sisters were sent. After the publication of Jane Eyre, the school run by Carus Wilson was immediately linked to the fictional Lowood School.⁽²⁴⁾ How far the author's objectivity was coloured by emotional judgement is unclear, but she clearly gives a vivid and detailed picture of a bitterly cold, bleak and harsh institution. The entire truth about the issues raised by Charlotte Bronte may never be known; it presented Elizabeth Gaskell with some anxiety when she was collecting material for her friend's biography. Whatever the truth of the matter may have been, Charlotte Bronte's outspokenness caused the conditions of the school to be improved; it was later relocated in a healthier area of Casterton.⁽²⁵⁾ It would seem that although Charlotte Bronte may not be classified for posterity as a social novelist, potentially she was in sympathy with those writers who were prepared to air social injustices by way of fiction.

George Eliot, born Mary Anne Evans and later known as Marion, displayed throughout the whole of her writing life - first as a journalist and editor of the Westminster Review and then as one of the most outstanding novelists known in English literature - a strong interest in the social and intellectual developments of her day. She had the most remarkable powers of memory and observation. Her experience of life was a wide and practical one. In the evangelical days of her youth, she relieved the poor, visited the sick and prayed with them.⁽²⁶⁾ She sustained an enduring involvement and interest in provincial

and metropolitan society, and, later, during her travels with Lewes in Germany and Switzerland, associated with many intellectuals. She always remained immersed in domestic preoccupations, in her earlier years with the Evans family and then, with the joys and tragedies of the Lewes family. She knew well the pain of rejection by both her own beloved brother, Isaac, and society, when she unofficially married George Henry Lewes, but she also enjoyed the personal, the creative and intellectual joys that her twenty-four years of a loving relationship with Lewes brought with it.⁽²⁷⁾ The biography of Gordon Haight reveals Lewes' unceasing belief in his Marion's genius. Without his encouragement, it is probable the novels of George Eliot would never have been written.⁽²⁸⁾ George Eliot was intensely concerned with morality and set herself to depict "mixed human beings in such a way as to call forth tolerant judgement, pity and sympathy".⁽²⁹⁾ By the time she was earning her living by her pen, she had discarded her obsession with Non-conformist Christianity, and was widely reading (and translating some into English) the humanitarian philosophies of Strauss, Spinoza, Feuerbach and Comte. Her insatiable appetite for erudite reading also acquainted her with the evolutionary theories of Darwin.⁽³⁰⁾ She appears to have believed that the future advancement of society would have to be founded not in the mysticism of the Church but on the "natural knowledge" provided by empiricism, however, the signs are she was reluctant to relinquish the Christian ethic of "love thy neighbour"; in fact, as

U.C. Knoepfelmacher observes, like D.H. Lawrence later on, she was to preserve in her novels the truths of the Bible, to reshape them into a new essence and rehabilitate them for a future environment.⁽³¹⁾ The indicators are, that George Eliot was considerably interested in the philanthropic movement in her day. She also believed in a literary tradition apart from men;⁽³²⁾ her fictional heroines - Dinah Morris, Maggie Tulliver, Dorothea Casaubon and Gwendolen Harleth - seem to have been almost suffragette in their resentment to the confinement of feminine intelligence.⁽³³⁾ The most philanthropic of these heroines, Dinah Morris of Adam Bede and, to a lesser extent, Dorothea Casaubon of Middlemarch, have been singled out for this study.

Charlotte Yonge, apologist for the Oxford Movement, was teacher in a day school and Sunday School, and fund-raiser for many charitable causes. Yonge seems to have been hampered by her parochial environment in the Hampshire village of Otterbourne and by a strict, sheltered, although happy, upbringing. Her parents were country gentry, who brought her up in the most rigid of Tory principles, and her kind and loving father exerted an undisputed family authority. However, Yonge received a sound education from her parents, especially her father, who gave her a thorough grounding in mathematics, the Classics and modern languages. Another great significant influence in her life, besides her father, was John Keble, rector of the neighbouring parish of Hursley, family friend, former fellow of Oriel College Oxford and disciple of Henry

Newman of the High Church Oxford movement. At the age of fifteen, Yonge was prepared for confirmation by Keble and she fell under the influence of the Oxford Movement. Keble, was to become her lifelong religious mentor. Yonge developed a genuine, obsessive love for God and the High Church and an abounding interest in religion as a subject. She never married. Nonetheless, as with many young women, bound by environmental strictures, Charlotte Yonge had ideas about her own fulfilment in society and displayed moments of rebellion. Her charitable work in the village schools was insufficient occupation for her gifted mind. There was her desire to become a novelist, but her grandmother considered that it was extremely low to profit by the fruits of one's labours. It also was an era when it was considered lax to read a novel. Eventually her family consented to allow Yonge to publish only on the understanding that her earnings were to be donated to charity. Yonge had managed to overcome the obstacle of family approbation by presenting herself as "a sort of instrument for popularising Church views"⁽³⁴⁾ and the object in all her books was "to make goodness attractive." So she compromised her art to the Oxford Movement cause. The strength of male control over Yonge's literature was such that her father read, criticised and changed at will everything she wrote; after his death Keble assumed this role.⁽³⁵⁾ However, despite this religious and domestic subservience, Charlotte Yonge was one of the most influential novelists of her day. She wrote over one hundred and sixty books in her long lifetime, the first being published in 1844 and the last in 1901, the

most successful being the novel, The Heir of Ratcliffe(1854), which surpassed even the works of Dickens and Thackeray in popularity. Although the majority of Yonge's fiction was aimed at young women and provided powerful rôle models for Victorian womanhood - models that urged female self-sacrifice and goodness, her vivid and absorbing stories also appealed to male readers: the Romantic tale surrounding the respectable hero of The Heir of Ratcliffe, Sir Guy Morville, was claimed to be eagerly read by officers in the Crimea, and her imaginative fiction was a source of inspiration to men, including William Morris and Rossetti. Much of Yonge's writing energies were narrowed down into improving the religious morality and education of young minds: she wrote small books for cottage school children⁽³⁶⁾ and was also editor of The Magazine of the Young: The Monthly Packet, a Church of England paper for young people; the Monthly Paper of Sunday School Teaching and Mothers in Council. The proceeds of her books went to a number of good causes of the High Church, such as the Melanesian Mission, and, curiously - because of her objection to women being educated outside the home - to a scholarship founded in her honour for girls going to university from Winchester School.⁽³⁷⁾ It is her heroine, Rachel Curtis of The Clever Woman of the Family, who will provide the interest here.

The novelists, Lady Georgiana Fullerton and Elizabeth Skene, have been selected to represent those less-accomplished philanthropic Victorian novelists whose books are unlikely to be

reprinted for publication.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton became a Catholic convert when she married Alexander Fullerton, a Guards officer and Irish Landowner and Catholic convert himself. As tractarian and novelist, she broke away from the usual major Roman Catholic doctrinal propoganda topics of the writer priests, to write about more humane, liberalising and ecumenical topics. As both a writer and philanthropist, she was greatly impressed by a community to assist the poor and dying established by the Reverend Père Blot at the Monastery of Ars in France, and, in her writings, proposes that such Catholic charitable communities should be set up in London.⁽³⁸⁾ Her selected heroine of this author is Ginevra of Grantley Manor - A Tale.

Felicia Mary Frances Skene was probably a more accomplished philanthropist than novelist, nonetheless, as a social document, her novel, Hidden Depths: A Story of a Cruel Wrong indicates an innovatory feminist mind of immense interest. The novel is prefaced with the statement that "The writer of this book is a lady, who is herself a witness of some of the thrilling scenes it narrates".⁽³⁹⁾ The subject matter of the book is similar to that of Mrs. Gaskell's novels, the suffering of the poor, with special focus on the exploited woman forced into prostitution by circumstance. From 1850, Miss Skene worked in a Sisterhood at Oxford - although she never became a Sister herself. She even ceased to go to confession, which does suggest that Skene

was a social worker first and a religious devotee second. Unlike Charlotte Yonge, she appears to have resisted the absolute dominance of the Church over her actions, although she was prepared to work closely alongside her good friend the Anglo-Catholic clergyman, Thomas Chamberlain of St. Thomas the Martyr at Oxford. The pair were dedicated to social and missionary work in the Oxford slums, prison and brothels. With Chamberlain, she laboured heroically among the poor in a cholera epidemic. An admirer and emulator of Florence Nightingale, she later helped to train nurses to go out to the Crimea. She might have gone herself had not her parents forbade it.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The philanthropic heroine of Hidden Depths, Ernestine Courtney, is one of those rare Victorian heroines who decide not to marry in preference to setting up a humane institution for "fallen women".

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The depiction of the philanthropic heroine through the "two different voices" of male and female novelists is the subject of literary analysis in the remainder of this chapter. The novels by male writers will be considered first as a group on the assumption that they provide the norm of convention against which the novels by female writers may be compared and assessed. In both sections the novels are taken in their historical order of publication.

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PAGINATION ERRORS

"MINISTERING ANGEL"

"Love is women's all - her wealth, her power, her very being. Man, let him love as he may, has ever an existence, distinct from that of his affections. He has his worldly interests, his public character, his ambition, his competition with other men In woman's love is mingled the trusting dependence of a child, for she ever looks up to a man as her protector, and her guide."

Sara Ellis (1842)

"As to the life I am destined for, I cannot tell: I suppose, to keep my uncle's house, till.....events offer other occupations....."

Charlotte Bronte

This section on gender dynamics is about the attitudes of male novelists towards gender stereotyping, how they, as writers, consciously or unconsciously, affirm or deny the stereotype of women through their perception of female philanthropy and their treatment of the philanthropic heroine. The key questions asked are: did the male author conform to the conventional model of the Ruskinian ideal of the "good lady" as helpmate and moral inspiration to man, thereby assigning his heroine to a private philanthropic role? Or did he take positive moves to acknowledge the existence of the actual revolutionary philanthropic woman? If Carol Gilligan's premise is sustainable, one would expect to find in the "voice" of male writers a significant retention of the stereotype of the

philanthropic heroine, whose self-identity is delineated in terms of self-sacrifice, the "ministering Angel", the de-sexed young Lady, whose charitable activities must not exclude her from her rightful place of dependency on men.

Although Charles Dickens wrote Oliver Twist (1837-39) two decades before Ruskin defined his famous ideal of "the Queen of the Hearth" , his heroine, Rose Maylie, clearly anticipates the Ruskinian model. Dickens writes of his heroine's sweet expression: "Above all, the smile, the cheerful, happy smile, were made for the Home, and fireside peace and happiness."⁽¹⁾ The character of Rose Maylie, the gentle-natured, obediently demure, adopted daughter of charitable Mrs. Maylie, more closely resembles the de-sexed stereotype of the Victorian "good woman" than a philanthropic heroine. Rose is not central to the novel as a whole, but she is important to the plot involving the benevolent Brownlow - Maylie network of relationships, which operate on the side of Good, serving to offset the Fagin plot, which promotes the Evil face of humankind. She is instrumental in taking pity on the luckless Oliver, who is found in a state of collapse after a housebreaking expedition as an unwilling accomplice to the villanous Sikes. Rose, faithfully believing in the goodness of the homeless orphan, develops a loving affection for him and nurses him with all the attributes of the ministering "Angel" sister. Rose first appears to the distressed and terrified boy as a somewhat saintly apparition:

"The younger lady was in the lovely bloom and spring time of womanhood; at that age, when, if ever angels be for God's good purposes enthroned in mortal form, they may be without impiety, supposed to abide in such as hers." (2)

Cliver is already acquainted with Nancy, the desperate, gin-drinking, slattern mistress of Sikes. Rose, therefore, serves as an antithetical device of maidenly goodness and light to Nancy, the sinner and "forever fallen" whore. Rose is the "good lady" who hears Nancy's penitent confession. Seventeen and virginal, she is, a Rousseauan Romantic image of pure womanhood, "Cast in so slight and exquisite mould; so mild and gentle; so pure and beautiful; that earth seemed not her element, nor its rough creatures her fit companions".⁽³⁾ Unfortunately, because of Rose's illegitimacy, Mrs. Maylie's charity does not stretch itself to allowing her son, Henry, to marry Rose. However, because of her goodness (and, because it is revealed she is Cliver's aunt, and they are both of well-to-do stock) Mrs. Maylie acquiesces and all is well. Rose is one of a category of Dickens' heroines whose self-identity is smothered by the requirement to make her gratefully submissive because of her disgraced station in life. She suffers her personal indignity in silence, sadly and stoically obedient to her kind, if morally rigid, benefactress. She is the epitome of "the good lady" who compensates for her social disadvantage by being virtuous and saintly towards others, a theme which Dickens explores more thoroughly in Esther Summerson, in his later novel. Rose Maylie, heads the list of a number of

Dickens "good" heroines - Madeline Bray, Agnes Wickfield, Lucy Manette - who are a mixture of the beautiful "Angels in the House", devoted, self-sacrificing, de-sexed women. Michael Slater presents the idea that Rose Maylie, in her role as "sister-heroine" was modelled on the recently deceased Mary Hogarth, sister of Dickens' wife, Catherine. Mary Hogarth had a profound influence on Dickens' art and, next to his wife, he loved her dearly. He writes that she intensified his response to the sisterly "sexless" aspect of women.⁽⁴⁾ Slater also suggests that in both Dickens' life and literature, his elder, musically talented sister, Fanny, in her childhood, seems to have supplied perfectly the "other woman" sister figure so necessary for a happy ménage.⁽⁵⁾

Unlike the actual philanthropic heroines, Rose Maylie stays close to "the Hearth" and rarely ventures abroad unless chaperoned by male company. Her most altruistic act is to hear the confession of the prostrate Nancy, which is highly stylised by forceful cliches of the Calvinist pulpit. It disproportionately idealises Rose but predicts Nancy's irredeemable fall:

"O lady, lady! if there was more like you, there would be fewer like me - there would - there would! dear, sweet angel lady, you are the first that ever blessed me with sweet words as these, and if I had heard them years ago, they might have turned me from a life of sin and sorrowbut it is too late for penitence and atonement.....You can do nothing to help me I am past all help indeed." (6)

Rose's maidenly sympathy and appeal to Nancy that she might yet receive God's redeeming grace does little to assist Nancy in her earthly life. The scene of Nancy's confession portends her sacrificial murder on the murky Thames embankment; her final act of goodness of reuniting Oliver, the emblematic figure of innocence, with his good friends means death for the "low and debased" girl. Any act of redemption towards her is passed on to the wiser judgement of the Almighty. Dickens' sentimentalised and insipid portrait of the demure, saintly Rose is a world away from those thousands of pioneering middle-class women who involved themselves in rescuing the "Nancys" from the streets, and with whom Dickens, himself, worked. Instead his cautionary message is that Rose might have been what Nancy has become had not the grace of God given her greater preference; Rose, herself, being one of the fortunate illegitimate girls who has been adopted as a daughter by a good "Lady Bountiful". Dickens was sympathetic to the issue of illegitimacy. Despite some vagueness in the handling of Nancy and given the prevailing approbation in these matters, there are signs of non-condemnatory concern for a working girl whose previous plight of poverty has driven her to prostitution - a girl who came from "the alley to the gutter" but who nonetheless has "something of the woman's original nature left in her still".⁽⁷⁾ This suggests that Dickens, at this stage in his writing life, was most at ease with the popular "ministering angel" stereotype of charitable women. Rose, like many of Dickens' heroines is given little "voice" of her own. She is generally^a flat, uninteresting, Romanticised creation - the

voice" of Dickens breathing into her very little maturity, mobility or independence from men. Rose is not even marginally typical of women like Mary Carpenter, who involved herself in educating orphans, nor of the Quaker and other "rescue" women, like Elizabeth Fry, who by the time the novel was written, were wrestling with the problem of prostitution in the London slums. Rose is more typical of the lifeless creation of the over-sentimentalised "good lady" which suited the sensibilities of the Victorian reading public.

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Disraeli's heroine, Sybil, like Rose Maylie, is described as "intelligent and gentle, whose temper never seemed ruffled"; (8) rarely is she expected to behave like a normal human being. Sybil or "The Two Nations" (1845) is one of a trilogy of propoganda novels - the others being Coningsby (1844) and Tancred (1847) - which span the three topics of political, economic and religious regeneration of England. As novelist and member of the High Church Oxford Movement, Disraeli was motivated by the religious and political idealism of Tory-Church paternalism. His concern with feudal socialism, a system of benevolent authoritarianism and intervention, which he believed would bring a peaceful and just society, meant that the characters in his novels were essentially representations of the opposing voices of economic political ideologies;

they were not seriously intended to be psychological depictions of individual people. Also, inspired by medieval literature, it is not surprising that his beautiful heroine, Sybil, is a maidenly stereotype, a novice-nun, symbolic of the former charitable orders, Sybil is the ministering angel par excellence in the tradition of the Lady of the Knights. She is a beautiful sister to the people,⁽⁹⁾ "that seraphic being" to Charles Egremont, the nobleman hero.⁽¹⁰⁾ Charles Egremont's first acquaintance with Sybil takes place at the ruined Marney Abbey. The occasion transfigures Egremont's purpose in life. As he learns from a wise stranger of the state of the two Nations, of Rich and Poor - "between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy", the crumbled monastic scene is symbolically bathed in "a sudden flush of rosy light" and, simultaneously, Egremont's emotions are stirred by a sound coming from the Chapel, of the "divine melody" of the solo voice of Sybil, the tones of which were "of almost supernatural sweetness." Thus, throughout the novel, Disraeli sets his philanthropic heroine on a near-celestial plane: Sybil is the bright apparition who inspires the young nobleman and spurs him on in his career.⁽¹¹⁾ Throughout the novel she is accompanied by seraphic imagery, a figure of "sweet celestial sympathy" and "ethereal power", who at various stages of her story "clasps her hands and looks up to heaven" for personal strength. Sybil is also presented as the mother model of the generation. Her suitability as Egremont's life partner and mother of his children is predicted in a Romanticised "sylvan"

setting:

"Some beautiful children rushed out of a cottage and flew to Sybil, crying out 'the queen, the queen,' and a third, too small to struggle, pouting its lip to be embraced. 'My subjects', said Sybil laughing, as she greeted them all." (12)

Sybil is an angelic Queen, whom Egremont observes, "feels deeply for the people". Their love relationship is presented on a beneficent sexless level, simply because Disraeli was more interested in projecting "a voice" of political idealism, than the human voice of reality.

As a philanthropist, Sybil visits the neighbouring poor "gliding like an angel, blessing and blessed".⁽¹³⁾ She associates herself with the Trafford settlement, run along the lines of baronial and utilitarian principles and upheld as a model for all. Mrs. Trafford, philanthropist among the poor, teaches the workers and their families to read and wash themselves.⁽¹⁴⁾ The factory workers are content and want nothing to do with the threatened riots; morals and manners are improved, and drunkenness and crime are virtually unknown. In the scene in which Sybil visits the Warner's cottage, she clearly serves as Disraeli's metaphorical expression of the new generation of monastic benevolence:

" 'You suffer?' said Sybil, moving to the bedside of the woman; 'give me your hand,' she added in a soft sweet tone. ' 'Tis hot.'
'I feel very cold,' said the woman. 'Warner would have the window open, till the rain came in'
'And you have no fire. Ah! I have brought some things for you, but not fuel.'
'If he would only ask the person downstairs,' said his wife, 'for a block of coal; I tell him, neighbours could hardly refuse; but he never will do anything; he says he has asked too often.'

'I will ask,' said Sybil. 'But first, I have a companion without,' she added, 'who bears a basket for you'.....Sybil untied the basket, and gave a piece of sugar to the screaming infant. Her glance was sweeter even than her remedy; the infant stared at her with his large blue eyes, for an instant astonished, and then he smiled.

'Oh! beautiful child!' exclaimed Sybil; and she took the babe up from the mattress and embraced it. 'You are an angel from heaven' exclaimed the mother, 'and you may well say beautiful' " (15)

The screaming baby, a symbol of the distraught future generation, is nourished both physically and spiritually by Sybil. The Superior of the convent also graciously sends out meals to the cottagers.

Sybil, was written at the period of agitation for effective Factory Acts, for the People's Charter, and for the repeal of the Corn Laws. The novel contrasts the mostly indifferent world of the noble rich and powerful politicians,⁽¹⁶⁾ and the world apart, of country towns like Marney, a place of vile hovels and sullen starving people, whose only relief is in poaching and burning ricks, or like the new manufacturing town of Mowbray, where those hands who are employed may enjoy good times at the music hall while others are neglected: the weavers die in garrets, infanticide grows and neglected children grow up menaces to society. The condition of the poor is described in a strange blend of realism and fantasy; there are

the poor in their cottages, and the discontented miners grumbling against the tyranny of the truck wages, and the grim pagan settlement of Wodgate, where locksmiths and ironmongers, keep their own barbaric rituals. The celestial aura and imagery that surrounds the heroine, Sybil, stands in sharp contrast, and offsets the latter and the evil Hell-cats of the so-called Bishop Hatton.

At first, Sybil, sincerely but misguidedly gives support to Chartism, as the good and loyal daughter to Gerard, a foreman and Chartist delegate from Nowbray. This conflicts with Egremont's love and need for her. Although Sybil suffers this dilemma of choice, she is permitted very little manoeuvrability both as a woman and as a philanthropist. Her portrait conforms closely to the stereotype of the "good angelic lady" for whom self-sacrifice and dependency on men is equated to self-realisation. She is fervently loyal to her father, and he to her, and because of this loving devotion she shares his political belief in the Chartists' mandate. Her oneness with Gerard is expressed in her words to Egremont: "All I desire, all I live for, is to sooth and support him in his great struggle; and I should die content if the People were only free, and a Gerard had freed them." (17) She is clearly her father's handmaiden in the cause for the working people's enfranchise. Yet, Sybil's own social aspirations are influenced by her strong Catholic faith: daunted by the harsh complexities of the world, she tells Morley that Chartism had "God and Truth" on their

side. Ultimately, she finds her continuing loyalty to Chartism, and Gerard, thrown into confusion once she makes the acquaintance of Egremont and his very different political philosophy.

The character of Charles Egremont serves to bridge the plot surrounding the poor people, Sybil, Gerard and the Chartists, and the plot which expresses the various viewpoints of concern and indifference of the aristocrats and politicians. Disraeli's intention was that his lovers should reflect what he saw as the political and economic polarisation of his day. Sybil is "the voice" of the deprived, industrial nation of the North, and her marriage to Egremont, the Southern "voice" of political wisdom, serves to bring the two Nations together. As with all courtly love stories, whatever the nature of their symbolism the lovely, virtuous lady, must be won by noble deeds and acts of gallantry. First, Egremont worships the good lady from afar as he comes across her at worship in the Chapel. While she attends to the poor he assumes the guise of Mr. Franklin, a working man, so as to make her closer acquaintance, and the couple engage in walks and read together. However, the lady, herself, is put to the test. First, she refuses Egremont's love because she believes the gulf between rich and poor to be irreconcilable. Sybil also undergoes the indignity of having to resist the proclamations of love from the treacherous Stephen Morley, who slanders Egremont, in order to gain the heroine's affection. Also, the spiritual and lofty charitable qualities of Sybil which endear her to Egremont are offset by her political belief

that the people with their Chartist leaders will save themselves. Egremont has no faith in Chartism, and urges her to believe that a new generation of the aristocracy is rising to save the country. Yet, Sybil's first loyalties are to her factory worker father and the people and to her Church. She tells Mr Franklin, unaware he is Egremont in disguise:

"I have lived under two roofs, only two roofs and each has given me a great ideal, the Convent and the Cottage. One has taught me the degradation of my faith, the other of my race. You should not wonder that my heart is concentrated on the Church and the People." (18)

Sybil, archetype of filial affection, risks her life and reputation out of loyalty and love for Gerard. In possession of recently acquired information from Morley that members of the movement were prepared to discredit Gerard, she, for once defiant, pleads with Gerard not to attend the Chartists' secret meeting, knowing he is in danger of arrest. Doggedly, Gerard continues to believe political change will come peacefully:

"All children of Labour are to rise on the same day, and toil no more, till they have their rights. No violence, no bloodshed." (19)

In this instance, Disraeli is indicating Sybil's womanly, moral superiority over her politically misguided and stubborn father, who thinks his cause is worth the risks of arrest. He dismisses her pleadings as "a womanish weakness", but Sybil's self-assertive reply is, "It may be womanish, but is it wise?"(20)

(20^a)

However, unlike Margaret Hale or Shirley, Sybil does not take immediate steps to prevent disaster. Instead, in a scene suggesting Pre-Raphaelite sentimentality, she "looks up to heaven with streaming eyes, and clasped her hands in unutterable woe." (21) Her personal courage acquired by prayer, Sybil ventures forth to seek her father's secret hiding place in the seedy haunts of the city. In the next sequence of scenes Sybil displays a certain degree of self-assertive behaviour. She chooses to take a cab into the dark, crime-ridden alleys of the city, but recoils from the poverty and degradation she witnesses there. Her author makes all manly attempts to keep his untainted heroine-"This child of innocence and divine thoughts on a great enterprise of duty and devotion " (22) placed at the mercy of a rogue driver - immune from the threat of city corruption. Taken to a coffee house, where Sybil persists in acquiring the address of the secret Chartists' meeting, she is mistaken for a whore and is the victim of snide innuendoes from the proprietor of ill-repute. Again, the over-protective voice of Disraeli intervenes:

"So absorbed in her mission, Sybil was almost insensible to the scenes through which she passed and her innocence was spared many a sight and sound that might have startled her vision or alarmed her ear." (23)

The cab which is providing Sybil with some physical protection, loses its wheel and she is left stranded confronted with undesirable and seedy company:

"A group immediately formed around the cab, a knot of young thieves, almost young enough for infant schools, a dustman, a woman nearly naked and very drunk, and two unshorn ruffians with brutality stamped on every feature, with pipes in their mouths, and their hands in their pockets." (24)

Sybil's first encounter with the deprived inhabitants of the industrial city provides a sharp contrast to Margaret Hale's meeting with the Manchester labourers. First, Disraeli's description of members of the underclass resembles a cardboard cut-out: it is merely a list of what he considered to be a representative group of the underworld, even their dialogue, which centres on drink and begging for money, is standardised. The passage is an example of Disraeli's lack of first-hand experience of this kind of threatening company, and was, therefore, unable, unlike Gaskell, to provide that immediate human response which comes from first hand knowledge. Ironically, Disraeli's heroine, "the ministering angel" visitor among the inhabitants of Mowbray and symbolically representative of the poor, is totally ill-equipped to deal with the situation in the metropolis. She is first rescued by a police officer, and then, when alone in a seamy street, recoiling in shame and terror, as she encounters two women "still beautiful in spite of gin and paint", she is assisted by an honest Irish Catholic who overhears her breathless evocation, "Holy Virgin, aid me." (25) By comparison, Margaret Hale, in North and South and Ernestine Courtenay in Hidden Depths, both reflections of their philanthropist authors, were capable of handling such situations alone, and of gaining the confidence of the under-

classes. Sybil lacks the independency of mind which the true philanthropic heroine had. Certainly, she is not even so much as a faint replica of women like Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler or Catherine Booth, all of whom fearlessly visited, moved among and resisted the criminals, the prostitutes and drunks. Along similar lines, Sybil's arrival at the Chartists' meeting is met with unlikely exclamations from rough members of the assembly of "Methinks she looks like a heavenly messenger" and "I had no idea that earth had anything so fair." Sybil's womanly innocence and saintliness is, to Disraeli, her ultimate protection.⁽²⁶⁾ Even when Sybil and the assembly of men are arrested and taken to Bow Street, the men are kept in custody, while Sybil is treated as "superior" and put into the kind keeping of the inspector's wife. The voice of Disraeli, the Victorian gentleman, persists as he explains, she "shrank with all the delicacy of a woman" at the shameful impending magistrates' examination.⁽²⁷⁾ Not surprisingly, Sybil is saved from this inglorious fate by a letter to Egremont, the consequence of which was her freedom and the reduction of Gerard's sentence.

Like Margaret Hale, Sybil also finds herself in the face of a riotous mob. She, Lady Howbray and a few companions of the Trafford settlement, courageously attempt to defend the settlement from attack. Like Margaret Hale, she recognises, in the ferocious mob, faces she knows. Sybil appeals to their good commonsense in the name of her peacemaker father:

" 'I see some Mowbray faces,' cried Sybil, springing forward, with a flashing eye and a glowing cheek. 'Bamford and Samuel Carr: Bamford, if you be my father's friend, aid us now; and Samuel Carr, I was with your mother this morning: did she think I should meet her son thus? No, you shall not enter.' said Sybil, advancing. They recognised her, they paused. 'I know you, Couchman; you told us once at the Convent that we might summon you in our need. I summon you now. Oh men, men ! she exclaimed, clasping her hands, 'what is this? Are you led away by strangers to such deeds? Why, I know you all ! You came here to aid, I am sure, and not to harm. Guard these ladies, save them from these foreigners !'" (28)

The men, instantly recognising the daughter of Gerald, unconvincingly call out: " 'Tis Sybil, our angel Sybil.' Unexpected aid arrives in the figure of Mr. St. Lys, the heroic priest and off_spring of the old family. Escape is effected for her companions but not for Sybil who finds herself alone surrounded by a fighting mob of Hell-cats. Unlike Margaret Hale, Sybil makes no further attempts as reconciler. The mob of Hell-cats, who had already left destruction in their wake, having ravaged and plundered the houses, cellars, shops and gasworks, are too unmerciful, even for her pacifying celestial presence. Extricating herself from them, she hides in the Grotto garden until in the tradition of the knights of old, Egremont comes to the rescue of the damsel in distress, and, Stephen Morley, alias Hutton, the Hell-cats leader and aristocratic antithesis to Egremont and his idealism, dies in the style of medieval gallantry at the point of Egremont's sword. (29) Egremont presses Sybil to his heart; and the pair unemotionally declare their union:

" 'We will never part again,' said Egremont
'Never,' murmured Sybil " (30)

Thus Good vindicates Evil. Sybil is instrumental in assisting the noble hero to espouse the cause of the people, by bringing to him her restored inherited fortune and manor of the Lords of Mowbray, as it is ultimately revealed that Sybil is no lowly maiden after all but is of aristocratic descent, with a right to property seized at the time of the Reformation. Moreover up to the time of Gerard's death, Sybil's loyalty to her father remains unaltered. While in prison in York, and before she marries Egremont, she lived in a convent nearby to visit and be near him. (31)

As a character, Sybil is given no independent self-identity, and few internalised feelings, opinions or emotions; she is merely the propoganda voice for what Disraeli considers to be right and just for the people - the revitalisation of the destroyed, prestigious, monastic medieval order. Sybil, in the tradition of the courtly love theme, serves as the visionary lady of beauty and goodness who inspires her lover to fight his political cause. Conversely Egremont serves as Sybil's wise political mentor. He was, Disraeli tells his readers, "what man should be to woman, ever-gentle, and yet a guide." (32) After listening submissively to this male voice of wisdom, Sybil is instrumental in assisting the aristocratic hero to lead the new Toryism. In both her relationships with Gerard and Egremont, she is the woman who serves and belongs to man.

It is clear that when writing Sybil, Disraeli was not specifically interested in the image of the self-identity of

his heroine, his primary interest was the presentation, through the hero, Egremont, of his own idea for alleviating deprivation, crime and poverty, downgrading those practices of those he considered were specimens of the post-Reformation mock ancestry, like the fictional Lord Marney, who, with no thought of his duties as landowner, treated his miserable peasantry, as if they were slaves. The symbolic philanthropic role of Sybil, as female representative of the Anglian Oxford Movement, is largely that of a prop to male political ideas of new Toryism. Disraeli, having little, first-hand, practical experience of female philanthropy, it suited his aesthetic purpose to impose on her the medieval trappings of an abstract, spiritualised heroine, a woman of mystique, whose role it is to inspire the greater political deeds of man. Notably, like Rose Maylie, Sybil is not permitted any decisive manoeuvrability towards feminine radicalism, yet, unlike Dickens, Disraeli, in his political life, was not unsympathetic to the woman's movement. This will be a topic of interest in 5.1.

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The similarity of Charles Kingsley's novel, Yeast, to Disraeli's group of novels is marked by the combining^{of} elements of a medieval courtly love tale with nineteenth century religious socio-economic idealism. Kingsley's heroine of

Yeast, Argemone, is set in the same stereotyped mould of Disraeli's heroine, Sybil. She is the squire's daughter, a novice of the Roman Catholic Sisterhood, a "ministering angel" to the poor, and the direct inspiration of the novel's hero, Lancelot Smith, son of a rich merchant. Lancelot, who is entranced by the beauty and noble spiritual charm of Argemone, announces, "I wish this summer, for the first time in my life to try and do some good - to examine a little into the real condition of English working men". He tells Argemone that she has taught him "priceless things", that "beauty is the sacrament of heaven, and love its gate." (33) In turn, Argemone is captivated by the hero's strength and nobility. The one obstacle to their relationship is their different religious allegiances, but when Argemone is confronted with Lancelot's robust Anglican simplicity and good intentions, he successfully dissuades her from a life of Roman Catholic piety. Like Sybil, Argemone is a de-sexed representation of the "good lady", instrumental in kindling a flame of social and spiritual idealism in her lover. Unlike Sybil, she dies tragically of typhoid fever contracted at the deathbed of a peasant of the insanitary village of Ashy where the filthy open drains have been the cause of an epidemic. (34) Unlike his counterpart, Egremont, in Sybil, Lancelot is denied the moral and spiritual supporting companionship of his reformist philanthropic partner. However, it becomes his mission in life to carry on good work of radical Christian social reform. In Argemone's melodramatic death-bed scene when the estranged lovers are

reunited, the delirious dying young woman, full of remorse for her family's neglect of the poor, tells the grief-stricken hero of the devastating horrors she encountered during her philanthropic work:

"She told him how she had gone up to the fever patient at Ashy,..... Shuddering, she hinted at the horrible filth and misery she had seen, at the foul scents which had sickened her. She had gone, in spite of her disgust, to several houses which she found open. There were worse cottages there than even her father's; some tradesmen in a neighbouring town had been allowed to run up a set of rack rent hovels.....(35)

Argemone, has, Christ-like, sacrificed herself for the sake of the people; she passes on her legacy of unfulfilled charity to Lancelot for him to carry out!

" 'The Nun-pool ! Take all the water, every drop, and wash Ashy clean again ! Make a great fountain in it - beautiful marble - to bubble and gurgle, and trickle and foam, for ever and ever, and wash away the sins of the Lavingtons, that the little rosy children may play round it, and the poor toil-bent woman may wash - and wash - and drink - Water ! water ! I am dying of thirst !' He gave her water, and then she lay back and babbled about the Nun-pool swooping "all the houses of Ashy into one beautiful palace, among great flower-gardens, where the school children will sit and sing such merry hymns and never struggle with great pails of water up the hill of Ashy any more. " 'You will do it ! darling ! Strong, wise, noble-hearted that you are !' "

Argemone's dying words, symbolic of a new beginning, are lacking in concrete detail. Neither is her voice the true voice of an over-distressed and aggrieved woman, who has been reconciled with a distraught lover. Her's is an histrionic speech,

clearly metaphorically contrived to convey Kingsley's own concern over continuing insanitary living and the risk of epidemic. The gloss of sentimentalised Romantic imagery, intended to highlight the plight of Argemone as an innocent victim of the epidemic, suggests a lack of first-hand knowledge of the kind of insanitary conditions known to Elizabeth Gaskell and investigated by such as Edwin Chadwick. (36)

One marked difference between the two earlier novels, Sybil and Yeast, and Alton Locke is that in Alton Locke the hero and heroine are not lovers: theirs is a relationship of communication between two social classes - the relationship between "an heiress, highly born and highly educated" and a working tailor who has a rare gift for poetry. In the denouement of the novel the heroine, Lady Eleanor Ellerton, is described by the radical tailor hero, as his "friend, mother, sister, all in one." (37) Eleanor enters the novel as a one bearing a resemblance to a Ruskinian figure; beautiful, austere, authoritative, "A queen rather to be feared than loved - but a queen still." Her audience, however, would have recognised her inner goodness and spirituality by her dress "as plain as that of any Quaker" and a voice (like Sybil's) which was "so peculiarly rich". They too would have proclaimed her as a fine lady by the "heavy gold bracelet on her wrist." (38) Eleanor is what Sybil and Argemone may have become had we access to the latter's biographies - a good, wise woman of counsel. She remains throughout a sex-less maternal representation of the educated, authoritarian noble classes especially as

she takes on the mantle of didactic Christian Socialist "priestess" in her sermons to Alton Locke. The story of Eleanor's personal development from rich heiress to a practical philanthropist in London's East End might appear to be a refreshing departure from the "ministering angel" prototype. Kingsley appears to be modelling his heroine on the actual philanthropic women of his day. Unfortunately, despite the exciting potential of her story, Eleanor is a flat, formless character whose story is, in the most part, recounted by her to Alton Locke.⁽³⁹⁾ She began life highly born as the only child of aristocratic parentage, and was highly educated. Flattery and vain pleasures made her proud and self-indulgent. Her ambition to be "a philanthropist, a philosopher, a feudal queen," was based on false notions of self-aggrandizement. With misguided good intentions, she turned the whole of her intellect to studies which served "Mammon and herself" in the belief that she was serving God.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Having traversed this wayward path, Eleanor enters into the "Lady Bountiful" stage of her development. The beautiful, intelligent heiress marries Lord Ellerton, a landowner who turns two neglected estates into one. An unoccupied manor house is transformed into a co-operative farm and village where "all of them from the least to the greatest have their own interest in the farm and be paid a percentage of the profits."⁽⁴¹⁾ It is a radical Utopian idea cross-fertilised with former aristocratic paternalistic altruism. Eleanor assists her husband enthusiastically with his work; the narration suggests some-

thing of a proud eighteenth century "Lady Bountiful" who oversees a Christian commune. Alton comments:

"But one thing struck me through the whole of this conversation - the way in which the new-married Lady Ellerton was spoken of, as aiding, encouraging, originating - a helpmeet, if not an oracular guide, for her husband - in all these noble plans. She had already acquainted herself with every woman on the estate; she was the dispenser, not merely of alms - for those seemed a disagreeable necessity, from which Lord Ellerton was anxious to escape as soon as possible - but of advice, comfort and encouragement. She not only visited the sick, and taught in the schools.....but seemed, from the hints which I gathered, to be utterly devoted, body and soul, to the welfare of the dwellers on her husband's land." (42)

Here Eleanor is more "the Angel of the House" than the "Angel in the House". Then Eleanor undergoes a personal crisis when her husband is killed in a riding accident. Her pride of caste is broken as she sees the estate pass into other hands. Freed from marriage and the estate, she undergoes a process of self-discovery her own philanthropic revolution when she puts her wealth into setting up a house for needlewomen in London, and becomes essentially a modern-day nineteenth century philanthropist. Although Eleanor's "voice" continues to be paternalistic, it is a clear departure from the "ministering Angel" concept of young women of Dickens and Disraeli.

In Alton Locke, a form of feminine radicalism is present in the aristocratic figure of Eleanor. Eleanor, unlike the general run of Victorian heroines, is not only liberated from marriage by widowhood but one who retains control over her life by

her decided choice, unpopular with her aristocratic peers to devote her life to women less fortunate than herself. On confronting the crisis of her husband's death, she relates to Alton Locke, in a speech reminiscent of that of the destitute King Lear on the heath: (43)

"I had broken the yoke of custom and opinion. My only ground was now the bare realities of human life and duty. In poverty and loneliness I thought out the problems of society, and seemed to myself to have found the one solution - self-sacrifice." (44)

As one of the new breed of female Christian Socialists, Eleanor first learns the lesson that indiscriminate giving to every institution, which "seemed after all, only means for keeping the poor in their degradation, by making it just not intolerable to them ", (45) was a mistake, that her wealth might be spent more selectively. She then applies both her wealth and her energies more positively by setting up a house for needlewomen in danger of prostitution in the East End -

"To become the teacher, the minister, the slave, of those whom I was trying to rescue, was now my one idea; to lead them on, not by machinery, but by precept, by example, by the influence of every gift and talent which God had bestowed upon me; to devote to them my enthusiasm, my eloquence, my poetry, my art, my science; to tell them who had bestowed these gifts on me, and would bestow, to each according to her measure, the same on them; to make my workrooms, in one word, not a machinery, but a family." (46)

Despite the paternalistic tone of her words, like Josephine Butler and Felicia Skene, who both befriended "fallen

women", Eleanor claims a kind of affinity with these, "the miserable and degraded of my sex", and sets out "to teach them to live as sisters by living with them as their sister."⁽⁴⁷⁾ In setting up the house for needlewomen, the benevolent widow is projected into "professional philanthropy" as Butler, Skene and others who ran the Magdalene homes were. Kingsley also permitted his heroine to have an opinion on matters of social economy:

"I shrank back behind the pitiable, worn-out fallacy, that luxury was necessary to give employment..... I knew that the labour spent in producing unnecessary things for one rich man may just as well have gone in producing necessaries for a hundred poor, or employ the architect and the painter for public bodies as well as private individuals. That even for the production of luxuries, the monopolising demand of the rich was not required." (48)

She is also responsible for the political and spiritual progress of Alton Locke, the radical working-class poet hero.

The relationship between Eleanor and Alton Locke is an ambivalent one which aims to establish the value of mutual worth on the one hand, but retains upper class paternalism on the other. Eleanor, tells Alton Locke, the Cambridge educated workingclass hero, that his "vivid descriptions of the misery among whole classes of workmen and ever increased by the very system of society itself"⁽⁴⁹⁾ have stirred her conscience and caused her to shed the shackles of her proud wealthy ancestry. She says, in the idealistic voice of socialism, "The capabilities which I saw in you

made me suspect that those below might be more nearly equals than I had yet fancied."⁽⁵⁰⁾ Conversely, the voice of common-sense and wisdom of the philanthropic woman guides Kingsley's hero along life's path of self-discovery. She urges Alton not to sacrifice his radical poetry to worn-out academic whims; she salvages him from a riotous Chartist mob, in which he carelessly gets involved, and is instrumental in reducing his prison sentence after a humiliating trial; she also rescues him from an unfortunate infatuation with the beautiful, fickle Lillian Winnstay, whose disloyalty causes him to betray his class and social conscience. Eleanor, educated, aristocratic and steadfast, is a civilising influence on the radical poet hero. Her "voice" is clearly that of "a guardian angel" and "spiritual healer" in her role as redeeming priestess to the ill and downcast Alton. This is achieved through a bizarre dream and a series of didactic sermons. The good woman proceeds to heal both his sick body and wounded soul as she nurses, reads and preaches from the scriptures, speaking slowly and gently to him as a friend. By way of biblical allusion and imagery and Tennyson's dreamy, utopian poem, Lotus Eaters, she brings Alton to a point where he recognises the truth of inner goodness and a religious and social doctrine by which a new Christian faith may be built, a movement of social justice. Chartism was not for nothing, it served as a message of the artisans to the aristocracy. The Utopian denouement of the sermons, is :

"Out of Paradise you came, from liberty, equality, and brotherhood, and unto them you shall return again. You went forth in unconscious infancy - you shall return in thoughtful manhood. You went forth in ignorance and need - you shall return in science and wealth, philosophy and art." (51)

Alton's new place of identity turns out to be seven years across the Atlantic. His return to England to form a working-man's library is betangled by his unexpected death. Unfortunately the egalitarian principles enunciated by Eleanor are offset by her paternalistic advice to Alton that he should return to his own class. It is a general problem in the novel that Kingsley displays a tendency of ambivalence when pronouncing his ethical theories, and one is not altogether sure where his underlying sympathies lie, especially towards the liberated woman.⁽⁵²⁾ There is also the inhibiting problem of Eleanor's portrayal. For about two-thirds of the novel she is no more than the disembodied voice of a "good angel" which nebulously and spasmodically appears from time to time,

Moreover, the account of her modern philanthropic venture with the distressed needlewomen takes the form of an autobiographical report to Alton Locke and is not enacted, not even as a subsidiary plot. This robs his character considerably of her literary worth as a philanthropic heroine of Christian Socialism.⁽⁵³⁾ Despite the radical and innovatory place Eleanor has in the novel, she makes very little impact on the reader because she largely exists outside the main events. The chief focus in the novel is the progress of Alton Locke, through whom Kingsley's own radical sympathies and

vision are expressed. Alton's story is told in a continuous retrospective narrative in the form of an autobiography. In a series of vignettes, Sandy Mackaye, modelled on Thomas Carlyle, whom Kingsley greatly admired, leads Alton to visit the harlot sweat-houses, the city slums, to witness the Bread Riots in the country and to assist the Chartists. These visions of social oppression and anarchy, somewhat sensationalised by Kingsley, provide the central theme of the novel. The narrative often generates histrionic actions and gestures to support Kingsley's realist intentions as he compounds the humanitarian cause of the poor with assumptions that they can also react viciously. Alton is given far greater coverage, mobility and predominance in the novel than Eleanor is: she is not even given an opportunity to exchange dialogue with those whom she helps, as does Alton himself when he visits the sweatshop girls. Sadly the innovatory story of Eleanor's self-realisation as a radical philanthropic woman is flat, formless, heavily didactic, both politically and religiously, and, at times, naive and obscure. Unfortunately, as a writer of social novels, Kingsley relied on the Blue Books and other second-hand information from journals. Hence, he lacked the ability to humanise his characters, especially his philanthropic woman. The character of Eleanor is clearly a lost aesthetic opportunity to create a close replica of the great female philanthropists of the nineteenth century. She is a clear departure from the "ministering angel" stereotype: This liberated woman, and her egalitarian views, are essentially lost

to obscurity simply because Kingsley was unsure of how to handle this literary potential - a major radical heroine. As with the characterisation of Sybil, Eleanor essentially serves to bring the hero to a greater religious awareness of his political role. Kingsley, like Disraeli, was a writer more concerned with the ethic of what he thought was politically right and economically just for the people but not with the detailed intricacies of human relationships.

It seems that these male writers were mostly relying on the Rousseauan ideal of "good" and "pure" women as representatives of a moral, political or religious notion of their own. They appear to be less interested in voicing the diverse feelings, emotions and hopes of individual charitable women.

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In Dickens' portrait of Esther Summerson there is a notable attempt to break away from the symbolic mould. Q.D. Leavis hails the portrait of Esther Summerson as, Dickens' first successful attempt at creating a girl from inside - to have established her through autobiography is a real triumph for such a thoroughly masculine writer.⁽⁵⁴⁾ In Bleak House, in fact, the unusual device of dual narrators, roughly half of the chapters are told in the third person by an unseen narrator, the remainder told in the first person, in an

autobiographical style, by Esther, the heroine. Angus Wilson approved of the double narration as it enables the reader "to participate with a victim of society".⁽⁵⁵⁾ Many other opinions doubt the effectiveness of Esther's self-portrayal seeing it as excessively self-effacing, and unbelievably good. Françoise Basch describes her as "the most insipid of Dickens' angelic women"⁽⁵⁶⁾ and, even more provocatively, Robert Garis argues she has "no convincing inner life", that "she has no will, no sense of ego, hardly an identity at all".⁽⁵⁷⁾ Leavis, clearly diagonally opposed to such a view, considers Esther to be very human and a very complete psychological study. Esther's own first person account of events, her observations and inner responses and conclusions to them, are integrated with the ironic narration of the author. Through her "voice" one hears the voice of Dickens, on two planes: how he perceives his philanthropic heroine, from a shadowy past, should behave, feel and think, and, how he, as author, comments on the world as she experiences it. It is a unique and experimental technique which enables Dickens' readers to gain a far wider perspective of his society and human nature through the perceptions of his philanthropic heroine than one would expect to see in the majority of novels. However, like most experiments it has its flaws. For some readers the voice of Esther, a female character in the story, jars alongside the assured, ironic voice of an extradiegetic voice of an anonymous narrator, who is not a character in the story. There is also the problem of the occasional burst of emotional self-

indulgence which often characterises Esther's voice.

Esther Summerson's cruel start in life tempers the image she has of herself, both as a child and later as a young woman. An illegitimate child, she is constantly reminded of her shameful beginning by her religiously austere, unloving godmother, who raises her, with early remembrances that her mother was "a disgrace" and, "It would have been better that you had never been born." Thus tainted at birth, not permitted to remember her birthdays, she is taught to regard herself as a blight on the world, an outcast, a person with no identity to speak of.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Made to feel that she is different and inferior to other children, Esther's sole confident is her doll who is still there waiting for her when she comes home from day school.⁽⁵⁹⁾ With childhood models of princesses in fairy stories and starved of love by her godmother, she is confused over what constitutes "goodness". Of her stern godmother she writes:

"(She was) a good, good woman ! She went to church three times every Sunday, and to morning prayers on Wednesdays and Fridays, and to lectures whenever there were lectures, and never missed. She was handsome, and, if she even smiled, would have been (I used to think) like an angel - but she never smiled." (60)

Here the reader perceives two voices - at one level, the inner puzzled voice of an intelligent, discerning child who cannot quite correlate her aunt's impeccable Christian practices with the cruel austere behaviour towards herself;

this godmother does not somehow measure up to those portrayed in the fairy stories; at another level, the satirical voice of Dickens communicates the extent of the aunt's religious hypocrisy to the reader. The godmother, bitter towards the end, dies without giving Esther the blessing and forgiveness she craved.⁽⁶¹⁾ Consequently, Esther remains ignorant of what constitutes charitable behaviour. These are some of Dickens' most successful passages during Esther's narration, and on the whole psychologically convincing - perhaps because of similar felt experiences of rejection by his own mother. Esther the child, brought up not to recognise the emotion of love and charitable behaviour, perceives the reverse of the true benevolence.

Esther's progress is directly and indirectly influenced by the benevolence and goodness of John Jarndyce. John Jarndyce, an upright, handsome man of about sixty, is undoubtedly one of Dickens' most rounded and convincing characters. There is too the hint of caricature in his depiction of a mild, but kindly eccentric man.⁽⁶²⁾ Paradoxically, touches of humorous, Dickensian caricature are sufficient to humanise a "good" character and highlight his weaknesses such as his excessive tolerance and naive trust of the exploitive scrounger, Skimpole; they also provide light structural interventions in a dark, gruesome and bleak plot. Jarndyce is a genuine philanthropist, who not only accepts the young wards, Ada and Richard, but also looks after Esther after her aunt died. With a mixture of

kindness and firmness, he also tries to help other people, such as, Harold Skimpole, Charley, and Alan Woodcourt. He is particularly hostile to the Court of Chancery, having first seen his great uncle ruined by long delays, lawyer corruption, and accumulating costs. In the novel, he acts as a philanthropic inspiration to Esther. Before she arrives as part of his household at Bleak House, because of his benevolence and choice of schooling for her, her outlook on life has changed dramatically: the disadvantaged child has become educationally and ethically advantaged.

When Esther joins the Jarndyce household she quickly becomes "the Angel in the House". Her natural affection and intuition cause her immediately to befriend John Jarndyce's two wards of court, Ada Clare and Richard Carstone. Despite being readily accepted at Bleak House, the Hertfordshire country house, Esther continues to suffer a lack of self esteem. John Jarndyce appoints her as housekeeper: like Agnes, in David Copperfield, in being given the keys of the house, she is entrusted with a task of responsibility within the household. Regularly she gives the household keys in her pocket a shake "as a reminder to myself" of this awesome trust in her management skills.⁽⁶³⁾ Proud to learn the skills of housekeeping and household management, she is "the paragon of domestic goodness"⁽⁶⁴⁾ The four establish what is, to all intents and purposes, a family unit. John Jarndyce, grey-haired, dignified, assumes the role of pater familias^a and, Esther dutifully keeping an

eye on the two wards and the management of the household, is "Queen of the Hearth". Once the "family" is established, the assumption of Esther's "sisterly-motherly" role continues to be confirmed by Dickens.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Jarndyce praising her tact and wisdom, shares with her his worries over the unstable and immature Richard, his career prospects, his intended marriage to Ada and his eventual obsession with the Jarndyce suit. Jarndyce's trust in Esther clearly raises the self-confidence she lacked in childhood, but in her speech she continues to self-efface with tags of humility - "the idea of my wisdom",⁽⁶⁶⁾ and, "I was really frightened at the thought of the importance I was attaining and the number of things that were being confided to me".⁽⁶⁷⁾ Esther and Ada preside over domestic niceties, conduct tea ceremonies, sew, make music as sisterly love flows between them. The prevarication over Esther's relationship with Jarndyce emphasises that it also resembled a daughter-father relationship. After her long illness, Esther writes that she loved him "as if he had been my father"⁽⁶⁸⁾ and this remains the case even though Jarndyce later in the novel proposes marriage to Esther and then withdraws it when he learns that Allan Woodcourt will have her as his wife. Nonetheless, during the time that Esther sees no prospect of marriage to Allan, she, notably unlike the heroines of the female novelists, is willing to accept Jarndyce out of a sense of duty and gratitude. Dickens clearly did not care for heroines who were independent of male protection and guidance. Although Jarndyce welcomes Esther's good judgement and

and relies on her innate intelligence, personal kindness and commonsense, he remains her mentor and psychological provider. Esther flowers forth in his "benevolent presence", and is happy and honoured to be in the loving security of his home until Woodcourt claims her. In Bleak House there are no convincing sexual undertones, such as exist in the arguments and industrial gyrations of Margaret Hale and John Thornton.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Esther never argues or debates contemporary issues either with Woodcourt or Jarndyce, it is not in the nature of an ever-mild, co-operative, good woman to do so.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Esther and Allan's courtship is clearly a very undemonstrative de-sexed affair. They begin by sharing the same ethic of caring for others and this continues as the key of their attraction towards each other.⁽⁷¹⁾ Dickens appears to give support to the prevailing assumptions of his time, that, ideally, women were better suited to the more genteel role of the benevolent, moral supporter of men.

Dickens' treatment of Esther Summerson as a philanthropic woman is far more positive than his handling of Rose Maylie. Esther continues to be an interesting psychological study of a young disadvantaged woman who is assisted towards a "diligent serving of others",⁽⁷²⁾ by the genuine goodness of John Jarndyce. As an unknown benefactor he makes a good choice of school for her. Esther happily records the first signs of her own philanthropic propensity:

"Whenever a new pupil came, who was a little down-cast and unhappy, she was so sure - indeed I don't know why - to make a friend of me, that all newcomers were confided to my care. They said, I was so gentle; but I am sure they were. I often thought of the resolution I had made to try to be industrious, contented, and true hearted, and to do some good to some one and win some love if I could." (73)

This speech highlights the problem of Esther's need to report every word of affection and praise given her and Dickens' intention to present a young woman who is innocently aware of her own good qualities. The attempt to reflect her own goodness away from her and to reaffirm her voluntary moral ethic for living, sounds both priggish and coy. However, it is Dickens' intention that Esther sets out as a standard version of a humble, duty-bound, virtuous heroine.

It is in Bleak House that Dickens expresses some outspoken views on philanthropic women and ineffectual charity. This he does through the "voice" of Esther, who is, as Harvey points out, "a moral signpost" in the novel.⁽⁷⁴⁾ It is through Esther's commentary that the reader assesses the behaviour of the "ineffectual angels of charity", Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle. Simultaneously, these comic interludes in the novel enable Esther to display her continuing developments as a shrewd, discerning young woman who understands a great deal about human nature and is able to distinguish between what charitable womanhood is and is not. In the chapter suitably entitled "Telescopic Philanthropy", Esther

meets Mrs. Jellyby, a pretty plump woman, who devotes all her time to women's committees and public issues, immersing herself in voluminous correspondence about African affairs, and, as a consequence neglects her own good looks, her house, her children and her husband. Mrs. Jellyby's caricatured household emphasises the irresponsibility of a wife and mother. Esther immediately fills the missing mother role, she assists poor Peepy, the boy whose head has become fixed between the iron railings outside the house; comforts a young child who has bumped its way downstairs on its head because of deficiently fixed staircarpet, helps to put another child to bed, tells the tired, neglected children a bed-time story, and coaxes the fire to light. She also gains the confidence and friendship of Caddy, the eldest daughter and skivvy to the family. Esther also records the presence of "a mild bald gentleman in spectacles, who dropped into a vacant chair after the fish had been taken away"⁽⁷⁵⁾ It seems that Mr. Jellyby is neglected to the extent of not being recognised as head of his own table and household. Caddy summarises her father's position for him:

"His family is nothing but bills, dirt, waste, noise, tumbles downstairs, confusion and wretchedness. His scrambling home from week's end to week's end, is like one great washing day - only nothing is washed."⁽⁷⁶⁾

After he becomes a bankrupt she despairingly declares: "A pretty thing, indeed to marry a philanthropist."⁽⁷⁷⁾ This

is a highly amusing caricature, with some element of truth, but also highly prejudiced. Dickens clearly did not approve of married women who involved themselves in public affairs: virtuous womanhood was synonymous with orderly "feminine domesticity". This is further evidenced when Esther, arranges for the domestically disadvantaged Caddy, engaged to Prince Turveydrop, to learn housekeeping at the instruction of Miss Flite. In North and South, Margaret Hale, similarly, arranges for young, unruly and untrained Mary Higgins to learn the skills of a maid in service, but Elizabeth Gaskell's reasons are social rather than domestic: she was unhappy about the effect that working in factories and mills had on coarsening the behaviour of young women and leading them into sexual temptation.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Esther's philanthropy is mostly restricted to visiting. Besides her visits of friendship to Caddy Jellyby, she also visits Miss Flite, the elderly, demented, poverty-stricken, victim of a prolonged Chancery Court suit, the bricklayers' families in Hertfordshire, and the child-mother, Charley, and her small charges at her dwelling in London's Bell Yard. The first time Esther and her companion, Ada, venture forth to visit the poor families of the brickfields they accompany Dickens' other "ineffectual angel" Mrs. Pardiggle. Esther astutely observes that the virtues of feminine modesty and gentleness are not among Mrs. Pardiggle's personal attributes. As the loquacious Mrs. Pardiggle tells of her own righteous piety, one can hear the unmistakable, mocking "voice" of Dickens in her words. She boasts, first

of her family's religious commitment and regular attendance at Matins "at half-past six in the morning all the year round, including, of course, the depths of winter", then, of her own indefatigable lists of philanthropic pursuits: "I am School lady, I am Visiting Lady, I am Reading Lady, I am Distributing Lady, I am on the local Linen Box Committee; and my canvassing alone is very extensive - perhaps no one's more so."⁽⁷⁹⁾ Additionally, she bullies her small children into giving their pocket-money to good causes. She invites Esther and Ada to join her on her rounds to visit a brick maker. Unlike Margaret Hale, Rachael Curtis, Dinah Morris, or Caroline Helstone, and, of course, Mrs. Pardiggle herself, Esther is unsure of her own qualifications for the task:

" 'That I was inexperienced in the art of adapting my mind to minds very differently situated, and addressing them from suitable points of view. That I had not that delicate knowledge of the heart which must be essential to such work. That I had much to learn, myself, before I could teach others, and I could not confide in my good intentions alone.' " ⁽⁸⁰⁾

Dickens is saying something of importance here, that the ill-trained, in-experienced woman who takes up philanthropy is useless to the recipient. It is the kind of line that the great philanthropists, Florence Nightingale, Mary Carpenter and Octavia Hill took.⁽⁸¹⁾ Dickens, however, is not referring to the professionalising of philanthropy in the way that the true women philanthropists would like to have seen it, but to the taking of "feminine domesticity" out of the home and in

to the community, for Esther adds:

"I thought it best to be as useful as I could, and to render what kind services I could, to those immediately about me; and try to let that circle of duty gradually expand itself." (82)

Dickens is far more content to reproduce a heroine in the image of a "Lady Bountiful" rather than an active radical philanthropic reformer. Dickens also uses the scene of the first visit to the bricklayer's family to contrast the respective philanthropic attitudes towards the poor, of the insensitive officiousness of the formidable, loudly-spoken Mrs. Pardiggle, and the sensitive benevolence of the unassuming, gentle-voiced girls, Esther and Ada. The paradox is that, although Esther and Ada feel an "iron barrier" of class differences between the bricklayer family and themselves, it is their practical kindness which brings relief; Mrs. Pardiggle, on the other hand, by assuming the stance of a righteous, High Church missionary, appears to overlook the sheer futility of giving religious tracts to poverty-stricken people who are illiterate.⁽⁸³⁾ The truculent bricklayer wants an end to the unwelcome prying and liberties taken with his place, and churlishly reminds his patronizing "do-gooder" visitor how unrealistic she is:

"You haven't got no occasion to be up to it. I'll save you the trouble. Is my daughter a-washin? Yes, she is a-washin. Look at the water. Smell it ! That's wot we drinks. How do you like it, and what do you think of gin, instead ! An't my place dirty? Yes, it is dirty - it's nat'rally dirty, and it's

nat'rally onwholesome; and we've had five dirty and onwholesome children, as is all dead infants, and so much the better for them, and for us besides. Have I read the little book wot you left? No, I an't read the little book wot you left. There an't nobody here as knows how to read it." (84)

The short, clipped rhetorical sentences form the speech of a rough working man as recounted by the timid young lady, Esther. One suspects the flesh and blood individual in such circumstances, even with ladies present, would have been much more savage and uncouth, such as Sikes in Cliver Twist, but then Sikes (only associated) with villains and prostitutes. However, it is in this scene, in the brick-layer's hovel, that the reader is able to witness Dickens' empathy with the day-to-day strictures that extreme poverty brings with it, and, also, his own disquiet over condescending charity. Through Esther's commentary, one also discerns his unease about utilitarian methods of philanthropy, when she tells of how she and Ada felt that, "Mrs. Pardiggle would have got on infinitely better, if she had not such a mechanical way of taking possession of people." (85) Esther's inner, if not outwardly expressed, certainty of what is the correct, unpatronising, approach towards doing good works is further reflected in her apologetic observation: "I hope it is not unkind in me to say that she certainly did make, in this, as in everything else, a show that was not conciliatory, of doing charity by wholesàle, and of dealing in it to a large extent." (86) After the departure of Mrs. Pardiggle to visit the next family on her visiting list, Esther is given

an opportunity to put her own brand of philanthropy into practice, when she and Ada witness the death of the bricklayer's baby. Esther gives her account of the events:

"Ada, whose gentle heart was moved by its appearance, bent down to touch its little face. As she did so, I saw what happened and drew her back. The child died. 'O Esther!' cried Ada, sinking on her knees beside it. 'Look here! O Esther, my love, the little thing! The suffering, quiet, pretty little thing! I am so sorry for it. I am so sorry for the mother. I never saw a sight so pitiful as this before! O baby, baby!'
.....
Presently I took the light burden from her lap; did what I could to make the baby's rest the prettier and gentler; laid it on a shelf, and covered it with my own handkerchief. We tried to comfort the mother, and we whispered to her what Our Saviour said of children. She answered nothing, but sat weeping-weeping very much. "When I turned, I found that the young man had taken out the dog, and was standing at the door looking in upon us; with dry eyes, but quiet. The girl was quiet too, and sat in a corner looking on the ground. The man had risen. He still smoked his pipe with an air of defiance, but he was silent." (87)

Dickens is upholding Esther and Ada as examples of effectual charity, as they win the grudging trust and confidence of their recipients. Later the same evening, when they return to the rough hovel, accompanied by Richard, they see the baby cleanly laid out with Esther's handkerchief and a little bunch of sweet herbs on "the motionless and peaceful breast".⁽⁸⁸⁾ The scene signifies the bereaved mother's acceptance of the two young women. These scenes of womanly sympathy, and also those describing the brickfield hovels with the pigsties and unhealthy stagnant pools nearby, are less sentimental and abstract than those depicted by Disraeli in Sybil and Kingsley

in Yeast, yet, they still lack the immediate realism and particular detail of scenes depicted by Elizabeth Gaskell in Mary Barton and North and South. One feels that if Dickens had been able to use his own third person narrative instead of Esther's autobiographical account, he would have made far more use of dark, depressing atmospheric imagery to convey the grim brickfield conditions. In what Dickens believes would be a feminine speech form, he makes use of less violent, less virulent language. Most unconvincing of all, is the evasive, sentimental, language associated with Esther's philanthropic acts: "We tried to comfort the mother, and we whispered to her what Our Saviour said of children"; the reference to Ada's drooping hair forming "a halo shine around the child", and to "the Angel of the child."⁽⁸⁹⁾ This reliance on popular religious clichés by Dickens to portray the ethic of care of truly good women is not only a technical weakness in the novel, it also implies that often Dickens was unable to reproduce the true voice of the philanthropic heroine, and like Disraeli and Kingsley, resorted to the image of the conventional "ministering Angel" when all else failed.

Unlike Margaret Hale or Shirley, Esther rarely makes a visit unaccompanied. She does not, as does the doomed Lady Dedlock, walk through the squalid back streets of the city. On the occasion of the Bell Yard visit, Esther is accompanied by John Jarndyce, Ada and Skimpole, and, it is Jarndyce who converses with Charley, one of Dickens' child-mother figures, a thirteen-year old abandoned girl who acts the dedicated

mother for her neglected five-year-old brother, Tom and the baby, Emma. Esther remains the passive but compassionate observer. The scene mostly concentrates, on the one hand, on the comic pathos of Charley's youthful, self-assured efforts to clean, nurse and wash for her small charges and to earn a small income of a few sixpences and shillings, and on the other hand, to illustrate the kindly charity of the poor towards the poor; of the generous landlady, who does not always expect a rent, and the neighbourly Grindley with his fatherly concern for the children. It is Grindley who tells Jarndyce that the little family is one of the many victims of the Court of Equity.⁽⁹⁰⁾ Deeply impressed by Charley's energetic, tender, efficiency, Esther later takes the active step of employing Charley as her maid at Bleak House. Charley, then becomes an invaluable companion to Esther on her next visit to the bricklayer's cottage. Charley has the news that the woman at the bricklayer's cottage has taken charge of the orphaned road-sweeper boy, Jo, who is ill with a fever.⁽⁹¹⁾ Esther, now more self-assured about visiting, quickly thinks of the medicine to take, but she relies on the youthful Charley's longer and more relevant experience in Bell Yard. In her narrative, Esther observes the closer affinity between Charley and the working people, who "always concluded by addressing Charley" and not herself,⁽⁹²⁾ although she is grateful to overhear the bricklayer's wife say to the terrified Jo - who has mistaken Esther for the mysterious veiled Lady who, in London had secured his help in guiding her to the burial ground close to Chancery!⁽⁹³⁾

"This is my Lady, Jo".⁽⁹⁴⁾ The efficient Charley serves as an inspiration to Esther and assists her development towards womanhood.

Unfortunately, Charley, through nursing the boy, Jo, falls ill, and Esther, through nursing Charley, herself falls ill and undergoes a climactic crisis, suffering temporary blindness and permanent facial disfigurement. The physical change in Esther's appearance seems to be paralleled with a psychological change towards a more self-assertive identity in the novel. During a semi-coma she is disturbed by a strange dream of herself labouring up a "colossal staircase, ever stirring to reach the top and ever turned, as I have seen a worm in a garden path, by some obstruction, and labouring again"..... "O more of these never ending stairs - more and more - piled up to the sky, I think!"⁽⁹⁵⁾ The reference to a slow ascendancy and the association of herself with the lowest of natural creatures, beset by obstacles to progress, reveals a subconscious knowledge of her own painful path to full self-realisation and her deep desire to raise above her bastardy state.⁽⁹⁶⁾ The dream has a function of prediction. There are signs that Esther had subconsciously undergone a personal metamorphosis. She does not throw off the mantle of selflessness, but she discards the self-sacrificial cloak of unconditional gratuitousness. Selflessly, in fear that Ada will catch the illness, she resists her tearful pleading from outside the sickroom door that she should care for her and she remains grateful to John Jarndyce for his loving vigilance at her bedside.⁽⁹⁷⁾ However, a new sense of self-awareness greets Esther as her eyesight

is slowly restored: she recalls, "the glorious light becoming every day more fully and brightly on me," as she gradually takes in the details of the furnishings in the room. The missing mirror tells her of her physical change, as she recovers, step by step, as if still climbing "the colossal staircase", a more self-assertive and self-assured Esther emerges. First, she learns that the fruits of her early philanthropic act of assisting Caddy has resulted in a happy marriage, and later she travels to London from Deal to nurse her when she falls ill.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Then, in order to protect her mother's reputation and marriage to Sir Leicester, she assertively begs Mr. Guppy, the lawyer's clerk, not to make any further enquiries about her personal history.⁽⁹⁹⁾ She travels unaccompanied to warn Mr. Skimpole away from Richard for the sake of the happiness of Ada and her unborn child,⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ and she actively assists Detective Buckettt in the search for the missing Lady Dedlock, enduring the wet and mud of an uncomfortable journey. Possibly, Buckettt's compliment to her on the way she has conducted herself throughout the search in "the narrowest and worst streets in London" epitomises what is Dickens' own idea of Esther's personal regeneration:

"When a young lady is as mild as she is game, and as game as she is mild, that's all I ask, and more than I expect. She then becomes Queen, and that's about what you are yourself." (101)

One wonders what Mr. Buckettt would have said of the more dynamic philanthropic heroines of Gaskell, Bronte and Skene! In subsequent scenes, Esther plays a significantly more decisive role than she has hitherto played. In

the dénouement leading up to the discovery of the dead body of Lady Dedlock at the grave of her former lover, Allan Woodcourt accompanies Esther and Detective Bucketts to Mr. Snagby's to obtain a letter, believed by the party to hold a message to Esther from her wandering mother, which would give a clue to her whereabouts, and, unknown to them, a request for Esther's forgiveness. On their arrival the sick woman, Guster, is suffering a fit. The death-bed scene is handled without Dickens' usual sentimentality. The resulting effect is that the pathos of Esther's compassion and grief is enormously convincing. As Esther pleads with Guster, she is clearly torn between compassion for the unfortunate woman and her own mother's safety:

"My poor girl it seems cruel to trouble you now but more depends on your knowing something about this letter than I could tell you at this hour." (102)

This maturer Esther does not leave all the questioning to her male companions on this occasion. At the burial ground the party find Lady Dedlock, dead, dressed in clothes which she has, significantly, exchanged with Jenny, the mother of the dead baby of the brickfield scene.

Although the general impression given in the novel is that John Jarndyce is the key philanthropic figure, as benefactor to Esther, Ada, Richard, the Nocketts and Skimpole, and Esther, as philanthropic heroine, is a subordinate figure to him, a humble grateful recipient of his care, trust and affection, there are signs that Esther assumes certain extra qualities

that Jarndyce lacks. Early on, Jarndyce establishes her as his personal friend, confidential mentor and asexual "wife" because he sees in her the feminine qualities of efficient household management, and because he trusts in her feminine intuitive intelligence. Overall, outside the "Bleak House" family unit, one detects the "voice" of Dickens, which implies that Esther is intuitively more observant about human behaviour than Jarndyce himself. Jarndyce, at times is undiscerningly and gullibly naive; Esther, in her more passive rôle may lack experience and self-confidence, but she is neither undiscerning nor gullible. Jarndyce, his senses guided by fantasy conceptions of the East wind, at times evades the awful reality that those ostensibly good can deceive. His excessive toleration of Skimpole and, to a lesser extent, of Mrs. Jellyby are evidence of these failings in his personality: they contradict his attempts to help Jo and others less fortunate. Although Jarndyce prefers to remain a private figure, his philanthropy is almost always motivated by the "public" matter of the Chancery Court and to assist its victims; Esther's philanthropic role is a more "private", domestically-centred one, that of being "the Angel" in and outside the house. Neither assumes the role of social reformer: Jarndyce seeks social justice: Esther a network of good human relationships.

Esther's self-realisation is assisted, at a mostly superficial level, by her relationship with Allan Woodcourt. In common with Rose Maylie, Sybil and Argemone, her eligibility for marriage to a suitable suitor of integrity

rests upon her own innate goodness and gentle, womanly selflessness. Like Rose Maylie, Esther is chiefly occupied in ministering and seeking to minister to others, and not with their lovers. Esther's concentration on her relationship with John Jarndyce overpowers her courtship with Woodcourt, which is sparsely traced through the couple's mutual philanthropic interest. Allan Woodcourt, despite his crucial role as an upright, philanthropic hero in Esther's story, is not a dominant figure in the novel. As a surgeon with a mission, he is particularly concerned for the suffering poor, and is, as Q.D. Leavis describes him, "full of humanitarian, classless, feeling" in his treatment of Nemo, Miss Flite, the bricklayers' wives and Jo.⁽¹⁰³⁾ It is mostly in the philanthropic, sick-bed scenes that Woodcourt and Esther establish their relationship. Esther meets the doctor again in a brief episode at Miss Flite's home where he comes to treat the old lady's illness, and Miss Flite whispers to Esther that the grave, young doctor was the "kindest physician in the college."⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ The reader does not ascertain that a growing mutual interest exists between them until Woodcourt, with his formidable mother, visits Bleak House to announce his departure to Asia as a ship's surgeon in order to re-establish himself financially. Woodcourt returns to England, having survived a ship wreck and heroically saved the storm-worn victims. By this time Esther's face is disfigured and she assumes, incorrectly, that her expectations of marrying him are gone. The pair settle down in Yorkshire, he as a public health practitioner and Esther, conventionally, as an adoring wife and mother. Unfortunately, in the closing

chapters Esther's newly acquired maturity appears to have receded, and her self-effacing, coyness regained:

"The people even praise Me as the doctor's wife. The people even like Me as I go about, and make so much of me that I am quite abashed. I owe it all to him, My love and pride." (105)

The reader remains unconvinced of Allan Woodcourt's worthiness for her, the young hero, medically advanced in his time,⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ has been mostly overshadowed by John Jarndyce and Ada in the Esther plot, and, structurally, grossly diminished in dimension by the more powerfully portrayed figures in the complementary plots of the Chancery suit and the Dedlock events of Chesney Wold.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Unfortunately, against a backcloth of a wealth of stronger characterisations, Woodcourt - because of Dickens' cautionary approach to courtship and the rectitude of his character, and because of the young doctor's long absence from the novel - remains, on the whole an unimpressive, fairly flat, figure. There is none of the fight or fire of the campaigner in his innovatory portrayal. He mainly serves as the loving rescuer of the good, selfless, disfigured philanthropic heroine.

Despite the aesthetic flaws in Esther's portrayal, she emerges as an interesting psychological study of a young woman's need to be useful and wanted as she develops towards realising her own identity from the position of a deferential, self-effacing, unloved, school-girl into a self-assured, good, brave, self-sacrificing, generally loved, middleclass lady, who

marries her hero philanthropist, Allan Woodcourt. Through this first-person portrait one discerns something of Dickens' own masculine views on philanthropic women - he clearly saw a conflict between women's matrimonial duties and philanthropic activity - and the dangers of ineffectual and patronising charity. Because of Esther's obvious growth towards maturity, the characterisation achieves far greater status than that of the conventional "ministering angels", Rose Maylie, Sybil and Argemone. She is morally and intuitively intelligent; her tone is without malice and she is able to see her own shortcomings, despite her false humility and cloying sentimentality. On the other hand Dickens is reluctant to let his heroine progress beyond the popular image of a Lady Bountiful. One is inclined to agree with the estimation of A.E. Dyson when he says he finds Esther "a convincing picture of moral goodness,"⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ but no more. Esther duly stays within the conventional Ruskinian mould of womanhood.

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On the evidence produced in this chapter, it would seem that, generally, the philanthropic heroines of male novelists conform to either the Rousseauian or Ruskinian ideal of womanhood of the "good lady", helpmate and moral inspiration of man. Both of Dickens' heroines, Rose Maylie and Esther

Summerson, are submissive sister-figures of the menage, intelligent but only insofar as they serve the purposes of the "good man", and resemble the Revivist Romantic images of the model of the "pure" woman. Esther's "voice" is more humanised than Rosie's^{"voice"} is, because of her first person narrative and some of the psychological imputations that Dickens uses through Esther's self-expressed need to do good. Disraeli and Kingsley, through the symbolic "voices" of their heroines produce flat, idealised apparitions, "sepheric beings" or "guardian angels" rather than rounded flesh-and-blood women, to voice their own political and religious ideologies on matters of social concern. In all these male-produced portraits, women serve and belong to man, who is, ultimately, her protector and wise guide: all - except Eleanor who is given cursory coverage and thus is a figure of no literary consequence - are classic stereotypes of "feminine domesticity" the victims of male gender dynamics. One may read into this a fundamental psychological need of the male authors, caught up in the stresses of the Law, journalism, politics and the Church, to affirm the notion "the haven home" at the heart of which is the Ruskinian model of gentle, loving, womanhood as a panacea to the rapidly changing economic revolution. It is clear that, in their novels at least, they chose not to treat the new army of philanthropic women as a serious subject for literature, or, alternatively lacked the imaginative capacity to project themselves sufficiently into the minds and activities of these women. For the purposes of comparison, the next chapter is a similar survey of philanthropic heroines depicted by female authors.

4.3. AN IMAGE OF SELF-IDENTITY. THE FEMALE VOICE AND THE
PHILANTHROPIC HEROINE.

"Man should not lay down what is, or not is, the vocation for woman the question rests with women themselves - to be decided by their own experience and by the use of their own faculties."

J.S. Mill

"I am myself and nobody else, and can't be bound to another's rules."

Elizabeth Gaskell

The aim of this chapter is to survey those novels written by women to see how far the philanthropic heroines realised their own feminine sense of responsibility towards those in need, and how it led them to challenge prevailing male precepts of society. In the "voice" of female writers one would expect to observe a noticeable move away from the feminine stereotype, with the "self-identity" of the heroine corresponding more closely to the new revolutionary image of the philanthropic woman - as she took "feminine domesticity" away from the home into society - the heroine's self-discovery being the discovery of connection with others beyond her immediate family circle, and a greater independency of mind.

Carol Gilligan speaks of the maturer woman - as one might have spoken of the distinguished female philanthropists of nineteenth century Britain - as the woman who exercises the choice to make a moral judgement, who is free to judge and

be judged.⁽¹⁾ The woman who will behave towards others according to her own feminine sense of responsibility. The theme of this section therefore will cover the heroine's knowledge and expression of "self" in relation to her philanthropic activities. Crucial to the theme of exercising a moral choice are the factors of personal motivation towards making that choice, and the freedom of manoeuvrability to exercise it. Notably, the achievements of the actual philanthropists rarely were won easily, and the majority of these women suffered a conflict of conscience, between dutiful compliance with the "domestic" constraints society imposed upon them and a desire towards self-fulfilment, which meant they had to, in varying degrees according to their circumstances, break down those constraints, often by "unfeminine" aggressive and rebellious means. If women novelists were individually and collectively conscious of this dilemma of self-identity, then one would expect strong traits of this "rebellious voice".

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At about the same time that Disraeli and Kingsley were writing their social novels, two women writers, Lady Georgiana Fullerton published Grantley Manor - A Tale in 1847 and Charlotte Bronte produced Shirley in 1849. In both of these

novels, the female protagonists were philanthropic women. Between those two dates, Elizabeth Gaskell published her first social novel, Mary Barton (1848) and a few years later, North and South, the central figure of which was her philanthropic heroine, Margaret Hale.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton, like Gaskell, was both philanthropist and novelist. Like Disraeli, she was inclined to Roman Catholicism, but unlike him, she forsook Anglicanism to become a Roman convert. It was soon after her conversion that she wrote Grantley Manor. Significantly, the novel was an innovatory work among the mainstream of Roman Catholic novels in that it broke with Roman Catholic propaganda. Most of the Roman Catholic novels at this time were written by priests and concentrated on major religious themes - the forgiveness of sin, the Catholic sacrament of penance and confession, and sexual abstinence and priestly celibacy.⁽²⁾ They rarely made reference to social problems and charitable work. Lady Fullerton, being a woman convert, possibly felt an insufficient authority on Church doctrine, so she turned to writing about more human and liberating topics on how human bondage can be wrought by religious prejudices and how religious belief should be equated with social responsibility for the poor.

The story of her heroine, Ginevra, is loosely based on Fullerton's own experience of marrying a man of a different

faith to her own. Ginevra, a Catholic, is secretly married to Edmund Neville, son of an enormously rich landowner, an Irish Protestant and antipapist. Ginevra is not only the instrument of religious reconciliation, she is also a woman for whom Christianity means helping the poor. On his death, Edmund's father leaves a will which disinherits his son if he should ever marry a Catholic. Edmund, deep in debt, puts pressure on Ginevra to give up her religion. The anxiety nearly kills her, and Edmund suffers remorse for his actions. Ginevra's illness has been a lesson for her husband, "who now- ever felt an angel was lingering at his side..... to save him from despair and to teach him to repent. (sic)" (3)

The problem then becomes conveniently resolved by a codicil to the will that the inheritance can take place if he was already married to a Catholic. Lady Fullerton handles the prejudices with gentle toleration. She writes of her heroine: "She saw the fatal result of long-shadowing prejudices and hereditary hatreds and deeply lamented them."⁽⁴⁾ The novel is a rare example in Victorian novels of the spirit of ecumenicalism, and one which was not likely to come from the priests. Even more relevant is Lady Fullerton's emphasis on correlating religious doctrine to social responsibility for the poor. The aspirations of her heroine, Ginevra, run high after the crisis of her illness. Fullerton makes use of Catholic doctrinal rhetoric to convey a sense of personal re-awakening:

"Had not life shown her depths of misery which in-
experience cannot fathom? Had not her spirit hovered
on the confines of eternity, and almost taken its
wing for the mansions of heaven? She returned to
life - to its duties and its blessingsDeath had
been near her, and had left a message on her soul." (5)

In accordance with convention, Ginevra is both "Angel in the
House" and the moral superior to her husband, but she also
sees a particular role for herself in the community as a
performer of charitable works. She anticipates Esther
Summerson, Shirley and Margaret Hale insofar as she percept-
ively learns to distinguish between effective charity and
patronising charity:

"The idea had never even occurred to her that it was
possible to visit the poor in the spirit of harsh
dictation and arrogant superiority which at one time
seemed prevalent among us, as if their poverty gave
us, in itself, a right to invade their houses, to
examine into their concerns, and to comment and
animadvert on their conduct in a manner which we
would not ourselves endure from our best friends." (6)

Here Lady Georgiana is being not only critical of the frequent
haughtiness of the Anglican upper classes to the poor, she
also perceives it as right that her Roman Catholic heroine
should perform "real" offices of love to the poor, respecting
them, and "to count it as a blessing to have them always with
us." (7) It is clear that she has little time for the general run
of heroines in Roman Catholic novels - portrayed by male writers -
who were destined for learning the lessons of "spotless"
humility either by becoming celibate by taking the veil or

through martyrdom.⁽⁸⁾

Grantley Manor is not a novel of any significant merit; the story, told in a lucid linear style, relies heavily on mostly didactic dialogue and is given to tractarian rhetoric in places. The emphasis is mainly on human relations, mostly of courtship and family - despite the utterances of altruistic concern. The novel lacks aesthetic depth: there is no intense description of places or nature, and such imagery and metaphors which are used tend to be over-simplistic, such as Fullerton's use of Nature imagery to reflect the events and religious experiences of hope. Lady Fullerton is clearly more concerned with the reputation of Catholicism at a time when society, of a mostly Protestant persuasion, was having to come to terms with it as a legalised faith. If anything, her novel speaks in a tolerant manner to both Catholics and anti-Catholics about the moral and charitable worth of Catholicism. She exercised a freer feminine philanthropic voice in her tractarian novel than most Roman Catholic women might have been allowed.

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Pauline Nestor rightly says of Shirley that it was Charlotte Bronte's closest approach to a feminist novel.⁽⁹⁾ It is also not unreasonable to describe it as the first major "philanthropic novel" written by one in a line of nineteenth century women writers. It is a work in which Bronte voices more of her thoughts about women in the world of men than in

any of her other novels. Also, in Shirley, there is an altruistic response towards social and industrial problems which is not apparent in either of the autobiographical accounts of the heroines in Jane Eyre or Villette. Bronte's use of third person narrative in Shirley suggests an attempt to get away from the subjective voice to take a wider view of the world and events in it. Shirley, structurely, is an uneven book and perhaps not well-chosen material for Bronte's genius, which shows itself better when she is describing intense personal feelings and passions, yet it is a work of considerable interest. The novel is set in the West Riding of Yorkshire in the years before Waterloo, and provides a central theme relating to the Luddite riots. At the age of fifteen, in 1831, Bronte went to Roehead, where she heard stories of the workers' riots against the introduction of steam in the textile industry. Strongly impressed, she associated the tragic incidents in the Luddite riots with the places where they occurred, and created a faithful picture of both.⁽¹⁰⁾ However, Louis Cazamian gives support to the view that she probably was influenced by contemporary social movements culminating in 1848; he cites Charlotte Bronte's statement in the novel that, "The industrial question had stirred men's hearts, and the new philanthropy had unsuspected friends in the depth of the countryside."⁽¹¹⁾

The plot is built around the relationship of two "philanthropic heroines", Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar.

It is the characterisation of Shirley which gives the novel its wonderful interest, but it is the development of Caroline which mostly occupies the novel. Shirley does not appear until about one-third of the way through. In Shirley, Bronte does very little to sustain either the Rousseauan or Ruskinian image of women. In fact she goes so far as to spell out man's misconceived view of women:

"If men could see us as we really are, they would be a little amazed; but the cleverest, the acutest men are often under an illusion about women: they do not read them in a true light; they misapprehend them, both for good and evil: their good woman is a queer thing, half doll, half angel: their bad woman almost always a fiend....." (12)

This is a clear statement of opposition to the stereotyped notion that men mostly had of women; if she did not conform to self-images of "the Angel in the House" and "the weaker vessel",⁽¹³⁾ then she was looked upon with suspicion as a malefactor.

In unison with the forthright "voice" of the stoic, independent Shirley, is the quieter voice of Caroline. Caroline Helstone is a more conventional and less dazzling figure than Shirley but nonetheless a young woman of substance. The tale of a young girl's gradual and unhappy falling in love might appear to be a fairly traditional theme for any drawing-room drama, but Caroline is not of the stuff of drawing-rooms, but a woman who lives in a milltown on the

Yorkshire moors. She makes a valiant attempt to overcome an unrequited passion for the half-English, half Belgian mill-owner, Robert Moore, and looks for useful things to do in the community, including assisting the old maids, Miss Mann and Miss Airley, in their loneliness. Harbours the strong belief that, like them, she would never marry, she ponders on the fate of spinsterhood, and the prospect appals her - as it did Charlotte Bronte, herself.⁽¹⁴⁾ Charlotte Bronte challenges female compliance to the notion of the "Angel in the House" when she readily brushes off the hint of Hortense Moore that, "When the gentleman of a family reads, the ladies should always sew."⁽¹⁵⁾ The "voice" of Caroline's, longing to be more like a man and have an occupation, is not only the obvious voice of Charlotte Bronte, herself, but also a strong echo of that of Florence Nightingale, when she despairs over, "Why have women passion, intellect and moral activity and no place in society where these can be exercised."⁽¹⁶⁾ In a search for meaning to her existence, she tells Moore, "As to my life I am destined for, I cannot tell I am making no money - earning nothing I should like an occupation; and if I were a boy, it would not be so difficult to find one I could be apprenticed to your trade - the cloth trade."⁽¹⁷⁾ Her idea of being a governess is opposed both by her uncle and by Mrs. Pryor, Shirley's governess (who, during the course of the plot, turns out to be Caroline's mother). In a long monologue, Caroline speculates about her role and, in doing so, makes a vociferous protest about woman's lot in the nineteenth century,

in a society in which, "The matrimonial market is overstocked". She states her belief that women, like their brothers, should have better opportunities to do something more interesting and profitable in their lives than household work and "unprofitable visiting". The latter phrase seems to suggest that Charlotte Bronte believed that unpaid charity was unlikely to advance the cause for women's careers, but it was preferable to domestic idleness.⁽¹⁸⁾ Instead, Caroline finds herself caught between the oppressive household of her strict, morose uncle, clergyman, Mr. Helstone, (probably partly modelled on Patrick Bronte), who, having suffered an unhappy marriage, is not prone to expressing human affection, and the Moore household, where she learns French with Hortense at Hollow Cottage. It is not until she meets Shirley, mistress of Briarfield, that her self-development begins to be realized. Shirley involves her in philanthropic pursuits and a workers' riot and finally reconciles her to Robert Moore.

Shirley is a stoic, courageous, wealthy, independent young woman, seeking a life of fulfilment. Shirley has been heralded by Margaret Lane as "a pioneer first in that long line of boyish, independent heroines who have made such a lively mark on English fiction."⁽¹⁹⁾ Rosalind Miles, however, assesses Shirley less warmly as: "An artificially contrived vehicle for the expression of Charlotte Bronte's own views on the intellectual and emotional privations of women."⁽²⁰⁾ Miles overlooks the significance of the philanthropic role of Shirley and that she

could possibly be modelled on some of the philanthropic women of Bronte's own time. Shirley is the most attractive of Bronte's heroines: she reflects, less than either Jane Eyre or Lucy Snowe, Charlotte Bronte's own inner yearnings to find self-respect and a soul-mate lover - she is far more altruistic than these two closer projections of Bronte herself. In fact, Shirley possesses many of the qualities identified with the flesh-and-blood female philanthropists. First of all, she is a rebel, defying many of the conventions which entrapped women. An heiress and "lady of the manor", she expresses a wish to be treated as an equal member of society on a level with male peers.⁽²¹⁾ Thus she assumes an identity which is part male. She says of herself, "They gave me a man's name: I hold a man's position: it is enough to inspire me to a touch of manhood," and habitually she refers to herself as Captain Keeldar.⁽²²⁾ When organising one of her philanthropic enterprises, she tells the Rector in mixed company, "You must regard me as Captain Keeldar today. This is quite a gentlemen's affair."⁽²³⁾ Thus, she not only puts herself in a male position as manager of the business in hand, she also provides for herself, as a woman, the space and the freedom in which to achieve her aims - something unheard of in any of the novels of Dickens, Disraeli or Kingsley, but very much a replica of the tactics employed by the most energetic and enterprising of the great women philanthropist reformers, who had to break into a man's world, put themselves in a man's place, in order to argue the case for their cause. Bronte was clearly conversant

with the prevailing prejudices met by women writers, and, most likely by serious philanthropists. Like Florence Nightingale, Shirley yearns to put her mind and personal resources to the common good, to be "outrageously charitable".⁽²⁴⁾ With no idea how to begin, she decides that she must learn the practice of alms giving and philanthropy from those who have practised it for years. Like Elizabeth Fry, she calls upon not the clergy, whom she considers not altogether promising in this field, but upon her "ladies", represented in the novel by Miss Ainley, one of the old maids - a woman "of administrative energy, of executive activity" to draw up, "a regular plan for administering relief to the destitute poor of Briarfield."⁽²⁵⁾ Here, Charlotte Bronte is not only highlighting the worth of the old maid's philanthropic experience to the village community, she is also, as were women like Florence Nightingale and Octavia Hill, aware of the need to train to achieve it, the dabbling amateur was not enough. Similarly, Miss Ainley, places at the disposal of Shirley, her long self-taught experience of charity work; she, too, knew who were the most deserving cases. Such women without education, without occupation, led barren lives and were often the subject of contempt from society. Charlotte Bronte highlights a difference in the male and female "voices" in the respective attitudes of Caroline and Robert Moore towards the old maids, Miss Mann and Miss Ainley. Caroline identifies their intrinsic worth by her respect for how they offset their empty lives by occupying themselves in numerous works of philanthropy. By contrast,

Robert Moore finds the spinsters figures of fun:

"He had amused himself with comparing fair youth - delicate and attractive - with shrivelled, old, livid, and loveless, and in jesting repeating to a smiling girl, the vinegar discourse of a cankered old maid." (26)

Later in the novel, Charlotte Bronte caustically comments on the way men judge women by their outer appearance and not for their character:

"All the neighbourhood - at least all the female neighbourhood - knew something (of Miss Ainsley's kindness): no one spoke against Miss Ainsley except lively young gentlemen and inconsiderate old ones, who declared her hideous." (27)

Both Caroline and Shirley dislike this brutal, uncompassionate side of the male character, but believing on the other hand that it could be brought out by proper female tutoring and example. Thus, from the outset Shirley, associated with masculine economic independence and strength, enjoys the privilege of wealth; as resident heiress of Fieldhall, and, consequently, has the privilege of choice, to chose what she does and whom she visits. Caroline had none of these, but the two young women soon become each other's confidant. From this strong standpoint of sisterly consciousness, the pair challenge the public world of men; the ineffectual charity of the Church, and the brutal harshness of the industrial world.

The heroines, Caroline and Shirley are critical of the Church where it shows itself to be corrupt and neglectful of

its parochial duties. The implied criticism comes in the opening chapter when Bronte satirically comments:

"They (the curate clergy) lie very thick on the hills, every parish has one or more of them: they are young enough to be very active, and ought to be doing a great deal of good." (28)

She has in her sights the three curates, Donne, Malone and Sweeting, who have allowed greed, vanity and self-interest to take over their lives. Charlotte Bronte, the daughter of a parsonage, must often have met such ignorant, conceited, young men, and, under the protection of an anonymous authorship, displayed her angry contempt for those who wasted their time, drinking, gorging food and quarrelling in each other's lodgings, instead of attending to their ecclesiastical office and the needs of their flock. Caroline, her heroine, does not tolerate them either. Having suffered Donne's "stultified and unmovable conceit and his incurable narrowness of mind", she is even less inclined to listen to the arrogant curate's vulgar ridicule of the people of the Yorkshire community whom he is supposed to serve; she angrily upbraids him:

"She would ask him what he had entered the Church for, since he complained there were only cottages to visit, and poor people to preach to? - whether he had been ordained to the ministry merely to wear soft clothing and sit in kings' houses? These questions were considered by all the curates as, to the last degree, audacious and impious." (29)

Similarly, with surprisingly vicious language from a Victorian "lady", Shirley attacks Mr. Yorke, the rector, over

the mobilisation of the military to quell the mob and her tenant, Robert Moore, and his supporters; ~~she~~ decries his so-called "philanthropy":

"Must I listen coolly to downright nonsense - to dangerous nonsense? No. I like you very well, Mr. Yorke, as you know; but I thoroughly dislike some of your principles. All that cant - excuse me, but I repeat the word - all that cant about soldiers and parsons is most offensive in my ears. All ridiculous, irrational crying up of one class, whether the same be aristocrat or democrat - all howling down of another class, whether clerical or military - all exacting injustice to individuals, is really sickening to me.....
.....You think you are a philanthropist; you think you are an advocate of liberty." (30)

When setting about doing charitable works, Shirley is selective over the clergy she involves in her project. She does not want the curates meddling in her arrangements, but she decides to incorporate the three local rectors and the senior priesthood into assisting her scheme. Decidedly in control, she calls a meeting and sets before the uncertain company of clerics and female laity her plans for meeting the wants of the poor in the surrounding parishes. Cleverly and tactfully, in response to Mr. Helstone's anxiety over "female manoeuvres", the spirited heroine appeases him by the assurance that: "The ladies there are only to be our aides-de-camp, and at their peril they speak, till we have settled the whole business." Compliantly, he is happy for Shirley to continue the business and to be reminded, by her that the ladies, Miss Ainley and Miss Hall, "If applied to, could help them out."⁽³¹⁾ Even more noticeable is the dominant

psychological "body language" of Shirley that Charlotte Bronte deploys here to convey her message that Shirley is, in truth, mistress of the scene and is getting her own way:

"Shirley stood behind the rectors, leaning over their shoulders now and then to glance at the rules drawn up, and the list of cases making out, listening to all they said, and still at intervals smiling her queer smile - a smile not ill-natured, but significant: too significant to be generally thought amiable. ".....
"Men rarely like such of their fellows as read their inward nature too clearly and truly. It is good for women, especially, to be endowed with a soft blindness: to have mild, dim eyes, that never penetrate below the surface of things - that take all for what it seems: thousands, knowing this, keep their eyelids drooped, on system; but the most downcast glance has its loophole, through which it can, on occasion, take its sentinel-survey of life." (32)

Charlotte Bronte seems to justify women's use of cunning and subtle means in the interests of achieving humanitarian ends, perhaps a far gentler, more peaceful tactic than male aggression and intransigence. Shirley, like Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, Josephine Butler, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, and thousands of other philanthropic women, made certain that the Church was not neglectful of its neighbourly duty towards the poor and the starving and needy. Without a doubt, Bronte's "Blue Stocking" heroine⁽³³⁾ agreed with the actual "Blue Stocking" novelist and philanthropist, Hannah More, that women were more suitably fitted for works of charity than the male incumbents of the Church. Like Hannah More, Charlotte Bronte clearly believed in the moral superiority of women in matters concerning people and the provincial community.

Shirley and Caroline also show themselves to be morally superior to Robert Moore, the entrepreneur mill-owner, in their greater sensitivity of class differences between worker and employer and in their understanding of the bitter feelings this provokes. Shirley explains her anxiety to Caroline:

"What I want to do is to prevent mischief. I cannot forget, either day or night, that these embittered feelings of the poor against the rich have been generated in suffering; they would neither hate nor envy us if they did not deem us so much happier than themselves." (34)

Robert's answer is to dismiss hitherto loyal men, whom he rashly assumes to be trouble-makers, and then, to bring in the military to quash the mob who attempt to wreck the new machinery he has installed. He rarely will spend time to seek the reason for their mood of disruption. He irrationally regards poverty as "selfish, contracted, grovelling, anxious." () Shirley and Caroline, on the other hand instinctively recognize the socio-psychological answers; they know that the men fear unemployment and destitution. The two different voices of men and women, as Bronte perceives them, are clearly apparent here. Although Shirley assumes a degree of "masculine" control in her dealings, it is significantly clear that she and Caroline also disassociate themselves from the male world of violence. This is particularly highlighted in the scenes leading up to and including the riotous attack on the mill. Both Moore and the frame-breakers appear aggressively eager. Moore, foreshadowing John Thornton in North and South, is

representative of the unfeeling, profit-motivated entrepreneur: Bronte writes of him that, "He ever wanted to push on: Forward was the device stamped upon his soul: but poverty curbed him: sometimes (figuratively) he foamed at the mouth when the reins were drawn very tight."⁽³⁶⁾ He has little sympathy or consideration for the suffering men who, in their turn hated the radical machines, and manufacturers who installed them.⁽³⁷⁾ Shirley's views on male violence are far from partisan. She makes it clear that violence, from which ever quarter it comes, even if it comes from the aggrieved labourers, is under no circumstances justified. If the mob turn violent and attack the mill, then she upholds the middleclass employer's right to resist:

"Let them meddle with Robert, or Robert's mill, or Robert's interests, and I shall hate them. At present I am no patrician, nor do I regard the poor around me as plebeians; but if they once violently wrong me or mine, and then presume to dictate to us, I shall quite forget pity for their wretchedness and respect for their poverty, in scorn of their ignorance and wrath at their insolence." (38)

Both sides appear to hunger for the violent clash which is to come: Moore awaits the arrival of the wagons bearing his new machines "with a sense of warlike excitement,"⁽³⁹⁾ regarding his mill as a "castle" which he will defiantly defend.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The frame-wreckers derive satisfaction by the destruction they cause. Although the women go to witness the riot, they offer no feminine heroics at this stage. Unlike Margaret Hale or Sybil, they remain onlookers and do not find themselves actively involved. They are more in tune with peaceful nature than the fighting men, with "The friendly night, its mute stars

and whispering trees". (41) Charlotte Bronte preferred her heroines to maintain the Christian pacifist and corrective approach for resolving human conflicts.

In her condemnation of insensitively-managed laissez-faire male enterprise, Charlotte Bronte can be as vociferous as Elizabeth Gaskell. Notably, Robert Moore bears some resemblance to Garson in Mary Barton as a stern, proud, hardworking industrialist. Bold and enterprising he pursues his own rights and interests, without giving very much thought to the lives of the people who work for him, or to the woman who craves his love, putting the success of his business before all else. Moore, having become the new owner of the mill, rejects the old fashioned installations there: determined to have improved labour-saving power looms, he installs them disdainfully disregarding the complaints of the workers who are made redundant. Bronte comments:

"He did not care when the new inventions threw the old people out of employ; he never asked himself where those to whom he no longer paid weekly wages found daily bread; and in this negligence he only resembled thousands besides, on whom the starving poor of Yorkshire seemed to have a closer claim." (42)

As equally bigoted as the millowner, are the Yorkshire millers to progress, change and more efficient looms. As the workers are starved of food, so is Caroline starved of love. Moore remains impervious to both the pleas and threats of the men, and to the longing looks and signs of Caroline for a response

from him.⁽⁴³⁾ Moore, in fact, puts on a masculine display of self-congratulatory misogyny: he tells the curate, Malone, that he seeks no female company, and he often eats and sleeps in the male environment of the mill than return to the home he shares with his sister.⁽⁴⁴⁾ It is as if he must disassociate himself from all reminders of feminine sensitivity. Moore's mercenary propensities and callousness are cautiously countered by Caroline's sense of propriety when she says to him:

"It may be presumptuous to say it, but I have the impression that there is something wrong in your notions of the best means of gaining happiness.. .. as there is in your manner to these Yorkshire workpeople." (45)

Moreover, the women also assume egalitarian principles, selecting people for their character rather than their class. This is made evident in their relationship with one William Farren, formerly a mill-hand now eking out a living as a weaver: "It was their delight to lend him books, to give him plants, and they preferred his conversation far before that of many coarse, hard, pretentious people, immeasurably higher in station." (46) This statement surely rings of Christian socialism. Louis Cazamian finds Charlotte Bronte's working characters, William Farren and Joe Scott, the overlooker, convincing. He rightly points out that, although she knew nothing about the urban industrial labourer, she knew the Yorkshire peasantry intimately, and the mill-workers in the uncultivated valleys, where mills began to appear at the time

of Shirley, were the children of the almost unchanged peasants.⁽⁴⁷⁾

The stance that Caroline and Shirley take over humanising the male world industrialism, runs complementary to their courtship relationships, with Robert and Louis Moore. Neither woman is prepared to commit herself to a loveless, slave - existence of a marriage - unlike the hapless campaigner, Caroline Norton.⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is characteristic of all of Bronte's novels that she cuts men down to size, to bring them in line with the more civilising terms demanded by their women.⁽⁴⁹⁾ In Shirley she maims and financially ruins Robert Moore and gives Louis Moore a stormy courtship. A theme common to each of the novels is the dualism of reason and passion: her women like to see passion tempered by reason in all relationships, both private and public.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Shirley encourages Caroline not to indulge in an all consuming passion for the harsh, driving employer, and to involve herself in something more real and practical. As a result of an armed attack on the mill, Robert is badly in need of financial help to restore the mill. He further rides roughshod over Caroline's feelings, when mistakenly believing the heiress Shirley is in love with him; he proposes to her in order to get his hands on her wealth - even though he does not love her. He is indignantly rejected by Shirley; she humiliates him and gradually she and Caroline eliminate his earlier male pride and arrogance. Even when the two women witness the scene of the storming of the mill and Robert sustaining an injury, Shirley restrains Caroline from

running to assist him knowing that she would regret her hasty and untimely action, that it would only "tease and annoy him in front of the men".⁽⁵¹⁾ Caroline, also, has to gain the maturity necessary to make a rational rather than emotional response. It is during Robert's long convalescence that Robert throws off his mantle of proud misogamy and aggression and learns from Caroline, the meek and mild woman, the virtues of womanly wisdom and humanitarianism. When Robert learns that he is not to be made bankrupt and that he can securely rebuild his business, Caroline makes certain that he is an industrialist with a philanthropic vision before she entrusts herself to him as his wife. Robert humbly puts his plans before her:

"Now, I can take more workmen; give better wages; lay wiser and more liberal plans; do some good; be less selfish; now, Caroline, I can have a house - a home which I can truly call mine.....
..... now I can think of marriage, now I can seek a wife."

This was no moment for her to speak: she did not speak.

'Will Caroline, who meekly hopes to be forgiven as she forgives - will she pardon all I have made her suffer - all that long pain I have wickedly caused her - all that sickness of body and mind she owed to me? Will she forget what she knows of my poor ambition - my sordid schemes? Will she let me expiate these things? Will she suffer me to prove that, as I once deserted cruelly, trifled wantonly, injured basely, I can now love faithfully, cherish fondly, treasure tenderly?' " (52)

By this time Shirley, herself, has become captivated by the cultivated mind and presence of Louis Moore, the tutor who gives her French lessons, and the pair marry, she willingly

relinquishing her own power as heiress of Fieldend Hall. Many critics are unhappy about this conventional "fairy-tale" destiny for the spirited, independently-minded heroine, but, as Pauline Nestor points out, the balance of sexual equality is maintained: whereas Shirley acknowledges Louis as her "master", he identifies her as his "sovereign".⁽⁵³⁾ She does not lose her worth as a woman. Clearly, Charlotte Bronte was unhappy about casting Shirley as an old maid. Yet, through the character of Shirley, Charlotte Bronte presents what she considers to be the two acceptable faces of womankind. There is the public image of the self-styled "masculine" philanthropic woman, who appears to tread fearlessly into the world of men, machines and strife; a woman who was able to cast a magnetic power over men like Mr. Yorke, who "took a secret pleasure" in hearing her forthright criticisms of himself but would not have endured "this language from some women";⁽⁵⁴⁾ an acquisitive woman who must get to the bottom of things, forever asking questions and getting into debate over community matters. In this latter respect, she anticipates Elizabeth Gaskell's heroine, Margaret Hale: She questions William on the welfare of the people: "There is still discontent I suppose!.... What more can I do? Supposing Moore was driven from the country and his mill raised to the ground, would people have more work?"⁽⁵⁵⁾ The other image of Shirley is the private, feminine one, first presented through her intimate friendship and involvement with Caroline, and then in her playful, manipulating courtship with her French tutor Louis Moore.

The independent Shirley had previously rejected six proposals of marriage and had also resisted her uncle's attempt to dispose of her as if she were a piece of property. It is vital to her portrayal as a free woman that, if she marries, it must be to a partner of her own choosing. Louis and Shirley, together with their neighbours, Robert, Caroline, Miss Ainley, and others, make Christian philanthropy a continuing part of their overall personal realisation, as they ensure food for the hungry, homes for the homeless, work and good wages for the men and education for children at the local Sunday School and for adults at evening classes. (56)

Through her lively, independently-minded, heroines, Shirley and Caroline, Charlotte Bronte boldly rejects the gender dynamics of her day which sought to stereotype women along Ruskinian lines. Instead of the female sex she produces self-images of mature, assertive, socially responsible young women, of Christian commitment, who are prepared to judge others and be judged themselves in their ethical dealings in the wider network of human relationships. In the novel, Bronte may air a case for sexual equality more strongly than she airs the case for redundant mill-workers, nevertheless, she identifies parallels of social injustice and insubordinate treatment by middleclass men towards these two groups. Here, one is mindful of Showalter's theory of the female subculture,⁽⁵⁷⁾ however, the character of Shirley, like the eminent philanthropic women of the nineteenth century, made public the so-called

"feminine subculture" by her wealth, social status and humanitarian beliefs. Bronte's bold, pioneering heroines are a far cry from the idealistic pictures of womanhood, the "ministering angels" of Disraeli and Kingsley, they are of the calibre of the true female philanthropists, full-bodied women who endeavour to throw out "the Angel in the House" and go and search for a much fuller independent, humanising, identity of their own.

How far the heroines are modelled on Charlotte Bronte herself has often been open to speculation. The character of Caroline has been associated with Charlotte. The most controversial statement made about Shirley was by Charlotte Bronte, herself, to Elizabeth Gaskell, that her heroine is an attempted portrait of Emily Bronte as she might have been "had she been placed in health and prosperity." (58) Mrs. Gaskell found it difficult to reconcile what she had heard about the dead Emily, the baffling, secretive, extremely introspective, often masochistic, sister of Charlotte, with the dazzling, voluble, forthright, outgoing, sympathetic fictional figure she created. It is true both are associated with masculine strength and stoicism, but the overall picture that one gleans of Emily, author of Wuthering Heights, is less than philanthropic and has a far less attractive personality than Shirley's. She may, however, having been shaped by Charlotte Bronte, have resembled more closely what Charlotte herself may have become had she been endowed with better

health and prosperity. It is something a shy, sensitive, self-effacing woman would have found difficult to have said about herself to another writer, whereas writing under the cover of a pseudonym, she could well have expressed a wish-fulfilment through her fictional character, and transposed the desired self-image onto her beloved dead sister. Signs of suppressed altruism are certainly more evident in Charlotte Bronte, herself, than in her sister. First, there is this attempt to write something close to a social novel, that in her solitariness, to share, as Louis Cazamian puts it - "in the great wave of social conscience" and adds of Shirley, "(It) evinces an instinctive, almost unconscious, Christian concern, akin to the best of feelings represented by the best of Mrs. Gaskell." (59)

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There are many indications that North and South is a semi-autobiographical novel. Elizabeth Gaskell's own predicament was that of Margaret Hale, of a young, Victorian, intelligent, middleclass, educated woman, who dearly loved the country, but, because of the circumstances of her life, was committed to living in a northern industrial city.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Margaret Hale is partly brought up by her Aunt Shaw in London society so as to complete her education. However, unlike Margaret Hale,

Elizabeth Stevenson's separation from her mother was a permanent, not a temporary one.⁽⁶¹⁾ Elizabeth Gaskell was always ready to undertake charitable work, she was particularly distressed by the neglect of seamstresses and other working class girls, and was known to have been on an intimate footing with many poor families. Margaret Hale, once in Milton, divides her time between home and filial duties and visiting the poor Higgins and Boucher families and teaching the Boucher children when they become orphaned. At many levels, one would expect to hear the strong "voice" of Elizabeth Gaskell emerging from the character of her heroine.

From the outset, Margaret Hale is not a conventional drawing-room heroine. In the opening chapter of North and South, during an account of extravagant wedding preparations for cousin Edith's wedding, Margaret Hale asks in a "voice" reminiscent of the Nightingale tone of boredom: "But are these all quite necessary troubles?"⁽⁶²⁾ She has been experiencing a "sense of indescribable weariness" of all the arrangements. Elizabeth Gaskell^{is} indicating here that her heroine's horizons are not limited to an early marriage, possibly turning out to be one of economic and social convenience, with domestic quibbles over servants and children. Already, Margaret has shown herself to be independent of the protection of men; in her Harley Street days, she rebelliously rejected her aunt's wish that she should be accompanied around the neighbourhood by a chaperone.⁽⁶³⁾ It is a theme which continues, for in her early rural Hampshire days, Margaret declines a comfortable

marriage with Henry Lennox, making it clear to him that she is not a slave to the luxuries she had enjoyed in Harley Street, and later, in her Milton days, after making the acquaintance of the proud, self-made industrialist, John Thornton, she declines marriage with Mr. Bell, an Oxford academic appointed to be her guardian on her father's death.- he is no match for her, he is of a different generation and mind. As a philanthropic woman in an industrial town, she tells him that his views are, "the oldest and mustiest I have met with for a long time."⁽⁶⁴⁾ Her voice is clearly that of a revolutionary woman who finds no sense of fulfilment in mere "feminine domesticity".

Margaret is a fully-rounded, vociferous character, and like the convincing portrayals of Charlotte Bronte, she is required to gain maturity by her youthful mistakes and inexperience. In the early Helstone days, Margaret, nineteen years old, is full of youthful eagerness and self-assurance, ostensibly an epitome of a dutiful clergyman's daughter, tenderly caring to the self-indulgences of an ill-stricken mother, and a "Lady Bountiful" figure who joyously goes about her visits of mercy in the New Forest parish. In the spirit of the pronouncements of Hannah More, the homes of Helstone are "her parish":

"She took a pride in her forest. Its people were her people. She made hearty friends with them;

learned and delighted in using their peculiar words; took up her freedom amongst them; nursed their babies; talked or read with slow distinctness to their old people; carried dainty messes to the sick;..." (65)

Margaret concerns herself with the state of Old Simon's rheumatism and fading eyesight and with Mary Domville's crippled boy,⁽⁶⁶⁾ but, Elizabeth Gaskell cautiously adds, "(She) resolved before long to teach at the school..... but she was tempted off to go and see some individual friend - man, woman, or child - in some cottage in the green shade of the forest."⁽⁶⁷⁾ At this stage, Margaret's charitable commitment is insubstantial, often offset by other distractions like her sensuous self-indulgent pleasure of walking through the forest and her deep love of the natural world. Nonetheless, she grows to become sympathetic to human need; unpatronisingly she learns to like people and develops, with those she helps, a special empathy - learning "their peculiar words."⁽⁶⁸⁾ The first five chapters, set in Southern England have been described as odd by Martin Dodsworth, who finds the suddenness of events unrelated and extreme, giving the novel "a strange jerkiness" as if it was starting three times.⁽⁶⁹⁾ What Dodsworth does not fully appreciate, these opening scenes are essential to the developing self-identity of Margaret Hale as a philanthropic heroine; they establish something of the network of relationships against which her own identity is to be measured. Although Gaskell gives a picture of her heroine dabbling with philanthropy in an amateurish way, which provides her with a self-fulfilling past-time, it also prepares her

for the more demanding kind of philanthropy she is to encounter in the dark streets of the city - despite the firm, somewhat misplaced, snobbish opinions Margaret holds about "people who make their fortunes in trade," preferring "cottagers and labourers".⁽⁷⁰⁾

Margaret learns to take the "Angel of the House" out into the community. Her sense of filial duty contrasts sharply with the Bleak House domicile of John Jarndyce and the complying Esther. At the Helstone vicarage, Mr. and Mrs. Hale are realistic portraits of trying parents of a naturally patient and loving daughter. Margaret, who has been absent from her mother during her formative years, is anxious to establish a closer daughter-mother relationship with Mrs. Hale. This is fraught with difficulties, as Mrs. Hale, a product of Southern idle gentility, with memories of parties, footmen and carriages, is discontented with her lot as a country parson's wife, and for the most part is a whingeing, sickly, self-obsessed person, who bitterly regrets her reduced circumstances and constantly worries about the effect of the forest on her health. Only, perfunctorily, as the vicar's wife, does she extend her seldom walks "beyond the church, school and neighbourly cottages."⁽⁷¹⁾ From the outstart, Elizabeth Gaskell is saying that Mrs. Hale is of a dying generation of "weaker vessels",⁽⁷²⁾ whereas her daughter belongs to the new stronger-minded, educated, philanthropic new generation of women. Once in the Milton house faced with fog, smoke and other brick walls enclosing in

on them, Mrs. Hale sees her social status even more reduced. Her remaining obsessive objective in life is to be re-united with her favourite child, Frederick, who has been exiled from his native land because of his part in a naval mutiny. She develops into a pathetic invalid and, once meeting Frederick again clandestinely, dies despite the daily attentions of her devoted maid, Dixon, and Margaret. Mrs. Hale is like a withering, delicate, cultivated rose planted in rough, unnatural environment, but Margaret is the sturdy sapling who adapts and grows. Despite Margaret's love and easier relationship with her father, Mr. Hale also is weak-minded and egotistically autocratic. Like some of Gilligan's boy subjects in her experiments, he is "mistrustful of being guided by others"⁽⁷³⁾ preferring to decide matters "without being influenced by those he loves".⁽⁷⁴⁾ Thus, Mr. Hale, to avoid facing up to the dreaded protestations of his wife, fails to consult her on the subject that is to affect the whole family, that, as a matter of conscience, he has decided to leave the Anglican living to take up a poorly paid post as tutor in the northern, industrial town of Milton. Instead he confides the news to his daughter and leaves her to impart the devastating news to Mrs. Hale that the family are to uproot themselves in two weeks time.⁽⁷⁵⁾ His loyal daughter, although acknowledging her father as a good, charitable man, senses the moral impropriety of this evasion of responsibility:

"It came strongly upon Margaret's mind that her

mother ought to have been told: that whatever her faults of discontent and repining might have been, it was an error in her father to have left her to learn his change of opinion, and his approaching change of life, from her better-informed child." (76)

Like Gilligan's girl subjects, she put the concerns of others before her own interests: she was being counted upon to perform the service. From this time onwards, Margaret takes over the responsibility for looking after and guiding her parents, a role reversal which can also be found in Dickens' run of "devoted daughters" or "child-mother heroines" Nell, Madeline Bray, Agnes Wickfield, and Little Dorrit, who care for an aged, perhaps peevish, parent or grandparent, sinking into second childhood. Yet, whereas Dickens' heroines, as well as those of Disraeli and Kingsley, are self-sacrificing creatures in the home, Elizabeth Gaskell puts considerable emphasis on selflessness rather than personal self-sacrifice. As Martin Dobson points out,⁽⁷⁷⁾ there is a degree of "gentle violence" and toughness in the character of Margaret which distinguishes her from the heroines of Dickens.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Margaret epitomises the social progression of female philanthropists in the nineteenth century, from, as A.B. Hopkins says, "the traditional paternalistic system of the "Lady Bountiful" among the humble and grateful cottagers" to meet "the dogged independence of the northern mill-hand, who insists on living for a wage and wants no charity."⁽⁷⁹⁾ Once in Milton, Margaret has to change her snobbish views on "people who make fortunes in trade" when she meets a very different breed of master and labourer. More

obviously, the chapters also provide a contrasting backcloth to the grimy, industrial conditions of the North into which Margaret is to be projected, and the different harsher attitudes of the Northern entrepreneurial middleclasses, into which she is to marry. She is required to compromise her southern affinity with northern commitment. Quite clearly, these opening chapters reveal that Elizabeth Gaskell is saying, her heroine must possess certain personal qualities and calibre to become philanthropic woman of worth.

Once the Hale family have arrived in Milton, Margaret becomes embroiled in a network of disrupted relationships both within and beyond the home. In the small, drab house, she adopts a positive attitude to the drastic change in circumstances by arranging the rooms and furnishings and making her sickly mother as comfortable as she can. She takes steps to break down the jealous mistrust of Dixon, her mother's faithful, possessive maid and companion, who regards Margaret as a rival nurse in the household. But Margaret is no gentle, softly-spoken maiden, as evidenced by her assertive insistence that Dr. Donaldson tells her the truth about her mother's illness, a matter which Mrs. Hale and Dixon had kept secret between themselves. Neither does she fall into a conventional histrionic swoon on hearing the feared truth that her mother was dying, but, in a state of calm distress, asks, "Will there be much suffering?" Dr. Donaldson is compelled to reflect on the exceptional qualities of the young woman of the household and

attributes it to her Southern breeding: "What a queen she is!
..... how much these thorough-bred creatures can do and
suffer."⁽⁸⁰⁾ From his male Ruskinian-like viewpoint, he
astounds at her controlled composure and admires "the very
force of her will", thinking:

"That girl's game to the backbone. Another who had
gone that deadly colour, could never have come round
without either fainting or hysterics. But she
wouldn't do either - not she!"

Gaskell's "voice" here resembles that of Florence Nightingale,
who scoffed at the notion that women were weak "swooning
creatures" and Josephine Butler's own dogmatism to ignore the
conventional cure of rest in a darkened room for a more
vigorous life assisting the poor and prostitutes. On the two
occasions when Margaret Hale does faint - once is after a
stone hits her after she stands up to a mob of rioting
strikers,⁽⁸¹⁾ and another time after the stress of keeping
from her father the news about his dying wife - she recovers
her composure quickly, stalwartly regretting it as a weakness
which she must overcome.⁽⁸²⁾ In the domestic scenes, one
perceives a heroine, who, with skilful tact and diplomacy,
achieves a trusting relationship with both Mrs. Hale and
Dixon, and takes on the burden of adult responsibilities on
her young shoulders. She provides a striking contrast to
Fanny Thornton, the young vain middleclass woman of the
industrial town, a social climber, who is reluctant to visit
her own nurse, who insists on a carriage to take her home,

and who is conveniently given to headaches when something was afoot in which she does not want to be involved. Elizabeth Gaskell, herself, was critical of the women of the wealthy industrial entrepreneurs who were indifferent to misery that existed not far from their doors.⁽⁸³⁾ Margaret Hale, like her creator, walked the dark streets of the industrial town to visit the poor families there, taking her domestic and humanitarian skills into the far wider network to the families in the community. In a letter of invitation to Eliza Fox, Elizabeth Gaskell admitted that the smoke-laden and drab city streets never ceased to depress her, and warned her pending visitor to be prepared for "a cold clammy atmosphere, a town with no grace or beauty in it."⁽⁸⁴⁾ Similarly, at first, Margaret does not adapt readily to Milton: the town where "the air had a faint taste and smell of smoke": where there were "long, straight, hopeless streets of regularly-built houses" and "great oblong many-windowed factories", and where "heavy, lumbering vehicles" of every kind bore cargoes of raw cotton or bales of calico. Even the slovenly loose clothes the working people wore were very different from "the threadbare smartness" she had seen on Londoners of the same class.⁽⁸⁵⁾ However, despite her first impressions, this young woman becomes curious about this new environment and its people.

Margaret Hale's personal development within the community network is handled at two levels in the novel: her gradual identification with the suffering workers' families through

her philanthropic relationship with Bessy and Nicholas Higgins and the Boucher family, and, her progressive induction to the ways and manners of the manufacturing middleclasses through her uneasy acquaintance with the Thornton family, and, especially with John Thornton, the respected mill-owner. Because of the industrial conflict over wages between men and master, Margaret finds herself a woman torn between the two worlds of her new acquaintances: drawn into events with which she has to come to terms - at a "public" level she suffers a divided social conscience, and at a "private" level a personal dilemma of divided loyalties.

Soon after the Hales arrival in Milton, Gaskell's heroine begins unconsciously to undergo a cultural metamorphosis which leads her to become immersed in the problems of the Higgins family. Experiencing complete alienation with her new surroundings at first, her conscience is soon stirred towards thinking that measures should be taken to assist the masses, and particularly the suffering minorities of the industrial system. At first, Margaret Hale is more curious than conscience-stricken as she ventures alone into the busy, bustling streets in search of a suitable servant to assist Dixon. She quickly realises that her solitary free walks and rambles in the New Forest have not prepared her for wandering the grim back streets where the coarse, rude throngs of mill and factory workers jostle their way to and from work, who come "rushing along with bold, fearless faces, and loud laughs and jests,

particularly aimed at those who appeared to be above them in rank or station." (86) Margaret, victim of their careless jibes, at first is frightened and avoids the times when she might meet them, but progressively, she comes to discover that a mutual form of amicable communication has developed between them:

"The girls, with their rough, but not unfriendly freedom, would comment on her dress, even touch her shawl or gown to ascertain the exact material;
.....
..... There was such a simple reliance on her womanly sympathy with their love of dress, and on her kindness, that she gladly replied to these inquiries, as soon as she understood them; and half smiled back at their remarks. She did not mind meeting any number of girls, loud spoken and boisterous though they might be. But she alternately dreaded and fired up against the workmen, who commented not on her dress, but on her looks, in the same open, fearless manner. She, who had hitherto felt that even the most refined remark on her personal appearance was an impertinence, had to endure undisguised admiration from these out-spoken men. But the very outspokenness marked their innocence of any intention to hurt her delicacy, as she would have perceived if she had been less frightened by the disorderly tumult. Out of her fright came a flash of indignation which made her face scarlet, and her dark eyes gather flame, as she heard some of their speeches. Yet there were other sayings of theirs, which, when she reached the quiet safety of home, amused her even while they irritated her." (87)

Here Gaskell skillfully makes use of "feminine" details of dress and daily repartee as features that will bring some kind of common contact between two groups of people from the two very different backgrounds of North and South. The scene is very keenly observed for its sensitivity to human detail and is totally convincing. Once Margaret has won over the unruly

throng by her good-natured commonsense and a sense of humour, the mill-workers become no longer an unidentifiable group. She begins to single out particular individuals, such as "a poorly-dressed middle-aged workman with a careworn face" with whom "a silent recognition was established between them whenever the changes of the day brought them across each other's path." (88) Margaret, too, soon notices he has a sickly daughter, to whom in an impulsive act of sympathy as she passes them by, she hands a bunch of wild flowers she had just picked in the fields around the town. The outcome of Margaret's generous act is an invitation from the couple to visit them in their home. This is the beginning of her personal and philanthropic relationship with the Higgins family. Gaskell writes, "From that day Milton became a brighter place for her (Margaret) It was that in it she had found a new human interest". In this new network of relationships she was to realise something of her own identity and her philanthropic role. Even the drab city itself took on a new dimension: the horizons of the young woman from the South were widened; she begins to find much of interest in the streets because, her author reminds her readers, she had "learnt to care for a dweller in them." (89)

The first lesson of philanthropy that Margaret is required to learn is the importance of establishing a mutual relationship of trust between herself, an educated, middleclass young lady from the South, and the hardened

suspicious, working people of the North. Her first sympathetic contact with the Higgins family having been made, Margaret instantly loses their trust, when, her mind temporarily distracted by Mrs. Hale's illness, ^{she} forgets to visit Bessy, whom she knows, by now, is unlikely to survive the coming summer. Higgins, who is dogged, forthright and independent, resents anything that savours of patronage. Margaret may visit his home on equal terms, but not as a "Lady Bountiful".⁽⁹⁰⁾ Bessy too has her pride and needs to retain her personal dignity: when she meets Margaret in the street and reminds her of her omission to visit them, she conveys her father's resentment: "But father says yo're just like th' rest on 'em, it's out of sight, out o'mind w'you." She then leaves her with the ultimatum: "If yo' care, yo may come".⁽⁹¹⁾ Thus, Margaret learns the personal lesson that effective philanthropy requires keeping promises and individual commitment, and that community commitment is as equally important as to that towards one's own family circle.

The sequence of visits to the Higgins' home by Margaret Hale are probably quite unique among the social novels of this period because of their simple expression of binding mutuality between the middleclass "good lady" and the working class girl, stoically dying of the effects of cotton fluff in her lungs. There is no suggestion of the kind of paternalistic piety, to which Disraeli gives coverage and which, at times, is ridiculed by Dickens, where the better-off give help to the grateful or

non-so-grateful poor. In a spirit of mutual affection and respect for each other, Margaret and Bessy gradually learn about each other's background and religious propensities and build up a close relationship, and a genuine friendship. Although Higgins has moments of mistrust about Margaret's intentions, he finds her to be genuinely helpful and kindly to his dear daughter. Neither does he altogether object to her quizzing him about the effects of strike action on the starving families: he admits to Thornton, "I like her..... Hoo speaks plain out what's in her mind."⁽⁹²⁾ At first, in the tradition of the lady visitors in the city slums, Margaret combines bathing Bessy's brow, when she undergoes spasms of discomfort, with religious comfort. However, Elizabeth Gaskell skilfully avoids sentimentality and religious dogmatism. Margaret remains gently tolerant of Bessy's Wesleyan dogmas based on quotes from Revelations. She makes unsuccessful attempts to rationalise them, but only because she believes that she would find greater religious comfort in "those parts of the Bible that are clearer".⁽⁹³⁾ Higgins, an atheist, has little patience with his daughter's "dreams and Methodee fancies".⁽⁹⁴⁾ In general, Margaret's conversations with Bessy evolve into the kind any two young women might indulge in; they are mostly delightfully realistic except for the odd emotive, religious pronouncements of Bessy. Margaret speaks of the rural delights of Hampshire; in turn, she asks questions of Bessy about the Milton mills and naively why when Higgins is under stress, he turns to the gin bottle?⁽⁹⁵⁾ Margaret

also enquires about the men's reasons for striking and for the respective opinions of Bessy and Higgins on the value of the strike and its deleterious effects on the families: Bessy's woman's view is that the strikes are more harmful than helpful; conversely, Higgins believes it will make the masters sit up and take notice. Unlike those scenes in which Sybil, Argemone and Esther pay visits to the poor, these visiting occasions of Margaret Hale are exceptionally human, being abundantly alive with daily conversation about personal matters and topical issues. The most poignant and unusual scene is where, Margaret, ostensibly the comforter of the dying Bessy, reverses their roles by making the working-class girl a confidant for her own secret worries. She has been keeping the burden of knowing the fatal nature of her mother's illness from her father, who is suffering a sense of guilt for bringing the family to Milton. She miserably tells Bessy:

"Bessy, I shall go home to my mother, who is so ill - so ill, Bessy, that there's no outlet but death for her out of the prison of her great suffering; and yet I must speak cheerfully to my father, who has no notion of her real state, and to whom the knowledge must come gradually. The only person, the only one who could sympathise with me and help me whose presence could comfort my mother more than any other earthly thing - is falsely accused - would run the risk of death, if he came to see his dying mother. This I tell you - only you Bessy. You must not mention it. No other person in Milton - hardly any other person in England knows. Have I not care? Do I not know anxiety, though I go about well-dressed, and have food enough?" (96)

The scene is psychologically truthfully realised, for Mrs. Gaskell is fully aware that the fully-realised carer is often in need of solace herself. It goes far beyond the bounds

of Esther's visits to the bricklayer's, insofar as she is also saying, that, in suffering, all classes of people can be at one with the other. One, who has experienced problems of her own, is more likely to have greater empathy with those they help, and this is part of Margaret's own development and self-realisation as a philanthropic heroine. Margaret's growing unconscious humility and empathy with the people of Milton is signified in the scene when her mother reprimands her for using "factory slang" and Margaret replies with gentle good-humour, "If I live in a factory town, I must speak factory language when I want it."⁽⁹⁸⁾ She had discovered their means of communication and mentally had made herself at one with them. Margaret's closeness to Bessy is further evidenced in the girl's dying wish to be buried in a garment of Margaret's. Conversely, Margaret has become more distanced from her former life of her London days and the life-style enjoyed by Cousin Edith, whose marriage has taken her to a life of idle domesticity in Harley Street and Corfu. Edith typifies a class of lady, who is grossly uninformed about conditions in industrial towns. She is of the opinion that such places are "not fit for ladies". She fails to understand Margaret's "rambling habits in Milton", fearing that she will expect "to hear of her having met with something horrible among all those wretched places she pokes herself into" without a servant.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ The reader is required to measure the development of Margaret's self-image against the stagnant lives of middleclass women of the Ruskinian mould, like Edith. Margaret belongs to the new

generation of philanthropic women who were prepared to get to grips with the realities of their time.

Margaret's personal growth towards maturity as a woman and philanthropist is most humanly illustrated in the death sequences in the novel. When Mary Higgins suggests that she might like to see Bessy's body, Margaret shrinks away from the prospect of seeing a dead person for the first time, but persuaded by Mary's tearful entreaties, she conquers her cowardice and goes.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ She is then psychologically prepared for her mother's death and insists on accompanying her father to the funeral, despite Mr. Hale's protestation that, "woman do not generally go."⁽¹⁰²⁾ In a self-assertive "voice", not unlike the tone of that of Florence Nightingale who despaired of any display of womanly weakness;⁽¹⁰³⁾ she replies:

"No: because they can't control themselves. Women of our class don't go because they have no power over their emotions, and yet are ashamed of showing them. Poor women go, and don't care if they are seen overwhelmed with grief. But I promise you, papa, that if you let me go, I will be no trouble." (104)

The maturer Margaret shows that no longer is she afraid of death or the natural display of emotions. In doing so, she defies society's image of the emotional, sheltered, middle-class lady, and identifies with the tougher resilience of the working-class women. As a philanthropist, she becomes mentally prepared to meet the less pleasant aspects of her work among the poor. When Boucher's suicide is reported,

Margaret, like all those true-life eminent female philanthropists, displays a strength of character and clarity of mind far stronger than that of the men around her: it is she who respectfully covers the disfigured face of the dead man; it is she who volunteers to give the unpleasant news to his unsuspecting wife. The events are naturally told with poignant simplicity and without any suggestion of over-dramatisation. It must be one of the most compelling scenes in the novel.

" 'How are you, Mrs. Boucher? But very poorly, I'm afraid.'

'I've no chance o' being well,' said she querulously. 'I'm left all alone to manage these childer, and nought for to give 'em for to keep 'em quiet. John should na ha' left me, and me so poorly.'

'How long is it since he went away?'

'Four days sin'. No one would give him work here, and he'd to go on tramp toward Greenfield. But he might ha' been back afore this, or sent me some word if he'd gotten work. He might-'

'Ch, don't blame him,' said Margaret. 'He felt it deeply, I'm sure-'

'Willto' hold thy din, and let me hear the lady speak!' addressing herself, in no gentle voice, to a little urchin of about a year old. She apologetically continued to Margaret, "He's always mithering me for "daddy" and "butty"; and I ha' no butties to give him, and daddy's away, and forgotten us a', I think. He's his father's darling, he is," said she, with a sudden turn of mood and, dragging the child up to her knee, she began kissing him fondly. Margaret laid her hand on the woman's arm to arrest her attention. Their eyes met.

'Poor little fellow! said Margaret, slowly; 'he was his father's darling.'

'He is his father's darling,' said the woman, rising hastily, and standing face to face with Margaret. Neither of them spoke for a moment or two. Then Mrs. Boucher began in a low, growling tone, gathering in wildness as she went on: 'He is his father's darling, I say. Poor folk can love their childer as well as rich. Why dunno yo' speak? Why dun yo' stare at me wi' your great pitiful eyes? Where's John?' Weak as she was, she shook Margaret to force out an answer. 'Oh, my God!' said she, understanding the

meaning of that tearful look. She sank back into the chair. Margaret took up the child and put him into her arms.

'He loved him,' said she. " (105)

Margaret, by her practicality and common sense, inspires the assembly of appalled men to behave practically themselves; they assist Margaret and a good woman neighbour by taking the fatherless children to their homes to feed them, to give their mother time to recover from her shock. Despite the tragic circumstances of the occasion, the domestic details of the scene and the depiction of the kindly, thoughtful poor helping poor neighbours are all delightfully drawn with the natural sensitive pen of Elizabeth Gaskell. There is a notable absence of sentimentality, no reliance on a long drawn-out, pious, death-bed scene, and no contrived atmosphere or imagery; there is the "voice" of one who had been involved at first hand with such events. Margaret, like Gaskell herself, is unobtrusively practical in her humanitarian capacity. In the nineteenth century, women saw much more disease than men. F.K. Prochaska makes an interesting observation when he points out how in the novels, the deathbed scene, when depicted by Gaskell and Bronte, had more "impersonality about it" than those depicted by Dickens and Kingsley. He attributes this to the suffering women had to witness, and childbirth, produced a certain toughness in them.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Certainly Gaskell, deals very readily with illness and death, yet she is sensitive to the effects of it on those around her. This is well displayed in Mary Barton in the death-bed scenes of Alice and Mrs. Wilson. (107)

In North and South, the death of Bessy appears to have been welcomed by her in view of her strong religious convictions that life would be happier and without dismay in the after life, although the living, younger sister, arrives at the Hales' house with the news, with her eyes swollen with constant crying and Higgins, too, is overwrought with distress. Mr. Hale must also eventually learn the lesson to face up to the awful, inescapable truth of the death of his wife. Nursing of the sick is also a common feature in Gaskell's novels; Dixon and Margaret nurse Mrs. Hale, and make arrangements to borrow a waterbed from Mrs. Thornton.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ There are faint indications that Gaskell saw traits of common character between her heroine, Margaret Hale, and Florence Nightingale, for whom she held immense admiration. In fact, she wrote a considerable part of North and South when staying at the Nightingale home at Lea Hurst, near Matlock. She made the acquaintance of Florence Nightingale a few months before the Crimean War and was in touch with the family at the most important period of Florence's life.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ In a letter to Catherine Winkworth, in 1855 she includes a substantial extract from a letter of Florence Nightingale's describing conditions in the hospital at Scutari.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Florence Nightingale like Gaskell held no sentimental views about nurses as 'ministering angels'. Although Margaret Hale confines her philanthropic activities to home visiting and local industrial politics, Gaskell provides her heroine with the kind of qualities of kindly common sense and with an independent, indefatigable

spirit of "soft violence" that both she and Nightingale admired. Had her character been a reality, she doubtless would have induced Florence Nightingale to regard her as a suitable recruit for her band of nurses destined for the Crimea, unlike Esther Summerson, Eleanor and Sybil who rely too much on male protection.⁽¹¹¹⁾

Gaskell juxtaposes Margaret's relationship with the Higgins family and her relationship with John Thornton. This central plot in the novel is less autobiographical than the Higgins plot, as Elizabeth Gaskell came to Manchester as the bride of a Unitarian Church minister, whereas her heroine arrives with no thought of marriage, least of all to someone in the manufacturing trade. In the events surrounding Margaret's stormy relationship with Thornton, Gaskell presents a situation in which one of a new generation of self-assertive women, the female philanthropist of nineteenth century industrial Britain, is confronted with the new middleclass man in Victorian society, the self-made industrialist, whose role, dependent on advancing technology, has contributed to fluctuating wages and urban poverty. John Thornton has a strong sense of economic dependence: he is proud to belong to the expanding cotton industry which has its roots embedded in the North. He belongs to a family originally well-off, but, because of his father's rash speculations and consequent suicide, the family have been left with a burden of debts. Encouraged by his proud,

ambitious mother, the young Thornton, through his own efforts, has risen to become a leading manufacturer in Milton and a magistrate on the local bench. This hero is a product of the laissez-faire economy and of the new age of the machine.

On arriving in Milton, Margaret intuitively finds herself very much as alien in a male world of powerful machinery and the mechanics of power struggles between masters and men, - the capitalists and labour. She thus creates a position of moral confrontation to those men who gave support to it. At first, she is astonished how readily Mr. Hale is impressed by what he sees of the new, mighty, man-made world of industrialism:

"There was something dazzling to Mr. Hale in the energy which conquered immense difficulties with ease; the power of the machinery of Milton, the power of the men at Milton, impressed him with a sense of grandeur, which he yielded to without caring to inquire about the details of the exercise." (112)

Here Gaskell seems to be critical of the psychology of a man who has a blind admiration for the apparent ease of mechanical power, but who, himself is often powerless in the face of family needs and misfortunes, mostly leaving them to his daughter to deal with. Neither is he open to question "the nature of the details of the exercise", the human labour, which lay behind the grand machines. Margaret, on the other hand, in these early days in Milton, "went less abroad, among machinery and men, saw less of power in its public effect, yet - in line with Hannah More's observation, gradually becomes

concerned with "the details" - with the people, the operators of the machines and their families. It is not surprising that Mr. Hale is further fascinated by a discussion he has with John Thornton on the magnificent power of the steam hammer - "this imagination of power, this practical realization of a gigantic thought, that came out of one man's brain." (113) Margaret's response to the manufacturer is stressed in the words to her father, that she finds him "a very remarkable man: but, personally, I don't like him." (114) The imagery she uses of him, such as "iron nature" and "mechanical powers" (115) reveal how intuitively she likens him to the mighty hold of industrialism over the Milton people. Thornton, at their first meeting, is consciously ill at ease with Margaret's "southernness", thinking to himself that she was "a young lady with frank dignity, - a young lady of a different type to most of those he was in the habit of seeing." (116) Thornton, in normal circumstances, a self-disciplined man and an autocrat to his men, finds himself confounded by the self-assured "simple, straight, unabashed look" of his new tutor's daughter. She seems "to assume some kind of rule over him at once". He deduces from this first impression that she is haughty and disdainful, at the same time he is attracted to her because of her movements of "soft feminine defiance". (118) He is soon to discover his assessment of Margaret is not far from the mark. She criticises him for "quietly despising people for careless, wasteful improvidence" without ever seeming to think it his duty to try to make them different, to give

them anything of the training which his mother gave him, and to which he evidently owes his position. (119) Margaret perceives, as does Caroline of Robert Moore in Shirley, that the hard struggle has cut Thornton off from sensibilities towards the working classes: he fails to understand their hardships even when she points these out to him:

"I see men here going about in the streets who look down by some pinching sorrow or care - who are not only sufferers but haters that terrible expression in their countenance of a sullen sense of injustice..." (120)

Instead, he extols the values of Northern industrialism and the excitement of the chances of the laissez-faire economy:

"I would rather be a man, toiling, suffering - nay, falling and unsuccessful - here, than lead a dull prosperous life in the old worn grooves of the South." (121)

He has no time for "humbug and philanthropic feeling". (122)

Like Cousin Marshall in Harriet Martineau's tale of Political Economy (123) he believes that the individual worker can reap

advancement by self-discipline and by his own labour; the workers have only themselves to blame if they go on strike and their families starve through loss of wages. (124) Margaret

learns from Higgins that the work-people view Thornton as:

"what the Bible calls a 'hard man' - not so much unjust as unfeeling", as one who will not have his decisions and actions questioned by the men. (125) When Margaret suggests to Thornton that he might explain to his employees the economic reasons for

their low wages, his proud reply is that: "We, the owners of capital have the right to chose what we will do with it." Margaret shifts the argument onto a different plane by her rejoinder: "A human right."⁽¹²⁶⁾ However, like Robert Moore, he is a man convinced he is right, but who finds himself confronted with the different ethical concept of a young woman. Throughout their relationship, Margaret forcefully affirms the humanitarian viewpoint. As Louis Cazamian observes: "The relationship between these two contrasting personalities, one born and bred in the South, the other in the North, is psychologically interesting because they provide a 'strong moral drama,' ⁽¹²⁷⁾ during their personal and spiritual progress - a progress, which is slow, because it is blocked by pride and intransigence on both sides." During the process, Margaret has to overcome her social bias towards the capitalist manufacturer and his laissez-faire ethos, and he, his indifference to the families of the half-starved mill-hands beyond the mill gates and also his bias towards philanthropic causes.

Thornton first expresses his love for Margaret after the famous climactic episode where she risks injury to herself by protecting his body against the stones of the rioting strikers. Thornton has been deeply moved by Margaret's single-minded bravery as the rioters charged the mill gates and her passionate, defiant command to him for reconciliation:

" 'Go down this instant, if you are not a coward.
Go down and face them like a man. Save these

poor strangers, whom you have decoyed here.
Speak to your workmen as if they were human
beings. Speak to them kindly. Don't let the
soldiers come in and cut down poor creatures
who are driven madIf you have
any courage or noble quality in you, go out
and speak to them, man to man! ' " (128)

Margaret's impulsive actions from then onward are spurred on
by her sense of "fair play on each side." (129) She identifies
the gaunt, wolfish face of the weaver Boucher in the crowd
and interprets his individual case in terms of the many:

"She knew how it was; they were like Boucher - with
starving children at home - relying on ultimate success
in their efforts to get higher wages, and enraged
beyond measure at discovering that Irishmen were to be
brought in to rob their little ones of bread. Margaret
knew it all; she read it in Boucher's face, forlornly
desperate and livid with rage. If Mr. Thornton would
but say something to them - it seemed as if it would
be better than this wild beating and raging against
the stony silence that vouchsafed them no word, even
of anger or reproach." (130)

Yet, as she stands between the sight of "hundreds of infuriated
men and reckless boys" her immediate thought is to save John
Thornton. In full view of the mob she is struck by a stone
in an attempt to protect the mill-owner by her own body. This
action is a clear reversal of the "knightly" role of Disraeli's
Egremont who charges in to save Sybil from a riotous mob. (131)
Like Bronte's heroines, Shirley and Caroline, Margaret
deplores the violence of men; unlike them she is prepared to
tell the men, in a public place, to go peacefully. (132) Nestor

is right when she says the atmosphere of the scene is sexually charged, for in it Margaret discovers her own vulnerability when it dawns on her that her sex is no protection.⁽¹³³⁾ What the scene also significantly implies is that in this new man-made world of the machine in which the rights of men must be fought for, a woman also has a particular part to play as pacifier. Margaret's ensuing personal dilemma must have been that of many a woman philanthropist, who battled to inject something of her own female values, and her own feminine sensitivities, into the competitive world of laissez-faire politics. After the event of the riot, Margaret defiantly justifies her unconventional actions as a normal feminine reaction, first to Thornton: "It was only a natural instinct: any woman would have done the same. We all feel the sanctity of our sex as a high privilege when we see danger," and later to herself: "I would do it again, let who will say what they like of me. If I saved one blow, one cruel, angry action that might otherwise have been committed, I did a woman's work..... I walk pure before God."⁽¹³⁴⁾ On the other hand, her impulsive action has been misconstrued as one of a loose woman by Mrs. Thornton, whose design it is to turn her son against Margaret. Margaret, in a state of private angry embarrassment, yet mindful of how the Christ prevented the stoning of the harlot, later ruminates: "Oh, how low I have fallen".⁽¹³⁵⁾ The scene is a remarkably drawn statement of female assertiveness and accompanying apprehension, yet Gaskell provides drama without overstatement and melodrama

with sensationalism. Margaret's experience before the howling revengeful onslaughts of the mob puts one in mind of similar experiences suffered by women, such as Josephine Butler, when she campaigned from a public platform for improved attitudes towards prostitutes, and Catherine Booth, as she battled with her Salvationist message and works of charity in the East End. As in the case of thousands of women philanthropists and reformers, they found themselves, wittingly or unwittingly, caught up in the vast power-struggles found in a male-dominated environment. It was a price of personal dignity many were prepared to pay. Margaret's act of swooning with shock after the incident might not have met the approval of either Josephine Butler or Florence Nightingale, but, true to the calibre of the heroine she is, she makes little fuss of her injury, refusing a carriage to take her home.⁽¹³⁶⁾ Margaret not only suffers from the effect of the shock of her impulsiveness, even more devastating for her, is that her act has awakened Thornton's confidence to declare his love for her. He, in turn, suffers the pain and indignity of an unrequited lover. The obvious irony is, that until her reconciliation with John Thornton, Margaret develops a much closer relationship with the mill-hand Higgins than with the mill-owner himself. However, Thornton is no Benthamite ogre, he is neither a Bounderby or a Gradgrind. There are highlights of integrity and honesty in the make-up of the industrialist: he makes it clear that he utterly deprecates the wild extravagance of the first cotton-lords at the

beginning of the century and the brutal tyranny they exercised over their work-people at the time of the Peterloo riots, (137) "crushing human bone and flesh under their horses hooves without remorse". (138) As Louis Cazamian observes, Thornton is not ambitious for wealth but for status - to win and maintain an honourable place among British industrialists, to gain authority and social standing. Consequently, his failings are pride, severity and want of feeling. (139) This is mostly the fault of his cultural inadequacies. It, therefore, becomes Margaret's role to impress upon him the finer philosophy, that Christian kindness ought to govern social and industrial relations. Her standpoint is quite clear when she reminds Thornton of his duties of "stewardship":

"All I mean to say is, that there is no human law to prevent the employers from utterly wasting or throwing away all their money, if they choose; but that there are passages in the Bible which would rather imply - to me at least - that they neglected their duty as stewards if they did so." (140)

Margaret's inclination to practice rather than to preach her religious beliefs brings about a more forceful reaction from Thornton. When she discreetly gives money to the starving Boucher family and sends baskets of food, Thornton accuses her of assisting the "turn-outs", but Margaret does not care that her charity prolongs the strikes. (141) She retorts that his economic theories cannot be justified - "as if commerce were everything and humanity nothing." (142) After some considerable misunderstandings between them over Margaret

being ensnared in the somewhat weak events of the Frederick plot by lying to protect her brother and Thornton believing she was engaging in a clandestine affair,⁽¹⁴³⁾ Margaret grows to love and respect Thornton when he is prepared to jeopardize his reputation, as a magistrate, for her sake.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Eventually, she acknowledges his humanity, and he, in all humility, accepts her loan of money when he becomes bankrupt. Gaskell does not charter the couple's passion and sexual attraction for each other very strongly; the courtship is written as an integral part of the caring ethic in the context of industrial strife and reconciliation, with Margaret being the main perpetrator.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Thus, through her two protagonists, Gaskell pits the "female voice" of selflessness and social and human consideration against the "male voice" of self-status and economic and political expediency, until both protagonists, from North and South, humble themselves before the other as a precursor to social reconciliation and their own union as man and wife.

Most significantly, the "self-image" of Margaret Hale is a distinct contrast to that of either Sybil or Esther Summerson, whose male authors mostly strove to protect their heroines from the unpleasant aspects of industrialism rather than embroil their heroine in them. Also, the "voice" of Margaret is one which rings contrary to the ethereal voice of Sybil and the quiet docile voice of inhibition of Esther. Margaret, both in the home and in the community, is a representative of the new educated woman who persists in questioning and making judgements on current happenings. Moreover, she displays an

impulsive propensity to argue her feminine viewpoint. She debates with her father the financial effect of his intended removal to Milton; she determinedly persuades Dr. Donaldson to tell her the truth about her mother's illness; she heatedly discusses with Nicholas Higgins the effects of striking on strikers' families - "Do they think the strike will end all this (hunger)?"⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ and about the "closed shop" demands of the union. She, questions Bessy about the effect of the fluff from working in the carding room on her lungs,⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ and argues obsessively with John Thornton over his treatment of the men and the evils of inhumanity in industrialism. Gaskell's remarkable achievement here is that she convincingly communicates the "voice" of Margaret's personal involvement in the affairs of master and men. Margaret also makes judgements of her own, albeit some misplaced, some astute. Over the incidence of Boucher's suicide, she harshly condemns Higgins for having made him what he is. The worker's rejection of the dead man for being "a poor good for naught" for only being able to handle two looms at a time, had driven him to joining the riot leaders and losing his job. She gently defies Mr. Bell's well-meant attempt to re-instate her as housekeeper for himself and Mr. Hale "to read us to sleep" and to be "the village Lady Bountiful - by day" incurring his jestful rapport that, "Her residence in Milton had quite corrupted her. She's a democrat, a red republican, a member of the Peace Society, a socialist."⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ It clearly would have been a retrograde step for Margaret to be put back into the "amateurish" Helstone days of rural patronage. She has developed into a new woman

of maturity, making her own decisions and taking responsibility for individuals in the community as well as in the family. However, unlike Shirley Keeldar, she does not have to assume the mock mantle of masculinity. There is no indication in North and South that Margaret would have succeeded better as a peacemaking philanthropist had she been a man. In fact, Gaskell makes it a positive advantage to be a woman.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ The "voice" of Margaret Hale, closely resembles that of the professional female philanthropists in many respects, as one who dares to enter the public world of men in a genuine belief that she, with her womanly judgements and values, can bring about improved social conditions and justice - the "voice" of Elizabeth Gaskell herself, who said, "Progress all around me is right and necessary."⁽¹⁵⁰⁾

George Eliot has been described as "a kind of sage" a viewer of the world in a multiple position of novelist, reviewer, oracle and observer."⁽¹⁵¹⁾ One would therefore expect from George Eliot's pen some broad statement on her itinerant preacher heroine, Dinah Morris. Although Adam Bede (1857) is set in the sleepy village of Hayslope at an earlier time towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, the novel, nevertheless, speaks about the role of women for others of a later generation in industrial Britain.

When George Eliot's readers are introduced to Dinah Morris, the heroine had already achieved what would appear to

be her full self-realisation, spiritually and vocationally. The young Methodist woman preacher, although highly attractive and marriageable, places her dependence on God rather than on men, and, as a testimony of her faith, is helper and comforter of the poor, a carer for the sick and a prison visitor. Although, for its plot, Adam Bede relies on the stereotyped story of a "fallen woman" and the good "saviour" lady, the two protagonists, the gentle, humble Dinah and her pretty, vain and foolish dairymaid cousin, Hetty Sorrell, are far removed from the prototypes of Rose Maylie and Nancy. George Eliot succeeds in breathing life into her characters, through her own capacity to identify human psychology and to give sympathetic aesthetic treatment to human frailty.

There are many indicators in the novel that the character of Dinah Morris was not only modelled on George Eliot's own Methodist preacher aunt, Mrs. Samuel Evans,⁽¹⁵²⁾ but also, in some respects on the Quaker prison reformist, Elizabeth Fry, who became famous between 1799, the time in which the novel was set and 1851 when it was written. Like many women Methodist preachers of the period and Elizabeth Fry and her ladies, Dinah's priority is her dedication to her evangelical work as a minister of God.⁽¹⁵³⁾ During the period of her zealous missionary work, believing she is spiritually possessed, she refuses to marry either Seth or Adam Bede. She gently tells Seth when she declines his proposal:

"My heart is not free to marry. That is good for

other women, and it is great and a blessed thing to be a wife and mother, but..... God has called me to minister to others, not to have any joys or sorrows of my own, but to rejoice with them that do rejoice and to weep with those that weep." (154)

Later, as a woman in inner emotional conflict, she paradoxically tells Adam:

"It is the Divine Will. My soul is so knit with yours that it is but a divided life. I live without you." (155)

Dinah Morris is not portrayed, as Sybil and Argemone are, as a symbol of self-sacrificing womanhood, neither does she speak in the first person, as does Esther, in the self-effacing, self-righteous tones of an unbelievably good woman. George Eliot successfully detaches herself from her heroine, allowing her readers to assess her through the interested eyes of a curious eavesdropper on the village rumblings and on Dinah's words and deeds. Dinah's saintly humility is accentuated through the repetitive use of the words like "simple" - "she walked simply as if she were going to market..... she seemed unconscious of her outward appearance as a little boy..... and her eyes looked so simple, so candid, so gravely loving."⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ More significantly, George Eliot reverses the stereotyped gestures normally applied to the heroines depicted by the male writers, for Dinah exhibits "no blush.... no casting up or down of eyelids..... no attitude of the arms that said, 'You must think me as a saint'."⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ This obvious covert protest, by Eliot, against the histrionic language of

sentimentalised "ministering angel" heroines, serves to convince one of the authenticity of her portrait. The preacher heroine is also made creditable through the voices of the crowd, the men who are entranced by the pretty looks of the pale, auburn-haired young woman and those who are curiously fascinated at the unnatural sight of a young woman preacher. George Eliot's presentation of Dinah with images of pale, petal-like purity, shedding love rather than making observations of her own, dignified, of subdued emotion and quietly dressed, also conjures up the popular picture of the Quakeresses and of Elizabeth Fry.

Despite her own rejection of the notion of a mystical God, in Adam Bede, George Eliot gives considerable sympathetic treatment to Dissent, and to her grave, compassionate, preacher heroine. The image she casts of a young woman of uninhibited, dignified, feminine simplicity and sincerity considerably assists the case for women preachers. Dinah's calm appearance and delicate facial colour belie the strength of her inner vocational determination. She remains forgivingly undismayed by the ribaldry and salacious remarks of the male local peasantry and their sexist jeers: "Yea I say to you, and more than a prophetess, an uncommon pretty woman" and "I shouldn't wonder if I turn Methody afore the night's out, and begin to court the preacher....." (159) She also works among the poor and "hard and wild men" in the industrial town of Snowfield. Mr. Irvine, the fairly tolerant rector of

Hayslope questions her on the subject: "And you never feel any embarrassment from the sense of your youth - that you are a lovely young woman on whom men's eyes are fixed?" Dinah's measured reply is that, even the "rough, ignorant people of Snowfield are not uncivil, because they see the women less than God's presence in her."⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ George Eliot must have learned from her aunt, and from reading, how women preachers were heavily criticised or ridiculed within and outside the Methodist ranks, and how a few determined women stood their ground against such onslaughts.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Elizabeth Fry's daughter wrote of her Quaker mother:

"She believed that a mighty power rested with her own sex to check and to control this torrent of evil; a moral force, that the educated and the virtuous might bring to bear upon the ignorant and vicious..... reason and Scripture taught her, that each individual has something to bestow, either of time or talent or wealth." (162)

Dinah, like those early women ministers, defends a woman's right to answer the Divine call to preach and to serve others. In her conversation with Mr. Irvine, she respectfully puts her case when he questions her on her Society's sanctioning of women preachers:

"It doesn't forbid them, sir, when they've a clear call to the work, and when their ministry is owned by the conversion of sinners and the strengthening of God's people. Mrs. Fletcher, as you may have heard about, was the first woman to preach in the Society, I believe, before she was married, when she was Miss Bosanquet; and Mr. Wesley approved of her undertaking the work. She had a great gift, and there are many others now

living who are precious fellow-helpers in the work of the ministry. I understand there's been voices raised against it in the Society of late, but I cannot but think their counsel will come to nought. It isn't for men to make channels for God's Spirit, as they make channels for the water-courses and say, 'Flow here, but flow not there.' " (163)

Dinah's reply gently challenges the self-assumed right of men to interfere with the ministry of women who felt themselves so called by God, and the prejudices they were likely to face. With convincing unemotional simplicity she describes her own call to serve God;

" 'I'd been used from the time I was sixteen to talk to the little children and teach them and sometimes I had had my heart enlarged to speak in class, and was much drawn out in prayer with the sick. But I had felt no call to preach; for when I'm not greatly wrought upon, I'm too much given to sit still and keep by myself: it seems as if I could sit silent all day long with the thought of God overflowing my soul - as the pebbles lie bathed in the Willow Brook..... But, sir, we are led on, like the little children, by a way that we know not. I was called to preach quite suddenly, and since then I have never been left in doubt about the work that was laid upon me.' " (164)

Dinah's speech, which is cluttered with allusions and metaphors from the Authorised Version, is found to be, "self-conscious and irritating and symptomatic of a self-righteous woman " by the critic, Joan Bennett. (165) However, Valentine Cunningham (1975) rejects Bennett's view as failing to apprehend the necessity of representing the true idiom of Methodism, which saw, in the light of the Scriptures, the means of real communication. Cunningham's research illustrates how closely George

Eliot observed her Aunt Samuel Evans. She also borrowed from her a copy of Henry More's Life of Mary Fletcher, and provides references to the famous woman preacher's vocation in her speech to Mr. Irvine (quoted above). There is also the scene where Adams attempts to comfort the dejected Seth, whose proposal Dinah has rejected, by relaying to him that Mr. Fletcher succeeded in marrying Mrs. Fletcher after a delay of twenty-five years. George Eliot also made copious notes on Southey's Life of Wesley,⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ on such items as - belief in present miracles, instantaneous conversions, revelations in dreams and visions, and belief in immediate guidance by the random opening of the Bible. She also drew on the sermons of Wesley and his followers.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ George Eliot also insists that her heroine wore the Quaker-like dress and practised asceticism like her Aunt Samuel, who wore a black dress and a "coal scuttle" bonnet in protest against the vanities of the world. Dinah wears a "net Quaker cap".⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Dinah's plain dress and prayerful demeanour, although serving aesthetically as a contrast to Hetty's love of finery and egotistical ambitions, are also those associated with Quaker women. Elizabeth Fry and her fellow Quakers, like Dinah, believed that women could be called as a minister of God in the same way as men could. There is, however, no first-hand account of Dinah's work in the Snowfield prison, or of the kind of howling mob of undisciplined inmates encountered by Elizabeth Fry in Newgate Prison. In this her first novel, George Eliot was happier

describing the rural England she knew and loved. Nonetheless, like Elizabeth Fry and her fellow prison reformers, Dinah's primary intention is Christian conversion with attention to practical need being close in priority.

Yet, juxtaposed to the close adherence to the details of Methodism at the turn of the century, is George Eliot's own gentle criticism of the values of evangelicalism. This first becomes apparent in Dinah's conversion of the woman, Lisbeth:

"And so there was earnest prayer - there was faith, love, and hope pouring itself that evening in the little kitchen. And poor aged fretful Lisbeth, without grasping any distinct idea without going through any course of religious emotions, felt a vague sense of goodness and love, and of something right lying underneath and beyond all this sorrowing life. She couldn't understand the sorrow; but, for these moments, under the subduing influence of Dinah's spirit, she felt that she must be patient and still." (169)

This passage illustrates a possible lack of true communication and understanding between the perpetrators of good works and those who were the recipients of them. On the other hand, it does not discount the positive effect and genuine, if at times misguided, endeavours of benevolent and religiously motivated people. This is further borne out in Dinah's relationship with her vain frivolous self-obsessed cousin, Hetty Sorrell. Structurally, Dinah serves as the antithetical "good woman" to Hetty, the "fallen woman" accused of infanticide of her illegitimate child. Hetty's seduction has mostly come about because of her deeply ingrained narcissism and self-delusion

that the man of the Manor, Arthur Donnithorne, could be drawn to marry her. Dinah is called away from her work in the city to visit her condemned cousin in prison. What is striking in this climactic scene is the apparent lack of communication between the Methodist evangelist and the frightened country girl. Yet, Hetty trusts Dinah but not because of her faith. - she has always found Dinah to be something of a mystery. - but because she knows she has always been kind. (170) Dinah perseveres in her attempts to get Hetty to open her soul to God by openly confessing her sin. Her reassurance to Hetty that God, the Father, was present in the cell with them and, as her friend, was "willing to save her from sin and suffering", appears to fall short of Hetty's understanding. But Dinah, quietly virtuous, gentle and patient, continues:

"He can't bless you while you have one falsehood in your soul; his pardoning mercy can't reach you until you open your heart to him and say, 'I have done this great wickedness: O God, save me, make me pure from sin.'" (171)

Dinah, in her role as salvationist, makes extensive use of the vocabulary of the pulpit, however, it is interesting to note that Hetty's confession is completely devoid of it. The confession is related in short bursts of colloquial and frequently broken and repetitive statements:

"I saw a wood a little way off I thought there'd perhaps be a ditch or pond there..... and it was so early I thought I could hide the child there, and get a long way off before folks was up. And then I thought I'd go home - I'd get rides in carts and go home...." (172)

These are the utterances of a childlike creature who either scarcely comprehends or chooses to disregard the horrifying seriousness of her cruel act, and vainly wishes to be restored to her former comfortable existence in the Poyser's household. George Eliot skilfully illustrates the wide gap of understanding between the missionary and the sinner, between Dinah's sincere but unrealistic religious optimism and Hetty's pathetic naivety and, thus, emphasises Hetty's moral distance from her abstemious, humble and selfless preacher cousin. George Eliot was probably aware of the low success rate of conversion of fallen women and prostitutes, despite the sincere and dedicated efforts of middle-class reformers and philanthropists. Her use of the stereotype conversion is undoubtedly a realistic one, and is tempered by her own agnosticism and meliorist beliefs.⁽¹⁷³⁾ Hetty is ultimately confronted more plausibly, with her own misdeed because she is constantly being haunted by the sound of the dead baby's crying. Her first and only religious words are said in her last line in the chapter entitled "In the Prison", when with childish helplessness, pathos and simplicity, she says, "Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying and the place in the wood, now I've told everything?"⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ The interview has been less of a religious confession and more of a psychological release from an internalized fear. Finally Hetty's death sentence is commuted to a transportation order, after the intervention of Arthur Donnithorpe.

Unlike Elizabeth Fry, and Eliot's Aunt Samuel Evans, Dinah eventually relinquishes her vocation for marriage. (Elizabeth Fry and Mrs. Evans carried on their work as a married woman.) Dinah's eventual marriage to Adam Bede comes as a surprise to some critics. Why should this dedicated, pure creature give up her religious vocation for a simple rural marriage? George Eliot appears to be telling her readers that Dinah was too saintly, too unnaturally good. Adam's hope of physical union with her is often thwarted by his sense of Dinah's spiritual distance from him. Once when he calls her name, "she started looking round (at him) as if she connected the sound with no place.....She was so accustomed to think of impressions as purely spiritual monitions that she looked for no material visible accompaniment of the voice".⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ George Eliot brings her "good" heroine back down to earth, as Adam's own free-will overcomes her spiritual will. Unlike, Elizabeth Fry, she even allows the continuation of her preaching and community role, promised her by Adam, to take an insignificant place to motherhood and even sisterhood to her discarded admirer, Seth. One reason may be that George Eliot, by the late 1850's was able to take a balanced view of what she had always been able to admire in Evangelical Christianity, which she first adopted and then rejected: she consistently believed that moral excellence should be made the standard by which all creeds and ideas should be judged.¹ At the time of writing Adam Bede, she had become interested in the philosophy of Feuerbach, which considered that religious

language could be translated into the language of humanism. Simon Dentith points out how much the character of Dinah Morris is a close expression of the Feuerbachian chain of truth, that the source of sanctity or divine inspiration is to be found in the person's subjective capacity for love, affection or feeling.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Through the Methodist preacher, Dinah, he claims, Eliot assimilates religion in the onward progress of humanity. In Middlemarch, the progress goes a step further. Dorothea Brook, with all her eagerness to do good and to know the truths of life, nonetheless, is a portrait of a young woman with immature ideas about marriage; she discovers after her marriage to the moribund scholar and sexually impotent clergyman, Casaubon, that both of these are not reconcilable with the progressive industrial nation. Her attempts to get improved cottages for the labourers are frustrated by his discompassionate obtuseness.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Adam Bede is essentially a pastoral novel which tells a moral tale along Feuerbachian lines, about the determining consequences of human frailty, without the necessity for Divine intervention. Dinah's self-identity undergoes an evolutionary process from a minister of religion to the more matter-of-fact role of humanitarian woman. Concurrently, Adam Bede, himself, has gone through a similar form of "baptism". Adam is a fine, manly workman, but perceptively limited: he has allowed himself to become emotionally obsessed with the pretty beguiling Hetty, without facing up to the cruel truth that she exploits this attraction for her own

selfish ends. He is then regenerated into a partner worthy of Dinah. Structurally, Dinah's innate womanly compassionate nature is counterpoised by Adam's basic rural commonsense and goodness.

Through the "voice" of Dinah Morris, George Eliot appears to give support to the egalitarian role of women, using Methodism and the sect's early acceptance of women philanthropic preachers as a suitable context for making her subtle point. On the other hand she preferred her egalitarian women to be practical and not over saintly. This is also made clear in her later characterisation of Dorothea Brook, whose youthful sense of mystical compassion and erudition leads her towards a misguided passion and empty relationship with the ageing, worn-out clergyman, Casaubon. In this later novel the majority of her women characters - Rosalind Vincy being a notable exception - are intellectually, morally or altruistically superior than their male partners. This becomes plain to Dorothea when her husband denigrates her intelligence and is obstructive in her efforts to persuade him to spend his accrued wealth on worthwhile causes. Similarly, Mrs. Cadwallar, the busy-body wife of the fishing enthusiast vicar - gossip though Mrs. Cadwallar may be - is a better vicar to her parish than her husband whose job it is to be concerned for the parishioners. Both women have time and taste for humanitarian details. Mary Garth, too, has far more natural commonsense and practical compassion than hapless, weak-willed Fred Vincy, and Mrs. Bulstrode turns out to be far more understanding and compassionate

than her self-righteous, hypocritical, Christian fundamentalist husband when she, when in a quiet show of wifely loyalty for_gives him his public disgrace. Even the ambitious young doctor, Lydgate, with his worthwhile intentions to build a modern hospital and to try out new forms of treatment, is lacking in compassion and has little "time and taste for details". He, like Adam Bede, is lacking in perceptivity. Dazzled by the cunning coquetry of the beautiful, conceited Rosamond Vincy, he allows her to trap him into a disastrous marriage which frustrates all his plans. Also, caught up in his own ambitious ideas for medicine, he is frequently insensitive to the political and community climate of the provincial town of Middlemarch: to him people are not much more than the means of financing or the objects of his experiments. He, in Gilligan's terms, is more concerned about the absolute of "right" rather than of responsibility for the web of human beings it is his compassionate duty to serve. He, in turn, is beset by entrenched attitudes of unthinking or bigoted members of society. A lack of ethical vision and frailty of will hamper individuals, and also the progress towards a better society, is largely Eliot's message in her provincial novel, Middlemarch. Although Dorothea attempts to take on that responsibility and acts as reconciler to Lydgate and Rosamond, George Eliot makes it clear that there can be no "happy" solution. in fiction as in real life. where human frailty has already established its own predetermined path. Perhaps this is also her message in Adam Bede, that Dinah may have to be content with the human love of Adam - that the

realisation of one's self-identity commonly means compromising the fuller image one has of oneself. However, unlike the majority of the heroines depicted by male novelists, the heroines of George Eliot are independent of men in so far as they learn to determine their own futures whether it be the conventional kind like Dinah's or the less conventional one, like Dorothea's. George Eliot's evenness of attitude and her humanistic outlook lead her to portray a balanced picture of the good, the bad, the strengths and weaknesses of humankind. In certain respects the image she presents of her heroines are representative of women who uphold egalitarian principles before their time and hence they do not readily fit into the stereotyped pattern of the "ministering Angel". Similarly, her "fallen woman", Hetty, is too full-bloodedly drawn to comply with the conventional image of the forever lost woman. Eliot's own agnostic moral philosophy preferred the uneven earthly benevolence of human responsibility rather than the mystical concepts of goodness and grace.

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Charlotte Yonge's heroine, Rachel Curtis, in The Clever Woman of the Family (1865) provides an interesting comparison to George Eliot's creation Dinah Morris. Both heroines begin by putting vocation before marriage and then succumb to

becoming contented wives and mothers. However, Yonge, unlike Eliot, was a firm believer in Anglo-Catholicism. Her heroine is the reverse of Eliot's insofar as she initially renounces the domination of the Church over her philanthropic activities. She is severely condemned for being too clever for her own spiritual good and taught to know her place in the Church and the home. In the character of Rachel Curtis it is possible to identify strong signs of the autobiographical voice of her author.

Rachel in search of her own identity is also, as Yonge was willingly herself, the victim of "gender dynamics".⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Yonge, an intelligent and gifted writer, was taught by her High Church father and John Keble to be content with her subordinate place in society and to be subject to man's greater wisdom. Rachel, her lively young heroine, feels herself trapped by social and religious convention and ends up, it seems, as yet another literary stereotype of the good, submissive, lady - "a thorough wife and mother, all the more so for her being awake to the larger interests (of the Church) and doing common things better".⁽¹⁸¹⁾ The innuendo here is, that Rachel, a would-be self-educated philanthropist, has overreached herself in her worthy aims through misguided self-confidence and myopic pride. Her efforts have been misguided because, being female and fatherless, only living with her mother and sister, she lacked masculine guidance during her formative years. She has, instead, been living in a harmful fantasy world of female inexperience, defying Church doctrines and practices, based on her own vain presumption

that she was the Clever Woman of the family. Yet, despite these gender dynamics, appearing to affirm the Victorian stereotype of womanhood, Yonge's "voice" of protest against the notion of "the Angel in the House", is still significantly present.

For qualities of self-assertiveness and personal dynamism, Rachel Curtis can readily be classified alongside characters like Caroline Helstone, Shirley Keeldar and Margaret Hale. An unmarried, intelligent, energetic, young woman of twenty-five, she is certain that there is more to life for a young woman than dressing up "for a pretty effect", and romantic notions about marriage.⁽¹⁸²⁾ She also echoes the bored "voices" of the fictional heroines as well as the utterances of Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler when she feels her talents have no obvious outlet and are being wasted. She, *firstly*, roundly addresses the discrepancy between herself, sitting there "with health, strength and knowledge", and that "one mass of misery and evil..... wretchedness, and crime." which exists in the world around her, and, *secondly*, the cruel exploitation of the poor by the rich - "children cramped in soul and destroyed in body, that fine ladies may wear lace trimmings." ⁽¹⁸³⁾ It is only her mother's insistence that Rachel is to marry which is holding her back: like her creator she finds that she can do nothing "at the risk of breaking her mother's heart." She must not be out late, must not put forth views, must not choose her own acquaintances, but to

be "mere helpless, useless being, growing old in a ridiculous fiction of prolonged childhood, affecting those graces of sweet seventeen that I never had." (184) It is the same kind of ringing feminist statement made by Bronte's heroine Caroline in Shirley when she despaired a future life without the prospect of either marriage or career. (185) Rachel declares that, rather than have a mere "domestic mission" (which had been the case for the recently widowed, Fanny Temple and her children) she would rather "become the founder of some establishment that might relieve women from the oppressive task-work thrown on them in their branches of labour." (186) When she considers career prospects for middleclass women, Rachel might well have been voicing the views of Charlotte Bronte, Emily Davies or Harriet Taylor. In declaring that she does not approve of encouraging women "to crowd the overstocked profession of governesses", she vociferously argues, "Is it not a flagrant abuse....., whether she has a vocation or not, every woman of a certain rank, who wishes to gain her livelihood, must needs become a governess." (187) Women, she continues must get out of the "old groove" and aim for better education, self-improvement. and a more worthy career in fields like medicine. Yonge's heroine also suffers pangs of social conscience about the lot of workingclass girls who are chained to an "evil system" of exploited work: "an unhealthy occupation in their early childhood", which created "an overstocked market and unpaid workers." (188) Full of the zeal, which characterises Shirley Keeldar, she ventures forth

into the community to involve herself in good works: she plans for the lace-making girls in the village a kind of trade school designed to emancipate them from the cruel conditions under which they work. (189)

The realism of Rachel's portrayal is enhanced by the author's ability to gently ridicule the earnestness of her heroine's missionary zeal and to highlight her genuine innocent naivety. Unfortunately, Yonge's lively satire does not operate to advance Rachel's eventful self-development towards a purposeful humanitarian cause, but to denigrate her philanthropic role in order to appease the High Church's notion of what constitutes a good woman. In a variety of delightfully convincing scenes, Yonge succeeds in bringing her heroine to heel as she highlights her uncontrolled feminine excesses of assertiveness, wilfulness and pride. Yonge has the gift of observing and capturing humankind in its most natural moments (most likely drawn from her personal experience with her village scholars and their families). This is evidenced in the episode in which Rachel attempts to reconcile two of her ebullient, rough fisherboys, Zack and Conrade, locked in a quarrel. Her intervention, although it does not achieve its intended peaceful outcome, is handled good humouredly. (190)

The scene is a startling contrast, tonally and aesthetically, to Dickens' caricatured episode of Mrs. Pardiggle's sanctimonious rigidity towards her offspring in Bleak House. But, more covertly, the passage also denotes what is to become a

developing theme in Rachel's progress, that she is not quite so clever at handling people and situations as she believes she is. Educating young boys is one thing, philanthropy as a vocation is quite another for a "slow and unready" woman.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ Yonge mocks the wider ambitions of her heroine as grossly unrealistic and highly pretentious. As Rachel expresses her desire to extend her philanthropic interests beyond her immediate community: "To understand the principle of diffused education, as there (Scotland) practised" and to see "The Grand Reformatory for the Destitute in Holland and the Hospital for Cretins in Switzerland".⁽¹⁹²⁾ Rachel concentrates instead on reforming Mrs. Kellar's miserable lace school, a system of "overwork, low prices" and in which "middlemen perfectly batten on the lives of poor girls....."⁽¹⁹³⁾ Rachel's earnest attempts to emancipate the women are trivialised in the incident of her discovery that the acronym for her Female Union for Lace-Makers Employment would be F.U.L.E.; she hastily changes the name to Female Union for Englishwomen's Employment.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ Her uninformed amateurish attempts to dictate economics also receives an ironic reprimand from Yonge as her heroine announces her plan for the lace-makers to her confederate Mr. Mauleverer:

"The only means that seems to me likely to mitigate the evil would be to commence an establishment where fresh trades might be taught so as to lessen the glut of the market, and to remove the workers that are forced to undersell one another, and thus oblige the buyers to give a fairly remunerative price." (195)

The pair discuss raising the tone of female employment and

the idea of industrial schools.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Like Mrs. Jellyby, of the evangelical faction of the Church, she inexpertly propositions patrons and organisations for funding the lace-makers' cause. The proposals for the lace-makers bear some resemblance to the non-competitive, cooperative work and training schemes that were being put forward and tried out by the Christian socialist movement, the denominational arch-enemy within the Church of England to the Oxford Movement. Charlotte Yonge appears to be saying her heroine is as doctrinally misled as they. Rachel is also criticised for her unacceptable liberal, ecumenical ideas on education. Even in the feminine preserve of nursing she is, at both the practical level and the moral level, outstripped by a man, Alick Keith, who accurately diagnoses the dying lacegirl's diptheria, knows what to do and who would be likely to catch it and who would not. Rachel contritely, blaming herself as the cause of the girl's illness, submissively stays with the patient until the doctor arrives.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ Her judgement to trust Manleverer had been wrong: the man turns out to be a clever swindler in pseudoclerical dress, ~~he~~ has misappropriated her money, starved and maltreated the poor lace girls, causing the diptheria fatality. Above all, ~~she~~ Rachel has been persuaded by Manleverer to challenge the Church by indulging in free thought about Christian doctrine. Rachel is dangerously on the wrong religious path and her schemes for good fail miserably because of her female inexperience and foolhardy usurpation of the Church's charitable role.

Rachel's personal saviours, who restore her to her proper womanly role, are Alick Keith, her admirer and the High Church learned clergyman, Mr. Clare - a fictional counterpart of John Keble. First, she must learn, unassisted, to swallow her pride by coming to terms with her dislike of Mr. Touchett, the curate of the village church, with whom she has been in personal conflict. He has undermined her authority with the village Sunday School boys, by insisting that they attend choir practice, which is scheduled to coincide with her classes. He emphasises the importance of the mystical elements; she, that can only attend school on Sunday morning because they are at sea on every weekday. As Robert Lee Wolff comments, we can be sure that the devout Tractarian, Charlotte Yonge, agreed with Touchett but not with Rachel who "found the performance undevotional and raved that education should be sacrificed to wretched music".⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ She also sneers at the curate's large following of local ladies who work as volunteers in the parish, and conform to his ideas. She is also chastened by the death of the young lace-maker, who turns out to be a devotee of the High Church. Rachel begins to yearn for "the reality of those simple teachings".⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ The young officer, Alick Keith, has long recognised Rachel's true worth and values her for her real intellect, her self-sacrificing spirit and her passionate desire to be of use in the world. He loves Rachel. He explains to the kinsman, Major Colin Keith, who doubted if any man can be genuinely in love with such a "self-opinionated, unattractive girl, that, he instinctively felt

"the relief of meeting real truth and unselfishness." Rachel's stance has been to eschew marriage for community interests. Charlotte Yonge writes mockingly of her heroine: "It would be a public misfortune if any one man's private domestic love should monopolize her".⁽²⁰⁰⁾ Alick, whom Yonge draws as a remarkably strong and sympathetic character, helps Rachel when she faces difficulty with raising funds for the industrial asylum for exploited lace-makers. He sells her beloved horse at a realistic market price so that money can be raised for the venture. The pair are brought together in marriage. In a reversal of the Bronte and Gaskell formula, it is the man, Alick, who reforms the misguided heroine. Their Welsh honeymoon is marred by Rachel's tormented conscience as she suffers mental despondency and is physically unwell. Not all Alick's tender care and sympathy can restore her. Rachel eventually recovers when Alick takes her to the peaceful sanctuary of Mr. Clare's country rectory. The holy High Church clergyman, a blind, gentle, scholar, is clearly of the old school of clergy to which Keble belonged.⁽²⁰¹⁾ His "voice" is that of the undisputed Divine authority of the apostolic Church. In the saintly care of Mr. Clare, Rachel comes to resolving her religious doubts simultaneously recovering her mental and physical self. Rachel's recovery of her self-identity comes through the reincarnation offered by the mysteries of the High Church. Moreover, she has to accept her place of subordination as a woman, and see her collapsed philanthropic work re-established in a High Church educational institution

and a convalescent house supervised by men: Colonel Keith and Mr. Mitchell, are the new superintendents responsible for the women teachers and nurses. During her period of rebellion Rachel had allegedly become a humourless woman who likes to hear the sound of her own voice. This is clearly a Pauline statement which forbids the voice of woman to be heard speaking in Church,⁽²⁰²⁾ and, from Yonge's standpoint, on matters relating to the High Church ethic of care. Once restored to the Church, Rachel good humouredly laughs with Alick at her own intellectual arrogance, saying, "I should have been better if I had had either father or brother to keep me in order "⁽²⁰³⁾ Her place is found for her as wife and mother. In the novel Yonge avoids predicting future changes for womankind. When, as proud parents, Alick and Rachel observe the highly developed precocity of their small daughter, Una, they decide that the only solution for curbing this "perilous gift to woman" is that she may have a wise brother and father to make certain she is brought up in "true unselfishness" and that her cleverness is channelled into "good, and not harm".⁽²⁰⁴⁾ Yonge is looking back to the time she knew John Keble, and requires her women to be religiously good and self-sacrificing. Yet, despite Yonge's adoring, unswerving allegiance to the dictates of Anglo-Catholicism, her book is more than a piece of propaganda and her style is never didactic.

The anti-feminist statements made by Charlotte Yonge in The Clever Woman of the Family and her other novels, have

disappointed many twentieth century women critics who admire the imaginative genius of Yonge-evidenced in her astute observation of human nature. Moreover, Yonge was able to produce a convincing portrait of a lively, energetic, rebellious, self-dependent, charitable young woman. In the scenes before her personal restoration to the High Church, Rachel Curtis is made of the stuff of the new-styled woman careerist philanthropist who was beginning to make her mark on mid-nineteenth century society. Like these women, when they began their public lives, she made the inevitable mistakes and misjudgements which go with inexperience and over-eagerness. Unlike them, she was not given a further opportunity to learn by her mistakes, instead her creator stifles her ambition, and her wider sense of self-awareness. Yet, despite Rachel's withdrawal into a stereotyped role for women, she is far from a stereotyped character in her portrayal. Charlotte Yonge succeeds in breathing the true vigour of life and youthful ambition into her adventurous, entrepreneurial heroine, in a way that Dickens, Disraeli and Kingsley never could. Even more reason to suspect that Rachel was drawn from her author's own experience, and, in many ways, is an extension of herself, and perhaps, subconsciously, a model of the new philanthropic woman about whose activities Charlotte Yonge was clearly aware, and possibly secretly envied. Although, Yonge is often unsparing in her mockery of poor Rachel's intellectual and charitable pretensions, one is at the same time aware that she genuinely sympathises with her heroine's efforts for self-improvement, her honest "truth

seeking" and her philanthropic inclinations. Her friendship with Elizabeth Wordsworth, the first Principal of Lady Margaret Hall coincided with the writing of The Clever Woman, and she gave support to the cause of women's education.⁽²⁰⁵⁾ One may even speculate on the inner-conflict suffered by the unmarried Charlotte Yonge, between her ingrained belief that her first duty was home and Church, and her unexpressed desire to be of more use in the world. However, she is among the few writers capable of creating an attractive "good woman". Therefore, she provides the literary tradition of women with a philanthropic heroine worthy of recognition.

.

Like Charlotte Yonge, the lesser known writer and philanthropist, Felicia Mary Frances Skene (1821-99) was unmarried and was strongly influenced by an Anglo-Catholic priest, but here the similarity ends. Unlike Charlotte Yonge, Felicia Skene was able to write from first-hand experience of the grim Victorian underworld of prostitutes and criminals.⁽²⁰⁶⁾ Like Elizabeth Fry and Josephine Butler, she was acquainted with the way brothels were run and how girls were ruined; she disapproved of the way a girl was moved out of a jail and into a penitentiary, an institution intended as a house of repentance

but which was run on harsh restrictive lines.⁽²⁰⁷⁾ Moreover, like Elizabeth Gaskell, she wanted to communicate to "the careless passerby" a glimpse of those "hidden depths" - the seamier aspects of society which caused women to be "fallen"- which she knew existed.⁽²⁰⁸⁾ Her novel, Hidden Depths: The Story of a Cruel Wrong (1866) is a strong protest against sexual double standards for men and women. In it Skene makes an unsparing attack on the response of un-Christian clergy to prostitutes.⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Unlike Charlotte Yonge, she was not afraid to attack what she considered were the shortcomings of the Church. Unfortunately, as a novelist, Skene did not possess the literary capabilities of Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell, or Charlotte Yonge, and produced an amateurishly written fiction. Hidden Depths at times rings uncomfortably of actual reportage and contains many passages of crass didactic rhetoric and other literary shortcomings. Nonetheless, some events are interestingly and lucidly told, and the work contains some vividly contrasting scenes to depict emotions and situations of good and evil, and passages of convincing dialogue. In her brief Author's Preface, anonymously written, Skene admits:

"This book is not a work of fiction in the ordinary acceptation of the term..... for the hidden depths, of which it reveals a glimpse, are no fit subjects for a romance, nor..... for purposes of mere amusement."

This is an innovatory statement, which makes fiction an instrument to be taken seriously robbing the form of laxity

and frivolity. It is the author's determined intention to reproduce the injustices of the social reality as she personally witnessed them, to produce a historical record by way of fiction. Undoubtedly, then, her work can be firmly classified as "a social protest novel" written by a "female philanthropist".

Perhaps one of the most surprising "voices" among the fictional heroines of the mid-Victorian novels also comes from the pen of Skene. The philanthropic heroine of Hidden Depths is Ernestine Courtenay, a fair, radiant, brave and goodhearted woman of good family. Ernestine is typical of a bored, well-to-do woman looking for something to do to fill her long, idle days. Her marriage to Hugh Linguard has been postponed for three years to give him time to pay off the debts of his inherited estate. Her brother, Colonel George Courtenay, is about to embark for India. The conversation she has with George about her future plans well indicates two different voices, those of conventional man, who selfishly abhors the advance of women in public life, and a restless woman, who is looking for something worthwhile to do. Ernestine declares:

" I do not know what else I can do at present; but you cannot think how I dread returning to the hollow, objectless life I lived with Aunt Beaufort before you came home. I do so want to try and be of some use in the world".

"Why, Ernestine, you alarm me! You are not going to turn out a strong-minded female, I hope, and raise a regiment of rifle women, or establish a printing press for the publication of pamphlets on the rights of women?" (210)

Ernestine diplomatically does not allow herself to be drawn into an argument on the extremities of the woman's movement, ambiguously stating that she does not intend to do anything that is "contrary to laws both human and Divine." George misunderstanding the import of her words, expresses his relief. Ernestine, however, is ready to contest his rejoinder that he has "A great horror of ladies who are the benefactresses of mankind".⁽²¹¹⁾ In a voice of quiet defiance, remarkably like that of Caroline Helstone and Florence Nightingale,⁽²¹²⁾ she emphasises that women's lives must be more usefully served than spending it "in dressing and . . . visiting, and working at embroidery". George's clear preference for the Ruskinian model of womankind is evident in his reply that, it must be possible for women to be useful to others, without going beyond "their own province", and in his reminder that Lady Beaufort will not contenance her "philanthropic schemes". Despite George's protests of "philanthropy being a dreary prospect" for her, Ernestine rounds off the conversation, which clearly is not going her way, by adamantly stating: "It will be a life with a purpose." (213) At this stage of the novel, Ernestine is unaware of George's treacherous betrayal of Louis, a young woman whom he has

t ly rt and driven to suicide. In her commentary, Skene pointedly despairs of George's selfish self-interest, and, moreover, is in sympathy with her heroine's aim to be a woman of her own time, to do something about the "perplexing condition of the poor.... God's creature, untaught, unpitied, and unsuccoured, without hope."⁽²¹⁴⁾ Once George has departed to India, Ernestine, on hearing of her brother's treachery, not unexpectedly, makes a personal undertaking to find.. and rescue from prostitution Louis' surviving sister, Annie Brook. Skene, makes a far bolder, if less aesthetic, statement on the double standards surrounding sexual indiscretion than Elizabeth Gaskell does in Ruth. She is also critical of male institutions such as the military and the Church, which generally disregard the plight of such women.

In Hidden Depths is what could be one of the most unique documentary scenes to be found in a Victorian novel written by a woman - an embarkation shelter for soldier's wives at Seamount. It is a scene in which a young pregnant woman, Mary, discovers she is the victim of the bigamous marriage to a soldier, James Reed, whose true wife, also at the embarkation shelter, has just learned of his death from cholera. Having arrived with the expectation of joining her supposed husband in India, the distraught girl is cruelly turned away accused of being an imposter and "fallen woman". The scene amounts to a strong feminist statement by Skene about the misuse of women by callous, unthinking men. A garrulous busybody of

a woman, a Mrs. Miller, giving evidence about the dead soldier, makes comments about her own marriage and rests her sympathies with the recently made widow: "I could feel for her for I am a wife and a mother myself, and a widow too - leastways I buried my first eight years come Michaelmas: and a great brute he was to me and seven children."⁽²¹⁵⁾ Skene, adopting a balanced author's stance, shows little sympathy for her character, Mrs. Miller, described as one of those gossips who derive satisfaction in gloating over the misfortunes of others - "that satisfaction beaming on her face which affords some of us in this world to hunt down our fellow creatures."⁽²¹⁶⁾ Mrs. Miller's sympathies, like those of the rough army officers and men, do not extend to the distressed Mary, the unmarried shamed outsider. The passage is psychologically convincing, it reveals not only Skene's keen powers of observation of humankind, but also her sympathetic identification with society's underdog. The scene is also unique in that she exposes this microcosm of the female "sub-culture" against the background of a man's world, the military. The scene, although structurally somewhat detached from the main plot, nonetheless, provides a cameo for the main theme of the novel that the "fallen woman" is, unjustly, society's victim. Another victim, Louis Brook, Colonel George Courtenay's young mistress, is also at the scene of the embarkation. Three months ago, George deserted her to marry Julia, the daughter of a wealthy family. As the ship is about to sail, she pleads distressfully with him on the ship's deck and accuses him: "You took my good name; you

made father curse me." George, with callous indifference, gets her unceremoniously carried off the ship, dismissing her as "a drunken woman" who has mistaken him for another. (217) Skene's knowledge of a man's world and of male self-protectionism is evident in her ensuing commentary:

"As to the captain of the ship and his own officers, Courtenay knew well that they understood the whole affair; but he also knew that they would offer no open criticism on the private conduct of a man in his official position." (218)

It is a remarkably defiant statement by a mid-nineteenth century woman novelist; it is the kind of statement that Josephine Butler might have uttered to the politicians in her bold campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act.

George's wife, Julia, unquestioningly accepts George's explanation of Louis' presence at the quayside. Ernestine, the would-be philanthropist, is more discerning. Despite her sisterly devotion towards her brother, she experiences a deep sense of womanly responsibility for the betrayed girl. Skene writes:

"So well had she loved him, that the girl's agony seemed to fall like heavy guilt on her own soul; and she felt that if it were so indeed, his victim must become her own sacred charge." (219)

Ernestine identifies this as God's special mission for her. In her attempt to find the whereabouts of Louis, she discovers news of the poor girl's suicide. She sees Louis' body and

on it a note verifying George's involvement with her. Ernestine, despite the protestations of Lady Beaufort, her guardian aunt and her fiance Hugh Lingard, vows to rescue the dead girl's sister, Annie Brook, from a fate of prostitution. The search takes her to Greyburgh (Oxford), where she meets the saintly High-Church clergyman, Mr. Thorold, who advises her in her search.

Ernestine's "voice" is clearly that of her compassionate philanthropic author. Skene, like Gaskell in Ruth, refuses totally to condemn young girls, who have been innocently seduced, as wicked or evil. When Louis Brook is on her way to some cliffs to commit suicide - unfortunately made trite by Victorian sentimentality - the half-crazed girl gives all the money she has to poor children to buy dolls and to an elderly pauper. The old man blesses her for "being a good one". Louis also turns to heaven to pray.⁽²²⁰⁾ Skene's message is clear: neither Louis' unchaste condition nor her eminent suicide puts her past Divine redemption. She also makes a genuine, if amateurish attempt, to convey something of the enormity of individual human suffering by juxtaposing Louis' misery against the daily pattern of existence:

"The day was drawing to a close. Within the streets (of Seamount) there were all the tokens of approaching night: the shopmen were lighting their lamps for later customers, the labourers were hurrying home, the diners out were arriving at the houses of friends. Yet strange it is to feel as the weeks pass over us as unmarked and uneventful, that there is no one day of all those that make up the years that is not to some human being the

most awful and portentous that can be for them in time and in eternity - the climax of their sufferings or the very crisis of their doom..... We think we know enough of this world's teeming sorrows and that we hear too often the many-mingled cry that ever rises from the suffering heart of all humanity; but how awful must be the sight on which the omniscient Eyes look down, to which no tear is hid, no pang unknown of all the weltering mass of this earth's agony!" (221)

In this, albeit clumsily written paragraph, Skene attempts to share with her reader her own deep empathy with the individual who suffers alone. The unhappy Louis has left "human habitation" far behind and, in the dark solitude of the cliff top, surveys the "black masses of seaweed" on the long low beach. Unlike the more eminent writers of her day, Skene is unable to use imagery effectively to illustrate the black terror of impending death; she falls into the mistake of crass over-dramatisation with her metaphors:

"The slimy reptiles creeping to and fro.....the restless waters moaning heavily as they beat upon the unyielding sands; the lowering clouds rolling heavy masses over the leaden sky. Far away the horizon there gleamed one ghastly streak of light where all that remained of the dying day was gathered, while over the dreary landscape the rising wind went sighing in fitful gusts rendering the damp air more bleak and chill." (222)

The passage compares poorly with Dickens' scene of phantasmagoria in which the prostitute, Nancy, is murdered in the swirling Thames fog.⁽²²³⁾ When Ernestine eventually meets Annie Brook, Annie repents of her sin. Here, Skene relies heavily on the stereotyped format of the "good lady" as recipient of the confessed sins of the fallen and the religious conversion. Speech is

in the language of the pulpit as Ernestine gently pleads:
"Will you not hear the voice of the departed Lord speaking
to you from His blessed Heaven?" The girl flings out her
hands passionately and exclaimed, "What shall I do? Oh, what
shall I do? I know its a wicked and wretched life..." (224)
Throughout the histories of the two Brook sisters, Skene's
sympathies for betrayed women are clearly evident: their
original "innocence" is signified in Ernestine's description
of the Eden-like grounds of their childhood home, Carleton
Hall, with its fresh spring flowers, deer browsing quietly
in the park and "where the evening star shone pure and pale."
This was the haven home until they were orphaned and became
the prey of lecherous men.

Hidden Depths is not a novel which looks for a conventional
happy ending in the reunion of a hero and a heroine, who,
despite their respective faults, ultimately deserve the good-
ness of each other. Ernestine's marriage to Hugh Lingard
does not go ahead because of his own seduction of a girl
called Rosie Brown. Uniquely, unlike the majority of philan-
thropic heroines in fiction at this time, Ernestine remains a
single woman who devotes her life to philanthropy, a situation
which more truthfully reflected that of many of those surplus,
unmarried Victorian women who found personal fulfilment in
such a venture. Ernestine gives the whole of her fortune and
dedicates the rest of her life to providing a home for out-
casts, such as Annie. To proclaim the worth of an unmarried

woman in this way was a considerable innovation in a nineteenth century novel. But, Felicia Skene wanted to show that Ernestine was no ordinary woman, but a shining example of the new development of philanthropic women in her own time. This is evidenced by her statement on her heroine:

"Ernestine Courtenay had of late been greatly influenced by one of the most striking characteristics of the age in which we live - the spirit of enquiry now agitating the whole length and breadth of the land as to the real condition of the lower classes, and the responsibility of the upper ranks with regard to them." (226)

Skene clearly sees it the duty of the wealthy and enlightened members of a Christian country to do something practical to as she puts it, "meet the terrible vastness of the evils" which lay outside their social sphere.⁽²²⁷⁾ In this, women had a significant role to play.

Felicia Skene's bold condemnation of male treatment of women does not stop at the military. She also distinguishes between the kind of High Church clergymen she admires and those she does not. Here she shares something of the perceptivity of Charlotte Bronte, Charles Dickens and George Eliot, who were prepared to display all shades of saintliness and hypocrisy in men of the cloth. Skene approvingly upholds the good Mr. Thorold as a truly Christian priest for his relentless efforts: going among thieves - "at it day and night in the most blackguard places in the town" - to save lost souls, with no thought of giving up even if they be "ever so bad".⁽²²⁸⁾

On the other hand, she is prepared to criticise the pompous priest, Dr. Granby, Rector of St. Gregories, who gives lip service to charity but dare not dirty his hands. Whereas Mr. Thorold is reminiscent of the shepherd who sought the last sheep, Dr. Granby is reminiscent of Pilate, who washes his hands of his full responsibility towards society's victims. When Skene attacks Granby, she attacks the "respectable priests" who fear risk to their "sacred person" if they should be brought into contact with a prostitute. When Ernestine, in her search for Annie, questions Granby on the possible whereabouts of the prostitute, he attempts to discourage her from her ill-chosen pursuit. Although Skene would have known nothing about Freudian psychology, her perception of the implication of a "Freudian slip" certainly does not go unnoticed when Granby advises her heroine not "to interfere with their damnation - I mean with their salvation."⁽²²⁹⁾ Ernestine's own Christian compassion tells her to defy such advice. She cannot be persuaded that women should only involve themselves in less distasteful forms of charity. Granby proudly reports that his own daughters do "works of charity, piety, and necessity", and adds, "My sweet Lousia visits the infant school once a week, and it is most cheering to see how she has taught the innocent little ones to clap their hands in unison."⁽²³⁰⁾ This is the kind of ineffectual dilettante charity, on which the new dynamic philanthropic heroines like Ernestine, Margaret Hale and Shirley Keeldar, have turned their backs. Even Rachel Curtis would not have been drawn back into the Church's

protection to such self-deceptive "do-gooding". For Skene, female philanthropists had to be prepared to face up to the harsh, grimy realities of the other face of society. The image she presents of her heroine, and of herself, is of a woman who should not hesitate, if necessary, to attack the evil aspect of male-dominated institutions which conveniently turned a blind eye to the hypocrisy within, committed by their own sex.

Whereas Skene displays a considerable amount of compassion for her "fallen women", she unequivocally condemns and pours wrathful revenge on the dilettante seducer. God's judgement falls heavily upon her male perpetrators of women's misery. George Courtenay, with his wife, is involved in an accident in Calcutta. His trusting, if naive, wife, Julia is killed outright, but George is brain damaged and survives a fate worse than death as an imbecile. During a journey home from India, Ernestine hears the confession of Reginald Courtenay, of how he treacherously seduced Annie Brook, as he lies weakly on his bed dying of consumption, a "once honest, God-fearing man, fallen into a life of low dissipation."⁽²³¹⁾ Then, Ernestine hears the surprising confession from her own fiancé; as Hugh, in a conciliatory letter declares his depravity and betrayal of Rosie Brown. Their wedding is called off. Skene's belief in female moral superiority over male morality has previously been illustrated in Hugh's words prior to Ernestine's departure in her search

for Annie, when he half-playfully and half in earnest says to the unsuspecting girl: "Don't go and become too good for me; I am very far from your level now, and I don't wish to find the distance widened between us"(232) Skene appears to be making a categorical feminist statement against marriage, a call for women's independence and - surprisingly as she declined to become one - proclaiming the Anglo-Catholic order of the Sisters of Charity. There can be no doubt, she makes a clear statement for female celibacy. Whichever way one conjectures it, the tone of Skene's novel is clearly antagonistic to both the non-celibate male and those priests who disregarded the humanitarian aspect of Christianity.

Skene is also critical of the prison and penitentiary systems of her day. Unfortunately, as a novelist, she did not possess, or did not sufficiently develop the literary skills of Dickens, Bronte, or Eliot, to convey, atmospherically, the true horror which she, herself, witnessed at first hand, and of which she gives an account. Nonetheless, her heroine's search for the lost prostitute provides her with the kind of mobility which would take her readers into the haunts of prostitutes and criminals and within the walls of a prison. On Thorold's advice Ernestine goes to the women's gaol and speaks to the governor there. Although, Skene, herself, worked among prisoners, in this part of the novel she appears to lack the courage to describe the details of the grim institutions. Her physical description of the gaol is simplistically restricted to "a small paved courtyard surrounded by

high walls," and the inmates to:

"Some eighteen to twenty women were before her of all ages, from the hard, callous-looking woman of more than thirty to the mere child of fourteen. All possessed at least some trace of beauty which had once been their treasure and their curse." (233)

It is as if words fail Skene in this chapter. One obvious reason is that she did not have it within her literary powers to depict the depravities of a scene she knew so well. Another reason could be that, as a middleclass lady, sensitive to Victorian proprieties about such matters, she cautiously avoided direct description of the gaol and its inmates. Significantly, throughout the novel, she maintains a "feminine" vocabulary, avoiding the use of strong, unpleasant, coarse or violent language and description.⁽²³⁴⁾ Nonetheless, Skene went so far as to reproduce an episode from reality in her account of "a lying bawd who murders the children of the wretched inmates of her brothel by burning them alive in a straw mattress".⁽²³⁵⁾ Even more evident is Skene's dislike of the harsh, utilitarian methods of dealing with "fallen women". The new home Ernestine establishes is "unlike the penitentiary and other highly disciplined homes". More humanely conceived, it was designed "to provide a preparatory shelter for them by love and gentleness" in order to bring to "the wanderers they sheltered" a perception of "that everlasting love of which they knew absolutely nothing". This is a very clear statement of Felicia's own feminine ethic of care, which treated humble human beings with respect and compassion, and

not as objects of theological condemnation.

Despite her literary limitations, Skene, succeeds through the activities and moral stance of her heroine, in unmasking the sordid state of prostitution as a business, and particularly male hypocrisy and self-protectionism. Her "voice", closely harmonises with the campaign led by Josephine Butler, which upbraided a society which allows the male participant in prostitution to remain free even though he may be a pervert and a cruel exploiter of women. Not unlike Elizabeth Gaskell, she requested a more social compassion for her Magdalen. Like Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Fry, Butler and Dickens, she frequently witnessed the macabre depravity of working women who could not earn an adequate wage for themselves and the horror of child prostitution, and used fiction as a means of uncovering the "hidden" injustices she knew to exist, but which society was loathe to openly acknowledge.

4.4. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 4.

The findings of this chapter, show that the discrepancy of self-image given to this selection of philanthropic heroines by male and female writers is remarkably wide.

Those heroines portrayed by men are, at their worst, no more than stereotyped impressions of both the Rousseauan and Ruskinian images of women which fed on the prejudices of those in society who wished to keep women in a domestic position of servitude and dependence on men, protected by them for their own alleged good, and, as "ministering Angels" and upholders of Christian moral values within the family circle. At their best, they are little more than kindly "Lady Bountifuls", who visit the local poor as symbols of Christian love and charity. Charles Kingsley's heroine, Eleanor, in her self-made role of philanthropic priestess of Christian Socialism, is the one exception, but she fails as a character as Kingsley fails to present the inner mind of a woman by the cursorily narrated coverage he gives to his heroine. In fact, in none of the novels, except in Bleak House, is the female philanthropist given a central role. In his portrait of Esther Summerson, Dickens makes a bold attempt to get into the mind and represent the psychology of his self-effacing heroine, but he is careful to keep her clearly within the bounds of the "Lady Bountiful" image. Moreover, in the plot, she is somewhat overshadowed by John Jarndyce, the male philanthropist to whom she is the

"child-sister" and housekeeper. The heroines of the male authors are rarely given a separate identity of their own, they rarely make independent judgements; they hardly ever have their voices raised in criticism or argument over the precepts of the male dominated institutions: their "voice" is almost always one which is compliant with that of the "good hero" and what he considers is right and just. The heroine serves as his inspiration and moral guide, but ultimately, man is the sage.

On the other hand, the heroines depicted by women novelists are mostly full-bodied highly vociferous creations. They are generally the main protagonist in the novel, and are given considerable detailed coverage. The indicators are clear : enough, the philanthropic heroines of the pens of women writers are made of far sturdier calibre than the gentle portraits of the men, they are more outspoken, they argue, debate and justify their actions. Often larger than life, they make judgements and are judged by what they do and say. They direct their compassion, sense of moral responsibility and good works, not only towards family and lover, but also towards a wide network of relationships beyond their own doors; some, like Shirley Keeldar, Caroline Helstone, Margaret Hale, Dinah Morris, Rachel Curtis and Ernestine Courtenay, courageously project themselves into the public world of men, presenting themselves as reconcilers in society in an egalitarian or morally superior position to men. They are given far more independent mobility and social responsibility in the novel than their counterparts

in the novels by men. Although their horizons do not extend to those of the actual philanthropic heroines, in many respects, there is significant correlation of attributes - of self-determination, of independence of mind, of rebelliousness against the constraints of the convention of the Ruskinian image of womanhood - between the fictional philanthropic heroines and the real ones. This suggests that those women novelists of the period were seeking inspiration from the pioneering women who, at that time, were shaping English history by bringing to the forefront of society values of their own - learned and developed in what Showalter terms, as the subculture of womankind. These findings appear to signify that women of the period were writing a different kind of social novel or "social protest novel" to that produced by men, which has a particular emphasis on the activities of philanthropic women, and therefore, could legitimately be named "a philanthropic novel".

Gilligan's theory on the different images of the self-identity of the sexes held by men and women appears to be significantly accurate when applied to the concept of the philanthropic heroine in the nineteenth century novel. In the next chapter, the two voices of "the ethic of care" of the men and women writers will be examined, to determine the existence of the "philanthropic novel" as part of the literary tradition of women.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4 : THE PHILANTHROPIC NOVELISTS

(pp287-463)

4.0 INTRODUCTION

1. See p26 above
2. Gilligan, C. In a Different Voice (Massachusetts and London) 1982 p129-32
3. Stubbs, P. Women and Fiction : Feminism and the Novel 1880-1920 (Sussex and New York) 1979. Patricia Stubbs writes of the novel, "At its best it explores private relationships and moral behaviour as an expression of external social and economic realities, but its central, its defining preoccupation, remains the elaboration of an intensely personal world of experience..." Introduction p xi
4. Stang, R. The Theory of the Novel 1850-70 (London) 1959 p27
5. Trevelyan, G.M. English Social History (Harmondsworth) Reprint 1986 p535

4.1. HEROINES IN FICTION AND THEIR NOVELIST CREATORS

(pp291-308)

6. J. Peter has traced the course of "Complaint Literature", which was used to attack various groups of "abusers", from the clergy, lawyers, usurers to atheists, misers and women, from the literature of the Middle Ages to the English Renaissance. Complaint Literature has since established some generalised themes which were transformed and heightened by the Puritan movement from the sixteenth century onwards. One of these themes, specifically associated with women and their sexuality, is the notion of original sin and the uncleanness of women's bodies. John Morris cites Peter's book in an essay on "The Play" and writes: "From the Fall sin entered man, flesh showed its weakness, and, because of sin and morality, the association of flesh with ideas of uncleanness logically followed. It is, as Peter argues, a short step to Calvin's doctrine of the natural depravity of man The Fall should naturally link the world and the flesh with the devil: and a contempt for worldly things, for the transience and decay of life leads to a repugnance and disgust of the human body these thoughts and a horror of the sexual appetite and especially a hatred of feminine sexuality, (or hatred solely of women whose frail precursor Eve bound man in evil and morality) might easily become connected" -

- Dr. John Morris, "The Influences of Puritanism and Calvinism on the Plays of Cyril Townsend" (1963) p10
See Peter, J. Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature (1956) pp9-10
7. Stubbs, P. op cit "Introduction"
 8. and 9. Figes, E writes about the profound limitations that the cult of stereotyping women in fiction must have had on women writers. She claims that the plots of their novels were expected to conform to two themes, the tragic plot of seduction and betrayal and the comic plot of courtship and marriage. The eighteenth century heroines of Fanny Burney were less restrained and moved about unchaperoned. pp12-16 Also see Spencer, J. The Rise of Women Novelists from Aphra Behn to Jane Austen (Oxford) 1986
 10. The figure of Sir Charles Granison, the drawing-room gentleman adored by all well-bred ladies, in Pamela, is the antithetical figure to Fielding's hero Tom Jones.
 11. Samuel Richardson is said to have written Pamela as a literary antidote to his previous novel Clarissa in which he created the first great suffering virgin: Clarissa is a young intelligent woman who is made to suffer in the hands of a violent and oppressive family. Tricked away from home, she is deceived, imprisoned, persecuted, drugged and raped by an aristocratic libertine, and finally impelled to her death. Her claim to integrity is fetishistically destroyed by the rakish narcissism of Lovelace.
 12. Stubbs, P. op cit pxii
 13. Miles, R. The Fiction of Sex (London) 1983 p53
 14. Pope, Norris, Dickens and Charity (London) 1978 p10
 15. Dickens' marriage, after twenty-two years and the birth of ten children ended in divorce when Dickens fell in love with an actress, Ellen Ternan. Biographers' views vary about the circumstances of the Dickens' marriage. Most biographers have taken their information from what Dickens himself said during or after the separation, and the general assumption has been that Catherine Dickens was a dull, domestically incompetent, not very intelligent woman, and that the marriage was doomed from the start. Michael Slater, in a more definitive work than previously attempted, has probed deeper into the many facets of the marriage and, from the available facts, makes out a very convincing case for Catherine, finding her a far more sympathetic personality than her husband, a lively companion, who bore him eleven children and who was an acceptably competent housekeeper. In fact, he claims that contrary to previous assumptions, that the marriage ran remarkably smoothly for most of its course, mostly because of Catherine's continuing tolerance of Dickens unpredictable, often irrational, moodiness. Her husband's relationship with Ellen Ternan was the final straw for Catherine. Slater lays the blame for the break-up of the marriage at Dickens' feet and accuses him of

being brutally unjust towards Catherine, against whom, in his frustration, he harboured murderous fantasies, and also when, in public, he accuses her of having made a bad mother, however strong a psychological need he may have had to cast her in that role. (Chapter on Catherine) The private, frustrated, middleaged, husband was clearly displaying a very different face to the public man, the generous-hearted and vigorously caring philanthropist and writer. See Slater, M. Dickens and Women (London) 1983 and Kaplan, F. Dickens A Biography (London) 1988

16. Disraeli, B. Sybil (1845) (Harmondsworth) 1954 p69
17. Thomson, D. The Pelican History of England 8 England in the Nineteenth Century (Harmondsworth) Reprint 1972 p110
18. Hopkins, A.B. Elizabeth Gaskell : Her Life and Work (London) 1952; Gerin, W. Elizabeth Gaskell: A Biography (Oxford) 1976
19. Hopkins, op cit pp45-6
20. Gaskell, E. Letters (ed Chapple and Pollard) L. 61 (Jan 1850) She writes to Dickens of a girl who is generally regarded as the model for her heroine, Ruth, "I am just now very interested in a young girl who is in our New Bayley prison. She is the daughter of an Irish clergyman who died when she was two years old: but even before that her mother had shown most complete indifference to her; and soon after the husband's death, she married again, keeping her child at nurse. The girl's uncle had her placed at 6 years old in the Dublin school for orphan daughters of the clergy, and when she was about 14 she was apprenticed to an Irish dress-maker here, of very great reputation for fashion. Last September but one the dressmaker failed, and had to dismiss all her apprentices; she placed this girl with a woman who occasionally worked for her, and who has since succeeded to her business: this woman was very profligate and connived at the girl's seduction by a surgeon in the neighbourhood who was called in when the poor creature was ill. Then she was in despair and wrote to her mother (with whom she had had no contact since leaving Dublin) and while awaiting the answer went into the penitentiary.....for four months she has led the most miserable life! in the hopes, as she tells me, of killing herself for 'no one has ever cared for her in this world' - she drank 'wishing it might be poison' pawned every article of clothing - and at last stole. I have begun to see her in prison at Mr. Wright's request....(she is but 16) with a wild, wistful look in her eyes, as if searching for kindness she has never known, and she pines to redeem herself". Then Gaskell recounts how, on a recent appointment with the assistant surgeon to New Bayley prison, the girl discovers he is the man who had seduced her, She continues: "the matron told me when they came thus suddenly face to face, the girl just fainted dead away

-The Chaplain will guarantee the truth of all I said." As a consequence of the incident the surgeon was dismissed from his post, and Elizabeth Gaskell persuaded Dickens' friend, Angela Burdett-Coutts to arrange for the girl's emigration to Australia.
21. Recounted in many of the books about Elizabeth Gaskell and her work.. Here, the reference is Cunningham, V. Everywhere Spoken Against: Dissent in the Victorian Novel (Oxford) 1975 p130-3
 22. Hopkins, A.B. op cit Chapter on Ruth
 23. see Lane, M. The Bronte Story (London) 1969
 24. Charlotte Bronte's depiction of Lowood, of the cruel deprivation and harsh treatment metered out by its hypocritical, evangelical supervisor Mr. Brocklehurst, his belief that starved bodies and physical chastisement was good for the souls of the orphans, and the consequential death of Helen Burns was based on the childhood experiences of herself and her sisters, and on Maria's death. ibid Chap.3.
 25. Elizabeth Gaskell clearly endeavoured to present a balanced account of the Cowan Bridge period, when she acknowledged to her publisher that, "some explanations which may modify that account of the school in Jane Eyre, which took such a strong hold on the public mind, that it absolutely affected the health of Mr. Carus Wilson. Great errors there were no doubt". In the Life she wrote "I now come to a part of my subject which I find great difficulty in treating, because the evidence relating to it is so conflicting that it seems almost impossible to arrive at the truth. Miss Bronte more than once said to me, that she should not have written what she did of Lowood in 'Jane Eyre' if she had thought the place would have been so immediately identified with Cowan's Bridge, although there was not a word in her account of the institution but what was true at the time when she knew it; she also said that she had not considered it necessary, in a work of fiction, to state every particular with the impartiality that might be required in a court of justice, nor seek out motives, and make allowances for human feelings, as she might have done, if dispassionately analyzing the conduct of those who had the superintendence of the institution ". In fact, Elizabeth Gaskell's reference to the incident in her Life raised further repercussions, leading to a dispute between W. Carus Wilson, son of the founder and the Reverend Arthur Bell Nicholls, widower of Charlotte Bronte. Mr. Nichols, in defence of his late wife, points out that his wife's assailants had failed to distinguish between conditions in the school at the time the Bronte children were there and the improvement in the diet and in conditions in general once the school was relocated at the more healthy area of Casterton. see Hopkins, op cit p181; Also Gaskell, E. The Life of Charlotte Bronte (1855)

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26. Haight, C. George Eliot : A Biography (Oxford and New York) 1978 p22
27. Elizabeth Gaskell obviously found it difficult to reconcile her admiration for George Eliot as a novelist and her liaison with George Henry Lewes. In a letter from Whitby, mid-year, 1857 she wrote, "How came she to like Mr. Lewes so much? he is so soiled for a woman like her to fancy." Letters op cit
28. Haight, G. op cit References from Chapter VI onwards
29. (ed) Haight, G. Letters (7 vols) (New Haven) 1954-6 Letter to John Blackwood, 18th. Feb. 1857
30. Knoepfmacher, U.C. Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel (Princeton) 1963 pp40-4; Haight, G. George Eliot: A Biography (Oxford and New York) 1978 also contains various references to the influence of these philosophers on George Eliot's life.
31. Knoepfmacher op cit pp18-20
32. See p284-6 (above).
33. Ellman, M. Thinking About Women (London) 1986 p192
34. Crow, D. The Victorian woman (London) 1971 pp58-9
35. Introduction on Charlotte M. Yonge in The Clever woman of the Family (Virago Ed. London) 1985
36. Avery, G. Nineteenth Century Children: Heroes and Heroines in English Children's stories 1780-1900 (London) 1965 p106
37. Charlotte Yonge gave to women's higher education at the suggestion of Walter Besant. She similarly assisted Emily Davies who opened a college for women at Cambridge.
38. Fullerton, G. The Helpers of the Holy Souls - Three Letters (London) 1886
39. The writer of the original Preface to Hidden Depths by Felicia Skene, William Shepherd Allen, M.P. states on behalf of the anonymous lady writer, that she writes "in earnest hope that it may be a means of helping on in some degree, the cause of Justice, Mercy and Truth".
40. Wolff, L.R. Gains and Losses (London and New York) 1977 p149

4.2. DYNAMICS OF GENDER : THE MALE "VOICE" AND THE "MINISTERING ANGEL"

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1. Dickens, C. Oliver Twist (Harmondsworth) Reprint 1978 p264
2. ibid
3. ibid
4. Rose Maylie first appeared in the April 1838 instalment of Oliver Twist in Bentley's Miscellany very nearly one year after Mary's death. see Slater, M. op cit p92-3
5. Slater, M. writes of how the young Dickens was supremely disappointed with his mother: his love for her as a

small boy was severely dented by her endeavour to keep him employed at the blacking factory he so hated; he seems to have transferred his emotional dependency on his sister Fanny. She sadly died at the age of thirty-eight. Notably, "David Copperfield needs his beautiful good, angel sister Agnes as well as his pretty wife Dora. Nicholas Nickleby's sister, Kate is the hero's inspiring sweet sister."

6. O.T. op cit p361-5
7. ibid
8. Disraeli, B. Sybil (Harmondsworth) 1954 p226
9. ibid p185
10. ibid p246
11. ibid p73 In a later scene in the novel Egremont discloses to Sybil how her spirit ruled over his being from the moment he first beheld her in the starlight arch of Marney. pp268-9
12. ibid p181
13. ibid p289
14. ibid p380
15. ibid p122
16. In Sybil the superficiality of the rich is made known through their doubtful origins: the Fitzwarnes come from eighteenth century nabob's (A person who around 1764 returned from India with a large fortune; orig. Title of certain Moslem officials who acted as deputy governors of provinces in the Mogul Empire) unscrupulous agent; the de Marneys from a plunderer of monasteries under Henry VIII: the FitzAquitaines from a French royal mistress.
17. ibid p228
18. ibid p175
19. ibid p350
20. ibid p286
21. ibid p288
22. ibid p297
23. ibid p302
24. ibid p302
25. ibid p302-4
26. ibid p312
27. ibid p318
28. ibid p389
29. ibid p395-6
30. ibid p396
31. ibid p336
32. ibid p289
33. Kingsley, C. Yeast: A Problem (London) 1910 reprinted 1970 p95 It was Kingsley's intention that Argemone was to be revived and the lovers reunited in a subsequent book entitled The Artists so that the ideal pair could be the radical representations of a new pioneering society in the future. But The Artists never appeared.

By this time Kingsley's radical enthusiasm had calmed down: he published instead Alton Locke which enabled him to express his ideas of social reform in a quite different way - Intro. A.L. ibid

35. ibid pp238-9
36. See Chap.1.2 pp50-1 (below)
37. Kingsley, C. Alton Locke (London) 1910 p334
38. ibid p150
39. ibid pp354-7
40. ibid p355
41. ibid p228
42. ibid p229
43. Shakespeare, W. King Lear III. II. Lear, unwisely, has divided his Kingdom between his two elder daughters, Goneril and Regan, who between them have succeeded in depriving him of all his worldly possessions, leaving him destitute on a wild, stormy heath.
44. AL op cit p357
45. ibid
46. ibid
47. ibid
48. ibid p356
49. ibid
50. ibid
51. ibid p333
52. See Chap.5 I. (below)
53. AL op cit pp333-7 Kingsley did not appear to fully regard women as intellectual equals to men. In Yeast he requires his heroine, Argemone, to discover "just how different women's mind and mental processes are from men's", when she is matched for the first time with a man who is her own equal in intellect and knowledge. Kingsley's metaphor reflects a perceived acceptance of the charm to men of the superficial feminine intellect: "Again and again she argued with him, and was vanquished.....Argemone, picked up her own will and fancy; while his were living, daily growing ideas, her mind beside his as a vase of flowers by the side of the rugged tree, whose roots are feeding deep in the mother earth." Also see Chap 5.1 (below)
54. Leavis, F.R. and Leavis Q.D. Dickens, The Novelist (London) 1970 pp155-6
55. Wilson, Angus Life and works of Charles Dickens (London) 1970 p234. At times Dickens seems unsure of Esther's narrative position and function: as Jeremy Hawthorn points out, there is the problem that Esther is supposedly writing her narrative and her style is personal and retrospective - looking back on events at least seven years earlier, yet in many sections of her narration, the voice appears to resemble the spoken voice. see Bleak House - The Critics Debate (London) 1987 p57
56. Basch, F. Relative Creatures (London) 1974 p64
57. Garis, R. The Dickens Theatre : A Reassessment of the Novels (Oxford) 1965 p141-2, quoted by Hawthorn, J. in

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- The Critics Debate : Bleak House (London) 1987 p27
58. Dickens, C. Bleak House (Oxford) Reprint 1970 pp20-21 Believing herself to be an orphan, Esther is, nonetheless, curious about the mother she assumes is dead, yet there is the niggle in the back of her mind that she had never been shown her grave, suggesting to the reader that she will eventually find the origin of her true identity. (Chap.2)
 59. *ibid* (Chap.3) p15
 60. *ibid*
 61. *ibid* p19 Later Esther learns from Mr.Kenge, the solicitor, that the woman who called herself godmother was, in fact, an aunt who disowned her kinship with Esther on account of her being illegitimate and her mother's disgrace.
 62. John Jarndyce's eccentricity is evidenced in his embarrassment by expressions of gratitude. his dislike of cruelty and exploitive behaviour, which causes him to pretend discomfort in an east wind, and, when he is deceived or disappointed in people, he takes refuge in the room he calls the Growlery.
 63. BH op cit p97
 64. *ibid* p231
 65. John Jarndyce's invitation to Esther to go to his prohibited room, the Growlery at the top of the house, where, normally in isolation, he rids himself or surplus anger and aggression to discuss his worries, is symbolic of his growing trust in her as a confidant, first he relays to her the events surrounding Jarndyce v Jarndyce the prolonged case in Chancery, which initially concerned a will and later extortionate legal costs and the misery it was causing.
 66. BH op cit p97
 67. *ibid* p99
 68. *ibid* p439
 69. See p410-9 (below)
 70. There is no sense of sexual passion building up between them as one would find in the couples depicted by the Brontes: even the "moral pupil-teacher" dichotomy of such protagonists as Jane Eyre and Rochester and Shirley and Louis More, is not present.
 71. Noticeably, the endearments which pass between Esther and "her darling" Ada are far more pronounced in Esther's narrative sequences in the novel than those between Esther and Allan woodcourt are.
 72. BH op cit p25
 73. *ibid*
 74. Harvey, W.J. Bleak House : The Double Narrative in Character and the Novel (London) 1965, pp89-99
 75. BH op cit Chap IV p41
 76. *ibid* p185
 77. *ibid* p186
 78. Gaskell, E. Mary Barton (Harmondsworth) 1970, ChapX Also see Chap.5.2 n25 (below)

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79. BH op cit Chap VI11 p102
80. ibid p104
81. See Part 1 Chap.2, 3 (below)
82. BH op cit p104
83. ibid pp106-7
84. ibid p107
85. ibid p107
86. ibid p108
87. ibid p109
88. ibid p110-1
89. ibid
90. ibid (Chap XV) pp209-16
91. ibid Chap XXX1
92. ibid p431
93. Jo's inexplicable fearful mistrust of Esther, is because he has mistaken her face for that of the mysterious veiled lady, who previously had paid him to guide her to the burial ground close to Chancery Lane. The scene plays a considerable part in unravelling the mysteries of the Chesney Wold plot. The veiled lady is, in fact, Esther's mother, Lady Dedlock, whom she physically resembles, but at this stage of the novel this is unknown to all parties of the scene. See Chap XXX1 p432
94. ibid p432
95. ibid Chap XXXV p488
96. In an essay, "Dickens and Victorian Dream Theory", Catherine A. Bernard explains that the dream convention in Victorian fiction was a convenient method for open discussion of thoughts and feelings of heroes and heroines, which otherwise would have been deemed unsuitable, and that dreams offer valuable insights to the reader. The theory of Catherine A. Bernard is that, for Esther dreams were her only outlet, that, in waking life she cheerfully insists that she was "the happiest creature of all" and is content with her lot, but in her delirium she reveals quite other things when she reports: "In falling ill, I seem to have crossed a dark lake, and to have left all my experiences mingled together by the great distance on the healthy shore." Bernard's theories are worth noting. She argues that the dream reveals two significant factors about Esther's character, first, that the guise of modesty and ~~openness~~ ^{openness} is a guise of Esther's repressed self, and the dream enables her to confront her unhappy past and all the compromises in life she has been forced to make, and, second, that she has harboured certain resentments in order to obtain love and attention. Bernard sums up: "In her waking life, she assumed all her duties with a cheerful smile. A housekeeper, duenna, and moral guardian to an assorted array of outcasts, she has excelled in all her roles. But her dream reveals what careful readers have sensed all along - she may have been happy in none of them. Selflessly devoting her energies to healing the emotional wounds of others, she has ignored her own." Bernard believes the dream suggests the striving for an identity

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- other than the old-maidish one assigned to her.
Published in Paradis, J and Postlewait, T. (eds)
Victorian Science and Victorian Values (New Brunswick)
1985 Chap.35
97. BH op cit Chap XXXV
 98. ibid Chap L
 99. ibid Chap LV
 100. ibid Chap LXI
 101. ibid Chap LXI p801
 102. ibid p811
 103. ibid p139
 104. ibid p198
 105. ibid p880
 106. Allan Woodcourt first appears as a young surgeon who attends a dying man, Nemo, in his squalid lodgings. Woodcourt guesses correctly that his patient has somehow been brought down in life. In fact, he turns out to be the rejected lover of Lady Dedlock and Esther's natural father. Woodcourt does not reappear until Chapter 13 when he notices Esther at a dinner party. From this point onwards, he moves into the autobiographical account of Esther. Initially, she makes minimal reference to him except to reservedly in the closing lines of the chapter, that one of the guests had been a gentleman, a young surgeon, of "dark complexion" who, she thought, was very agreeable and sensible (p181). One deduces that Esther's own shyness accounts for her brief passing mention of a man who has all the attributes she would be likely to admire in a man.
 107. Q.D. Leavis feels that the marriage of Woodcourt and Esther is structurally and morally proper: it serves as a contrast to the unhappy Ada - Richard marriage. Woodcourt's ambition, unlike Richard's is not for private gain but for the execution of a worthwhile public service. Esther who exemplifies selfless love and human sympathy is his rightful life partner and mother to his children; Ada becomes a widowed mother. Woodcourt also serves to offset the wasted life of the irresponsible Skimpole, the trained doctor who cannot be bothered to use his skills, and is prepared to turn out the homeless orphan, Jo, when he badly needs medical attention. p139
 108. BH op cit p173

NOTES FOR 4.3 AN IMAGE OF SELF-IDENTITY : THE FEMALE VOICE
AND THE PHILANTHROPIC HEROINE

(pp363-460)

1. ~~See~~ Part 1, Chap. 2. 2.
2. Robert Lee Wolff in his magnificent survey of religious

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novels in Gains and Losses, writes of the clergy of the Roman Catholic Church, at the time Lady Georgiana Fullerton was writing, that they might have been living in another world such was their disinterest in charitable work (pp80-1). Fullerton was greatly impressed by a community established by the Reverend Père Blot at the Monastery of Ars in France where the poor, the ill and the dying were given aid and shelter.

3. Fullerton, Lady G. Grantley Manor, A Tale (London) 1871 p225
4. ibid p171
5. ibid p255
6. ibid p171
7. ibid
8. Robert Lee Wolff explains how the destiny of heroines in novels by Roman Catholic authors, who were mainly priests, concentrated on either a future life of celibacy or martyrdom. Two examples he gives are, Cardinal Henry Newman's heroine, Callistra, in the historical novel of that name, who is predisposed towards celibacy before her conversion to Christianity and her eventual martyrdom, and Cardinal Wiseman's Fabiola is converted through the martyrdom of her friend, Agnes, in whom she had loved the very spirit of human perfection, Fabiola of The Church of the Catacombs (1854) - quoted by Wolff, ibid p61 by contrast, neither Lady Georgiana Fullerton nor Disraeli eschewed marriage, and, by implication, the sexual act for their heroines.
9. Nestor, Pauline Female Friendships and Communities (Oxford) 1985 p118
10. Cazamian, Louis The Social Novel in England 1830-1850 (1973) p232
11. ibid
12. pp 395-96
13. "Weaker Vessels" - a term used by Paul (Rom.14 and 1 Cor. 8) to believers whose scruples although unsound, should be treated with tenderness: see note 72 below
14. It is generally assumed by modern day biographers that Charlotte Bronte experienced a hopeless unrequited love for Constantin Héger, professor of the Belgium pensionnat where she had spent two years as pupil teacher between 1843 and 1845.
15. Bronte, C. Shirley (London and New York) 1909 repr. 1975
16. Cassandra
17. Shirley p81
18. Gillian Beer observes how, throughout the book, Shirley insists that for women improvement is an essential part of marriage and that she will only marry someone who can undertake to educate her. pp99-100 Reader, I married Him Shirley's tutor-lover turns out to be Louis Moore.
19. Shirley (Introduction to Dent ed pvii)
20. Miles, Rosalind The Fiction of Sex p53 (London 1983)

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21. Shirley p162
22. ibid pp214,215
23. ibid p214
24. ibid p208
25. ibid p210
26. ibid p -
27. ibid p203
28. ibid p1
29. ibid p90-1
30. ibid p291
31. ibid p214
32. ibid p214-5
33. Chapter XXVII in Shirley is entitled "The First Blue-Stocking"
34. ibid p210
35. ibid p55
36. ibid p21
37. ibid p22
38. ibid p210
39. ibid p22
40. ibid p17
41. ibid p114 Also see Nestor, P. op cit. :
42. ibid p22
43. ibid p55 Caroline Helstone offers Robert More her help - "I could do the counting house work, keep the books and write your letters, while you went to marketperhaps I could help you to get rich?"-but he rejects it Chap.5 p55
44. ibid p32
45. ibid p55
46. ibid p225
47. Cazamian,L. op cit p
48. See Part 1 Chap 2.2 p122-4 (above)
49. Charlotte Bronte blinds the morose libertine, Rochester, to become a morally upright and respectful partner for Jane Eyre, and she leaves Paul Emanuel, Lucy Snow's temperamentally eccentric lover, missing, presumeably believed drowned in Villette. Charlotte Bronte, as did Hannah More before her and also many of her contemporaries, regarded women as the moral superiors and tutors to men. Her previous heroine, Jane Eyre, as Patricia Beer, points out, learns nothing at all from Rochester except the inadvisability of accepting a proposal from a man who deceives her. Jane, despite her lower status as a governess in his household is his superior in morals, honesty, self-respect and worldly wisdom. She, too, is morally and sensibly, superior to the ice-cold clergyman, St. John Rivers, who is only prepared to teach her Hindostanee - useful if she agrees to join him as his unloved missionary wife. Jane prefers to be "a village schoolmistress, free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook of the healthy heart of England" than either "a slave in a fool's paradise at Marseilles" or a legitimate partner of a self-sacrificial, high-

- minded, unemotional cleric. Chap.13
50. The dualism of reason and passion are a key feature of argument in Bronte's novels: the women like to see passion, whether it be for a woman, an entrepreneurial enterprise, or a missionary cause, tempered by reason. They, themselves, have had to learn the lesson as part of their life experience. Significantly, this has usually been passed down to them by another woman, ~ reminding one of the notion of the feminine subculture that Showalter speaks of. Jane Eyre learns the lesson to contain her passionate nature by self-restraint and reason from Miss Temple and Helen Burns, and Lucy Snowe a similar lesson from the contrasting influences of the bright, motherly godmother, Mrs. Bretton and the hapless, trying, cloistered invalid, Miss Marchmont. Both heroines enter into monologues in which they weigh up the virtues of passion and reason in order to make the next decision in their lives. See Jane Eyre and Villette
51. Shirley op cit p275
52. ibid p506
53. Nestor, P. op cit p124 Also Patricia Beer points out that Louis Moore is ostensibly a subservient in Shirley's house as an employee-tutor; this is the equivalent position to a governess: the position is modified by the reversal of power relations in the teacher-pupil relationship. See Reader, I Married Him (London) 1974 pp94-100
54. Shirley op cit p291
55. ibid p257
56. ibid p510
57. ibid Lane, Margaret "Introduction" pvi (Dent ed. repr. 1975)
58. Gaskell, E. Life of CB p249 reproduced by Margaret Lane in The Bronte Story p256 (London) 1953
59. Cazamian, L. op cit p232
60. Elizabeth Stevenson was brought up in Knutsford by her beloved Unitarian aunt, Mrs. Hannah Lumb in a loving atmosphere where, according to A.B. Hopkins, her biographer, "the patterns of moral and religious discipline were always present but not severely ministered" and where piety did not exclude fun or the cultivation of the mind. During her 12 years in Manchester, Elizabeth Gaskell, divided her energies between home and the community. She brought up seven children, managed a household, and at the same time kept her mind alive to what was going on outside in the busy life of the industrial city. The Unitarians were some of the most active and intellectually liberal denominations, so she often visited the sick and dying with her husband and took a personal part in his work during the long depression from 1839 to 1842. See Hopkins A.B. op cit Gerin, W. op cit and Gaskell, E. North and South (Harmondsworth) 1970 pp29,30

61. Elizabeth Stevenson was made motherless at the age of 13 months. Also, it was marriage to William Gaskell, the Unitarian minister of Cross Street Chapel in 1832 which brought the young bride, Elizabeth, to Manchester not her father's religious disaffection. However, some obvious parallels between Elizabeth's father, William Stevenson, and Mr. Hale do exist: Mr. Stevenson resigned as minister of Dob Lane Unitarian Church at the age of 25 to become an experimental farmer, editor of the Scots Magazine private tutor, and finally keeper of the Treasury records. Mr. Hale, because of unexplained reasons of conscience, resigns his Helstone living as Church of England minister and takes up tutoring in Milton. See the biographies of Hopkins and Gerin op cit
62. N & S op cit p141
63. ibid p109
64. ibid p409
65. ibid p48
66. ibid p75
67. ibid p48
68. ibid p48
69. Dodsworth, M. in "Introduction" to the Penguin edition of North and South 1970 repr. 1981 p12
70. N & S op cit p50
71. ibid p49
72. "Weaker vessels" - a term coined by Mrs. Sandford (1831) see Part 1 Chap.2.1 Nt 46 (above) and Nt 13 (this chapter)
73. Gilligan, C. op cit p38
74. N & S op cit p71
75. ibid p79
76. ibid p79
77. Dodsworth, M. op: cit
78. N & S op cit pp14-5
79. ibid p114
80. ibid p174
81. See Part 1. Chap.2.3 pp187-90 (below)
82. N & S op cit pp252-3
83. Gaskell, E. In a letter to Pathenope Nightingale (18th Jan. 1865) she condemns "those ladies in Manchester who 'play' at benevolence" and holds up Florence Nightingale as an example to follow. L 279 (ed) Chapple and Pollard (Manchester) 1966
84. ibid L 151
85. N & S op cit p97
86. ibid p110
87. ibid p110
88. ibid p111
89. ibid p143
90. Duthie, Enid, L. The Themes of Elizabeth Gaskell (London) 1980 p77
91. N & S op cit p132
92. ibid p367
93. ibid p145

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94. After Bessy's death, Margaret, in a less convincing scene, is instrumental in getting Higgins to regain his religious faith. *ibid* pp290-7
95. *ibid* p185
96. *ibid* p186
97. Dickens, C. Bleak House *op cit* p109
98. N & S *op cit* p302
99. *ibid* p278
100. *ibid* p520
101. *ibid* pp278-9
102. *ibid* p336
103. Nightingale, F. Cassandra *op cit*
104. N & S *op cit* p336
105. *ibid* p368
106. Prochaska, F.K. *op cit* Prochaska points out that the practice of Christian benevolence made it somewhat easier to reconcile themselves with death, and it often concentrated their minds on good works. This was especially so for the Dissenter Bible-reading Christians, for whom the supreme charity of Jesus in sacrificing his life was a model to follow: - "Women commonly took on a new piety after witnessing a death". He cites among his examples, Elizabeth Fry, Josephine Butler, the charitable Georgina King Lewes, who saw several of her brothers and sisters die, as well as the writers, Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte. (pp123, 124). Interestingly, Margaret Hale tends to the needs of Bessy Higgins, and Gaskell's other heroine, Ruth, after her attempted suicide, is nursed back to health by the sister of a kind minister. When she, in her turn as the penitent, takes on the task of a sick nurse at the infirmary during an outbreak of typhoid, she assures Jemima, "I like being about the sick and helpless people; I always feel so sorry for them; and then I think I have the gift of a very delicate touch, which is such a comfort in many cases." (p385 Ruth (Harmondsworth) 1970). Gaskell is far more liberal towards the institutional nurse. Charlotte Bronte's character, Grace Poole, in Jane Eyre, is typical of the drunken slattern than one finds in Dickens' institutions. The reason for this may be that Gaskell was friendly with the Nightingale family, and was well aware of the new middleclass, professional image Florence was bringing to nursing. see Part 1 Chap. 2.3 p177-185 (below)
107. Gaskell, E. Mary Barton (1848) (Harmondsworth) 1970 Chap. 33 and 36
108. N & S *op cit* p225
109. (ed) Chapple and Pollard "Introduction" to Letters of E.G. p xix
110. *ibid*: Elizabeth Gaskell wrote to Catherine Winkworth of Florence Nightingale: (11th - 14th Oct. 1854), "She herself was up day and night from Friday (Sep 1) afternoon to Sunday afternoon, receiving the poor prostitutes,

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as they came in (they had it (cholera) the worst and were brought in from their 'beat' along Oxford Street) undressing them - and awfully filthy they were, and putting turpentine stupes & c. all herself to as many as she could manage...." L.211 and see L 223 (1st Jan 1855) *ibid.*

111. See Part 1 Chap 2.3 pp177-185 (above)
112. N & S op cit p108
113. *ibid* p93
114. *ibid* p130
115. *ibid* p129
116. *ibid* p99
117. *ibid* p99
118. *ibid* p100
119. *ibid* Chaps. 10 and 26
120. *ibid* p123
121. *ibid* p122
122. *ibid* p167
123. Martineau, H. Illustrations see Part 11 Chap.3
124. N & S op cit p160
125. *ibid* p162
126. *ibid* p126
127. Cazamian, L. op cit p226
128. N & S op cit p232
129. *ibid* p247
130. *ibid* p233
131. Disraeli, B. Sybil op cit p
132. N & S op cit p234
133. Nestor, P. op cit p17
134. N & S op cit p
135. *ibid* p247
136. *ibid* p240-1
137. and 138. *ibid* pp124-5 Although Elizabeth Gaskell does not refer by name to the Peterloo riots in protest against the factory conditions in the Lancashire cotton area, she is most likely to have them in mind. The historian G.M. Trevelyan, writes of the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 that the "unhappy charge of yeomanry, sabre in hand, among the cotton operatives of Manchester disgusted the rising generations of Englishmen with anti-Jacobin Toryism". see English Social History (Harmondsworth) 1964 repr. 1986 pp490-1
139. Cazamian, L. op cit p228
140. N & S op cit p165
141. *ibid* p211
142. *ibid* p204-5
143. Margaret Hale makes a mistake in agreeing to her mother's dying request to see her exiled son, Frederick, before her death. This is one of the conflicting decisions Margaret is forced to make, and one of the structural ironies in the novel. Torn between satisfying the dying wishes of her mother and her brother's safety, she complies with the wishes of Mrs. Hale and Dixon. Frederick succeeds to returning safely to exile in

Cadiz and a Roman Catholic wife, but not before he is sought after by the police in respect of the death of a man, Leonard, and puts Margaret in the onerous position of having to lie to the police to protect her brother over his subterfugitive presence in Milton. The irony that Thornton, suffering the requited love of Margaret, witnesses the pair at the station after dark and assumes that Margaret has a secret lover. The handling of this episode is perhaps one of Gaskell's weakest in the novel; there is the difficulty of her introducing Leonard as a drunken villain, in order to retain some element of sympathy for Frederick, who could be guilty of the manslaughter of Leonard. The reader is not told whether Frederick's blow was a contributory factor or not.

144. Margaret Hale becomes snared in the Frederick plot and her own remorse at having lied to the authorities about her presence at the station with her brother in order to protect him from the death sentence. Thornton knows she has lied, but has misconstrued that she is conducting an affair with an illicit lover. Gaskell in attempting to create circumstances in which Thornton as a local magistrate, acting to protect Margaret's reputation, intervenes on the case by finding insufficient medical evidence to bring the case before the coroner's court. Gaskell's audience would expect, Thornton, the manufacturer and the prospective husband of Margaret, the heroine, to be a man who lets a villain go free and does not lose his integrity as an honest and upright citizen. On the other hand, Gaskell is anxious to portray that Thornton, because of Margaret's influence, is no longer the autocratic manufacturer who has "no general benevolence - no universal philanthropy". (p167) On hearing that Thornton has risked his own reputation to protect her from public scandal, Margaret regains her lost humility, acknowledges her lie and tells him her true reasons for it. Her personal morality and integrity, are important to the basis of their relationship which is restored.

145. *ibid.* The pair's passion and sexual attraction is not strongly chartered by Gaskell. Like most writers of her day, she was sensitive to public censorship, avoiding the "sordid" and "indecent" aspects of sex. She understood passion but was forced to write about it in a blurred or vague fashion, leaving details to the reader's imaginations. Because of the restriction, language faults are present: Gaskell tends to over-emphasise Margaret's outer regal beauty instead of her inner emotions, especially in the scene where Thornton proposes. Likewise, Thornton's own privately expressed emotions about Margaret are often conveyed in thin, often enforced "feminine" language:-.

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"he heaved with passion" (243), which is psychologically unconvincing coming from a tough self-made man who was reared by a stern, unsentimental, mother for whom a display of emotion was a weakness. Thus the courtship scenes lose something of their intensity. Nonetheless the courtship, written as an integral part of the caring ethic in a social context, gains in realism and altruism.

146. ibid p202
147. ibid p146
148. ibid p418
149. Ironically and significantly, the only time Margaret voices her wish to be a man, it is in the context of her personal relationship with Thornton, when she desires to change his embittered misplaced belief in her loss of integrity, and as a woman, feels it would be presumptuous of her to dissuade him. (385)
150. ibid p488
151. Knoepfelmacher U.C. Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel (Princeton) p12
152. In her portrait of Dinah drawn partly from personal experience, recalling her Methodist Aunt Samuel Evans, nee Tomlinson (1766-1849) Gordon Haight writes that George Eliot told Lewes a story that she had heard her Methodist aunt Mrs. Samuel Evans tell about ... visiting in prison, a young girl condemned to death for child murder, bringing her to confess, and riding with her to the scaffold. Lewes thought the events would make a fine element in a story. see Haight G.S. G.E. A Biography (Oxford and New York) 1986 Chap.9 p249
153. See Part 1 Chap. 2.3 pp170-7 (above)
154. Eliot, G. Adam Bede (Harmondsworth) 1980 p79
155. ibid p576
156. ibid p66
157. ibid p66
158. (no reference)
159. ibid p65
160. ibid p136
161. Mrs. Samuel Evans moved out of preaching when the Methodist Connexion forbade women preachers in 1803
162. Fry, E. Memoirs (2 vols) Vol ii p523
163. AB op cit p134 The preacher Mrs. Fletcher, referred to in this passage was an intimate friend of Mrs. Samuel Evans. Her preaching impressed men like Hugh Bourne. See Barber, B.A. A Methodist Pageant (London) 1932 p3
164. AB op cit pp134-5
165. Bennett, J. George Eliot : Her Art and Mind (Camb) 1954 pp108-9
166. Cunningham, V. Everywhere Spken Against (Oxford) 1975 p161 and Haight, G. G.E. Biography Chap.9
167. Cunningham, V. op cit p148, 161

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168. Haight, G. op cit Chap.9 Also Prochaska, F.R. (op cit) comments that because Evangelicals, generally, and Quakers, in particular, were restricted in their dress and shut out from many sources of emotion, benevolence became more important to them than it might have been otherwise.
169. AB op cit p169
170. ibid p427
171. and 172. ibid Chap.45
173. "Meliorism" - the doctrine, intermediate between optimism and pessimism, which affirms that the world may be made better by human effort.
174. AB op cit p500
175. ibid p576
176. Wolff, R.L. Gains and Losses (London and New York) 1977 p230-1
177. Dentith, quotes from Feurbach and finds the comparison with Dinah striking: "The divine nature which is discerned by feeling is in truth nothing else by feeling enraptured in ecstasy with itself- feeling intoxicated with joy." from Fuerbach, Ludwig The Essence of Christianity (Trans Marian Evans (3rd ed London) 1893 271 quoted by Dentith; S. in George Eliot (Brighton) 1986 p19
178. George Eliot tells her readers that her heroine believed that "the really delightful marriage must be where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew, if you wished it." Dorothea looks back in time to the "child pilgrimage" of the saintly sixteenth century incumbent Theresa for spiritual inspiration. See Prelude to Middlemarch.
179. Eliot, G. Middlemarch Chap XXXIX
180. See Part 1 Chap 2.1 (above)
181. Yonge, C. The Clever Woman of the Family (Virago London) 1985 p365
182. ibid Chap.1
183. ibid p3
184. ibid p3
185. Bronte, C. Shirley op cit pp54-5 also (above) this chapter.
186. CWof op cit p3
187. ibid p16
188. ibid p12
189. ibid p136-42
190. ibid p26
191. ibid p367
192. ibid p93
193. ibid p136
194. ibid Chap XI11
195. ibid p136
196. ibid p136
197. ibid p228-31
198. Wolff, R.L. op cit p137
199. CWof op cit p231
200. ibid p140

201. The Assize Sermon of John Keble, vicar of Hursley and close friend of the Yonge Family, preached in the University of Oxford in July 1833 and had been instrumental in the rise of the High Church Oxford Movement. The holy and learned parson, Mr. Clare, is in many ways reminiscent of Keble; he belonged to that generation which gave its choicest in intellectual, as well as religious gifts to the ministry, when a fresh tide of enthusiasm was impelling them forward "to build up, instead of breaking down, before disappointment and suspicion had thinned the ranks.... or doctrinal carpings had taught men to conduct a search into their own tenants." p337
202. N.T. 1 Cor. 14.34
203. CwoF op cit p367
204. ibid p367 Charlotte Yonge's definition of what the ideal clever woman is, is found in the character of the disabled teacher and writer, Ermine Williams, a staunch, beautiful, unassuming, learned lady who modestly writes articles under a pseudonym, "Invalid" for critical journals and magazines in order to keep herself and to care for her brother's young daughter. In many respects Ermine is all those things that Rachel might have become. It is believed that Ermine Williams is modelled on Charlotte Yonge's close friend Marianne Dyson, an invalid twenty years older than herself, or, even possibly on John Keble's wife who was similarly affected. Although Ermine is Yonge's model as a good and clever woman she is a somewhat lifeless character and fails where the portrayal of Rachel mostly succeeds.
205. ibid see "Afterword" by Gillian Batterscombe, p370
206. Felicia Skene lived in Oxford for fifty years and was close friend and helper of Thomas Chamberlain of St. Thomas-the-Martyr. Chamberlain's church lay in what was then a filthy slum, and he did not confine himself to Tractarian reforms, to ritualism and publications, but embarked on an incessant programme of parochial visiting. He overcame the natural mistrust and suspicion of his impoverished parishioners by his self-sacrificing zeal in a cholera and small-pox epidemic. Daily risking his life by nursing and comforting the sick, in a way not normally associated with the neglectful early nineteenth century Anglicans, he overcame his unpopularity and was readily acknowledged by the poor as a friend. Skene drew an admiring portrait of Chamberlain in her Tractarian novel, St. Albans : or the Prisoner of Hope (1853) , and also in Hidden Depths (1866) in the character of Thorold. Chamberlain also set up a sisterhood in Oxford of the kind that Charlotte Yonge defended in the Heir of Redcliffe. After 1850, Felicia Skene threw herself into the work of Chamberlain's sisterhood, although, curiously, she retained her independence from it by never becoming a Sister herself, seeming to

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- prefer to act from without rather than from within.
See Wolff, R.L. op cit p149-50
207. Wolff, *ibid* p150
208. Felicia Skene's own "Preface" written anonymously,
to Hidden Depths (London) 1886
209. Skene's novel unequivocally reveals she was especial-
ly incensed by a Church which was full of clergy who
gave support to double standards which condemned to
perdition the women who had illicit sexual relations
but allows for no recrimination against her seducer.
210. Hidden Depths op cit pp16-17
211. *ibid* p17
212. Bronte, C. Shirley op cit Chap.V
213. HD op cit p18
214. *ibid* p19
215. *ibid* p5
216. *ibid* p4
217. *ibid* p23
218. *ibid* p25
219. *ibid* p26
220. *ibid* p31
221. *ibid* p31-2
222. *ibid* pp31-2
223. Dickens, C. Oliver Twist op cit Chap.46
224. HD op cit p163-4
225. *ibid* p79
226. *ibid* p43
227. *ibid* p43
228. Wolff, R.L. op cit p151
229. and 230. HD op cit cited by Wolff, R.L. p151
231. *ibid* p94
232. *ibid* p77
233. *ibid* p128
234. Studies in sociolinguistics have revealed that,
generally, women writers avoid coarse language and
vulgar expressions, whereas male writers are more
inclined to use them. See Spender, D. Man Made
Language (London, Boston and Melbourne) 1980 and,
Thorne, B. and Henley, N. (eds) Language and Sex
Differences and Dominance (Massachusetts) 1975
235. Robert Lee Woolf's research reveals that such a crime
was tried at the Oxford courts at the time but the
alleged perpetrator, who had taken the precaution of
providing herself with an alibi, was acquitted
op cit p151

CHAPTER 5: TWO DIFFERENT ETHICAL CONCEPTS OF CARE AND THE
PHILANTHROPIC NOVEL.

"As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak. Yet in the different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship and responsibility,"

Carol Gilligan

This thesis proposes that certain female writers of the period between 1840 and 1870 were producing a particular form of "social novel", significantly different in "ethical voice"⁽¹⁾ to that being produced by male writers and, consequently, termed here a "philanthropic novel", and, that the philanthropic novel is part of the continuing literary tradition, as defined by Virginia Woolf and Elaine Showalter.⁽²⁾

It has already been substantiated in the preceding discussion that, in the portraits of the fictional philanthropic heroines depicted by women novelists, there are discernible traits of character which correlate significantly to the actual female philanthropists of the day, traits which are rarely found in the novels by men. Although the fictional heroines lack the scope and depth of activity of the actual philanthropists and reformers, their "voice" is considerably similar.

They share a common "voice" of protest against the gender dynamics, the values and decisions of men who appear to have viewed the world, and women in it, in relation to themselves and their own beliefs. These women took it upon themselves to challenge the social order as it was, based on male assumptions and hierarchies which generally did not recognise a public place for the female sex. Women shaped a new identity for themselves by exploiting in the public place the one superior attribute that society afforded them, the role of nurturers and teachers in moral and family matters. This was the image they took out into society as philanthropists and reformers and one which is clearly reflected in the "social novels" written by women, whose philanthropic heroines, as moral tutors to men, assumed a common image of identity for womenkind as peacemaker and "mother of mankind".⁽³⁾ Clearly, the intrinsic ethical values of care perceived by men and women writers were different.

Carol Gilligan's research on ethical concepts leads her to distinguish between a morality of "rights" for men and a morality of "responsibility" for women.⁽⁴⁾ The male ethic of rights predicts an equality, centred on the understanding of fairness: manifesting itself in reciprocity, in balancing the claims of self and others, it requires an emphasis on personal prestige, self-assertion, even aggression, and recognises some distancing from others by non-interference with the rights of others.⁽⁵⁾ On the other hand, the sequence of woman's moral

judgement proceeds from an initial concern with survival, then focuses on goodness and, finally, sustains a reflective understanding of care as the most adequate guide to the resolution of conflicts in human relationships; consequently, the self-discovery and re-discovery of connection with others is sustained by care in relationships.⁽⁶⁾ The notions of truth and a sense of social reality for men and women were likely to stem from different experiences of the world. The ethical code perceived by men would be likely to rise from a knowledge of the mechanics of the "public" world, of work, from the institutions he created and administered, from the world of trade, politics, law and the Church, whereas the ethical code of women would be based on a private knowledge of human relationships, and a public self-image as reconciliator.

5.1. THE ETHIC OF CARE: THE MALE NOVELIST.

The two male writers who write with a decidedly political and religious bias are Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley. Despite their opposing views on social reform, the two writers were of the same opinion, that the time was ready for reform. Both emphasised the acute distress of the poor and the scourge of poverty in the 1840's. Both deplored the social rift between rich and poor and the need to raise the condition of the people. Both wanted the upper-class to relieve and guide their fellows,⁽¹⁾ and believed the way forward rested with the clergy who should play a more active part in the organisation of charity. Kingsley, highly suspicious of the Oxford Movement, disliked Disraeli's ideas on Young England and his aim to revive feudal socialism: Disraeli was unsympathetic towards the Christian socialism of Frederick Denison Maurice, of which Kingsley was an ardent admirer.⁽²⁾

When one considers the ethical value of Disraeli's symbolic heroine, Sybil, and her role as a seraphic "Lady Bountiful", one is given to deduce that Disraeli wholeheartedly believed in a specifically female nature along Ruskinian lines. Yet, within Sybil are brief sketches--rare to this period of the novel--of young emancipated working women. In cameo portraits of Harriet and her female worker Chartist friends, one hears the sympathetic voice of Disraeli as the women, over a meal of drink and sausages, air an

intellectual interest in politics. One girl intervenes in a male discussion on the Ten-hour Act, giving her opinion that the ban on work before the age of sixteen should be fifteen, and Harriet delivers unwomanly slogans on the priority given to machinery over the people who labour at them.⁽³⁾ At a subsequent gathering, widow Carey makes a declaration for "good wages and plenty to do"⁽⁴⁾ and Julie tells of her dread of factory drudgery whenever she hears the factory bell on Monday morning.⁽⁵⁾ Similarly, in his vignettes of aristocratic women, one senses the tone of sympathy towards women in the higher classes to those who are subjected to the frivolous idleness of an unhappy marriage, as in the case of the intelligent Lady Marney, who was always the victim of the arbitrary will of a selfish stupid husband,⁽⁶⁾ and to those, like Lady Firebrace, "a great stateswoman among the Tories", who fought political battles of every kind and made political issues her business. Lady Firebrace, who questions political issues concerning pensions, the ballot and government majorities,⁽⁷⁾ may have been a gentle parody of a Mrs. Wheeler, who was a member of the women's rights movement, and of whom Disraeli wrote: "This clever, but awfully revolutionary woman She poured forth all her systems upon my novitiate ear as she advocated the rights of women "⁽⁸⁾ Notably the two "voices" one hears in Sybil are those of the two Nations, the aristocracy and the workingclass. Disraeli omits the middle-class who were among the most philanthropically active. Both as politician and novelist, he was conscious of the women's

cause, nevertheless, he confines the voices of emancipated women to his minor characters and not to his philanthropic heroine, whose primary role, spiritually, politically and structurally, is to serve as accomplice to the men of North and South, Gerard, her Chartist father and then Egremont, her hero lover. Disraeli's two voices of womanhood provide a sharp uncertain contrast in the novel. It is part of Disraeli's overall artistic dilemma, to blend together proposals for a new England and an old nostalgia for medieval benefice. On the one hand, he sketches the portrait of a young generation of working men and women who show signs of stability and independence, and some cautious acceptance of female participation in public affairs. On the other hand, he relies on the popular symbol of the "ministering Angel" as representative of the neo-feudal philanthropic female. Disraeli may rightly have been referred to as "one of the first real male feminists", but in Sybil he makes no attempt to superimpose any interest he may have had in the "new woman" upon his medieval creation, even symbolically.

Dr. F.R. Leavis refers to Disraeli as "a supremely intelligent politician who has the sociologist's understanding of civilisation and its movements in its time" ⁽¹⁰⁾ Louis Cazamian is less glowing in his assessment of Disraeli; he accuses him as a novelist of lacking the tone of emotional sympathy found in Dickens and Carlyle, finding him "woolly and detached". Certainly Disraeli lacks the human warmth and

personal concern of Elizabeth Gaskell.⁽¹¹⁾ Cazamian writes:

"If Disraeli was never a man of feeling, he was, first and foremost, a man of lively imagination. He compensated for his lack of scientific understanding with intuitive insight into the present and foresight into the future. He thought in symbols, and was acutely alive to the power of images over human thought and conduct..... Guided by these habits of mind he looked at social forces and institutions poetically, and dwelt on their externals." (12)

The new Toryism not only appealed to national tradition and a sense of the past, it also insisted on the majesty of the throne and the splendour of the Established Church, upholding the pious charity of rural monasteries. The problem for Disraeli was to reconcile the traditional rights of the old ruling class and the just expectations of the bourgeoisie so that the people's hopes of political equality and justice could be realised. Sybil falls into the trap of simplifying the issues of social revolution as a whole. However, Disraeli puts forward a political doctrine which novelists like Dickens, Gaskell and Bronte failed to do.

Unlike Disraeli, Charles Kingsley looked forward rather than back in time for a solution to society's ills. In Yeast and Alton Locke, he tries to reconcile socialism with general Church teaching. He valued the wonders of material progress wanting to see them combined with a deep sympathy for the oppressed poor. His novels rest on a deep conviction that

life is a battle in which the strongest must impose and penetrate their superior ideologies in the name of progress. He was more democratic than Disraeli.⁽¹³⁾ Both his heroines, Argemone and Eleanor, morally superior to men, step down from their lofty places in society to reach out and to lift up the miserable and degraded. Argemone's ethic for reform of social conditions is unwavering, and, inspired by her example, the man, Lancelot, continues her philanthropic pursuits. Eleanor is "guardian angel" to Alton Locke. In her sermons, one hears the tones of her author's egalitarianism in her overriding theme on a better distribution of wealth by the rich. There is a curious blend of paternalism and Marxist-type ideology in Eleanor's voice as, on the one hand, she sees the solution to her distressed needlewoman in "good faith, fraternal love and overruling moral influence"⁽¹⁴⁾ and on the other, she criticises the luxurious lasciviousness of the rich who enjoy useless things, often produced by the neglected starving poor. Critical of the Church for its inability to act, she casts back a look to the past and asks, "When was there ever real union, co-operation, philanthropy and equality, brotherhood among men, save in loyalty to Him, Jesus, who died upon the cross?"⁽¹⁵⁾ The ethical message of Eleanor is that revolutionary ambition must be inspired by the Church, rather than by the politics of Chartism or the aesthetic movements of Strauss or Emerson.⁽¹⁶⁾ Eleanor is more prepared than Argemone, and any heroines depicted by either Disraeli or Dickens, to argue the rightness of her cause. . . . When she talks of the rescue work of the

desperate needlewomen, one finds echoes reminiscent of Elizabeth Gaskell and Josephine Butler in her words: "I would teach them to live as their sister myself"⁽¹⁸⁾ Yet, in Alton Locke, in its condemnation of the practices of capitalism, it is the male voice which dominates and the male person who actively participates in the more realistic and compassionate episodes in the novel. It is Alton Locke and his friend, Mackay, who witness the degradation of the sempstresses brought about by competition and forced labour. The three shillings the young girls earn by day sewing dresses for the rich is insufficient to pay for thread, coals and candles, and to feed themselves and the sick-girl they support. Such misery leads to prostitution.⁽¹⁹⁾ Another scene, perhaps a little more overwrought and less realistic, is the description of the insanitary hovel of an Irish gin-drinker where the stench from the sewers has killed three members of the family.⁽²⁰⁾ Although Kingsley had no experience of heavy industry and little of urban living, he was prepared to speak out against "the horrid effects" of the New Poor Law. His revulsion is enacted in a scene, when after the bread riots, Alton Locke meets a cockney man who grumbles at the New Poor Law because it "ate up the poor".⁽²¹⁾ The portrait of Kingsley's philanthropic heroine is severely undercut by his greater interest in his hero and the ideas of Carlyle which Mackay puts forward. Neither of his heroines, Argemone or Eleanor, is given a great deal of manoeuvrability, very little human emotion or scope to promote feminine radicalism. Yet, there is no doubt that Kingsley

highly approved of philanthropic women, who found fulfilment in their pursuance of such work. He expressed his fullest admiration for Florence Nightingale and Catherine Marsh whom he referred to as, "these human angels of whom it is written, 'The barren hath many more children than she who has a husband'".⁽²²⁾ He clearly viewed unmarried women, at least, as "mothers of mankind".

Christian Socialism did not preach feminism, nevertheless, its influence told in that direction. Women were admitted freely to share in discussions, and it was assumed as a matter of course that in the Kingdom of Heaven there was "neither male nor female", so that differences between the sexes were regarded of little importance. Yet Kingsley's own views on women's role in the caring professions and eventual emancipation, reveal a reluctance to commit himself. He expressed sympathy for and supported medical education for women, he was not liberal enough to support the political movement for it - a matter over which John Stuart Mill aired his disappointment.⁽²³⁾ The shy, modest, rector, who enjoyed a happy marriage, seemed to prefer a theological rather than political egalitarian solution to social injustice. On the question of a social revolution against outrageous laws against women, his solution was "to address ourselves mildly, privately, modestly, rationally" to possible change.⁽²⁴⁾ It is clear that the ambivalence displayed in his novels between revolutionary idealism and personal conservatism reflects the actual

distancing stance he took in real life.

Charles Dickens, as journalist as well as novelist, examined a far wider field of public matters and people than either Disraeli or Kingsley did. He did not confine himself directly to one political theory or religious belief, but stood back to criticise and ridicule all manner of social injustices. He was not always right on public matters. His instincts were profoundly anti-Tory, and there is sufficient evidence in novels, like Hard Times, that he deplored utilitarian practices which dehumanised men and women.⁽²⁵⁾ He also was capable of turning pious hypocrites into stock figures of fun whatever their Christian denomination, from Mrs. Pardiggle of the High Church to Mr. Chadband of the evangelical Chapel.⁽²⁶⁾ Ethically, Dickens, influenced by Carlyle, mostly upheld radical principles, but, generally he was far more interested in the good and bad in humankind itself.

As early as 1838, a writer in the Edinburgh Review, saluted Dickens' work as a moral force, and says of the young writer:

"One of the qualities we most admire in him is his comprehensive spirit of humanity. The tendency of his writings is to make us practically benevolent - to excite our sympathy on behalf of the aggrieved and suffering in all classes; especially in those who are mostly removed from observation.....His humanity is plain, practical, and manly." (27)

Humphry House points out that, the goodness of Dickens' moral characters depends on just two things - personal affection and general philanthropy. Novels abound with figures of good-natured, gentlemanly benevolence: Mr. Pickwick had "a benevolent countenance", Mr. Brownlow was an elderly gentleman "of benevolent appearance".⁽²⁸⁾ John Jarndyce, as benefactor to his wards and "orphaned" Esther, is of the same species of character. The pattern of their benevolence is symptomized by the qualities of generosity in money and kindness; an acute feeling for suffering in all forms, whether caused by poverty, sickness, cruelty or injustice; righteous indignation, and an equable and benign or controllable temper.⁽²⁹⁾ Noticably, "gentlewomanly" benevolence is less obvious among Dickens' plethora of characters; Betsy Trotwood, the benevolent grand-aunt of David Copperfield and philanthropic rescuer of the mildly deranged Mr. Dick, is the rare exception, and her good-naturedness is hidden under a fiery exterior. The majority of good women in Dickens' novels are either dependent middle-class "angels", like Esther and Ada, or belong to the category of the kindly poor, like, Clara Peggotty, Nell, Mrs. Cratchit, Little Dorrit and Mrs. Bagnet. The pattern of their moral goodness is more of the order of personal affection and kind works in and out of the home. Women cannot be so generous with money as the male philanthropists. Yet, the reality was that women, including Dickens' friend, Angela Burdett-Coutts, were, as a sex, disproportionately generous with their giving of donations.⁽³⁰⁾ This clearly displays Dickens' ordering of ethics

according to sex, male goodness being related to personal prestige and female goodness being concerned with human responsibility.

The pattern continues to be reinforced in his attitude towards philanthropic women. Whereas it is the prerogative of the benevolent gentleman to express his righteous indignation, it is rare indeed, to find a philanthropic heroine who is permitted the same freedom of expression, although Dickens, himself, received correspondence from Elizabeth Gaskell, who aired her views to him on matters of housing the elderly and the rehabilitation of fallen women.⁽³¹⁾ He also received reports from Angela Burdett-Coutts on the "ragged schools". Dickens preferred his women to be feminine and intuitively wise. He did not show much interest in the intellectual capacity of women, and, in opposition to men like John Stuart Mill, he appears to have believed only in the superior intuition and spiritual qualities of women over men.⁽³²⁾ The empirical knowledge of the discerning, spiritual woman, that Dickens admires, is the essence of Esther Summerson's own intelligence: it causes her finally to condemn Mr. Skimpole for the evil his wasted, sycophantic, parasitic life-style, and to protect John Jarndyce and Ada from him.⁽³³⁾ Most opinions on Dickens' attitude towards women are expressed by Slater in his observation that Dickens was worried about seeing women as assertive adults, so his tendency was to depict them as children, sisters or angels. Goodness in young marriageable women was obviously equated to her sexlessness,

and her marriageability (and virginity) with her charitable spirit.⁽³⁴⁾ He, thereby distanced them from the reality. The least worthy women of all are those mothers who combine motherhood with philanthropy - the most infamous of these being Mrs. Jellyby and Mrs. Pardiggle⁽³⁵⁾ who are caricatured and satirized unmercifully as glutinous images of wives who pay too much attention to their good causes and too little to what Dickens regards as proper family care. These two truly philanthropic women in Bleak House are relentlessly lampooned as extreme cases of offensive busybodies. Esther presents a scene of Mrs. Jellyby writing copious letters in aid of her overriding interest "to have from a hundred and fifty to two hundred healthy families cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger".⁽³⁶⁾ Dickens' artistic intention is to highlight the kind of overseas charity he regarded as a mistake.⁽³⁷⁾ When Mrs. Jellyby turns her attention to "the rights for women to sit in Parliament", Esther's quiet dismay reflects the deep scorn felt by Dickens, who clearly disapproved of committee women and feminist movements. The Jellyby episode in Bleak House is an excellent example of the strength and weakness of Dickens' use of fiction as a medium of social criticism: Humphry House rightly remarks of the episode that "it is prodigiously strong in personalities, but weak in arguments".⁽³⁸⁾ Dickens rightly, communicates his own reservations about ineffectual charity like that of the patronizing intrusiveness, condescending authoritarianism and false moral masquerading of Mrs. Pardiggle

in the bricklayer's cottage.⁽³⁹⁾ As Norris Pope comments Mrs Pardiggle acts as if she were "a inexorable moral policeman to the poor".⁽⁴⁰⁾ Dickens clearly regards women who assertively concerned themselves with extra-domestic issues as failed wives and mothers.

During his life-time Dickens witnessed the gradual evolution of new English womanhood from one of meek submissiveness of the 1830's and 1840's to the one of self-awareness and self-assertiveness of the 1860's and after, but there is very little sign of this development reflected in his novels. Dickens' anti-feminist stance is not only indicated by his two famous caricatures of ineffectual charity, of patronizing and campaigning women, but by the absence of the depiction of a towering philanthropic heroine modelled on those he knew and worked alongside in his own philanthropic pursuits. Critics have frequently commented on the incongruity between Dickens' fictional cynicism towards devout philanthropists and his daily knowledge and experience of philanthropic women, such as Angela Burdett-Coutts, Mary Carpenter and Adelaide Anne Proctor. The latter was deeply involved in the movement to widen opportunities for women.⁽⁴¹⁾ He also admired many "public" women, including married women like Elizabeth Fry, who visited the prison of Newgate, and Elizabeth Gaskell who managed home, writing and good works, and, when he could, gave them his dedicated support. Significantly, despite his portrayal of nurses as incompetent hags like Mrs. Gamp, he greatly approved

of Florence Nightingale's campaign to establish nursing as a profession: he gave it coverage in the pages of both Household Words and All the Year Round, and warmly recommended Florence Nightingale's "Notes on Nursing" for study by all who had to minister to the sick.⁽⁴²⁾ Dickens seems to have sympathised more with the exploited and socially down-trodden women and often presented a convincing argument for their case. Notably, both Rose Maylie and Esther Summerson suffer because of their illegitimacy. In 1844, Dickens lent his voice to the movement against the abused and miserable under paid governesses,⁽⁴³⁾ and, during his editorship days, encouraged articles which drew attention to the hardships endured by milliners' apprentices, needlewomen and sempstresses.⁽⁴⁴⁾ He peopled his novels with poorly paid and exploited seamstresses, such as Little Dorrit in the employ of Mrs. Clemman, Jenny Wren, the doll's dressmaker, and Kate Nickleby, whose long hours of patient toil from early daybreak "bedecks the thoughtless and luxurious middleclass ladies".⁽⁴⁵⁾ Although ideally, he believed a woman's place was in the home, he also recognised the harsh reality that many women who did not marry would have to earn their living and that working-class wives and mothers were often compelled to work. He condemned the brutalising effect on women who laboured in the collieries, and gave powerful support to Lord Ashby's Bill to prohibit the employment of women in the mines.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Interestingly, in 1910, one of his daughters confirms that he had, "the strongest sympathy with all women who work in order to gain a livelihood for

themselves and those dependent on their excursions ".⁽⁴⁷⁾ One is left to be amazed with Rosalind Miles who writes, that, Dickens, "with all his tremendous imaginative energy, all his reserves of satire and sentiment, of love, bluster and despair, never got across to the side signposted "female".⁽⁴⁸⁾ For some unfathomable reason, perhaps a psychological one stemming from his unfortunate relationship with his mother, or an imaginative one, which precluded his ability to enter the "female consciousness", he refrained from including an ingenious, revolutionary-minded heroine in his novels. The kind of charity he accepts as proper for womankind is that practiced, within and just beyond the home, that is, the charity of the "Angel in the House" and "Lady Bountiful". As a novelist, Dickens is more concerned with upbraiding the villains in the corrupt male institutions; in Bleak House it is the Court of Chancery. Notwithstanding his omissions, Dickens was a unique writer, who set out to entertain a popular audience. His attraction was his sensitive imagination which enabled him to create an endless combination of scenes and an extraordinary amalgam of characters, his novels enriched by a variety of styles, effectively harness the whole gamut of human emotion. His was a compassionate and often humorous response to injustice, crime, depravity, and the moral failings and foibles of humankind. Of the women writers, only George Eliot came close to representing such wide variety of human experience. The central creed of Dickens was a belief in the natural goodness and innocence of ordinary people; his motive was artistically

to warn against oppressive institutions and evil manipulative people.

The means for affecting an ethical concept of care for Disraeli and Kingsley was through the male institutions of politics and the Church. Both authors use the novel as a platform to voice their own political ideologies and their philanthropic heroines are spiritual mouthpieces in support of those ideologies. Neither saw the fruition of his ethical ideal. Disraeli's solution was impracticable, it meant turning back the tide of history and would have been impossible to reconcile with the laissez-faire political economy and the current opinion against Catholicism. Neither were the entrepreneurial Victorians ready for socialism, not surprisingly, Christian Socialism enjoyed only a brief existence. Both writers drew heavily from the Blue Books for their material; unlike Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell and Felicia Skene, they did not write from first-hand experience. Consequently, their novels are more about humanitarian theories about "right" solutions and less about humanity itself. Dickens' novels are more about humanity than individuals in particular. His concern is with the mechanics of corrupt institutions, such as the Law, officialdom, commerce and religious groups, and malignant forces which destroy, degenerate and generally work against the goodness and enterprise of ordinary people. His motive was to warn, by way of middleclass benevolence, against

oppressive, malignant and powerful agencies. He offered no solutions for reform. As with Disraeli, his own male concept of ethic of care kept his fictional heroines in their place as subordinate, supportive creatures to men. He was less concerned with the details of women's connection with humankind, than in their philanthropic emancipation. The male ethic, as Gilligan claims, manifests itself in a notion of what is ideologically right, based on a moral understanding of a fairer society.

5.2. THE ETHIC OF CARE : THE FEMALE NOVELIST.

When considering the way in which Charlotte Bronte conceptualises the ethic of care through her heroines, Caroline and Shirley, one finds at one level the "private" female voice which concerns itself with human relationships, making love, affection and personal responsibility for others a priority, and, at another level, a public voice which concerns itself with the rules that shape society and the realms of politics and religion with the aim of improving the world and the general condition of mankind.

At the private level, one is immediately aware of the conflict between self and other, particularly in the case of Caroline Helstone, who is torn between the necessity of the female role of looking after her uncle's house and the compulsive urge for a better life fulfilment, to do constructive things out in the community. She would prefer a paid occupation, but opts instead, as many unmarried women did in Charlotte Bronte's time, for voluntary charity work. Hers is the voice of the surplus of spinster women, and of Charlotte Bronte's own bitter experience, crying out about the neglect and masculine scorn suffered by such women, who, socially, were often equated with the poor. Charlotte Bronte writes:

"Old maids, like the houseless and unemployed poor, should not ask for a place and occupation in the world: the demand disturbs the happy rich....."

Her message to fathers of daughters is:

"Give them scope and work - they will be your gayest companions in health; your tenderest nurses in sickness, your most faithful prop in age." (1)

Charlotte Bronte's words suggest that she sees women's role as a compromise between "feminine domesticity" and community activity; she does not appeal for full independence - she does not kill off the "Angel in the House", but requires, as did Ruskin, that a woman's talents are exploited sufficiently to make her a more stimulating companion for others, especially men.⁽²⁾ Charlotte Bronte clearly regarded the "Angel in the House" as an incomplete woman. Her ambivalence reflects the inner conflict suffered by one who was bound by the exercise of loyalty to her domestic role and an internalised commitment to realize her own burning genius.⁽³⁾ However, Charlotte Bronte's philanthropic heroines do not belong to the classical "sacrificial angel" stereotype; they are practical, down-to-earth women who want to have a say in the affairs of society. Charlotte Bronte's ethic of care embraces the plea that male and female relationships should be based on a union of equals. For Caroline Helstone this can only be achieved when the hero, Robert More, has been taught the humanitarian lessons of Christian humility and righteousness, and the pair work together for the common good of the community. Caroline has disliked Robert's aggressive approach to his workmen and he has had to readjust to the ethical stand she takes. Thus,

Caroline, by focussing on the value of human relationships, resolves her own personal conflict with Robert and that of others in the community. It is mostly through the character of Caroline that Charlotte Bronte attacks the dehumanising power politics of the entrepreneurial world of men, and upholds the sympathetic voice of the patient, good woman.

Charlotte Bronte's other heroine, Shirley, assumes certain masculine characteristics to give her space to manoeuvre her philanthropic endeavours onto the public stage. Through Shirley, one becomes aware of Bronte's potential as a philanthropic novelist, and of her potential ability, as a writer of fiction, to portray more accurately than most the kind of radical character which was the make-up of many a true female philanthropist. Shirley is a truly dynamic personality, who fiercely cares about the misfortunes of the common people on her estate. She is more than a "Lady Bountiful", she does not merely dabble in visiting, she gets to grips with organising a cohesive scheme, involving both the clergy and the existing experience of unmarried philanthropic women. She exudes a spirited egalitarian sense of public, political and religious responsibility towards the famished and unemployed families; she is critical of the harsh practices of manufacturing employers who put capital gain before people's welfare, of some degenerating sections of the Church for their self-incompetence, cruel neglect of the people and their condonement of the violence of the military. The social message of Shirley is a powerful one: she is the

figure of reconciliation, her ethic of care is for a more just, peaceful and harmonious society. Unfortunately, Charlotte Bronte is unable to sustain the strength of her creation: besides providing limited coverage for her philanthropic heroine in the novel, towards the end she reduces Shirley's dominance as a character when she comes to considering her private relationship with Louis Moore, a fairly unimpressible hero, and she dwindles into a home-loving happily-married woman. Martha, the housekeeper reflects: "There is no such ladies now-a-days".⁽⁴⁾ Sadly, and maybe cautiously, Charlotte Bronte makes her stoic enterprising woman, with her dazzling individuality, a phenomenon of the past and not of the future. Patricia Beer is probably right when she says that Charlotte Bronte is "a lost leader", who fails to think in terms of a cause and "can see no body of women to lead".⁽⁵⁾

As a novel, Shirley stands out, not as a magnificent work of artistic fiction like Jane Eyre and Villette, but as Charlotte Bronte's most altruistic novel with a lyrical love story. Charlotte Bronte did not actively involve herself in political matters, but she followed the advice of G.H. Lewes, and attempted to write "a realistic novel avoiding melodrama," and to share in the great wave of social conscience.⁽⁶⁾ It was not altogether good advice, as Charlotte Bronte herself realised - evidenced by her reversion to the autobiographical, more melodramatic style in Villette. Not surprisingly, therefore, there is little attempt by Charlotte Bronte to challenge the assumptions of her society: she could see no easy solution

to the evils of industrialism. Charlotte Bronte's problem was her own lack of experience in public matters, of large cities and of the industrial scene. Louis Cazamian points out that she knew nothing about the urban industrial populace, however, he qualifies this by adding that many of her workingclass characters are convincing because she knew the Yorkshire people intimately, and the uncultivated mill-workers were mostly "unchanged peasants" at the time of Shirley.⁽⁷⁾ Relying on accounts she read of the Luddite revolution, she is able only to push her heroine onto the brink of such a world and not into it. She knew little, personally, of the extent to which many women were involving themselves in relieving the ills of the great cities. Nonetheless, there are many traits in Shirley's personality, of rebelliousness, of breaking down gender-divided conventions, of manipulating the male-dominance, of being business-like, of self-involvement in public matters, that were the recognised characteristics of women like Elizabeth Fry, Mary Carpenter, Florence Nightingale, Octavia Hill and other great women philanthropists. Bronte was not prophetic enough to assess philanthropy as a paid profession for women, although she shares the view of Hannah More, that charity, run on business lines is the right unpaid "career" for women of means, like Shirley, who sees her community as her "parish".⁽⁸⁾

Louis Cazamian rightly writes of Shirley that it "evinces an instinctive, almost unconscious Christian concern, akin to the best feelings represented by the best of Mrs. Gaskell" and that, as a parson's daughter, Bronte was "a good example of the

frame of mind from which Christian socialism developed ".⁽⁹⁾ In fact, many critics have pointed out the similarities to North and South, and claim that Mrs. Gaskell may have owed something to Shirley, which was published first.⁽¹⁰⁾ Such a conjecture makes Charlotte Bronte a pioneer, if inexperienced, voice in the concept of the social novel. There is a social message of some power in Shirley which should not go overlooked. Raymond Williams advocates that Charlotte Bronte followed on from Blake, giving a kind of value to human longing and need by the lost and isolated, and thereby created a more human world.⁽¹¹⁾ Like both Eliot and Gaskell, she was prepared to question the environment around her, and at the same time, kept human feeling and impulse, and the message of human reconciliation alive in a changing world.

The ethical stance taken by Elizabeth Gaskell in her fiction, as well as in her own life, is concerned with the dehumanising effect that laissez-faire industrialism and politics had on - to use Elaine Showalter's term - the subculture of women and their children, and also on the tough entrepreneurial giants themselves. Gaskell's voice is forever tolerant, she rarely condemns in a didactic fashion. She is able to take an overall objective view, when she reviews how recession in trade affects employers and employees. In North and South, there are many victims of industrialism: the effect of atmospheric pollution kills Mrs. Hale; Bessy Higgins

dies of tuberculosis disease brought on by constantly absorbing fluff in a textile factory; Higgins, himself turns to drinking gin; the Boucher family are left fatherless because the provider was unable to keep abreast of the fierce pace of the competitive mill, and the starving Irish labourers are but pawns in a political game. The values upheld by the men centre on power politics and aggression. Thornton's responsibilities to his men are limited to a wage based on the fluctuating economy and not to their starving families. Higgins takes pleasure in an "honest fight", and grudgingly admires Thornton's obstinate touchiness, admitting, "He's worth fighting wi'..... every inch of him - th'oud bull-dog".⁽¹²⁾ Gaskell's message is quite clear, such "male values" are both negative and self-destructive. One hears her voice through that of Bessy, when she declares: "Oh, father! ... what have ye gained by striking? Think of that first strike when mother died ",⁽¹³⁾ and through Margaret Hale's plea to the mob of strikers: "Oh, do not use violence! You shall have relief from your complaints, whatever they are ",⁽¹⁴⁾ Gaskell also writes: "Margaret's whole soul rose up against him (Thornton) while he reasoned in this way - as if commerce were everything and humanity nothing".⁽¹⁵⁾ It was a voice first heard in Mary Barton which focussed on the devastating resurgence of Chartism: it dually condemned the disinterested ignorance of the middleclass entrepreneur, Carson, and the blind obstinacy of the unionist campaigner, John Barton.⁽¹⁶⁾ Women, in the novel, see themselves as better communicators than men, and often as mediators. In North and

South, Gaskell sees female interventionism as a viable answer to male confrontation.

Margaret Hale is a young woman who finds her sympathies bridging the two worlds of master and men. Margaret unlike Thornton, listens to and learns to understand the working families. She would like to see class barriers and entrenched attitudes cast aside for the sake of social harmony; "If Higgins would forget that Thornton was master, and speak to him as he does to us (the Hale family) - and if Mr. Thornton would be patient to listen to him with his human heart, not with his master's ears". Yet, unlike the heroines of Dickens, Disraeli and Kingsley, Margaret is no saintly woman. As she assists the progress of reconciliation between master and men and teaches them the human lesson of philanthropy, she, herself must learn the lessons of the falsity of pride and snobbery.⁽¹⁷⁾ Gaskell has been accused of "mothering" her heroines, but her message clearly is, that no woman can grow to become a competent wife or philanthropist without first acquiring an independence of mind through humbly knowing herself: she may only be in a position to judge others when she, herself, is able to stand up to others' scrutiny. It is a harrowing lesson that Gaskell, as a sympathetic writer on questions of working-class exploitation and "fallen women", was herself compelled to learn. Margaret also has to learn that there can be no easy or absolutely happy solution to human affairs, for she never becomes totally reconciled to her Thornton in-laws, or they to her.⁽¹⁸⁾ Elizabeth Gaskell

rarely swerves far away from the dilemmas of reality. The ultimate reconciliation of hero and heroine symbolises the adjustment that the society of rural gentility of the south has to make to the advancing age of technology and the new powerful industrial middleclass of the North. Gaskell ejects into the industrial world a human dimension of "personal intercourse".⁽¹⁹⁾ Notably, the basic goodness of her philanthropic heroine not only averts a public disaster, it also causes others to become more charitable to each other. Higgins takes in the Boucher orphans, Mr. Hale learns to take an interest in the families of the men who operate the powerful machines, and John Thornton is reformed into an enlightened philanthropic employer. He now gives expression to Gaskell's own ethical solution to industrial Britain:

"My only wish is to have the opportunity of cultivating some intercourse with the hands beyond the mere 'cash nexus'". (20)

Like Disraeli, Elizabeth Gaskell realized the division of society into two worlds, unlike him she drew on genuine first-hand experience; she became one of the inhabitants of that world, she learned, like Margaret Hale did, to speak its language and to understand the problems. Consequently, in her novels, she is . . . inclined to immerse herself more in one world than the other, giving a fresh and sensitive picture of the only world these people knew, of back-to-back houses, dingy, unhygienic cellar dwellings, smoke-laden skies, industrial sickness, the fears and toil of starving families

and class warfare. Her portraits of colourful northern personalities, their racy dialect and forceful needs meet with her aim which was to produce life as she saw it, and also to advance her own unfailing generous belief in "the infinite and beautiful capacities of human nature".⁽²¹⁾ Disraeli's aim was to provide a political ideological solution to unify the two worlds. Here, there is clear support for Gilligan's definitions of female and male concepts of ethical care. Eva Figes points out that Elizabeth Gaskell, like Charlotte Bronte, felt a deep distrust of all political factions; both women depicted political agitation as people who exploited the ignorance and suffering of the working class.⁽²²⁾ This is Gaskell on politicians:

"For there are never wanting those who either in speech or in print, find in their interest to cherish such feelings in the working classes; who know how and when to rouse the dangerous power at their command; and who use their knowledge with unrelenting purpose of either party." (23)

It is a voice in opposition to the political paternalism of Disraeli. Nonetheless, there are signs of a feminine revolutionary vision in the novels of both Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte, but, unlike defiant women like Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale and Josephine Butler, they verged on the edge of social propriety.⁽²⁴⁾ Yet, both women were interested in the question of how far should woman be involved in political and industrial matters;⁽²⁵⁾ to them, philanthropy was the obvious channel. Neither woman attempted to offer a political

solution for social reform. However, their heroines, Shirley and Margaret Hale, like many eminent philanthropists, reserved the right to follow their own Christian ideas of social duty, for, essentially in both the cases of Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Bronte, it is a biblical-based comment on human injustice rather than a political one.

George Eliot once told a friend how inconceivable she found the idea of God, how unbelievable the concept of immortality, but how peremptory and absolute the demands of Duty.⁽²⁶⁾ George Eliot, a disaffected Non-conformist and translator and researcher of philosophical works, regarded her art first and foremost as a moral medium. She joined the crusade of free-thinking rationalists, for whom the revelation of life was not religious but scientific: influenced by the anti-theology of Strauss, Feuerbach and the positivism of August Comte,⁽²⁷⁾ she developed her own ethic of "meliorism", that the world can be made better by human effort. Thus, she substituted the concept of Divine predeterminism with the responsibility of individuals to determine their own future, and that of others, by their own motivations, desires and actions. Consequently, the interdependency of humanity is important to Eliot. The powerful fascination of her novels is her disciplined ability to structure them on a complexity of interwoven relationships. This is particularly the case in Middlemarch. One is also struck by her lack of didacticism and by her broad and generous understanding of human psychology, of human goodness and human

frailty. Yet the Christian ethic and the "beautiful fiction" of the Christian "fable" which taught the perennial truth of human love and selflessness remains in her novels, and this is especially so in Adam Bede.⁽²⁸⁾ U.C. Knoeplmacher (1965) rightly describes Adam Bede as a covert recast of the Adam myth in the light of Feuerbach's theories which omit the metaphysical dimension.⁽²⁹⁾ Eliot drives out the Eve myth about woman, and restores her to an egalitarian position alongside men as a human being, sharing the same failings of egoism and sense of moral goodness as they. Although she rejected the Church and the mysticism it preached, in Adam Bede, she impliedly recognised, through the character of Dinah Morris, the value of the work of the woman preachers of Wesley half a century earlier, who in truth, heroically worked in the prisons, among the poor and fought for anti-slavery, for she never mocks Dinah's sincerity. In Dinah's justification of women preachers to Mr. Irvine, the parish priest, is something of the ecumenical "voice" of Elizabeth Fry, who wrote charitably of an Anglican prison chaplain:

"After all, however, we may differ as to the means of grace, our end in view is the same, and we feel at times that we have one Lord, one faith and one baptism. I increasingly find, that whoever love the Lord Jesus, are, without distinction, as brothers, sisters, fathers, and mothers to me." (30)

Conversely, Eliot paints a sympathetic portrait of Hetty as a "fallen woman", as a vain and foolish child; she discreetly allows her to circumvent the ultimate fall from God's grace

by Hetty's reprieve and transportation. As Vita Sackville-West comments of George Eliot:

"The curious thing is that she should have acted rebellion rather than preach itMary Ann Evans, one must remember, was.....A Victorian woman..... She was no flaming rebel, with a desire to scandalize and startle her generation. No dreams that her example might speed up the emancipation of her sex entered her head." (31)

George Eliot was unique in that she was a Victorian woman who was a free thinker, whose genius led her to portray a diversity of flesh-and-blood characters who lived and worked in recognisable rural places and with whom generations of readers have been able to universally identify for their human reality.

Eliot's articles in the Westminster Review, as well as her novels, reveal her astonishing intellectual vitality and versatility, as she covered topics about literature, philosophy, the Church and politics. In her article, The Natural History of German Life, she writes of "small shopkeepers, artisans and peasantry" and about the degree they are influenced by local conditions and their religious teachers, and adds, "Such a study would be a valuable aid to the social and political reformer".⁽³²⁾ Both Felix Holt and Middlemarch belong to the period of the Reform Bill of 1832 and include a lively interest in radical politics, but, like Gaskell's novels, these works make no attempt to preach for a new social system

of reform. Through her art, Eliot laid open questions on human morality, responsibility and self-determination, and, through her women heroines, something of the philanthropic and potentially egalitarian position of women, although female humanitarian superiority in George Eliot's novels is never clear cut and is at times difficult to assess. George Eliot's genius lies in her ability to observe the complexities of human nature. She established a literary precedent of her own, which future generations of both male and female writers looked to as a source of inspiration - especially to depict intelligent independently-minded women.

It is the fiction of Lady Georgiana Fullerton, Charlotte Yonge and Felicia Skene, that reflects more closely than George Eliot's novel, the importance of religious belief in the lives of the majority of philanthropists.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton, despite her criticism of those priests who displayed a disinterest to the wants of the poor and dying in Grantley Manor, was a faithful tractarian to the Roman Catholic Church and it is in the tracts that one finds her particular area of care fervently expressed. An ardent admirer of the philanthropy of Père Blot of Ars Monastery, she drew on his writings to frame her own thoughts in three letters written in 1863. In the letters, she argues a case for such a charitable religious community as that at Ars be

set up in London:

"In every Catholic land or rather in every land where there are Catholics, souls no doubt exist which would be attracted to the Order if once acquainted with its objects and spirit. There have been at all times persons who have embraced the religious life with the hope of furthering the conversion, the salvation, or the deliverance of some beloved one. It might prove to some... an immense consolation to join a Community the end of which is practically to carry out this theory of self-immolation..... whose lives are a perpetual sacrifice offered for departed souls, who live for the dead while they work for the living. Would it not be a joy to all bereaved mourners to have them at hand? Would it not be a blessing to the dying poor to have them by their sick beds in their wretched homes? Do we not want them in London, where sorrow and death, sin and suffering, call louder every day for greater efforts to pray down the rising tide of human misery? " (33)

Fullerton's views eventually led to the establishment of the hospice movement. They were uniquely liberal coming from a Roman Catholic novelist.

In contrast to Elizabeth Gaskell, a Unitarian writer in the industrial North, Charlotte Yonge was a novelist of High Church persuasion writing about the rural south. Her extremely sheltered life, meant that she had no personal experience of the vast industrial provinces.⁽³⁴⁾ On the other hand, she shares some of the warm-heartedness of Gaskell in her approach to social problems and some of the tolerance of human frailty of George Eliot with her delightful portraits of families and children, with whom she worked closely as a teacher.

Georgina Battiscombe writes of Yonge's ability to make "goodness appear extremely attractive".⁽³⁵⁾ This applies to both her virtuous male and female characters. Even through the activities of her misled heroine in The Clever Woman, Yonge displays the sympathetic voice in her treatment of the exploited lace-makers, towards the educational needs of the village children, and over the young woman stricken and dying with diphtheria. In fact, as Robert Lee Woolf discerningly observes, nearly all of Charlotte Yonge's novels reveal an insatiable interest in contemporary affairs: Abbeyfield considers the questions of the political radicalism of Chartism and Socialism, Astronomers and Geologists without faith, and Mechanics Institutes and The Heir of Ratcliffe considers the problem of pauper children.⁽³⁶⁾ Unfortunately for the female literary tradition, Yonge's alert social conscience is habitually hampered by her narrow religious commitment to the cause of Anglo-Catholicism, for she regards all these radical movements in her day as a threat to the sacred orders and ordinances of the High Church. An over-riding theme in practically all of her works is that of an energetic, enthusiastic, altruistic young woman who, with well-meant but ill-advised philanthropic intention, propels herself out into the world, but is then recalled to examine the flaws in her own character and subsequently to learn the lesson of self-discipline and the solace of the sacraments of the Church. The novel Abbeyfield is neatly subtitled "Self-Control and Self-Conceit", a clear indication that the involvement of Elizabeth Woodbourne, with-

out her vicar father's permission, in teaching at the local Mechanics Institute where radical lectures on the class system and the new sciences take place, is a form of charitable pride and a violation against both family and Church loyalty. In The Clever Woman, the philanthropic work of the inexperienced, intellectually arrogant Rachel is more suitably taken over by the Church. Similarly, in The Heir of Radcliffe, philanthropic work is brought within the constraints of a new Anglican sisterhood: two maiden sisters take in pauper children to educate them and attend to the sick and dying. How far the duality of personality of Yonge's female protagonists reflects traits in her own personality is open to speculation. Her avid interest in female philanthropy is clearly present in her novels, but even more so is her unquestioning acceptance of female submissiveness. Clearly, the recipe for Yonge's typical heroine was based on the ingredients of her own upbringing. Gillian Avery describes them:

"She should be thoughtful and devoutly religious before anything else, devoted to her mother and to her brothers and sisters, obedient to her father, well-educated, serious of purpose, submissive to whatever heaven might choose to send." (37)

Very little room was left for personal tastes and interests or any independence of mind on ethics of care.⁽³⁸⁾ Yet Yonge was committed to both her belief and her art-form and she succeeds in skilfully merging the two together: Henry James paid her the tribute of referring to her as "almost a genius" with a "first-rate mind....which is master and not slave of its material".⁽³⁹⁾

Yet, one wonders, how much more a genius she would have proved to be had she not been such a devout slave to Christian piety? Would she, too, have produced an even more dominant philanthropic heroine than Rachel Curtis and also a more liberally pronounced "ethic of care"?⁽⁴⁰⁾

Had Sybil in Disraeli's novel not married she would have entered the Sisterhood. As a heroine, depicted by a male author she provides a sharp contrast to Felicia Skene's Anglo-Catholic heroine, Ernestine Courtenay, in Hidden Depths, who rejects marriage to work for the Sisterhood and sets up a home for the rehabilitation of "fallen women". The preface writer, William Allen, M.P., says of Skene, writing anonymously, that she wrote the novel: "in the earnest hope that it may be the means of helping on in some degree, the cause of Justice, Mercy and Truth."⁽⁴¹⁾ Skene wrote her amateur novel with all the heartfelt dedication of redressing the double standards which existed for men and women who engaged in extramarital sex. Also, implicit in her novel is a protest against teenage prostitution - girls used by men for their debauched pleasures and then discarded at will. In a scene where Louis Brooks contemplates suicide, the distraught girl reflects on her recent life with George Courtenay after the deaths of her beloved father and Christian grandmother - seduction in a carriage, becoming his mistress and living in an opulent villa in Richmond with servants, horses and dress; then Annie, a

sweet innocent child invited at Courtenay's request to become acquainted with Reginald, ^{all} is a cameo of the secret darker side of Victorian life as depicted by Steven Marcus. (42)

It is clear, too, that Skene believed the work of rescue of such girls was better carried out by strong-minded, compassionate Christian women - like herself, who could remain independent of marriage, devoting themselves, instead, to God's work: women who sympathised with the plight of the girls and understood their psychological need for love and security. Skene's remedy was not the solution exercised by a male - orientated society, that of prison or the penitentiary, but the more homely solution of a Christian, humanitarian-run, albeit religiously paternalistic, institution. Skene's ethic of care clearly was to take the feminine domestic principle of the "Angel in the House" out of the home and into society where she was badly needed to complement and also to combat the wrongs of the "public" world of men. She recognised an urgent need for greater feminine help and co-operation. To her, the purpose of philanthropic woman was to give support to their less-fortunate sisters and to make society a more just and equal place for women as well as men. She clearly has a place in the literary tradition of women because her belief in womankind and for her bold outspokenness. Even though Skene's literary prowess was lacking, her novels provide an interesting social commentary for the historian.

5.3. CONCLUSION : THE PHILANTHROPIC NOVEL.

The existence of the philanthropic novel as a particular genre, which formed part of the developing literary tradition of women, is determined by the different concept of the ethic of care held by women writers of the social novel.

The evidence presented here clearly indicates that the male writers were perceiving a different concept of the ethic of care for society on the basis of their own male world of political and religious ideologies, as in the case of Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley, or, on his own personal ideological prejudices about women, as in the case of Charles Dickens. In their novels, the male writers distance themselves from the insensitive notion of a woman being an active worker in close relationship with slum-dwellers and inmates of dens of vice in the great cities, either, through lack of first-hand experience of these conditions, to depict a genuine portrait, or, because they chose to maintain the stereotype formulated on a prevailing Victorian ideology of what the good middleclass lady ought to be like and not on what many actually were - brash, self-assertive, determined, courageous and often defiant. They prefer their women philanthropists to be subordinate to man, ministering her selfless love in the home rather than in the rough industrial society, dependent on male protection and masculine wisdom. Such assumptions give support to Gilligan's theory that the male concept of

what is "right" rests on a notion of fairness based on balancing the claims of self and others in a hierarchal order, ~~one~~ tempered by personal prestige and self-assertion.

On the other hand, the concept of the ethic of care as perceived by female writers is reflected in their initial concern for survival, for the personal welfare of individuals and for maintaining a spirit of harmony within the community network, in which individuals and families should be morally responsible for each other. Their heroines are mostly reconcilers, not reformers, in a male world of strife or indifference. The ethic of care of the heroines of the women writers rarely transgresses into politics and, although it is prepared to challenge male systems, it stays with people by focusing on the content of human relationships. However, it is through the heroines' significantly self-assertive "voice", that they debate and argue social and moral issues. A common fundamental assumption emerges, namely that women have a decisive role in society as peace-loving custodians of humanity and as "mother of mankind". This is a fairly strong echo of the voice of the actual female philanthropists, who appear to have provided a discernible model for women writers on which to formulate the personality of their heroines, although not by any means the extent of their philanthropic activity. Public censorship was a factor which prevented a more accurate and coarser account from a female hand. Another factor may have been woman's own innate inhibition about parading the

achievements of her own sex. It is interesting to note that throughout her studies, Carol Gilligan found women in a state of doubt about herself and the world. Even in studies on highly successful professional women, she found "a fusion of identity and intimacy": when her subjects were asked to describe themselves and their lives, their tendency was to measure their own strength in "the activity of attachment", i.e. "giving a helping hand to", "being kind", and "not hurting" others; they mostly evaded any mention of their academic and professional achievements. In fact the tone of her women subjects indicated that they regarded these activities as jeopardizing their own sense of themselves. This illustrates well the inner-conflict women have timelessly suffered, that of personal achievement and caring for others.⁽¹⁾

Nonetheless, many opinions have been expressed about the special contribution that women made to the novel in the nineteenth century. Richard Faber, writing on class structures of the period and realism in the novel, makes reference to the experience and achievements of the women novelists at the time. He explains how women, like Charlotte Bronte and Elizabeth Gaskell, and even George Eliot- who, although she lived more freely, was still not so free as a man - compensated for their limited experience by writing from a depth of vision rather than a breadth of vision. He writes:

"Their movements being more restricted, their observation of what was close to them was sharper, while their interest in people tended to be less coloured by general presumptions about life."

Even more significantly, he connects this narrow role of life with women's particular contribution to the social system:

"It fell to them to dress the altar and sweep the hearth; to form social circles and cherish family feeling..... Women were the priestesses of the social system; As soon as their sympathies were engaged.....they were quicker than men to regard people as individuals rather than social types." (2)

The shared female consciousness of what Gilligan terms as the "ethic of care",⁽³⁾ was clearly present during the period. Similarly, G.K. Chesterton, when writing on the subject of great Victorian writers (1913-4), refers to the status achieved by women novelists: "When we come to the novelists, the women have, on the whole equality; and certainly, on some points, superiority ".⁽⁴⁾ He identifies the novel as "an art of sympathy and the study of human variations.....an art form which has been found to be particularly feminine ",⁽⁵⁾ and one "which the conquests of women are quite beyond controversy." Chesterton supplies a definition of "sympathy" which points even more closely towards the suggestion of "the philanthropic novel": "Sympathy - not to mean so much feeling with all who feel, but rather suffering with all who suffer".⁽⁶⁾ He equates the growth of the novel with "an increase in the interest of humanity". This observation was being made at a time when the popular response to the prevailing changing industrial society and its social injustices was still alive.

The indications are that philanthropists and writers shared a common sympathy and consciousness which directed them towards the improvement of the lot of underprivileged mankind. While male writers were concentrating on issues relating to social injustice and giving expression to what they believed to be generally right and just, women - looking to their philanthropic sisters for inspiration - were mostly concerned about questions of individual responsibility between different groups and classes. The only superiority over men to which women philanthropists and writers could freely give expression was their moral and caring superiority, which, wittingly and unwittingly, played a part in achieving literary fame as well as philanthropic fame. These complementary achievements, as described above in this thesis, give confirmation to the proposition that women were writing a different social novel from men's, termed here as "a philanthropic novel". Since this form was exclusively part of the ethical consciousness of women, it opened up for women a new emancipating expression, which formed a crucial role in the advancing literary tradition of women during the period between 1840 and 1870.

5.4. THE PHILANTHROPIC THEME AND THE CONTINUING LITERARY
TRADITION OF WOMEN.

"It is time to effect a revolution in female manners - time to restore them to their lost dignity - and make them, as part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves, to reform the world."

Mary Wollstonecraft

Future research in mapping out the role of the philanthropic theme, and the female ethical concept of care for society in the continuing development of the literary tradition of women, will have to take into account the deflecting subsequent changing social roles of men and women. The clear line of demarcation laid down for the two sexes in Victorian Britain makes the identification of different moral codes precise and easily definable. These boundaries became defused as the suffrage movement of the late nineteenth century and in the first decade of the twentieth century led to greater sexual and social freedom, and also to the gradual overlapping of the roles of men and women. Indeed, the era of the philanthropic novel seemed to end abruptly with the writings of Mrs. Humphrey Ward (1851-1920).⁽¹⁾ As an active philanthropist and a popular writer, she spent a substantial amount of the income she earned as a novelist upon philanthropic causes: without her novel-writing, thousands of poor children would have ranged the streets unsheltered.⁽²⁾ In her most famous novel, Robert Elsmere (1888) she links the heroines's suffering

in childbirth, to the suffering of "all creatures in pain - workmen crushed by machinery, or soldiers, or poor things in hospital - above all of women What women must suffer... in out of the way cottages - no doctor, no kind nursing, all that agony and struggles!".⁽³⁾ Moreover, this novel, and a later anti-suffrage novel, Delia Blancheflower (1914), led Mrs. Ward to become embroiled in a public controversy over her anti-suffrage campaign.⁽⁴⁾ Yet, as Elaine Showalter observes, despite her antagonism to political activism, Mrs. Ward absorbed many of the attitudes and prejudices of feminists in her novels, seen in her heartfelt concern for women, in her desire to see women's maternal energies directed outward, in her belief in the beneficent effects of altruistic sisterhood which Showalter claims, reflected "the intense bond of non-lesbian friendship" of the female subculture.⁽⁵⁾ However, rather than confront the political and sexual systems as the sources and causes of women's oppression, Ward, like Gaskell and Skene before her, chose instead to channel her feelings, more directly, into the feminine network of charitable agencies and settlement houses.

Although suffrage and the perilous situation of twentieth century emancipated woman appeared to be the next obvious altruistic topics in the literary development of women in Western society, these themes have not so far received very significant literary treatment. In fact, a point of curiosity is that many of the eminent Victorian women, from Florence

Nightingale to George Eliot, were suspicious of the women's movement although they themselves inspired the political activities of future feminists.⁽⁶⁾ Women novelists who avoided the subject of the enfranchisement of women duly received the scorn of Harriet Taylor, who, in 1851, accused them of being "anxious to earn the pardon and toleration of men" and ostentatious in their desire for equality and citizenship".⁽⁷⁾ One of the most influential pieces of literary propaganda to come out of the suffrage movement in the first decade of the twentieth century was the political play, Votes for Women (1907) by Elizabeth Robins, (1863-1943), which a year later was made into a novel and retitled, The Convert. The American-born Mrs. Robins, who came to England as a widow, was President of the Women Writers' Suffrage League, and her melodramatic novel, set against a realistically detailed background, raises the standard questions surrounding women's suffering - ruined maids, prostitution for earning a living, starving working mothers, and the sexual viciousness of men. Robins compares the force-feeding of suffragettes with the Lock Hospital's examinations of the Contagious Diseases Act.⁽⁸⁾ Showalter says of Robins that although her main purpose was political, she was also interested in the new direction in women's literature: she like many novelists around the 1900's wanted to explore the female psyche "both for its own sake and for the sake of confounding male complacency about human nature".⁽⁹⁾ Writers, such as Dorothy Richardson, Virginia Woolf and Rebecca West made a significant retreat from revolutionary social involvement to indulge in a leisurely examination of the experience of the

positive middleclass female in family, social and sexual relationships. Thus, the literary tradition of women took a new turn: the notion of the philanthropic theme as a progressive step towards emancipation was discarded for a more introspective feminist exploration of ^{women's} own connection with others and her own sexuality. Future research could examine the all-important question of why, it seems, that historically at this point in the history of women's literature, women began to lose their sense of altruistic mission as middleclass women writers became more absorbed in women's consciousness about herself and her sexuality, and placed emphasis on freeing herself from her dependency on men?

The introspective pursuit of the female consciousness came with the "stream of consciousness technique", an impressionistic style of writing, developed by Dorothy Richardson and Virginia Woolf, and perpetrated by Woolf as, "the psychological sentence of the female gender, a sentence of more elastic fibre than the old, capable of stretching to the extreme, of suspending the frailest particles of enveloping shapes".⁽¹⁰⁾ However, the revolutionary female aesthetic, impressive as it was for its aesthetic quality, led women away from the great social and political implications left in the wake of the First World War. It led women writers into the narrow, private, experience of upper-middleclass life to debate woman's personal conflict with the claims of free love and art. They rarely touched on the horrors of the war and the unemployed poverty-stricken masses.

In fact, critics of Virginia Woolf's novels have rightly accused her of snobbish attitudes towards the lower classes.⁽¹¹⁾ Woolf's notion of a literary tradition for women rested mostly on women's need for opportunity and academic privileges to allow her to give account of her own autobiographical experience and feminine values, and to encourage her to say exactly what women think.⁽¹²⁾ Woolf's own experience of life, and possibly the depressive illness which eventually led her to her suicide, kept her away from the harsh public world of warfare, politics and social welfare. She certainly lacked the personal qualities of toughness and wilful determination, though not the verbal wit and thrust, of women, like Mary Wollstonecraft, Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, whom she so clearly admired. Ironically, by the early 1900's, the normal lives of men and women allowed women to move more freely in social atmospheres previously closed to them, and women were more in possession of sexual and professional experience than they had ever been before, yet the majority of women writers, in a quest for female consciousness, found the world more sexually polarised in psychological terms. This is apparent when one compares the wider, universal questions of religious doubt, politics and national oppression explored by male writer, James Joyce, who exploited a similar "stream of conscious^{-ness}" technique in his novels.⁽¹³⁾ Yet, women were involved in the war, both on the battlefield as nurses and in men's jobs at home, but few, with the notable exception of Vera Britten and her autobiography, Testament of Youth, have filled the literary shelves with the

war experiences as have the male poets. Britten was a prolific feminist writer who, over a period of fifty years, argued the right and the necessity of women to be an equally powerful force in the structuring and humanising the organisation of society. Dale Spender explains: to Vera Britten. "the movement towards a welfare state, to a society which cared for all members, had been a triumph of 'feminine' principles over 'masculine' ones".⁽¹⁴⁾ However, the general indication is that women have remained repulsed by the violence they see in the male world, but unlike Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and Felicia Skene, they fail to make a moral stand against it. Instead, as Rosalind Miles (1983) has claimed, women have over-immersed themselves in questions of how to free themselves from the dilemma of their own sexuality. This, many feminist novelists attempt to demonstrate by way of explicit sexual expression in their novels, the general aims being, to confound the male view of sexual relationships, to belittle masculine morality and to attack male institutions.⁽¹⁵⁾

The drastic events of the Second World War and post-war egalitarian movements with the onset of socialism, has done little to improve the direction of the literary tradition. It opened up an opportunity for novelists to lodge a protest against "drawing room" literature by producing in the 1950's novels of "kitchen sink" realism, which focussed on the plight of urban working class heroines, such as can be found in Shelagh Delaney's A Taste of Honey or in Lynne Reid Banks'.

The L-Shaped Room, but it was a literary phase which was soon overtaken by a middleclass expression from Iris Murdoch, Brigid Brophy, Margaret Drabble and Doris Lessing. Yet, curiously, none of these writers has fully reinstated and evolved the feminine altruistic theme of social responsibility established by the nineteenth century female novelists.⁽¹⁶⁾ Of this grouping of novelists, Doris Lessing displays the most altruistic sensitivity towards a number of individual, social and political issues, ranging from female concerns to a more collective concern for global destruction through germ warfare and nuclear warfare.⁽¹⁷⁾ In her choice of theme, she recaptures something of the sense of mission which was lost between the World Wars. Like Virginia Woolf and Iris Murdoch, Lessing has a fondness for fantasy: she is a powerful and gifted writer who is capable of transmitting the collective unconscious over such matters as the breakdown of civilisation as it is experienced. The handling of her material is practical and mechanical: in many respects, her voice is rational and prophetic. Notably, the "voice" of Lessing, like that of Iris Murdoch, lacks the caring maternal warmth of the nineteenth century philanthropic writer, and also her sympathy with intimate human details.⁽¹⁸⁾ Nor have twentieth century women produced successors to the giantesses of fiction, heroines who freed themselves from the constraints of social stereotyping as opposed to sexual stereotyping. Curiously, it has been mostly male, not female, novelists who have given a sympathetic voice to the egalitarian woman: Thomas Hardy attempts to free his heroine, Sue Bridehead,

from the constraints of both social and sexual conventions in Jude the Obscure; H.G. Wells epitomises the new, intelligent, altruistic woman in his characterisation of Ann Veronica: George Gissing produced heroines who were freer socially and sexually than men crushed by human weariness and "hopeless hope",⁽¹⁹⁾ and Henry James, ardent admirer of the novels of George Eliot, promoted the women's movement in The Bostonians.⁽²⁰⁾

Terry Eagleton (1983), writing on the literary eras of structuralism and post-structuralism and associating them with opposing political movements and the resurgence of the women's movement of Europe and the United States, accuses women of a failed opportunity to express these new experiences aesthetically. He writes

"For although the oppression of women is indeed a material reality, a matter of motherhood, domestic labour, job discrimination and unequal wages, it cannot be reduced to these factors, it is also a question of sexual ideology of the ways men and women image themselves and each other in a male-dominated society of perceptions and behaviour, which range from the brutally explicit to the deeply unconscious.....because sexism and gender roles are questions which engage the deepest personal dimensions of human life, a politics which was blind to the experience of the human subjects and was crippled from the outset." (21)

He continues to argue that the political struggle of women cannot be reduced to the personal or vice versa, and accuses some sections of the movement of seeming "indifferent to the sufferings of anybody, but women ". Conversely, he acknowledges that, "There are also forms of social feminism which holds

that the liberation of other oppressed groups in society and classes in society is not only a moral and political imperative in itself, but necessary (though no means sufficient) condition for the emancipation of women ". (22) However, the liberal humanist critic of literature must also enrich and extend our lives . Pluralism is important, so are goals of ideology, but art, itself, must maintain the strategic use, the aesthetic element to shape forms of consciousness and unconsciousness, so that it can be mobilised in a variety of human ends.

Clearly, in today's mostly secular environment, the modern novel does not answer the same problems about mankind as they were posed by the theological debate of former centuries. It also has lost sight of the sensibility of the Romantic Revivalists and the values it imposed on the mind of the Victorian novelists. Modern man lives by the theories of sciences which analyse behaviour, by the impersonal rules of mathematics and technology. The ethic of care, which rested on human interaction arising out of an intuitive response to individual need and responsibility and to a deep belief in a Divinity or in the goodness of man - often a personal inspiration for women - has been devalued in the scientific and economic arrangement of the modern world, which is still mostly the realm of men. The modern woman writer has lost sight of the novel as an art form of sympathy.

For the literary tradition of women to continue, the

individual writer must identify her own modern-day ethic of care, beginning with a personal concern for individuals, and bring the topic to the forefront of the public world. She must establish universals which are separate from, yet of value to, the universals of men, in the history of literature, as did Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot. The continuation of the tradition requires literary excellence, the discovery of, and experimentation with, literary technical innovations based on the feminine artistic response. The woman novelist must put her heroines back on an altruistic course as society's reconcilers and custodians of suffering humanity, no longer as philanthropists but as their modern day professional equivalents, as doctors, nurses, social-workers, Third World welfare workers, lawyers, Members of Parliament, personnel managers, and so on. John Stuart Mill wrote to his Victorian readership that men's view of women remained imperfect and superficial and always will be until "women themselves have told all they have to tell". (23) The topics of women writers have been "indoors", immersed in the subculture, in intimate relationships, for far too long.

- THE END -

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5 : TWO DIFFERENT ETHICAL CONCEPTS
OF CARE AND THE PHILANTHROPIC NOVEL

(pp 464-516)

1. The theory of Carol Gilligan, and a premise to this thesis, see pp22-3 (above)
2. See pp 20-2 (above)
3. Showalter, E. A Literature of Their Own (London) 1982
4. See Part 1 Chap.2.3 (above)
5. Gilligan, C. In a Different Voice (Massachusetts and London) 1982 p19
6. *ibid* p104

5.1. THE ETHIC OF CARE : THE MALE NOVELIST (pp467-482)

1. Faber, R. Proper Stations (London) 1971 p91
2. Kingsley, was influenced by the writings of Thomas Carlyle, which attacked laissez-faire policies, and also by the inspiration of Frederick Denison Maurice the Christian philanthropist and reformer.
3. Disraeli, B. Sybil (Harmondsworth) 1965 pp103-4. The presenting of slogans by women at this time was a rare occurrence.
4. *ibid* p364
5. *ibid* p366
6. *ibid* p78
7. *ibid* p107
8. Disraeli's emancipated woman may have been a gentle parody of Mrs. Wheeler, the mother-in-law of Disraeli's friend, Bulwer, and a member of the women's rights movement. This is evidenced in a letter written by Disraeli to his sister, Sarah, in which he describes Mrs. Wheeler as "this clever, but awfully revolutionary, woman. ... She poured forth all her systems upon my novitiate ear as she advocated the rights of women". Mrs. Wheeler has been regarded as probably the most important woman in the women's rights movement between Mary Wollstonecraft and Emmeline Pankhurst. In the late 1830's she appeared in "A Year at Harlebury" upholding professions for women as for men and bemoaning the fact that only men had the vote. Stated by Michael Foot in a review of Benjamin Disraeli's Letters Vols.1 & 2 1835-37 (Toronto) 1982 in The Observer 4th. July 1982 p29
9. *ibid*

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10. Leavis, F.R. The Great Tradition (Harmondsworth) 1972 p10 n.1
11. and 12. Cazamian, L. in The Social Novel in England 1830-50 (London) 1973 also casts doubt on Disraeli's sincerity, being of the opinion that his political convictions were tempered with attitudes of ambition and self-interest, that social Toryism served him well. p179
13. Faber, R. op cit p91. Richard Faber correctly points out that Kingsley was more democratic than Disraeli; he wanted to "level up" the working man, as in the cases of the gamekeeper, Tregarva and Alton Locke, by way of their talents and education.
14. Kingsley, C. Alton Locke (London) 1910 repr 1970 p357
15. and 16. ibid Chap. XXXVIII
18. AL op cit Eleanor states, "I simply tried to put them in-
~~to~~ a position in which they might work for each other, and not for a single tyrant; in which that tyrant's profits might be divided among the slaves themselves. Experienced men warned me that I should fail; that such a plan would be destroyed by the innate selfishness and rivalry of human nature; that it demanded what was impossible to find, good faith, fraternal love, overruling moral influence. I answered, that I knew that already; that nothing but Christianity alone could supply that want, but that it could and should supply it; that I would teach them to live as sisters, by living with them as their sister myself." p357
19. ibid Chap VIII
20. ibid p317
21. AL p121
22. Kingsley, C. Preface to Yeast 4th. ed 17th. Feb. 1859
23. When John Stuart Mill wrote to Kingsley to enquire why he had withdrawn his support of the movement for the medical education for women, Kingsley's answer was that he objected to mixing up feminist "social and sexual" questions with "the question of women's right to vote or to labour, and above all, to women's right to practice as physicians and surgeons." He, as a clergyman, was clearly nervous of associating himself with the more militant elements in the women's movement. He visited the first Woman's Suffrage Meeting in London in 1869 and was unhappy about it. C.K. Letters and Memoirs of his Life ed Mrs. Kingsley (London) 1914 p304-6
24. ibid Kingsley's correspondence and "Memories" reveal that he was happily married with a devoted wife who dedicated herself untiringly to home, family and parish, which may have decided him that women's place was better in the home. He writes to John Bullar in 1857 of his constant reliance on his "guardian angel of a wife". p199. Earlier, in 1839, when Kingsley met his

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- future wife, she, Eleanor-like, was instrumental in restoring his faith by introducing him to the idealist movement and writings of Coleridge and Carlyle. p48
25. In Hard Times (1854) Dickens writes more extensively and exclusively of a northern industrial town than in any previous novel. The architecture of Coketown and characters like Mr. Josiah Bounderby, the rich banker, merchant and industrialist, and Mr. Thomas Grandgrind, "a man of fact and calculations"; each are a denial of the expressive human spirit. Sissy Jupe signifies something of Dickens' view of woman as the embodiment of grace and mercy of God: it is as if through her that Grandgrind and his daughter are regenerated spiritually.
 26. Dickens, C. Bleak House (Oxford) reprint. 1970 Chaps VIII and XXV. Norris Pope points out that Dickens was not a "Gospel Christian" and that he was often unfair to dissenters such as the smooth sanctimonious hypocrite, Snawley in Nicholas Nickleby, the Rev. Melchisedech Howler, the non-conformist rector in Dombey and Son as well as Chadband in Bleak House. Yet in reality, he liked many dissenters, the Bridetts, who were evangelical, John Foster, W.J. Fox and Elizabeth Gaskell. See Dickens and Charity (London and New York) 1978 pp22,34 - 37
 27. ER Vol 68 1838, pp77-78 quoted by House, H. The Dickens World (Oxford and London) 1941 p40 The article probably reflects how Dickens regarded his own objective in writing the novels he did, where morally good people correct those evils they see around them and oust the immoral and evil elements in society, typified in characters like, Fagin, Sikes, Squeers, Quilp, Krook, Tulkinghorn and Vholes.
 28. Dickens, C. Oliver Twist (Harmondsworth) repr. 1978 p39
 29. id. Bleak House op cit p46 Walter Bagshot, reviewing the new collected edition of Dickens' works in the more stable period of the later "fifties" looked on such individual benevolence as an outmoded taste: for him it was a temporary phenomenon best explained as a corrective reaction against the harsh and narrow spirit of those in high places "to perform the task in ameliorating harsh customs and repealing dreadful penalties". Bagshot claims that Dickens "is an example of the proper use and of the abuse of sentiment", which had been typical of the period immediately following the Napoleonic wars: the sentiment was popular and even fashionable among the novelists of the forties despite the fact that many philanthropists, including Dickens, gave considerable support to the institutions of collective charity. Estimations in Criticism, 11, p193 quoted House op cit p47
 30. Prochaska, F.K. Women and Philanthropy of the Nineteenth Century (Oxford) 1980 p184 Also see Part 1 Chap 1.2. p65-7 (below)

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31. Slater, M. Dickens and Women (London)1983 p306:
In 1857, on a report of Angela Burdet-Coutts on children in the Ragged Schools, he comments on the better behaviour of the girls, and adds, "There is so much more Good in women than in men, however Ragged they are".
32. ibid. An example can be found in Little Dorrit in a scene where the landlady of the Break of Day Inn speaks as one who values womanly tuition above male reason:
"I am a woman, I. I know nothing of philosophical philanthropy (of man). But I know what I have seen, and what I have looked in the face, in this world here, where I find myself. And I tell you.....there are people.... who have no good in them - none.....who must be dealt with as enemies of the human race." (Slater, p305)
33. Ironically Charley Neckett, the responsible adult child provides an antithesis to Harold Skimpole, the irresponsible childish adult, who avoids earning a living by extorting money from the generous and gullible, neglects his wife and children and leads them all into unhappiness and bankruptcy. Esther began to question his behaviour from earlier on, when she noticed that he eats a basket of peaches without paying for them, and also, in the Bell Yard scene, when he genially underplays the plight of Charley's struggling family. She has to be as devious as he by revealing to him that Richard has been reduced to penury, knowing that Mr. Skimpole will lose interest in anyone who can no longer give him money to settle his own increasing debts. (BH. p828) This is one of the few characters whom Esther grows to dislike, probably abhorring the sin more than the sinner. Also, structurally, she serves to protect her beloved guardian from the hurt of Skimpole's treachery towards him. Jarndyce's long-suffering tolerance of Skimpole results not unpredictably in Skimpole describing his benefactor in his diary as: "the Incarnation of Selfishness". BH p831 Chap 61
43. ibid. Slater observes that Dickens was unhappy with women writers who dealt overtly with the passions rather than with feelings; according to Slater he eschewed reading books written by Georges Sand, who was popular in England at the time, and the Bronte sisters: in 1860, he made it known he had not read Jane Eyre and he would probably have been disgusted with Wuthering Heights, and have disapproved of Shirley in which "the young ladies.....make all the advances ". pp319-320, Dickens also appeared nervous about any manifestation of aggressive female passion. Madame Lefarge's unleashing of female revenge in The Tale of Two Cities is safely depicted against the backcloth of a foreign social upheaval. Slater writes of Dickens' revulsion of the ferocious energy of women during the Revolutionary uprising in Paris and how he feared the

- terrible power that he sensed was buried in the perverted female nature. He claims, it reflected the novelist's own nervous sexual responsiveness to women both in his life and in his novels. p356
35. BH op cit. Chaps IV and VI 11
 36. Humphry House has traced the obvious actual source and philanthropic model of these events. He writes: "Ten years before Bleak House came out- that is about the time that Esther first went to the Jellyby house - the African Civilization Society and Niger Association, largely managed by Fowell Buxton, got up a hare-brained expedition which most readers would have taken to be Dickens's model. 'We read in the chronicles of the time,' says Miss Martineau, 'of public meetings, with Prince Albert in the Chair, so crowded that persons were carried out fainting; of the congratulations and mutual praises of statemen and prelates, of grand subscriptions and yet grander hopes.' An expedition of three iron steamers, two of which were appropriately named the Albert and the Wilberforce, was prepared in the Thames, and, after a visit from the Prince Consort, sailed bravely for Africa. There were scientists on board and two representatives of the C.M.S. The purpose was double - to open up trade on the upper Niger, and to establish a model farm there as a centre of beneficent Christian civilization. Numbers died of malignant fever, and the whole attempt was abandoned within a year. Buxton's main aim had been to deflect Africans from the slave-trade by the alternative of 'legitimate' commerce. The Borrioboola-Gha venture failed because of the 'King of Borrioboola wanting to sell everybody- who survived the climate - for rum'." op cit.p87
 37. Dickens shared with Carlyle a critical despair over the kind of philanthropy which was concerned with overseas barbarians, while social injustice flourished and spread in Britain's cities. See House op cit p87; also Pope, N. Dickens and Charity (London) 1978
 38. House ibid p87
 39. BH op cit Chap VI 11
 40. Pope, N. op cit pp132-3
 41. Slater, M. op cit p332
 42. ibid p331
 43. ibid Slater cites two articles featured by Dickens in Household Worlds, one by Harriet Parr entitled "Two-Pence an Hour" and another by Florence Wilson headed "Only a Governess" p330
 44. ibid p329 In 1844 Dickens accepted an invitation to speak at a dinner in aid of the Governess' Benevolent Institution, to denounce the shabby remuneration and indicate his warmest sympathy with the cause. Through articles in his journals he often drew public attention to the hardships endured by milliners' apprentices, needlewomen and sempstresses. See Henry Morely's

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- articles "Day Workers at Home" HW Vol.13 pp77-8
and "Many Needles in One Housewife" HW Vol 15
pp234-6
45. Dickens, C. Nicholas Nickleby (1839) (Harmondsworth) 1978
 46. Slater, op cit p329
 47. ibid p329
 48. Miles, R. The Fiction of Sex (London) 1983 p14.
In "Sucking Pigs" (HW vol.4 pp145-7 8th. Nov 1851)
Dickens makes it clear he was adverse to women's rights
campaigns. In the essay he sets out to ridicule Mrs.
Colonel Bloomer, a campaigner for greater freedom for
women on a visit to London, for entrenching herself
behind "a small table, ornamented with a water bottle
and tumbler, and from that fortified position to hold
forth in public."

5.2. THE ETHIC OF CARE : THE FEMALE NOVELIST (pp483-501)

1. Bronte, C. Shirley (London) 1975 Chap.22
2. Charlotte Bronte was uncertain over the question of women's emancipation. On John Stuart Mill's article on the emancipation of women, she cautiously comments, "I think the writer forgets there is such a thing as self-sacrificing love and disinterested devotion", while agreeing with his demand that all careers should be open for women to try.
3. Carol Gilligan finds similar dilemmas in her twentieth century studies on highly successful professional women.
op cit p158
4. Shirley op cit p511
5. Beer, P. Reader, I Married Him (London) 1974 88
6. Cazamian, L. The Social Novel In England 1830-50
(London) 1973 p232
7. Shirley op cit Chap.5
8. see Part 1 Chap.2.3 p160 (below)
9. Shirley p322
10. The characters, Robert Moore and John Thornton, are both harsh, driving, entrepreneurial industrialists who are softened by a young girl's humanitarian influence.
11. Williams, R. The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (1971) Also J.S.Baker remarks that, although Charlotte Bronte was reared in an anti-radical and Evangelical Anglican home, she is not very much an evangelical. He finds her "a very secular novelist", like George Eliot, "a link between Protestantism and its child Naturalism, and at least to that extent, she stands with the Liberals." The Novel and the Oxford Movement (Princetown) 1932 Chap VIII p86

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12. Gaskell, E. N & S op cit p186
13. *ibid* p182
14. *ibid* p234
15. *ibid* p204
16. Figes, E. Sex and Subterfuge (London) 1982 pp155-6
17. N&S op cit p384 She also commits the error of lying to the police and becoming implicated in the Frederick affair. See Chap.4.3 Nts 143 and 144
18. *ibid* Mrs. Thornton grudgingly admits that Margaret "might be bold, but she'll never be giddy." p 395
19. *ibid* p525
20. *ibid* p525
21. Duthie, E. N. The Themes of Elizabeth Gaskell (London) 1980, p201
22. Figes, E. op cit p158
23. N&S op cit p158 Elizabeth Gaskell uses an interesting metaphor in North and South which indicates that she was in sympathy with John Stuart Mill's apprehensions over the democratic freedoms of minority groups living in a Bentham-type Utilitarian society: "The question always is, has everything been done to make the suffering of these exceptions (the mill-workers) as small as possible? Or, in the triumph of the crowded procession (of industrial advance), have the helpless been trampled on, instead of being gently lifted aside out of the roadway of the conqueror, whom they have no power to accompany on his march?", p108
24. Figes, E. op cit p158
25. The novels of Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Bronte reveal that, as women, they were uninterested in politics and matters of reform. As Enid Duthie correctly points out, by the time Gaskell began to write Mary Barton she had at least thirteen years of experience of the industrial city and that period included the depression of 1836 and the terrible years of 1839, 1840 and 1841 and the resulting Chartist agitation. (op cit p65) Thus, in Mary Barton, Elizabeth Gaskell not only displayed a guarded interest in Chartism, she also protested about the lack of welfare legislation in respect of the long working day, pointing out that the worst industrial accidents happen in the last hours of the day. (Chap. x) She is critical that girls were made to start too early: the factory work made them "too tired and down in the mouth", making them unfit for housekeeping and motherhood. One of her characters, an old lady, asks why "can't he (Prince Albert) make a law against poor wives working in the factories?" Ch x. Also, in Mary Barton (1848), some of Gaskell's scenes correlate closely to sections of Edwin Chadwick's Conclusions in his Report on the Sanitary Condition of the Labouring Population (Parliamentary Papers 1842) vol xxvi p369-72, in which he writes: "That the various forms of epidemic, endemic and other disease caused or aggravated, or propagated chiefly amongst the

- labouring classes by atmospheric impurities produced by decomposing animal and vegetable substances, by damp and filth, and close and overcrowded dwellings..." reproduced in Industrialisation and Culture (1830-1914 ed Harve, C. Martin, G. and Scharf, A. (Open University Press) 1970 pp137-141 Likewise, Charlotte Bronte's interest in the history of Luddism and the position of the workers in the face of new inventions which replaced manpower is a thematic feature in Shirley
26. Haight, G. George Eliot, A Biography (Oxford and New York) 1968 p
 27. Knoepflmacher, Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel (Princeton) 1965 p44-5 George Eliot takes away the concepts of Divine intervention and pre-determinism and replaces these with individual responsibility and self-determination, with all the attendants of human frailty to contend with.
 28. *ibid* p53
 29. Hetty Sorrell, who is like Eve, the temptress, is supplanted by Dinah, the good woman of intelligence and common sense, who eventually becomes Adam's wife. Adam has initially courted Hetty.
 30. 29th. March 1826 Fry, E. Memoirs Vol 2 p2
 31. (ed) Massingham, H. The Great Victorians essay on George Eliot, p189
 32. WR, NS 10 July 1856 pp56,72
 33. The letters were published five years later in the tract The Helpers of the Holy Souls (London) 1868 pp25-6
 34. Charlotte Yonge's novels are mostly set around the cathedral town of Winchester which in The Clever Woman of the Family is referred to as Avoncaster. Yonge's success as a novelist is that, like Jane Austen - although not so accomplished as her predecessor - she wisely wrote about the Hampshire and Devonian environments she knew. She was also capable of discerning human foibles: some of her satirized people, such as the pretty empty-headed, Miss Menteith are reminiscent of Austen.
 35. Afterword to The Clever Woman of the Family (Virago ed) 1985 p371
 36. Wolff, R.L. Gains and Losses (London and New York) 1977 pp120-33
 37. Avery, G. Nineteenth Century Children: Heroes and Heroines in English Children's stories 1780-1900 (London) 1965 p75
 38. Clearly, Charlotte Yonge's "ethic of care" was powerfully shaped by her deep love in the mystical dogmas and rituals of High Church Anglicanism and her dislike of Romanism and evangelical puritanism. Her earnest Tractarian message to her young readers intermingles dogmatic warnings about running into the traps of liberalising the world and the risk of damnation with

interesting advice of "Never read a badly written book" In Yonge's later fiction for a more adult market, there is little evidence of open didacticism. One is inclined to agree with Robert Lee Wolff when he writes, "Although the Tractarian lesson of The Clever Woman is more visible than that of The Heir of Radcliffe, it is cunningly embedded in the windings of an elaborate and well-told story that it needs to be separated out."

p 137

39. Wolff, R.L. op cit p126
40. *ibid.* Had Yonge been born in a different place in a more liberally-minded family and into the more radical Utilitarian Church, she, like Elizabeth Gaskell, may have been a stronger advocate of the self-assertive female philanthropy. Evidence of a rebellious spirit was present in her own character. Yonge is known to have said that her father and Keble had difficulty in teaching her - an energetic and enthusiastic young woman with a ready tongue - the lesson of self-discipline. There is a strong indentifiable parallel here with the character of Rachel Curtis. Even more pertinent, is the firm stance taken by Yonge to uphold the new Anglican sisterhood, kept secret, in The Heir of Radcliffe. Robert Lee Wolff points out that such sisterhoods were a Tractarian innovation much criticised even by other Anglicans. In the novel, the charitable sisters are blamed for educating the pauper children "in a way unfit for their station" and for "visiting the sick to preach to them to their death" for visiting the poor at all hours, and also "a miserable lodging house...filled with the worst description of inmates". As the sisters face a strong party of resentment and protest, Charlotte Yonge comments in an aside, there is a "tyrannous hate" in the world for "unusual goodness", which impedes the usefulness of the sisters. This passage suggests that Yonge is in favour of a far stronger social commitment by women than her own parochial position permitted her. See pp 119,133
41. Preface to Hidden Depths (1868)
42. Marcus, S. The Other Victorians (New York) 1964, In his book, Marcus examines some of the pornographic material written during the nineteenth century, including a "secret diary of a nobleman" who anonymously records in considerable detail many of his adventures of debauchery.

5.3. CONCLUSION : THE PHILANTHROPIC NOVEL pp502-506

1. Gilligan, C. op cit p158
2. Faber, R. Proper Stations Chap.3 p34
3. See Introduction p22-3 (above)
4. Chesterton, G.K. The Victorian Age in Literature (London) 1913-4 p91-2
5. ibid p93
6. ibid p94

5.4. THE PHILANTHROPIC THEME AND THE CONTINUING LITERARY
TRADITION OF WOMEN
(pp507-516)

1. Knoepflmacher, op cit p4, writes that Mrs. Ward somehow signified the culmination of two distinct though overlapping phases of Victorian speculative thought: the one expressed the continuing altruistic philanthropic theme for women, the other projected an evolutionary "scientific cast of mind", an inventive humanist attempt to reconcile a form of Christian socialism with the new power of Science.
2. Trevelyan, Janet Penrose (daughter of Mrs. Ward) The Life of Mrs. Ward reviewed by Virginia Woolf in The New Republic 9th Jan 1924. Mrs. Ward also published a pamphlet on infant feeding to distribute in the Oxford slums, and worked for women's higher education and social reform. As a young girl of the Anglican Broad Church living in Oxford, she had been strongly influenced by Felicia Skene, the Anglo-Catholic philanthropist as, "a saint of goodness, humility and tenderness" despite their different religious views. Like many of her novelist predecessors she portrayed the influence of Christianity on human character. See Showalter, E. op cit p229 and Wolff, R.L. op cit p150
3. Ward, Mrs.H. Robert Elsmere (London) 1888, bk 111, Ch xix, p259 Robert Elsmere was attacked by prominent Churchmen for its "agnosticism", (a new term), its melodramatic attack on orthodox beliefs in allowing her empirically-minded clergyman hero to engage in religious disbelief and his support for evolutionists principles. See Knoepflmacher, op cit n. p4
4. Mrs. Ward had actively opposed the franchise movement from 1889 onwards and in 1908 became first President

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- of the Anti-Suffrage League, which published the monthly Anti-Suffrage Review.
5. Showalter, E. op cit Showalter claims that Mrs. Ward shared with the suffragettes, especially Mrs. Pankhurst, a sense that women were united by the terrible and holy sufferings of childbirth. p229
 6. Florence Nightingale admits to having more "pressing evils" to concentrate on. Woodham-Smith, Cecil, Florence Nightingale (London) 1950 Ch xx p487 George Eliot was unsure of women's readiness to assume political responsibility and Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Yonge both believed women should fight for others rather than for themselves.
 7. Taylor, H. "The Enfranchisement of Women" WR LV p310.
 8. Showalter op cit pp220,222
 9. ibid p224 In a speech to the Womens Writers Suffrage League in 1907, Elizabeth Robins referred to male complacency: "If I were a man, and cared to know the world I lived in, I almost think it would make me a shade uneasy - the weight of that long silence of one-half of the world," See E.R. "woman's Secret", W.S.P.U. pamphlets in the collection of the Museum of London.
 10. ibid p260. First quoted in the correspondence between Clive Bell and Virginia Woolf (1909) over the first drafts of The Voyage Out.
 11. and 12. These are generally held views of Virginia Woolf's critics, summarised by John Holloway in the chapter, entitled "The Literary Scene" in The Pelican Guide to Literature, The Modern Age (ed) Boris Ford (Harmondsworth) 2nd ed 1963 pp72-5
 13. Joyce uses the technique in Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man (1916) and further developed it in his subsequent novels.
 14. Spender, Dale Women Of Ideas and What Men Have Done To Them (London Boston and Melbourne) 1982, p457, 459 In 1953, Vera Britten wrote Lady Into Woman: A History Of Women from Victoria to Elizabeth. She opened her book with a letter of reminder to her daughter, Shirley Williams, the politician, that "all is not yet well with the position of women ". (Cited by Spender, p457)
 15. Miles, R. The Fiction of Sex (London) 1983. In her book, Rosalind Miles urges contemporary women writers to look outside rather than in , to widen their field of vision and experience. She says that they must develop a sense of community, to look to the "moral" rather than "emotional" dimension, and to get away from the sexual cliques, from the narrow concentration on the minutiae of women's lives. She adds the novel does not only reflect and record experience, it defines and delineates it too. p195
 16. The failure to recapture the altruistic spirit of the

nineteenth century fiction in the twentieth century novel may rest on a number of factors. However, Iris Murdoch in her essay "Against Dryness", probably gives some explanation of this, when she observes that the novel of the eighteenth century and nineteenth century - a medium of allegory and moral tales - was less concerned with the human condition and more with the real, various individual struggles in society, whereas the novel of the twentieth century, usually either crystalline or journalistic, is either, "a small quasi-allegorical object portraying the human condition and not containing characters in the nineteenth century sense". (published in Encounter in 1961).

17. Lessing, D. Memoirs of a Survivor (London) 1975, written at a time of fear of nuclear threat, is an allegorical story of a woman who has escaped a crumbling society, in which children have become cannibals and animals are sentient. The woman's sexual and maternal instincts have also dissipated.
 18. Iris Murdoch describes well a world of complex characters, who, as presented, may sound or seem real, but they can only relate to each other by some form of arbitrary sexual encounter or through some act of violence or a bizarre involvement in a dangerous situation. Although Murdoch is capable of suspending both suspense and creditability, and is a gifted writer she is lacking in the essential novelistic gifts of insight, sympathy and human warmth. See Bergonzi, B. The Situation of the Novel (2nd ed London) 1979 p48
 19. Swingewood, A. The Novel and Revolution (London) 1975 p125
 20. Henry James, who was born in New York is not strictly an English novelist, but he chose to settle in Europe in 1875. His novel, The Bostonians (1886) which examines the question of women's suffrage in New England, anticipated the move towards women's suffrage in Britain.
 21. Eagleton, T. Literary Theory (Oxford) 1983 pp148-9
 22. ibid p150
 23. Mill, J.S. The Subjection of Women (Virago ed) 1983 pp45-6
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APPENDIX

Women writers who were also philanthropists and social campaigners.
(Listed in alphabetical order)

Isabella Varley Linnaeus Banks (1821-77)
Supporter of women's rights.

Barbara (Leigh-Smith) Bodichon (1827-91)
Interested in education and "ragged schools" and feminist issues.

Elizabeth Rundle Charles (1828 -96)
Hospital and hospice work. National Association for Befriending Young Servants.

Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904)
Interested in "ragged" schools, antivivisection and women's employment.

Sarah Ellis (1810-72)
Quaker who later became a Congregationalist. Temperance, female education and Christian missionaries.

Lady Georgiana Fullerton (1812-85).
Roman Catholic philanthropist, interested in hospice care for the dying.

Elizabeth (Cleghorn Stevenson) Gaskell (1810-65).
Philanthropist in Manchester, interested in the education, the industrial poor and the plight and rehabilitation of prostitutes.

Margaret Gatty (1809-73)
Parish work and children's moral education

Anna Maria Hall (1800-81)
Interested in temperance, women's rights and needy governesses.

Mary Howitt. (-)
Quaker teacher and visitor of hospitals and prisons and anti-slavery campaigner

Elizabeth Geraldine Jewsbury (1818-81).
Interested in workingclass problems.

Emma Marshall (1830-99)
Promoted higher education for women

Harriet Martineau (1802-76)
Campaigner for all manner of social, economic and political reforms and feminist issues.

Caroline Norton (1808 -77).
Campaigner for married women's property rights, divorce and child custody.

Maria Rye (1827-1903).

Promoted women's causes and involved in the Church of England Waifs and Strays.

Elizabeth Missing Sewell (1851-1906).

Member of the Oxford Movement, Educationalist.

Felicia Mary Frances Skene (1821-99).

Anglo-Catholic prison worker and rescuer of prostitutes.

Sarah Smith (Hesba Stretton) (1832-1911)

Worked with prostitutes and interested in the protection of cruelty to children.

Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna (1790-1846)

Concerned about poor working conditions and low pay for women and children.

Charlotte Maria Tucker (1825-93)

Church of England missionary.

Mrs Humphry (Mary August Arnold) Ward (1851-1920)

Anti-suffragette leader who campaigned for higher education for women. Involved in general social work among the poor.

Charlotte Yonge (1832-1901).

Anglo-catholic. Village and Sunday School teacher and fund-raiser for missionary work.

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Brenda Matthews

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