THE ROLES OF MALE SEXUAL PREDATORS IN THE NOVELS OF AUSTEN, CHARLOTTE AND ANNE BRONTË, AND GASKELL

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLES OF MALE SEXUAL PREDATORS IN THE NOVELS OF AUSTEN, CHARLOTTE AND ANNE BRONTË, AND GASKELL

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In this thesis the roles of sexually predatory male characters in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and Elisabeth Gaskell's *Ruth* and *Mary Barton* are analyzed, based on the theory of psychiatrist Karen Horney and the reader-response theory of Wolfgang Iser. The hypothesis is that the male sexual predator represents a reflection of the pursued heroine's idealized image, an unrealistically idealized and preferred self-image in Horney's terms, and makes the education and vindication patterns of the novels possible.

Keywords: literature and psychology, reader response, Horney, desire, self-image

ÖZ

AUSTEN, CHARLOTTE VE ANNE BRONTË, VE GASKELL'İN ROMANLARINDA CİNSEL AÇIDAN AVCI ÖZELLİKLERİ GÖSTEREN ERKEK KARAKTERİN ROLÜ

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Bu çalışmada, Jane Austen'ın *Ateş ve Kül*, Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë'nin *Şatodaki Kadın* ve Elisabeth Gaskell'in *Ruth* ve *Mary Barton* adlı romanlarındaki cinsel açıdan avcı davranışları gösteren erkek karakterler, psikiyatrist Karen Horney'ın kuramı ve Wolfgang Iser'in okur tepkisi kuramına dayalı olarak analiz edilmiştir. Çalışmanın savı, bu karakter tipinin, elde etmeye çalıştığı kadın kahramanın bir idealize edilmiş imgesini, yani Horney'ın kavramlarına göre kendine dair gerçek dışı, idealize edilmiş ve tercih edilen bir imgeyi temsil ettiği, ve romanların eğitim ve haklı çıkarma şablonlarını mümkün kıldığı yönündedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: edebiyat ve psikoloji, okur tepkisi, Horney, arzu, kendine dair imge

To My Mother and My Son

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As a character type, the male sexual predator is a perennial favourite in Western literature. As hero, rake, lover or villain, he is an important literary figure found in very different literary genres and almost all periods from the Classical age to the twenty-first century. His roles and the messages that are conveyed through him show important differences from one period, or even one writer, to another, but he can be very broadly defined as a sex-hungry male character, usually trying to seduce or sexually assault women. The focus of interest of this thesis will be the roles of this character type in novels of the nineteenth century by Jane Austen, Charlotte and Anne Brontë and Elisabeth Gaskell.

A brief survey of uses of this character in European, especially English, literature shows how prevalent and important he is in literary works, for both plot and message purposes. The male sexual predator in nineteenth-century novels has evolved from previous examples in literature; and whether used as a simple plot element or a tool for didactic aims, he is a major element of the works in which he figures.

Among the forefathers of the male sexual predator are the gods and heroes of the Classics, whose sexually predatory behaviour sets in motion the events on which the plots of mythological tales and epics rely. Olympian Zeus, who can entice or coerce any mortal woman to sex in whatever shape he pleases and begets demi-gods that are the heroes of myth, is as sexually aggressive as the heroes of the *Iliad* who appear to be motivated more by lust than love, like Paris who seduces the queen of Sparta, and Agamemnon and Achilles, who block the momentum of the Trojan War that Paris caused because of a squabble over captive women. Another sexually predatory hero type is the *miles gloriosus*, the braggart soldier of Greek comedy who tries to seduce the heroine.

The type is conspicuously absent from English literature up to the Middle English period, perhaps due to the general near-absence of investigation of male-female relationships in narrative works of the period. But the male sexual predator reappears as the Squire of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1386-1400), "A lover and a lusty bachelor" with clearly an active sex life: "So hot he loved that, while night told her tale,/ He slept no more than does a nightingale" (Chaucer: l.80, 97-98). Although he is not vital to the plot, simply because there is less action than tales-within-a-tale here, the squire is one of the memorable personalities of the *Canterbury Tales*, as are later examples of the type in fiction and drama.

In the drama of the English Renaissance, the sexual predator has his great come-uppance. The first wish of Marlowe's Dr Faustus in the eponymous play (1604), after he sells his soul to the devil, is for a woman, "for I am wanton and lascivious, and cannot live without a wife" (Marlowe: 5/140), and later, specifically, Helen of Troy. Traces of male sexual predation are discernible in the miserly hero of Jonson's *Volpone* (1606), who woos and nearly rapes the married Celia, and Circe's son Comus in Milton's *Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle* (1634), who attempts to seduce the aristocratic Lady with magical wine and his own sensuality, presenting a prototype of Milton's later ultimate tempter, the Satan of *Paradise Lost* (1667). In those examples, the importance of the sexually aggressive behaviour seems to expand from being only part of the general evil and fallen nature of Faustus to being the basis of the temptation plot in the *Masque*.

The plays of Shakespeare alone appear to be a breeding-ground for the type, who usually dominates and even determines the plot through sexual predation: Bertram in *All's Well That Ends Well* (1603) tries to seduce a virgin and is instead bed-tricked in the dark into consummating his own marriage with Helena; following the same motif, the ostensibly ascetic Angelo in *Measure for Measure* (1604) lusts after the pure Isabella who can only be saved by the bed-trick involving the forsaken fiancée Mariana. Imogen, the heroine of *Cymbeline* (1609), finds herself besieged by two sexual predators: her step-brother Cloten, who plans to rape her wearing her husband's clothes, and the same husband's so-called friend, Iachimo, who bets against her chastity, tries to seduce her and tells lies of

his success to her husband Posthumus when he is refused. Even more vicious are the brothers Chiron and Demetrius in *Titus Andronicus* (1594), for they not only rape the heroine Lavinia but, following the example of Tereus with Philomel in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, cut off her tongue and hands so she will be unable to tell of it.

The stage examples of the sexually predatory male after the English Civil War appear to be of the less violent and more playful kind; indeed, it is in the comedy of manners of the Restoration and the eighteenth century that they are most prominent as wits and rakes. These examples who woo and bandy words with single and married women alike, are again central to the plots which revolve around their flirtations, but their sexuality appears not as a form of vice, but as acceptable behaviour of a man-about-town. One of the very first examples, Dorimant of the many mistresses in Etheredge's *The Man of Mode* (1676), is generally regarded as having been modelled after the most famous of real-life Restoration rakes, Lord Rochester. Similar rakes are Horner in Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1672), who specializes on seducing married women and spreads rumours of his own impotence to facilitate his access to them, and Constant in Vanbrugh's *The Provok'd Wife* (1697), who attempts to comfort the cheated wife Lady Brute in the same manner. The two rakes in Congreve's *Love for Love* (1695) are especially interesting because their case shows the actual liberty of the libertine: the ironically named Valentine has, quite freely, a number of illegitimate children by former mistresses, and his friend Scandal, just as openly, sleeps with their wet-nurse whenever the occasion arises. This play also features an example of the would-be rake in Tattle who continually boasts of alleged conquests of important women.

The failure to seduce appears to be the only occasion when the sexual enterprises of the Restoration rakes are shown to be unacceptable: it is not the taking advantage of women, even dependent women, that is shown to be reprehensible, but lacking the charm or wit to do so. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) also features a rake with a weakness like Scandal's; the hero Marlow, although hardly able to stammer a word to genteel ladies, is a heart-

breaker with servant girls whom he regards no differently than prostitutes: when his friend is astonished at his plan to "rob a woman of her honour", he replies, "Pshaw! pshaw! we all know the honour of the barmaid of an inn. I don't intend to *rob* her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house, I shan't honestly *pay* for" (Goldsmith: IV/1, emphases in the original).

Sexually predatory behaviour of masters, directed against servant girls, is also an important issue in the novels of the eighteenth century: the attempted seduction of maids by masters is to be seen in Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), where Moll is first seduced by the oldest son of the family that raised her not quite as one of their own, and in Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749): in Tom himself who stands in awe before the heroine Sophia, yet has no qualms in bedding the dishevelled Moll Seagrim. This is also the central motif in Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748), the heroine of the former successfully resisting her master to be rewarded with his hand, that of the latter being undone only because she is drugged and overpowered by Mr. Lovelace. Especially the rakes in Richardson's novels continue the Miltonic tradition of representing temptation for the heroine which she must withstand. The male sexual predators thus have a clear role in the didactic purpose of these novels, as the evil over whom the good of sexual virtue must be chosen. This role is later elaborated in less openly didactic and more complex examples especially by women novelists in the nineteenth century.

Other novels of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries feature the male sexual predator as one of the most important stereotypes of the Gothic novel, like the vicious Monk in Lewis's novel of the same name (1796) who rapes the innocent heroine only to discover later that she was his sister. The hero of Byron's *Don Juan* (1819) is often seen as a prototype of the male seducer, although Juan, like Tom Jones, appears to play the passive role in seduction almost as often as the active one. Yet apart from the Gothic subgenre and Byron's works, the male sexual predator is to be found in the works of many nineteenth-century novelists even besides those dealt with in this thesis: George Osborne in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847) is clearly a rake of the eighteenth-century order, who uses Amelia's love letters to light his cigar and invites Becky to run away to the

continent with him only weeks after his marriage. Only one example among many in the novels of Dickens is James Harthouse in *Hard Times* (1854), who tries to lure Louisa away from an unsatisfactory marriage into a fate much worse. Eliot's Arthur Donnithorne in *Adam Bede* (1859), who seduces the country girl Hetty (again of a lower social class) is clearly a sexual predator, albeit one who is portrayed as less blameworthy than the famous Alec D'Urberville, about whom critics are still at odds as to whether he rapes or seduces the heroine of Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891).

Examples from literatures of other countries appear to confirm that the male sexual predator type is most prominent in the nineteenth century. Julian Sorel, the young seducer of the married Madame de Rênal in Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* (1830), and Rodolphe, the willing lover of Emma Bovary in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) are examples of the type in French fiction. The male sexual predator also figures in German literature in the characters of Crampas in Fontane's *Effi Briest* (1882) who makes advances on the married Effi, and Schach in his *Schach von Wuthenow* (1896), who impregnates, but refuses to marry, the disfigured Victoire. He is found in one of the most important works of Scandinavian literature, though in drama instead of the novel, in the servant Jean in Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1888) who drives Miss Julie to suicide after having given in to his temptation, and in the canon of the Russian novel in Anatole Kuragin, the vicious abductor of Natasha in Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1865), as well as in the form of both father Fyodor and son Dmitri Karamazov, confronting each other as rivals for possessing Grushenka, in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* (1879). Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893) presents another example of the type in American fiction in the character of Pete, through whom Maggie is undone.

The literature of the fin-de-siècle and the twentieth century, on the other hand, sees comparatively few examples of the male sexual predator, probably because the danger they pose to women's lives and reputations is smaller in an era of greater social and sexual freedom. Among canonical works, only Wilde's *Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) features a truly hedonistic hero who leads many women

(and young men) to their doom, including Sybil Vane whom he drives to suicide. In Shaw's *Man and Superman* (1905), for example, the principle of the "chase" is turned upside down: in the dream sequence Shaw continues the discussion of love from Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, showing the reversal of roles, as Tanner in the role of Don Giovanni is hunted by Ann as Donna Anna, instead of the other way round. English, European and American literary works alike indicate that male sexual predation as such is in decline in the novel as in drama. In Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), both sexes have to be coaxed to sex by the state, and it is again a woman, Lenina, who tries to seduce the "savage" John instead of being seduced by him. Both Stanley Kowalski in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and Osborne's Jimmy Porter in *Look Back in Anger* (1956) are sexually aggressive, but only as part of already violent nature in the former case and of protest against society, even the whole world, in the latter. In the twentieth century, sexually predatory behaviour appears to be of interest in works of literature only when it escalates into violence, as in Osborne; rape, as in Williams; or sex with minors, as in Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), which also bears traces of incest.

In his old role as philanderer and heart-breaker, the male sexual predator figures mainly in contemporary popular fiction and modern romance, especially the kind aiming at an urban female readership and commonly referred to as 'chick lit.' According to Jauss, this literature falls short of being classified as art since "it confirms reader expectations" (Holub 324); in the formulaic plots of these modern romances, the male sexual predator usually plays the expected role of the seducer, without variations or complex characterization. Most students know, but in the seminar room seldom refer to, figures like Daniel Cleaver in Helen Fielding's *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996), the good-looking boss who seduces his co-worker and is later caught *in flagrante* with another woman. This and similar modern examples of the type leave behind broken hearts, but no broken lives and hardly any broken reputations as in works from previous periods, since in the contemporary urban setting of the western world, women's lives do not depend on

these men's support, nor their social status on withstanding the men's sexual seduction.

It is this danger to the life and virtue of the besieged woman that the male sexual predator generally embodies in the canonical works of earlier periods: although he may at times appear as a comic figure, merely by his failure to seduce, as in the cases of the *miles gloriosus* and the would-be rake of Restoration comedy, he presents a great peril to women from which they must guard themselves. Mostly this danger functions as a plot catalyst: Iachimo's attempted seduction and subsequent lie lead to Imogen's flight and the continuation of the plot in *Cymbeline*, and Marlow's sexual preference of lower-class girls necessitates the comedy of erring roles, with his intended bride playing a barmaid, in *She Stoops to Conquer*, just as the first seduction of Moll simply begins a career of other sexual adventures or rather enterprises. In some works, the danger posed by sexual predators is simply so great that women cannot guard or extricate themselves from it: Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus* is taken by sheer force, just like Richardson's Clarissa and the Monk's sister. These works appear to be intended to shock rather than to warn, conveying the message that even vigilant virtue is no help against true villains of this kind. Here, the sexual predator is a basic evil element.

Richardson's *Pamela*, most nineteenth-century works and also the modern romance works which, as Tania Modleski (15) points out, evolved directly from the novels of Richardson, Austen and the Brontës, often present situations in which the heroine is tempted, though not forced, by the sexually predatory hero; this makes for conflicts to be dealt with in the work and can lead to implicit or explicit moral messages. The male sexual predator is here not simply an embodiment of evil but an essential element leading to the heroine's development. The role he plays in this process of temptation is an important clue for his role in the narrative: far from being merely a tool for warning against his rape or seduction, he also represents a particular self-image of the heroine, an unrealistic image of what she desires to be but cannot become, especially in restricting social circumstances. The male sexual predator is all that a liberal-minded single lower

middle-class woman living in the nineteenth century, like the heroines of novels of this kind, is not but would, secretly or openly, like to be: rich, mobile, powerful, able to live his life as he wants without being ostracized. Thus he may be said to embody, in Horney's terms, the heroine's idealized image, "an image of what the [person] believes himself to be, or of what at the time he feels he can or ought to be" (Horney: 1945, 98).

This idealized image is bound to change in the narrative since the novels in which the young heroine is tempted by a male sexual predator are coming-of-age novels, and usually have what Bernard J. Paris calls an "education plot" (Paris 1997, 11): an important part of the heroine's education consists of seeing the male sexual predator for the villain that he turns out to be, sometimes through the example of other victimized women, and then rejecting him, or changing him so much that he can no longer be deemed predatory. She sheds an unwholesome part of her self, the part that aspires to be like him.

In the idealized world of the novel, the heroine is then rewarded with a better (or bettered) partner and glorified. This often escalates to the "vindication pattern" (Paris 1997, 15) which involves not only her being appreciated as she deserves, but also the chastisement of wrongdoers. The male sexual predator hence has a role not only in the female protagonist's education, triggering the education process, but also in the vindication, being punished in the plot by injury, death or unhappiness. The education and vindication patterns feature in comic or satirized form in modern romance novels, as well as in more serious form in the nineteenth-century novels from which they evolved.

While novels by writers like Thackeray and Dickens also feature examples of minor sexually predatory characters, in the nineteenth century this character type is most frequently found in the novels of women writers, whose works also present the most minutely characterized, and most memorable, sexually predatory heroes. Although these characters are portrayed in great detail and with convincing realism, and although they are major characters as they mark an important turning-point in the heroine's development, they are never focalizers, but only presented through the eyes of others, of the heroine and/or the narrator.

This intensifies the effect of the implied author "taking sides": identification with the heroine and her choice of finally rejecting the male sexual predator is encouraged, and the condemnation and punishment of the predator shown to be just by the novel's rhetoric, i.e. "all the devices an author employs to influence readers' moral and intellectual responses to a character, their sympathy and antipathy, their emotional closeness or distance" (Paris 1997, 11).

The rejection of the idealized self, represented by the male sexual predator who is finally shown to be destructive, is also in accordance with Iser's concept of the blank which the reader is called upon to fill in. Since the male sexual predator's mind and motivations are not known to the reader for most of the novel and are only to be guessed at by his actions, he might be termed a blank who is filled in by the reader, so that his selfishness and destructiveness become clear gradually, contrasting with the initial, favourable or at least neutral impression he makes. "Through filling in blanks . . . the reader acquires a perspective from which previously held opinions are rendered obsolete or valid" (Holub 333). By 'filling in' the character of the male sexual predator during the process of reading, the reader forms his opinion of him according to the character's actions, which is different from the good opinion first held of him. The gaps are also aligned in such a way as to lead the reader to gradually acquire a negative opinion of him, which accords with Iser's concept of "steering the reader" (Holub 329).

The working definition for this character type in the works of Jane Austen, Charlotte and Anne Brontë, and Elisabeth Gaskell must naturally be more authoritative than the very broad one given at the beginning of this introduction. The male sexual predator will be referred to in the remainder of this thesis in this rather wordy manner, for want of a better term: "seducer" would fit neither the rapists nor those who do not actually succeed in seducing the heroine, and the term "rake" denotes the playfulness and cheerful libertinism of the heroes of the Restoration comedies too much as to be appropriate for dark, dangerous characters like Charlotte Brontë's Rochester. This character type is often young and usually sexually attractive, promiscuous, and with previous sexual experience. His sexual promiscuity is often associated with other forms of loose living:

drinking, gambling, violence, or squandering of money. He is usually of a higher social status, and always has greater mobility, than the heroine; but often lacks the power of will and character to match hers. In most cases and in a variety of ways, he attempts to seduce the heroine and usually also other women who are victimized as examples of the dangerous outcome of giving in to his seduction. In accordance with the quality of the character as a blank in Iserian terms, only his attractiveness and charm are presented, from the outside, at first; the destructive and immature sides of his charm become clear to the reader during the process of reading as their effects are seen in the plot.

While this character type usually appears to represent danger for the heroine for plot purposes, he also represents a reflection of a particular flattering self-image of the heroine he pursues, in Horneyan terms, of her idealized image; and makes the education and vindication patterns of the novels possible. In support of this argument, this thesis presents an analysis of the roles of male sexual predators, mainly based on the mature theory of Karen Horney and backed up with the reader response theory of Wolfgang Iser, in novels by Jane Austen, Charlotte and Anne Brontë, and Elizabeth Gaskell. The analyses will focus on Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*, chosen for their presentation of sexually predatory heroes that are particularly prominent, attractive and dangerous, both in the mood of their presentation and the effects they produce in the plots and messages of the novels. Other works by the same authors, and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, will be referred to when necessary.

After this Introduction, the second chapter of this thesis will present the theoretical background and methodology of the study, a short summary of the mature theory of Karen Horney and its application, together with reader response theory. Chapter III is devoted to the analysis of the roles of sexually predatory heroes in the novels of Jane Austen in Part A, the Brontës in Part B and Elisabeth Gaskell in Part C. The findings of the analyses will be presented in Chapter IV, discussion and conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The narratives in which the male sexual predator is an important element are mainly of a domestic nature; the novels are usually based on love and family life, on personal, even intimate matters. The conflicts among and within the characters are in the foreground, these are often conditioned by less conspicuous conflicts between characters and society.

Although these are fictional characters, they are more than simple tools for plots: they have motivations designed by the author by way of clues and experience taken from real life. What role these characters play in the narrative is best analyzed by tracing the roles they play in their fictional lives and their relationships within the created world of the novel. This could be deemed a psychoanalysis of the characters. However, to gain an insight into the characters' roles as literary elements, a certain understanding of how the text manipulates the presentation and readers' reception of these characters is necessary. Hence a combination of psychoanalytic approach with insights from reader response theory can illuminate the character type's function in the narrative as well as in the whole rhetoric of the novel.

Horneyan theory provides a particularly useful way of analyzing literary characters and relationships from the psychological angle. This is mainly because it is a detailed, yet precise and commonsensical system which enables the critical analysis to focus on the personality structures of the fictional characters and their conflicts as they are in the text, without making it necessary to build up a hypothetical pre-existence as a Freudian-based analysis would.

The theory may appear to be inappropriate for study outside of the medical/analytical field at first glance because the foci of Horney's study are

patients with neurotic character structures. Not only is this the case with most psychological and psychoanalytical study, since researchers naturally concentrate more on deviant than ordinary cases of human behaviour, but the study of unhealthy behaviour is moreover a great help for the study of literary character. This is because characters so memorable and pivotal as to be studied in criticism are generally those whose attitudes are out of the ordinary and against expectations, with unbalanced and conflicting personalities: characters that are, in modern terms, psychically ill. Considering Karen Horney's definition of neurosis as "*a disturbance in one's relation to self and to others*" (1950, 368. emphasis in the original), the term neurotic is applicable to fictional characters insofar as their behaviour in the narrative can be shown to disturbed, both within themselves and in relationships with other fictional characters. Whenever the terms neurosis or neurotic turn up in the remainder of this thesis, they may be simply read as indicative of behaviour that implies the presence of conflict, since "neuroses are essentially the result of conflicts" (Horney 1939, 24), and must be analyzed.

The fact that with Horneyan theory the analysis centres on these conflicts within the character structure, and not on the childhood where character traits are rooted, makes it especially useful for literary study: it is not necessary to assume certain experiences in childhood about the fictional characters; the analysis of the adult is easily done through the evaluation of his behaviour and his relationships with others in the novel. Horney makes this possible by viewing unhealthy adult behaviour as being not simply the repetition of specific experiences in early childhood as in Freudian theory, but as the result of the sum total of childhood experiences that form a neurotic character structure:

> The connection between later peculiarities and earlier experiences is more complicated than Freud assumes: there is no such thing as an isolated repetition of isolated experiences; but the entirety of infantile experiences combines to form a certain character structure from which later difficulties emanate. Thus the analysis of the actual character structure moves into the foreground of attention (Horney 1939, 9).

It would be easy to view the conflict between the male sexual predator and the heroine as situated round a core of a wholly sexual nature, in harmony with

orthodox psychoanalytic theory according to which all conflicts stem from sexual/libidinal roots and their suppression. But as Horneyan theory puts character structure, its conflicts, and the defenses employed to evade them into the centre of attention, "sexual problems are no longer in the [*sic.*] dynamic center of neuroses. Sexual difficulties are the effect rather than the cause of the neurotic character structure" (Horney 1939, 10). Ostensibly purely sexually determined behaviour is then one sign among many of deeper conflicts that must be analyzed.

Horneyan theory has been successfully applied to the literary study of works by writers as diverse as Shakespeare (Rosenberg 1961, Rabkin and Brown 1973) and Hemingway (Yalom and Yalom 1971), among many others. It has been used as a tool for the analysis not only of fictional characters, but also of the implied author, and also in psychobiography (Thompson 1966). These previous studies have demonstrated that one of the great strengths of this approach is its ability to deal with the constructedness of fictional material, with the shadowy figure of the implied author and with contemporary analytic awareness in the form of the potential deconstructions of the text.

While Horneyan theory is a valuable tool for the analysis of the behaviour and relationships of literary characters as far as they are openly given in the text, reader response theory helps to cover the territory which is more or less deliberately left bare by the author, where motivations or actions of characters are not stated, but form blanks which are to be filled in by the reader. Although Holub points out that reader response criticism appeared in the United States while its counterpart, originated at the German University of Constance under Carl Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, is referred to as reception theory, the term reader response will here continue to be used for Iser's work, according to the correct use of the term as defined by Iser himself in the preface to *The Act of Reading*:

> It is called aesthetic response because, although it is brought about by the text, it brings into play the imaginative and perceptive faculties of the reader, in order to make him adjust and even differentiate his own focus. This approach implies that the book is to be regarded as a theory of aesthetic response (*Wirkungstheorie*) and not as a theory of the aesthetics of reception (*Rezeptionstheorie*). (1976, x, emphasis in the original)

As Iser emphasizes, the theory is centred not on simply how the text affects the reader, which could be termed completely subjective and bound to change with each reader, but rather on the reader's response to the stable text: "A theory of response has its roots in the text" (1976, x). This rootedness in the literary text, together with providing an important tool in mapping out points in the text which invite the reader to "participate in the production of meaning" (Holub 327) or lead him in a certain direction, is the reason why Wolfgang Iser's theory of response will also be used in this study. His definition of schematized aspects alternating with blanks, "where the reader is called upon to connect or bridge the schematized aspects" (Holub 329) accounts for the degree of identification by the reader with a scene in which he is invited to participate during the act of reading. It also makes clear how the organization of alternating stable given points and blanks leads the reader subtly in a certain direction, or to the forming or acceptance of a certain meaning.

Before outlining in which way Horneyan theory and Iser's response theory will be used in this study, a short summary of both are necessary. An outline of Horneyan theory and its application in this thesis will be followed by a summary of response theory and how it will be used to analyze the texts studied here.

A psychoanalyst born in Germany in 1885 who emigrated to the USA in 1934, Horney questioned Freud's libido theory and traced the origins of neuroses to cultural influence and disturbed human relationships rather than genetic motivation. Her mature theory, outlined in her two latest works, *Our Inner Conflicts: A Constructive Theory of Neurosis* (1945) and *Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization* (1950) works on the simple tenet that when basic psychological needs are frustrated, people develop strategies of defence both within their own self and in their relationships with others. When these basic psychological needs like safety, warmth, support and esteem are not met in infancy, alienation from the self takes place as defence against basic anxiety, which is "a feeling of helplessness toward a potentially hostile world" (Horney 1939, 74): to keep this anxiety down, the person devises defence strategies, which are ways to cope with people and to manipulate them with

minimum damage to himself, and “constitute our effort to fulfil our now insatiable needs for safety, love and belonging, and esteem” (Paris 1997, 18-19).

There are three basic trends in strategies of defence: moving toward, against or away from other people. The person is compulsively driven to one of these as the main solution (to lessen his neurotic anxiety); which move he makes depends on the combination of temperament and environmental factors. One trend is emphasized, but the others are still at work unconsciously and manifest themselves in conflicting drives, neurotic needs and fears etc., which leads to inner conflicts and turmoil. If the person is forced to abandon the main strategy or if it collapses, he may turn to another of the repressed strategies.

Of the three main trends, one is compliance or the self-effacing solution (moving toward people); a person who adopts this trend “tends to subordinate himself to others, to be dependent upon them, to appease them... what he longs for is help, protection, and surrendering love” (Horney 1950, 215). Examples of this type, who glorify suffering, gentleness, meekness and love, are to be found especially among female characters in literature, which is not surprising especially in literature up to the 19th century since the idealized attributes of this trend correspond directly to those of the ideal wife and mother, the Victorian ‘Angel in the House’.

The second trend is aggression or the expansive solutions (moving against people), in which there are three subdivisions. One is the narcissistic type, whose “unquestioned belief in his greatness and uniqueness is the key to understanding him.” He is dependent on “endless confirmation of his estimate of himself in the form of admiration and devotion”. Although he can be “charming”, he is also “unreliable” and “does not seem to mind breaking promises, being unfaithful, incurring debts, defrauding” (Horney 1950, 194-95). The character type studied in this thesis seems to be predominantly narcissistic.

Another type of the expansive trend is the perfectionistic type, who “feels superior because of his high standards, moral and intellectual, and on this basis looks down on others” (Horney 1950, 196). He pursues the impossible, flawlessness in the whole conduct of his life, and holds others in cold contempt

though he usually behaves in a friendly manner. He is usually not even conscious of his arrogance because his high standards would not allow emotions deemed improper by social standards.

The third type of the expansive trend is the arrogant-vindictive type, whose "main motivating force in life is his need for vindictive triumph." This type has no qualms in using people for his triumph and frustrating others, feels no ties of love or loyalty, and can put himself and others in danger during "spells of vindictive fury." Characters of this type may be among the most interesting in literature; Horney herself mentions Captain Ahab in Melville's *Moby Dick*, Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, and Julien Sorel in Stendhal's *The Red and the Black* as examples of this type (1950, 198).

The third main trend is detachment or resignation (moving away from people). A person who adopts this trend detaches himself from close relationships not only with other people, from profound beliefs and loyalties, interests and values, effort and achievement, but also from his own life: he is "an onlooker at [*sic.*] his own life". He may look very normal, but his peace is "merely the absence of conflicts" (Horney 1950, 260) because he stays away from anything that might cause trouble, and leads an essentially blank life.

In every neurosis the person makes up an idealized image of himself to compensate for feelings of inadequacy and self-hate. In this unrealistic image the main trend is emphasized, but it has superhuman attributes of all three trends. It is everything he wants to be, and in time he identifies himself with this demi-godly self-image and turns it into an idealized self, now really considering himself to be as grandiose as his idealized image.

In the "search for glory" (Horney 1950, 24), the process of trying to live up to his idealized image, the person develops neurotic needs, which are exaggerated and compulsive needs for unconditional love, attention or mastery. In Horney's definition, "the difference between spontaneous and compulsive is one between 'I want' and 'I must in order to avoid some danger'" (1950, 29). These needs later amplify into neurotic claims on the rest of the world, when the person really feels entitled to the object of these compulsive needs. The conflicting trends in the

person lead to conflicting ethical codes, conflicting conceptions of justice, and bargains with fate due to neurotic claims. This also leads to regarding the double standard as fair; a different code is expected to apply to himself than to other, lesser, human beings.

The neurotic also burdens himself with tyrannical shoulds, which are unreasonable demands from himself. He tries to do justice to his idealized image, everything else seems worthless. So he also makes up a despised image of himself: the opposite of the idealized image, everything he doesn't want to be, which will loom as the dangerous pitfall he will sink into if he cannot act up to the shoulds.

The neurotic pride, pride in the attributes of the idealized self, is the climax of the process of searching for glory. It is an important defence but vulnerable, so there are many defenses for restoring it, like vindictiveness, externalization, playing down, losing interest in situations or people that hurt the pride.

Horneyan theory is used in literary study not only to determine which trend a given character or character type seems to fit, like a zodiac sign. It is feasible to assume that the male sexual predator also moves toward a goal of affirmation by seduction, based on a set of values like charm, power and ostensible independence, with special defences of the narcissistic type. The roles he plays in this process are an important clue to his role in the narrative.

Horney also points out that someone who has adopted compliance often takes the expansive partner as the idealized image and lives out wishes vicariously through that partner:

> [The self-effacing person] is inclined to overrate [people of the aggressive type] because they all seem to possess attributes which he not only bitterly misses in himself but ones for the lack of which he despises himself. . . he externalizes his own expansive drives and admires them in others. It is their pride and arrogance that touch him to the core. Not knowing that he can solve this conflict in himself only, he tries to solve it by love. To love a proud person, to merge with him, to live vicariously through him would allow him to participate in the mastery of life without having to own it to himself. If in the course of the relationship he discovers that the god has feet of clay, he may sometimes lose interest – because he can no longer transfer his pride to him (1950, 243-44).

Substitute “she” for “he”, and this appears as a description of most relationships between (also sexually) aggressive heroes and frail heroines in fiction. This is often the case particularly when the heroine is immobile, weak and poor, and the male sexual predator mobile, powerful and rich. In this context this theory is in harmony with Eagleton’s Marxist approach to the Brontës: an important element of the idealized image is belonging to a high, or higher, class, in terms of both wealth and social status. In the novels studied in this thesis, the male sexual predator is also a class representative.

The male sexual predator plays the role of the idealized image of the heroine and serves to illuminate certain points in her development, especially when her priorities and idealized image change. The fact that the reverse hardly ever happens indicates that the role of the male sexual predator often may not be more than to be a tool for the heroine’s change: he hardly shows any change and, as has been mentioned before, is never the focalizer, he is only seen and presented through the eyes of others and at most given a scene in which he explains the motivations of his behaviour, again without any hints as to what is really going on in his head.

The analysis of a set of defenses and tools for the affirmation of needs can also be attempted in the case of the implied author. Paris points out that “writers tend to validate characters whose defensive strategies are similar to their own and satirize those who have different solutions” (1997, 12). These characters, with strategies similar to the writer’s, are often designed as mouthpieces, and are lauded and rewarded for representing and defending values to be affirmed, explicitly or implicitly, in the novel. The others, especially those who have done them wrong, are shown to be wrong and criminal, and punished.

According to Karen Horney, “inconsistencies are as definite an indication of the presence of conflicts as a rise in body temperature is a sign of physical disturbance” (1945, 35). Paris points out that there are often incongruities in the realistic novel: the plot itself may show incongruities, and besides this, form and

theme may be incongruous with the novel's professed realism. A happy ending does not appear reconcilable with the neurotic character who does really not grow up, but merely switches "from one destructive solution to another" (1997, 11). The rhetoric (theme, tone, narrative voice etc.) indicates the primary defences of the implied author, especially if it consistently glorifies one particular trend, and is used to prove right the implied author and her mouthpiece, which is usually the heroine. The mimetic representation of the characters, however, may prove the mouthpiece wrong, or not as morally right and matured as she is presented by the rhetoric. If the rhetoric itself is inconsistent, "it reveals the implied author's inner conflicts" (Paris 1997, 13).

The novels analyzed in this study have plots both of education (though this may later be proven to be not towards real maturity, but a switch to another set of defenses) and of vindication. The male sexual predator has a role in the education and vindication plot and plan of the author. He is an essential part of both: he necessitates the heroine's growing up by tempting her, after which her eyes are opened to the destructive side of his freedom, mobility and power, which she rejects in him and accepts not having in herself. To emphasize and prove the point, he is punished in the vindication.

Following the guidelines of these ideas, the analyses that follow will rely largely on the concept of the idealized image which is projected on the potential partner and later rejected together with him, on the main defensive trends employed by the characters, narrators and implied authors, and on the repressed tendencies and trends to which they may switch. The analyses will begin with the introduction and characterization of the male sexual predator and his comparison with the narcissistic type in Horneyan theory, trace the influences of the male sexual predator and the heroine on each other's values and lifestyles during the relationship and after its breakdown, and focus on the new "self", values and conduct that the male sexual predator and the heroine embrace after the relationship, that are thus presented as the implied author's approved values and conduct. The punishment of the male sexual predator for his morally wrong values and behaviour will also be alluded to.

Wolfgang Iser's (b. 1926) response theory, developed at the University of Constance in Germany and outlined in his *The Implied Reader* (1974) and *The Act of Reading* (1976), works on the premise that the meaning of a literary text is not fixed, but formed during the process of reading: "the reader, by filling in gaps or indeterminacies in an already given structure, completes the literary work and thereby participates in the production of meaning."

The text provides a fixed standing ground for the reader with "schematized views" (a term Iser borrowed from Ingarden), "supplying the reader with a correct form to contemplate" (Holub 327, 329) due to clear descriptions and reliable information. The repertoire of the text, which "consists of all the familiar territory within the text" (Iser 1976, 69) due to established norms, also provides a base from which the text starts to diverge. The schematized views alternate with indeterminate points, blanks which the reader must bridge and fill in so as to join the process of meaning formation:

> What is missing from the apparently trivial scenes, the gaps arising out of the dialogue – this is what stimulates the reader into filling the blanks with projections. He is drawn into the events and made to supply what is meant from what is not said. What *is* said only appears to take on significance as a reference to what is not said; it is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meaning (Iser 1976, 168, emphasis in the original).

These blanks not only serve to make the reader a part of the read scene by actively imagining the parts not given in the text, but also trigger a process where the reader will draw conclusions from blanks he fills in, question and refuse formerly held truths, and search for new answers: "through filling in blanks on the syntagmatic level the reader acquires a perspective from which previously held opinions are rendered obsolete or invalid. When this occurs, a 'negation', defined as a dynamic blank on the paradigmatic axis in the reading process, takes place" (Holub 333). This negation of former opinions and views leads to the search for new answers, "something . . . to be formulated but concealed by the text" (Iser

1976, 18). The answers, not clearly given but implied, appear as the joint work of text and reader.

Iser emphasizes that "a theory of response has its roots in the text" (1976, x), and it is clear that the negations and following answers are not left to chance or the reader's individual disposition: the alternating schematized views and blanks are placed and arranged in such a way as to lead the reader to calculated negations and conclusions. The reader must "be gently guided by indications in the text, though he must never have the feeling that the author wants to lead him by the nose" (Iser 1974, 37). This guidance, which Iser calls "steering the reader (*Leserlenkung*)" (Holub 329), leads to the negation of certain opinions and adoption of others as conditioned by the author.

The use of Iser's reader response theory is especially valid in this thesis since the character type in the novels studied here is a blank in itself: in marked contrast to the heroines, whose motivations are known no matter whether they are narrators or seen from outside, the male sexual predator is a great unknown in every novel. His behaviour, and the reasons for it, form the "gaps" which have to be "supplied from what is not said." Together with the heroine in the novel, who is also ignorant about the character type and attempts to make sense of his enigmatic behaviour by filling in what he does not explain, the reader slowly "fills in" the blank of this character, until the initial "romantic quality" of the romantic hero is negated by his being revealed as unsuitable. The immature and destructive side of the male sexual predator's expansiveness become clear during the reading process as their results are revealed: either he does not have the attributes he seemed to have earlier in the novel (as in *Sense and Sensibility*), or the notion that his lifestyle and high social state are enviable is negated (especially in Gaskell). Effectively, the reader is steered into negating the solution represented by this character and adopting the opposite one.

The analyses that follow, though mainly relying on Horneyan theory, will be backed with the concepts of the schematized views, the blanks filled in, and the negation attained by the reader. Although readers of Austen, the Brontës and Gaskell, at the time of their novels' publication as now, might largely be

composed of women, the pronoun “he” will be adopted for reference to the reader in the remainder of this thesis for the sake of brevity, especially since Iser also presupposes a male reader.

CHAPTER 3

NOVEL ANALYSES

3.1.

The Male Sexual Predator as catalyst for the heroine's relinquishment of rebelliousness in Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*

The rhetoric of *Sense and Sensibility* presents the rake Willoughby as a dashing, spellbinding figure from the very beginning. While other characters are introduced by the narrative voice which outlines their character traits, Willoughby makes a "dramatic entrance" into the story, according to the dictates of romance" (Mooneyham 33), as "a gentleman carrying a gun, with two pointers playing round him" (Austen 41) who miraculously happens to step up just as the heroine Marianne Dashwood falls down. Indeed, this motif of the mysterious young man, who appears out of nowhere to save the lady from a fall, bandits or any other mishap, has been used countless times in popular romantic literature. This character combines the effect of his surprising entry into the narrative with his role as unexpected helper in distress and his good looks, to fascinate the stricken heroine as well as the reader. The repertoire, the use of familiar norms from romance, is visible in this very introduction scene, yet though these norms will "arouse particular expectations" that the text will develop in harmony with the norms, the novel will diverge from these especially in terms of the male sexual predator. "These subsequent divergences are the first step toward innovation" (Iser 1974, 32).

If Willoughby's entrance is a surprise, his first action is a shock because the rescue makes it imperative to put decorum aside: "The gentleman offered his services, and perceiving that her modesty declined what her situation rendered necessary, took her up in his arms without further delay, and carried her down the

hill." Although this action is indeed what the situation requires, since Marianne is "scarcely able to stand" (Austen 41) on her twisted ankle, the thought of a man carrying a woman not married or engaged to him in his arms was considered scandalizing not only in Austen's time, but even at the end of the nineteenth century. Mina Urgan relates that Hardy was forced to purge a similar scene from his *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* in 1891 so that the novel could be published in instalments, only to reintroduce the titillating details in a later edition:

> The chief editor of *The Graphic Magazine*, for example, considered it improper for a magazine read by the whole family that Angel Clare carried Tess and three of her friends over a creek in his arms, and found it more decorous that these ladies be conveyed to the shore in a wheelbarrow. So the girls were shipped in a wheelbarrow in the instalments, and carried in Angel Clare's arms when the book was published in one volume (Urgan 1375).

It is never clearly said that it is scandalous for a young girl to be in such close bodily proximity to a young man and that the scene is titillating – considering the social norms of the time, that probably is not necessary. Yet, considering Iser's claim that "it is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meaning (1976, 168), this unformulated fact is filled in by the reader, as well as the effect of the scene on Marianne.

The act of carrying an injured woman in his arms, especially having spoken no more after "having offered his services" (Austen 41) appears to be a service, but since it is scandalizing, it is also in a sense a snub for the woman thus treated, especially if it is considered that Marianne is not only so bashful during the incident that "the confusion which crimsoned over her face, on his lifting her up, had robbed her of the power of regarding him after their entering the house," but also ridiculed as a result of it: "the laugh which his gallantry raised against Marianne, received particular spirit from his exterior attractions" (Austen 42). The laugh raised against Marianne, presumably by her mother and sisters who are the only ones in the house, would be well-meant "laughing with her" at her embarrassment, but it is stated that the laughter, and probably the embarrassment that caused it, are so great because the rescuer is young and handsome, hence sexually attractive: it is implied that Marianne must have enjoyed the rescue. And

it is especially telling that her confusion robs her "of the power of regarding him *after their entering the house*" (italics added): she might have been looking at him or revelling in being in his arms on the way down the hill; it is only when they reach the house and the situation becomes public that she is declared to be mortified, and it is again up to the reader to conjecture the true scope of the mortification.

This loss of dignity is described by Karen Horney as an element very often seen at the beginning of the kind of problematic relationship between a self-effacing person (usually the woman) and an expansive person (usually the man) which she terms a morbid dependency. Pointing out that it is the man's pride and strength which fascinates the woman, Horney claims that "the relationship may start indeed with some crude offense on the part of the arrogant person. . . insulting behaviour frequently precipitates a dependent relationship." Being carried because of a twisted ankle could not justly be termed a crude offense, but Horney lists more "subtle and insidious" examples of insulting behaviour that fascinates the self-effacing person:

> It may consist of a mere lack of interest or an arrogant reserve, of paying attention to others, of joking or facetious remarks, of being unimpressed by whatever assets in the partner usually impress others – such as name, profession, knowledge, beauty. These are 'insults' because they are felt as rejections, and – as I have mentioned – a rejection is an insult for anybody whose pride is largely invested in making everybody love him (1950, 245).

Willoughby's introduction into the narrative shows a very refined version of this behaviour since he causes her embarrassment when she is defenseless, but shows none of that embarrassment himself at holding a pretty young woman close while she is later laughed at because of her excitement at his "manly beauty." His short performance in this scene is enough to make her fall for him, including his leave-taking, in which Austen implies that he may be especially trying to be fascinating: "he then departed, to make himself still more interesting, in the midst of an heavy rain [*sic.*]" (Austen 42). The text does not make it clear whether the departure is indeed a show, but plants a doubt. The reader will again have to fill that blank in for himself, but this arrangement of the blank with the incriminating

verb “to make himself” does begin to steer the reader in the direction of seeing Willoughby as a show-off. Marylin Butler also claims that his attractiveness in this scene is not wholly natural: “his entrance, like that of the ‘preserver’ of the heroine in a romantic novel, at once gives him a superficial glamour” (186).

The hero introduced with such an exciting scene appears to gain the affections not only of the heroine and her family. It is clear that the household consisting of ladies is impressed by his looks and action: “his manly beauty and more than common gracefulness were instantly the theme of general admiration” (Austen 42). But even the narrative voice, otherwise so sober as to credit Marianne with having a face “so lovely, that when in the common cant of praise she was called a beautiful girl, truth was less violently outraged than usually happens” (Austen 45), praises him almost as much as the Dashwood family, so that Willoughby is presented as both charming and honest:

> Elinor and her mother rose up in amazement at their entrance, and while the eyes of both were fixed on him with an evident wonder and a secret admiration which equally sprung from his appearance, he apologized for his intrusion by relating its cause, in a manner *so frank and so graceful*, that his person, which was uncommonly handsome, received additional charms from his voice and expression (Austen 41, italics added).

Iser claims that during the reading process, what is read is continuously compared to what has been read before, so that new information shows the previously read one in a new light: “every reading moment sends out stimuli into the memory . . . reading does not merely flow forward, but the recalled segments also have a retroactive effect, with the present transforming the past” (1976, 115). In that sense, the narrator’s praise of Willoughby will remind the reader of the half-hearted admittance of Marianne’s beauty few pages before, and the reader will fill in the blank, the unformulated comparison, to understand the subtle hint that Willoughby’s handsomeness is both striking and important.

There is no negative comment on Willoughby to disturb this favourable picture: Sir Middleton, the only person to whom the Dashwoods can apply for information on him, repeatedly claims that he is “as good a kind of fellow as ever lived” (Austen 42). The presentation of Willoughby as a fascinating and lovable

person seems complete by the comments of both the characters and the narrative voice. As in his introduction, Willoughby's characterization seems to be in line with the romance repertoire, and will only prove to diverge from it later in the novel.

This portrait of the charming young man who bursts into the lives of the ladies with an offer of his services is remarkably similar to the description of the narcissistic type in Horneyan theory. At the beginning of the chapter about the trend of narcissism, which is one of the three expansive solutions as defense against anxiety, Horney points out that she uses the term "in the sense of feeling identified with one's idealized self" (1950, 194 *n.*). This means that a person who has adopted this trend presents himself to the world and to himself as someone so gifted, lovable and adorable as he wants and strives to become. Horney claims that the narcissist's "often-fascinating charm" stems from "his unquestioned belief in his greatness and uniqueness."

Willoughby's dramatic rescue action and his equally interesting departure in the rain appear studied, intent on impressing the ladies, as Austen implies with the latter scene, when compared to the behaviour of the narcissist towards people whom he has newly met:

> He is often charming indeed, particularly when new people come into his orbit. Regardless of their factual importance for him, he *must* impress them. He gives the impression to himself and others that he 'loves' people. And he can be generous, with a scintillating display of feeling, with flattery, with favors and help – in anticipation of admiration or in return for devotion received (1950, 194, emphasis in the original).

Willoughby's eagerness to charm agrees with the description of the narcissist, just as his hunger for admiration and devotion. In his later confession to Elinor, Willoughby explains that he began his relationship with Marianne only to wallow in her love for him: "I endeavoured, by every means in my power, to make myself pleasing to her, without any design of returning her affection" (Austen 308). Horney also states that "a sober onlooker would find him unscrupulous, or at least unreliable" (1950, 195). Willoughby's untrustworthiness is essential to the plot of

the novel and will be dealt with later in the chapter, and it is one of the important attributes that correspond to the portrait of the narcissist.

Of course, the dependency on approval and the unreliability are not the virtues that Marianne admires in Willoughby, especially since these become clear only late in the narrative. She sees only those attributes that she expressly looks for in an idealized partner, and the reader will recognize them because they have been listed. Long before the appearance of Willoughby, during her sister's courtship with Edward Ferrars, Marianne criticizes Edward for lacking some qualities which are those she wants in a partner, and can barely imagine her sister being ready to forgo in her future husband:

> His figure is not striking; it has none of that grace which I should expect in the man who could seriously attract my sister. His eyes want all that spirit, that fire, which at once announce virtue and intelligence. And besides all this, I am afraid, mama, he has no real taste. Music seems scarcely to attract him.. . . I could not be happy with a man whose taste did not in every point coincide with my own. He must enter into all my feelings; the same books, the same music must charm us both (Austen 17).

Marianne wants a partner with spirit and fire; moreover, she wants a partner whose taste should be the same as hers. The reader will remember from previous pages that she is herself "eager in every thing" and "every thing [*sic.*] but prudent" (Austen 7). According to the claim that "every reading moment sends out stimuli to the memory" (Iser 1976, 115), the reader will draw the parallels and infer not only that she is looking for someone like Willoughby, but also that she appears to be looking for a male version of herself: for the same type of personality with more masculine attributes. At first she seems to have found the perfect match in Willoughby, whom Butler terms her "***alter ego***" (187, emphasis in the original). It is pointed out expressly that "their taste was strikingly alike" (Austen 46), and since Marianne stands for the "Sensibility" of the novel's title (as opposed to Elinor who represents "Sense"), just how important the taste is in the context of the novel becomes clearer when the definition of "Sensibility" in Austen's period, according to the Oxford English Dictionary Online is considered:

> **6.** In the 18th and early 19th c. (afterwards somewhat *rarely*): Capacity for refined emotion; delicate sensitiveness of taste; also, readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art.

The text refers back to the quoted passage about Edward's lack of passion to make sure that even the inattentive reader draws the parallels to that passage, fills in the blanks about Marianne's search for someone exactly like herself – which, unlike the list of her preferences, is not given – and realizes that Marianne's preferences have been met: "his musical talents were considerable, and he read with all the sensibility and spirit which Edward had unfortunately wanted" (Austen 47).

These preferences show more than only a foible for handsome men with artistic talents: the statements in the novel about Marianne's values and her expectations from life reveal that she wants free enjoyment of art and sexual feelings without the restriction of social rules and the lack of funds. This is not clearly stated, and considering that "only participation – as opposed to mere contemplation – can bring the reader the hoped-for satisfaction" (Iser 197, 48), it is possible that getting the information about Marianne's wishes for life openly, without filling in the blanks and finding out by himself that what she wants in her partner is what she wants in herself, would bore the reader. But since these preferences are only to be inferred, the reader makes the connections between Marianne's and Willoughby's choices.

Willoughby not only shares Marianne's values and tastes, thus her sensibility; he at first appears to be a means of realizing her preferences. What Marianne is after, though not consciously, is nothing less than what Horney describes as the vicarious experience of mastery that the self-effacing person attempts through the expansive partner: "to merge with him, to live vicariously through him would allow [the self-effacing person] to participate in the mastery of life without having to own it to himself" (Horney 1950, 243-44).

The very first pages of the novel disclose Marianne's choice of a partner with artistic taste and abilities in the passage just quoted; her first conversation with that partner further reveals her own interest: the couple "speedily discovered that

their enjoyment of music and dancing was mutual", and Marianne speaks about her favourite authors with "rapturous. . . delight" (Austen 45). One of her wishes in life is to enjoy art to the full, not only through dancing, but also by spending money on music and literature, which she could not possibly afford in her present state. While the Dashwood family is talking about money with Edward, Marianne shows her naive greed in terming two thousand pounds a year "a competence" while to her sensible sister half of that is "wealth;" and as the sisters fantasize on being given "a large fortune apiece," Edward correctly guesses how Marianne would use the fictitious money:

> As for Marianne, I know her greatness of soul, there would not be music enough in London to content her. And books! – Thomson, Cowper, Scott – she would buy them all over and over again; she would buy up every copy, I believe, to prevent their falling into unworthy hands; and she would have every book that tells her how to admire an old twisted tree.

Being ready to spend inordinate amounts of money on frivolities – art, romantic literature and "hunters" to be kept in her home with Willoughby – is one indication of Marianne's going against sober social rules, even though she can only do so in fantasy; Elinor prudently speaks about "improvements on this house" (Austen 88) to be done with the same money. There are other factors which show that Marianne struggles against social rules instead of conforming to them. Being admonished by her sister after her first, very lively conversation with Willoughby, she criticizes and ridicules the idea of propriety: "I have erred against every common-place idea of decorum; I have been open and sincere where I should have been reserved, spiritless, dull and deceitful" (Austen 46).

Marianne does not appear to spare a thought for the duties of married life, as opposed to its pleasures, although she dreams of setting up her own home with Willoughby at his estate Combe Magna and amuses Elinor by considering the much-debated two thousand pounds a year barely enough for "a proper establishment of servants, a carriage, perhaps two, and hunters", which Elinor clearly recognizes as "her sister describing so accurately their future expenses at Combe Magna" (Austen 87). There is no indication that she is ready to assume the

responsibility of being the mistress of a large estate, or even that she is aware of such a responsibility. Even when she causes a minor scandal by allowing Willoughby to show her the house when they are not even engaged, she excitedly tells her sister only about the rooms and the view, without a word about how to keep them in order; similarly, she casually speaks of Willoughby's remark that "a couple of hundred pounds . . . would make it one of the pleasantest summer-rooms in England" (Austen 67), without a thought by either as to how that amount of money should be come by. The reader will fill in the blank to understand the scope of Marianne's as well as Willoughby's immaturity and thoughtlessness when he again draws the parallels to the very first pages of the novel (Austen 12), and realize that 500 pounds is the amount that the Dashwoods live on for a whole year.

The carefree, passionate life Marianne thirsts for seems to open up before her with the arrival of Willoughby: with him, she experiences a period of attempting to enjoy extravagances, disregarding social rules, and giving way to sexual feelings. When Willoughby offers to present her with a horse, she cares only about "the delight of a gallop in some of these downs," not about the difficulties that the gift would entail since her mother "must buy another for the servant, and keep a servant to ride it, and after all, build a stable to receive them." Although a horse is a very expensive gift, she also does not heed her sister's doubts about "the propriety of her receiving such a present from a man so little, or at least so late known to her" (Austen 56). She wants to enjoy the luxury, without considering the financial or the social responsibility for it.

Marianne also shows her contempt of social conventions most clearly in Willoughby's presence. While she says nothing about the "horrible insensibility" (Austen 34) of Mrs Jennings and her family who do not listen to her performance at the pianoforte before his appearance, and later merely scoffs at her sister in the passage quoted above, she is more actively rebellious once their relationship has definitively begun. One instance of this is the imprudent conduct of both during the "evenings at the park," on Sir Middleton's estate:

> If dancing formed the amusement of the night, they were partners for half the time; and when obliged to separate for a couple of dances,

> were careful to stand together and scarcely spoke a word to any body else. Such conduct made them of course most exceedingly laughed at; but ridicule could not shame, and seemed hardly to provoke them (Austen 52).

Other displays of the couple's disregard for social rules are worse than merely ridiculous. Marianne's consent to enter Combe Magna with no other companion than Willoughby leads to the sternest reproach of her sister so far: "If they [the house and grounds] were one day to be your own, Marianne, you would not be justified in what you have done" (Austen 66). Although there is no explanation of social rules or what constitutes scandal, Elinor's reprimand helps the reader bridge the gap to understand that what has been done is a serious misdemeanour according to nineteenth-century norms. This visit, which would apparently be considered severely blameworthy even if the two were officially engaged, Marianne claims to have attempted because "Mr Willoughby wanted particularly to shew me the place [*sic.*]" (Austen 66). Though it is not stated which partner incites the other to acts against propriety as regards their animated dancing, here the reader can surmise that Marianne gladly consents to foolish acts that Willoughby invites her to. This way, she has the chance to participate in his way of life.

She also declares, by her actions, her right to be unfriendly to people around her once she has seen Willoughby sneering at Colonel Brandon because the latter has to leave just before an outing:

> There are some people who cannot stand a party of pleasure. Brandon is one of them. He was afraid of catching cold I dare say, and invented this trick for getting out of it. I would lay fifty guineas the letter was of his own writing.

What neither Willoughby nor the reader know, and which appears again as a blank connected to Willoughby's character, filled in only later in the novel when the incident in the plot is long forgotten, is that the Colonel is on his way to save the girl Willoughby himself seduced. This is one of the clearest examples of how blanks in the text are used to mask the true nature of the male sexual predator.

To Willoughby's mockery of Brandon, Marianne tellingly replies with "I have no doubt of it" (Austen 62): in several scenes later in the novel, she is similarly unfriendly or downright impertinent. Upon Edward's question as to whether their neighbours, the Middletons, are "pleasant people", she answers, "we could not have been more unfortunately situated" (Austen 85). Later, in her sorrow when abandoned by Willoughby, she still follows the example of treating the people next to her uncivilly:

> In one thing, however, she was uniform, when it came to the point, in avoiding, where it was possible, the presence of Mrs Jennings, and in a determined silence when obliged to endure it (Austen 193).

The clearest rebellion against social norms that Marianne shows during her relationship with Willoughby is simply the way that the relationship is maintained: Austen shows in the novel, as openly as possible without breaching the same norms herself, how Marianne gives way to her sexual feelings. The eroticism is a blank easily filled in by reader: Marianne's confusion upon being carried in Willoughby's arms at the very beginning is as well indicative of her enjoyment of sexuality as the vivacious dancing and her acquiescence to his calling her "by her Christian name alone" (Austen 57), which Elinor sees as a sure sign of their engagement. Both scenes draw all attention to eroticism without a word about unmentionable body parts or reactions, and while they are in this sense unobjectionable, they might well have been titillating for readers who were Austen's contemporaries.

The most erotically charged scene, however, is the one in which the youngest sister Margaret observes the couple. Perhaps it is told by her and not by the narrative voice so that it may be conveyed in a more innocent and decorous manner, for even Marianne's sitting by her beau with her hair "all tumbled down her back" (Austen 58) is shocking: the hair streaming down her shoulders implies eroticism and a state of dishabille. These connotations, of course, only emerge as the blank is filled in, and the reader's role is here a very active one: since Margaret does not quite appear to grasp the social significance and seriousness of

the scene, she conveys the scene as a very important gap, where the reader will fill in the social implications of which she is unaware.

Willoughby's action and Marianne's consent to it makes this furthermore the only love scene in Austen's novels where more happens than mere speech: "presently he took up her scissars [*sic*.] and cut off a long lock of her hair. . . and he kissed it, and folded it up in a piece of white paper, and put it into his pocket-book." In this scene, Marianne is passive and Willoughby the one who actively cuts off the hair, still she participates in the quasi-seduction by allowing herself to be persuaded when he is "begging something of her" (Austen 58).

During the short time spent with Willoughby, Marianne thus tries to participate in his life: although she cannot accept the horse, she joins him in incivility, disregard for conventions, and sexuality lived out as openly as possible for her without actual slander. Yet Willoughby also lives in a dream-world during his relationship with her, just as she does with him, in which he also realizes what he wants from life.

In his case, it is not as easy at first to trace what he wants from life as in Marianne's case since he is not the focalizer: his motivations are not known; he is only presented externally and presents a blank which is difficult to fill in for at least half of the novel. Though it is clear about Marianne that "her heart was devoted to Willoughby," the narrative voice can only reveal Willoughby's behaviour, the fact that "his attentions were wholly Marianne's" (Austen 52, 53); it does not disclose whether, and how much, he loves her or what else he expects. The observation that he "sacrific[ed] general politeness to the enjoyment of undivided attention where his heart was engaged" (Austen 46), and with it the conjectures that he enjoys the attention and that his heart is truly engaged, belong to Elinor, not to the narrator; hence they might be as unreliable as Elinor's later assumption that the couple must be engaged since Willoughby calls Marianne by her given name.

Only towards the end of the novel, in his first and only scene of explanation and confession, when his objectionable behaviour has already made possible filling in the blank that is his character, does Willoughby disclose what motivated

him at the beginning of the relationship. As pointed out during the comparison of this character with the narcissist in Horneyan theory, his wish at that point is to "pass [his] time pleasantly" by being admired and flattered, and Elinor's conjecture about his wish for Marianne's undivided attention turns out to be true:

> Your sister's lovely person and interesting manners could not but please me; and her behaviour to me almost from the first, was of a kind – It is astonishing, when I reflect on what it was, and what she was, that my heart should have been so insensible! – But at first I must confess, my vanity only was elevated by it. . . I was acting in this manner, trying to engage her regard, without a thought of returning it (Austen 308-09).

In his speech, Willoughby provides another interesting blank: he is unable, or unwilling, to specify Marianne's behaviour to him and "what she was," so far that he cannot even form a proper sentence when attempting to speak about it, which indicates confusion and helplessness. The reader will again fill this in to realize the extent of the difference between her genuine affection and his search for glory.

Willoughby's only other motivation at that stage is his wish for money to pay off his debts and continue his lifestyle, the one that so appeals to Marianne with its luxuries. This wish appears at first not to clash with the one for admiration, but is put forward by Willoughby as the reason for his initial emotional aloofness: "it had long been my intention to re-establish my circumstances by marrying a woman of fortune. To attach myself to your sister, therefore, was not a thing to be thought of." In his confession he describes his attempt to make Marianne fall in love with him, without meaning to love or marry her, as "meanness, selfishness, cruelty" (Austen 309). But if the reader again draws parallels by reconnecting to the stage that Willoughby is speaking of, due to the stimuli sent to the memory by the reading moment, he will remember that Willoughby does not appear to have any qualms in acting in this manner during the courtship. This agrees with Horney's comments on the narcissist type. She points out that although "he is not. . . a scheming exploiter . . . he feels rather that his needs or his tasks are so important that they entitle him to every privilege" (1950, 195). Willoughby is focused only on his own needs of Marianne's admiration and his future wife's

money at this point, and since he feels entitled to both, does not perceive this as a conflict.

The real conflict emerges later, when he must choose between continuing the trend of mastery and accepting a more modest way of life. It might appear at first that his "self-effacing trends" (1950, 192) which Horney claims to be present, though suppressed, in all expansive types, come to the surface at the beginning of his courtship with Marianne: it is stated that "he acquiesced in all her decisions" and later at card play "cheated himself and the rest of the party to get her a good hand" (Austen 46, 52). It is probable that these acts of gallantry are part of his effort to make her admire him the more. On the other hand, this blank may also be filled in later, when Willoughby's character as a scoundrel in other areas of behaviour is revealed and parallels to first indications are drawn, to be a foreshadowing of later deception. This would have been an important hint especially to a reader contemporary with Austen, since cheating at cards was taken as seriously as cheating in other aspects of life.

The narcissist's dependency on approval and love suggests that his self-effacing tendencies might be stronger than in other expansive types. Horney, interestingly, does not touch on this point although she mentions that the narcissist "expects others to 'love' him 'unconditionally'" (1950, 195). Still, the dream-world of Willoughby is not the reverse of Marianne's who adopts expansiveness from the partner: he does not really appear to experience the drives of self-effacing trends, to submit to "the appeal of love" (Horney 1950, 214) which would conflict with his expansive main solution. His conflict is visible in his "unwillingness to enter into an engagement while [his] circumstances were so greatly embarrassed," i.e. to propose to the penniless Marianne while himself in debt. It emerges when he later claims to have found himself "sincerely fond of her," but still is not a conflict between money and love, but rather one between money and being loved. Willoughby himself comments: "had I really loved, could I have sacrificed my feelings to vanity, to avarice?" (Austen, 309)

Willoughby's dream-world consists of being flattered by Marianne's admiration for him, and enjoying her company because of this. His claim to have

seduced Eliza thanks to “the violence of her passions” (Austen 310) for him lead the reader to fill in the information that this dream-world of being loved and flattered is nothing new to him. This is feasible especially considering Horney’s statement that the narcissist wants to be praised by everyone and tries to impress everyone whom he meets. In this sense, Willoughby does not experience a change like Marianne does. For Marianne, the values and behaviour adopted from the partner are wholly new and long sought-for; she only finds them in Willoughby. He, however, seems to experience the time of being admired as merely a new version of his courtships before Marianne; it is only when he is faced with the consequences of the shattered relationship that he perceives it as unique.

Marianne is also confronted with the consequences of the relationship with Willoughby. The connection with him appears to be dangerous: the male sexual predator traditionally represents peril to the heroine he woos. The scene previously alluded to, in which Margaret observes Willoughby cutting off her sister’s hair, presents a clear indication to the reader that Willoughby is out on sexual seduction, the extent of which cannot be given clearly in the text. But this blank is easily filled in by the reader: The cutting of hair is a stock representation of sexual permission or assault, as parodied in Pope’s *Rape of the Lock*. The innocence with which Margaret recounts the scene not only emphasizes the youngest sister’s naivety, since she begins speaking about what she has witnessed with the conjecture that “she [Marianne] will be married to Mr Willoughby soon” (57), when the reader draws the parallels to realize that the conjectures of her mother and Elinor are the same. This also serves to illuminate both the gravity of the situation for Marianne, who could only avert being compromised if she were to be married, and Willoughby’s culpability, although at this point in the narrative both are as yet blanks since it is not clear that they are not engaged.

The later information about his seduction of Eliza is in a sense a concrete showcase of his sexual escapades and makes it very clear that he poses a danger of seduction, and hence the loss of respectability. Although this comes at a point in the story when the relationship between Willoughby and Marianne is finished, it reveals the gravity of that danger to the reader in retrospect.

What jeopardizes Marianne's reputation is less his sexual attractiveness than her own behaviour in allowing and even encouraging him to behave in such an unrestrained fashion. She is compromised by the folly of her behaviour during their relationship and by her open suffering in his absence throughout. As previously alluded to, the couple make themselves "most exceedingly laughed at" (Austen 52) by dancing only with one another. Similarly, when Marianne imprudently agrees to visit Willoughby's house, Mrs Jennings makes what Elinor describes as "impertinent remarks," (Austen 66), although the matron only laughs and implies that the couple will soon be married: "I hope you like your house, Miss Marianne" (Austen 65). After Marianne is abandoned by Willoughby, it is again Mrs Jennings who makes well-meant but embarrassing comments on Marianne's depressed state:

> Upon my word I never saw a young woman so desperately in love in my life! *My* girls were nothing to her, and yet they used to be foolish enough; but as for Miss Marianne, she is quite an altered creature. I hope, from the bottom of my heart, he wo'nt keep her waiting much longer [*sic*.]. Pray, when are they to be married? (Austen 173, emphasis in the original)

Marianne's folly consists mostly in living out all the phases of her relationship right before the eyes of all people – the people being generally represented by Mrs Jennings. Elinor, though also deep in love and similarly disappointed, does not give her the chance to call her foolish, since her love and suffering are kept secret.

It is a matter of dispute whether Marianne is in real danger of being ostracized, since it is a matter of debate whether she is in danger of actually being seduced. While Mooneyham claims that "Willoughby at his worst never intended an assault on Marianne's virtue, nor was Marianne capable of surrender" (35), the danger of sexual seduction is only too real according to other critics. McMaster, for example, also regards the hair-cutting scene as indicative of seduction, "an emblem of things possibly to come":

> The tumbled hair, the reluctantly granted boon, the kissing and triumphant appropriation of the lock, all suggest that Marianne might yield to seduction. . . It is eventually [only] the discovery of the last seduction that terminates [Willoughby's] next attempt (69).

The possibility that Marianne will allow Willoughby to enter full sexual relations with her appears quite real to the reader, because her behaviour is lacking in all the restraint expected from a well brought up unmarried lady. In that sense, Marianne is only one step away from the fate of the youngest sister Lydia in *Pride and Prejudice* who is only saved from a life of 'sin' by the social and financial intervention of Darcy.

Yet Marianne is surrounded mainly by benevolent people who later blame Willoughby for abandoning her, not her for having fallen for him. Mrs Jennings's reaction on the new of Willoughby's marriage to Miss Grey is not only pity for Marianne, the "poor thing", but also anger: "Well, said I, all I can say is, that if it is true, he has used a young lady of my acquaintance abominably ill, and I wish with all my heart that his wife may plague his heart out" (Austen 185). Colonel Brandon similarly comments that Marianne's sufferings "proceed from no misconduct, and can bring no disgrace. On the contrary, every friend must be made all the more her friend by them" (Austen 202).

Marianne is imperilled not by Willoughby himself, but by her behaviour which is at least partly modelled on his, too rebellious to observe social conventions and keep a love affair discreet. The danger of being truly victimized by him only would present itself to a woman of a different sphere: Eliza is not shown to the reader at all; she is a bigger blank that Willoughby himself, to be imagined only by comments. The fact that it is impossible to fill in this blank makes the danger of falling to her situation appear even greater. Willoughby makes the comment that Marianne's mind is "infinitely superior" (Austen 311) to Eliza's: the girl's weak mind and her illegitimacy make her an appropriate victim to physical seduction. This could not be the case for the heroine of the novel with whom the reader sympathizes, and associates to some degree: in the refined world of this novel, the heroine can be foolish, but she cannot be sinful; she can be rebellious, if reformed later, but she must be virginal. The void of information surrounding Eliza marks the limits to which novelists went in matters of sex, to maintain the delicate balance between raising the issue and not alienating the

audience: until Gaskell, few novelists dared to portray a fallen woman as a heroine.

While Marianne is in danger indirectly through her behaviour imitating Willoughby's, and suffering caused by him, he is also endangered in a sense by his relationship with her. In his case, his own idealized self is shaken: while he had been hard-hearted before, enticing love without giving any, he becomes emotionally involved after the affair has ended. He becomes guilty and vulnerable when he is confronted with the consequences of his actions after he has left Marianne for a rich bride.

Willoughby's departure is an important turning-point in the novel. It marks the collapse of the dream-world created by their relationship for both him and Marianne. Willoughby's state of mind in this situation, as in other cases, is only explained in his confession scene. His reasons for leaving and his condition after that remain a blank and are not even referred to by the narrative voice. Only Marianne's condition is outlined clearly for the reader, and her suffering is in accordance with her romantic views:

> Marianne would have thought herself very inexcusable had she been able to sleep at all the first night after parting from Willoughby. She would have been ashamed to look her family in the face the next morning, had she not risen from her bed in more need of repose than when she lay down in it. But the feelings which made such composure a disgrace, left her in no danger of incurring it. She was awake the whole night, and she wept the greatest part of it. She got up with a headache, was unable to talk, and unwilling to take any nourishment; giving pain every moment to her mother and sisters, and forbidding all attempt at consolation from either. Her sensibility was potent enough! (Austen 80)

Although the ironic tone suggests that Marianne's reaction to the parting is exaggerated, the pain that she experiences must be real. Since she has been forced to part from a person she sincerely loves, which is clear from passages previously cited, she is actually going through a process which in psychology is called traumatic grief, i.e. the feeling of grief and bereavement after an important loss. The clearest form of loss, as listed first in psychological sources, is "losing a loved one through divorce, separation or death" (Mestçioğlu/Sorgun 179). In that

sense, Marianne's grief after the departure of Willoughby for an indefinite time and without any explanation is almost as violent as it might have been after his death.

It is necessary at this point to make use of psychological theory outside of Horney's works, though not contradicting hers. Horney states how the expansive and self-effacing types react to disappointment and loss, her remarks on these points will be returned to later. But there is nothing in her work about general response to loss and trauma. Other theorists, notably Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and John Bowlby, have written extensively on this subject; both have pointed out that there are definite stages in every person's process of grief after the loss of a loved one. The stages defined by Kübler-Ross and Bowbly roughly correspond, and they can be traced in the changes that both Marianne and Willoughby go through after their separation.

The first stage of shock, the reaction to news of death or abandonment, is titled with "denial and isolation" in Kübler-Ross (34) and "numbness" in Bowlby (qtd. in Holmes 90), but the symptoms described in both appear similar: Kübler-Ross states that patients react to bad news "at first with the statement 'No, not me, it can't be true'" (34), while in Bowlby

> the very earliest response to a sudden bereavement may be an apparent calmness based on emotional shutdown in which all feelings are suppressed, ***or reality denied,*** until the bereaved person is in a safe enough situation to let go a little (qtd. in Holmes 90, italics added).

Though she is in shock, Marianne surely does not suppress her feelings; quite the contrary, her romantic suffering is described as an "indulgence of feeling" (Austen 80). But while she is not emotionally numb, she clearly shows a denial of the definite break-up even days later when talking with her mother:

> 'We have never finished Hamlet, Marianne; our dear Willoughby went away before we could get through it. We will put it by, that when he comes again... But it may be months, perhaps, before ***that*** happens.'
> 'Months!" cried Marianne, with strong surprise. 'No – nor many weeks.' (Austen 82, emphasis in the original)

Marianne reacts with tears and sleeplessness to being apart from Willoughby for any period of time, but she does not accept the fact that he may be gone for good. She clings to the idea that he must return in a few weeks. The apparent denial of the end of the relationship may yet be due not only to her exaggerated grief: Marianne might not really be aware that the separation is final, because Willoughby might not have broken off properly. In the scene of departure a few pages previously, he only replies that he has "no idea of returning into Devonshire immediately" (Austen 73) to Mrs Dashwood's inquiry as to when he will return; and later in his confession to Elinor gives only a blurred account of the event:

> 'Did you tell her that you should soon return?'
> 'I do not know what I told her,' he replied, impatiently; 'less than what was due to the past, beyond a doubt, and in all likelihood more than was justified by the future.' (Austen 313)

In both scenes, the blank is strongly emphasized. Willoughby offers no explanations to the reason and length of his absence, and "his embarrassment, and affectation of cheerfulness" (Austen 74) at the time of his leave-taking indicate that there is something the matter, without giving the reader enough hints to help fill in the blank (it is revealed much later, in Willoughby's confession, that he had to leave at once because the scandal of Eliza's pregnancy had reached his aunt's ears). This embarrassment makes it plausible to assume that he made no clearer statement of how long he would be gone to Marianne than he did to her mother, and that hence Marianne has good reason at first to believe that he will come back soon, especially if whatever she was told that was "more than was justified by the future" included terms of endearment, as the statement is probably to be understood.

Her acceptance of the final separation is thus postponed. Even when they finally meet at a ball and he behaves like a stranger, she is shocked but still refuses to believe that she has been abandoned. Only when, having demanded an explanation, she receives his cold letter announcing his marriage to Miss Grey is she confronted with the truth and the resulting emotions. At this point she experiences the second stage of grief which, as Bowlby points out, is characterized by "anger at everyone who might be responsible" (qtd. in Holmes

91). Marianne now not only suffers, but also blames people for the suffering which turns out to be unavoidable because the break-up turns out to be final. But even now, when it becomes clear that Willoughby is trying to shrug off his responsibility for the relationship by pretending in the letter that it never took place, Marianne attempts to continue the denial at first and to blame his coldness on anyone but him:

> 'Whatever may have changed him now, (and nothing but the blackest art employed against me could have done it,) I was once as dear to him as my own soul could wish. . . Elinor, I have been cruelly used, but not by Willoughby.'
> 'Dearest Marianne, who but himself? By whom can he have been instigated?'
> 'By all the world, rather than by his own heart. I could rather believe every creature of my acquaintance leagued together to ruin me in his opinion, than believe his nature capable of such cruelty.' (Austen 181)

The desperate attempt to blame anyone else, notably Willoughby's fiancée, might also be seen as the intermittent stage after anger that Kübler-Ross calls "Bargaining:" "some sort of agreement which may postpone the inevitable happening" (72), the inevitable being accepting that he is indeed the only one responsible for her abandonment. But since the contents of the letter appear to make it very clear that Willoughby does not love her (although the end of the novel proves otherwise at least in that respect) and will not return to her, the last struggle to deny this is very short. Marianne's accusation of Willoughby moments after the last quoted passage can be taken as an indication that she is on the way to accepting this truth about him: "Oh! Willoughby, Willoughby, could this be yours! Cruel, cruel – nothing can acquit you" (Austen 182).

With or without Kübler-Ross's bargaining stage, the longest stage of grief after shock and anger is the long period of distress which Bowlby calls "disorganization and despair" (qtd. in Holmes 93) and which Kübler-Ross simply entitles "Depression" (75). Marianne's condition some time after having internalized the truth about the separation corresponds to this stage. While her pain immediately after reading his letter is violent and she "almost scream[s] with agony" (Austen 174), she is fixed in depression especially after being told that

Willoughby had seduced Eliza: “her mind did become settled, but it was settled in gloomy dejection” (Austen 204). For a period of time, Marianne is immersed in her own suffering, speaking to hardly anyone except her sister and interested in nothing but the news of Willoughby’s marriage which leaves her “in a state hardly less pitiable than when she first learned to expect the event” (Austen 208).

Marianne is only distracted from her own suffering by that of her sister, causing a “shocking affair” (Austen 227), the like of which she had only occasioned when with Willoughby, by defending Elinor against Mrs Ferrars who praises another young woman to Elinor’s face. Marianne’s reaction to the news of Edward’s impending marriage to Lucy shows not only that for the first time she is passionate about the fate of someone other than herself, but also that she can no longer try to defend or excuse Willoughby. In acting like him by abandoning the girl he loves to marry someone else, “Edward seem[s] a second Willoughby” to Marianne, which, considering Elinor’s effort at that moment to offer “a very earnest vindication of Edward from every charge but of imprudence” (Austen 251), appears to be very severe criticism. Although there is no clear statement by the characters or the narrative voice declaring that Marianne has recovered from her heartbreak, her inclination to condemn Willoughby and those who appear to be on his side lead the reader to infer that she is on the way of slowly extracting herself from his influence. Similarly, her concern for Elinor and her effort to keep “her promise of being discreet” (Austen 255) about Elinor’s disappointment in love show that she is trying not only to disentangle herself from the preoccupation with her own sad love affair, but also to slowly adopt her sister’s example in being discreet about these love affairs. Though her efforts are at first clumsy and conveyed ironically, they clearly mean a great effort and a great change to the formerly mutinous Marianne:

> She attended to all that Mrs Jennings had to say upon the subject [of Edward’s marriage], with an unchanging complexion, dissented from her in nothing, and was heard three times to say, ‘Yes, ma’am.’ – She listened to her praise of Lucy with only moving from one chair to another, and when Mrs Jennings talked of Edward’s affection, it cost her only a spasm in the throat. – Such advances toward heroism in her sister, made Elinor feel equal to any thing herself (Austen 255).

Talking civilly to Mrs Jennings to whom she would not even speak during the sorrow of her own love affair, and keeping quiet about that of her sister, is indeed heroism for Marianne: it means that she is gradually attempting to relinquish the rebellious idealized self represented by Willoughby and adopt that represented by Elinor. But in spite of her effort to disentangle herself from Willoughby's influence, his effect on Marianne is not yet quite overcome:

> Marianne, few as had been her hours of comfort in London, and eager as she had long been to quit it, could not, when it came to the point, bid adieu to the house in which she had for the last time enjoyed those hopes, and that confidence, in Willougby, which were extinguished for ever, without great pain. Nor could she leave the place in which Willoughby remained, busy in new engagements, and new schemes, in which *she* could have no share, without shedding many tears (Austen 291, emphasis in the original).

In this stage of depression and despair, Marianne's serious illness after giving up Willoughby and the life and idealized self represented by him is more than merely a dramatic plot catalyst for a final presentation of Willoughby and Colonel Brandon. Marianne's condition corresponds almost exactly to that of the exemplary self-effacing woman described by Horney who finds herself at the end of an unhealthy relationship with an expansive partner, which she terms a morbid dependency:

> She is actually at the point where it becomes a proposition to sink or swim. Two moves set in now and it all depends on which wins. The one to go under – as we have discussed before – has for this type the appeal of a final solution for all conflicts. She may contemplate suicide, threaten it, attempt it, do it. *She may fall ill and succumb to her illness.* . . The other move is in the direction of health, and consists in efforts to get out of the situation. . . Sometimes the two moves go on intermittently. The process of struggling out is eminently painful (Horney 1950, 256-57, italics added).

Not only Marianne's criticism of Willoughby and her tears at parting from the city he is in, but also her efforts to adopt a new idealized self and her illness after arriving in Cleveland which is close to his home, indicate that she is torn between the two moves of going down, hence still clinging to Willoughby and dying because of it, and getting out of the situation. In that sense, the illness is also

symbolic for her being torn between the self she must give up and the one she must adopt, as her convalescence is symbolic for her rebirth with a new idealized self.

During Marianne's process of being disappointed by Willoughby and discarding the idealized self embodied by him, the comments about him of the narrative voice and of the characters, at first so enthusiastic, change drastically, subtly steering the reader in the direction of rejecting his values and adopting those of the opposing characters. Elinor, who from the beginning of their acquaintance disapproves of his "slighting too easily the forms of worldly propriety" (Austen 47), a trait which Marianne immediately adopts, is the first to doubt his intentions and the engagement between him and Marianne after his departure, though neither her mother nor her sister share her uneasiness. Whereas Elinor seems alone at this point in disturbing the characters' and narrator's praise of Willoughby which began with his introduction, some chapters later, in the scene where Marianne and Willoughby meet at a ball, the narrative voice is not in favour of Willoughby, but wholly neutral. His behaviour is externalized, conveyed completely through an observer's point of view, due to which his character as blank is particularly emphasized:

> He approached, and addressing himself rather to Elinor than Marianne, *as if* wishing to avoid her eye, and determined not to observe her attitude, inquired in a hurried manner after Mrs Dashwood, and asked how long they had been in town. . . He could not then avoid [shaking hands with Marianne], but her touch *seemed* painful to him, and he held her hand only for moment. During all this time he was evidently struggling for composure (Austen 169, italics added).

The narrative voice recounts Willoughby's wishes and feelings only through the addition of words like "as if" and "seemed," which presents his mind and motivations as a blank, although the scene itself is described in great detail. It is now left to observers to analyze his behaviour and guess at its motivations, notably to Elinor whose thoughts and feelings on the subject, already critical of this behaviour, are the only ones conveyed to the reader:

> Her indignation would have been still stronger than it was, had she not witnessed that embarrassment which seemed to speak a consciousness

> of his own misconduct, and prevented her from believing him so unprincipled as to have been sporting with the affections of her sister from the first, without any design that would bear investigation (Austen 171).

Elinor's indignation, and hence the feelings about Willoughby conveyed to the reader, become still stronger when Elinor reads his letter "which proclaimed its writer to be deep in hardened villainy" (Austen 176). Here, the narrative voice turns from a neutral to a critical tone, and the steering of the reader away from Willoughby, if it has not begun with the blanks of mysterious departure and the embarrassment at the ball, is surely now set in motion when the new schematized views lead the reader to realize this character's "hardened villainy." Thus the reader is slowly led by the rhetoric of the novel to think gradually worse of Willoughby, reaching the climax of condemnation when Colonel Brandon lays the foundation for the accusations against him by explaining his seduction and abandonment of Eliza and sums up his character as "expensive, dissipated, and worse than both" (Austen 201).

The reader's relinquishment of Willoughby and the values represented by him is achieved not by blunt propaganda voiced by the narrator, but through shrewd steering of the reader, as formulated by Iser: "he [the reader] must, rather, be gently guided by indications in the text, though he must never have the feeling that the author wants to lead him by the nose" (1974, 37). This guidance is given not only through the portrayal of the consequences of Willoughby's actions for Eliza and Marianne and through the criticism of his behaviour by the characters, but also through the favourable portraits of characters who represent behaviour and values that oppose Willoughby's. Both Elinor and Colonel Brandon represent this other idealized self that is sensible and values propriety in social gatherings. Both are self-effacing: Colonel Brandon remains loyal to Marianne even though she scorns him and loves the man who hurt his foster-daughter. Similarly, Elinor supports her sister through her unhappy separation from Willoughby while keeping her own disappointment secret because of a feeling of duty: "I owed it to my family and friends, not to create in them a solicitude about me, which it could not be in my power to satisfy" (Austen 252).

It is significant that precisely the two characters who represent values that are the reverse of Willoughby's inform Marianne of his crime and comment on it. Thus Marianne learns of Willoughby's true character from the people who simultaneously draw her away from his person and lifestyle and towards the solution of sense and self-effacement represented by themselves. As Marianne is drawn, the reader is also certainly steered towards this solution. At the end of her stage of despair, which is marked by the end of her illness, Marianne also switches to these values.

The crisis prompted by the separation also turns out to be a process of traumatic grief for Willoughby, along similar lines as in Marianne's case. His process of grief is not as easy to follow as hers because the novel reveals nothing about him until his confession scene when Marianne's education is almost complete. It appears that the blank surrounding his character can be filled in once the steering of the reader, following the development of Marianne, is as good as finished. There is also little information upon the condition of the narcissist during the break-up of a relationship to be found in Horney since, as pointed out previously, the end of the relationship titled morbid dependency, between the self-effacing woman and the expansive man, is only described from the woman's point of view. In a way, a sort of mythical mystery is maintained around the male sexual predator, keeping him at arm's length from the inner circle of narrative and readers. In that sense, the confession scene is valuable since it is the only opportunity where Willoughby's motives, and the emotional process he goes through, can be traced. The reader will compare the explanations given in this scene with his own findings, the later comments are added to make the steering complete.

The first reaction of Willoughby on the end of the relationship, according to his own admission, is characterized by denial no less than in Marianne's case. Although he stands on safer ground than her for knowing that the separation is final, since he is the one who has decided that it must end, he also refuses to accept: not the fact that the dream-world has collapsed, but his own feelings about the break-up. He does not actually experience the emotional numbness described

by Bowlby, but attempts to convince himself that he does not feel any love for Marianne or remorse for having left her. He tries to uphold "the mastery of life through intelligence and will power as the means to actualize [his] idealized self" (Horney 192). His will power indeed serves to suppress his feelings about the separation for a while, keeping up the idealized self of being loved and flattered without real emotional involvement. This is the idealized self which he clings to at the beginning of the relationship with Marianne, is inclined to let down for a while due to his real fondness for her, and returns to for the sake of marrying money to keep up an aspect of it almost as important as the indifference to emotion, the enjoyment of luxury:

> Marianne's note . . . awakened all my remorse. I say awakened, because time and London, business and dissipation, had in some measure quieted it, and I had been growing a fine hardened villain, fancying myself indifferent to her, and chusing [*sic*.] to fancy that she too must have become indifferent to me; talking to myself of our past attachment as a mere idle, trifling, business, shrugging up my shoulders in proof of its being so, and silencing every reproach, overcoming every scruple, by secretly saying now and then, 'I shall be heartily glad to hear she is well married.' – But this note made me know myself better. I felt that she was infinitely dearer to me than any other woman in the world, and that I was using her infamously (Austen 314).

While Marianne refuses to accept the end of the love affair by choosing to believe that Willoughby will come back, he refuses to accept the end of the love affair by pretending that it was not an affair of love at all. In this sense, both parties experience the first stage of grief in denial. Like Marianne trying to blame anyone else for his coldness even when reading his letter, Willoughby also tries to keep up the denial of his feelings for as long as it will go, feeling remorse but not acting upon it. Similarly, Willoughby enters the second stage of anger, as Marianne does, by being confronted with the truth and the resulting emotions; but in this case it is not the truth about the other partner but about himself: the fact that he does feel love for her and remorse for having abandoned her.

It looks at first like his anger is turned against himself because he is responsible for the separation and for the emotional suffering he has caused to

both himself and Marianne, although his character is still blank because he has not proven himself reliable in emotional matters, and the narrative voice does not make a statement at first. He begins the confession by asking Elinor whether she thinks him "most a knave or a fool" (Austen 306) and continuously accuses himself for his behaviour during this conversation. Still the careful reader can bridge the blanks posed by the lack of comment to realize that he is hypocritical although he is supposed to be candidly confessing. Asking Elinor for comments instead of starting honest self-criticism shows his continuing concern about what others think of him and his need for approval, instead of a heartfelt wish for betterment.

Similarly, although he appears to be contrite and self-critical, he tries to put the blame on anyone but himself, just as Marianne attempts to justify him. He blames and denigrates his wife several times. While Marianne is "beautiful as an angel" on the evening of the ball, his wife is "jealous as the devil" (Austen 315-16); her reading Marianne's letter to him is "impudence" and her forcing him to write an answer upon it "malice" (Austen 316). He also tries to divest himself of responsibility for the unhappiness of their marriage because of his indifference for her: "She does not deserve your compassion. – She knew I had no regard for her when we married" (Austen 318).

He also implicitly accuses Colonel Brandon of telling lies about him, although he is the wrong-doer himself and the Colonel, through the seduction of his foster-daughter, the injured party. This accusation goes hand in hand with the accusation of Eliza herself for her own seduction:

> 'Remember,' cried Willoughby, 'from whom you received the account. Could it be an impartial one?. . . I do not mean to justify myself, but at the same time cannot leave you to suppose that I have nothing to urge – that because she was injured she was irreproachable, and because *I* was a libertine, ***she*** must be a saint. If the violence of her passions, the weakness of her understanding – I do not mean, however, to defend myself' (Austen 310, emphasis in the original).

While Willoughby claims that he does not mean to defend and justify himself, he does try to do precisely that in the same breath, by implicitly accusing Colonel Brandon of lying about the matter and Eliza of stupidity and sexual

overexcitement, or even of seducing him. The part of the sentence that Willoughby can or will not finish presents a blank easily filled in by the reader, revealing his immature self-defense. His desperate attempts to defend himself by blaming everyone else indicate his moral inadequacy even more strongly than the information about his loose sexual morals, since even his professed remorse is not truthful. Elinor reveals the rhetoric's stance by admonishing him for the indifference to his wife and Eliza, and emphasizing his responsibility in the seduction, even though she appears to be touched by his confession: "you have proved yourself, on the whole, less faulty than I had believed you. You have proved your heart less wicked, much less wicked" (Austen 318).

Elinor's readiness to forgive Willoughby, at least partly, and to pity him has been seen by some critics as not only compassion, but an indication of her own weakness for Willoughby, which has caused disputes: Mudrick's claim that both "Elinor and her creator" are "'almost in love' with Willoughby" is dismissed as "a flamboyant idea" (Gard 235), and his statement that Elinor is "amorously moved only by Willoughby" is commented on by Fogus as an "especially perverse reading" (40). Although it might be an exaggeration to interpret it as being in love with Willoughby, Elinor's "feeling response" is not only an instance of Christian virtue, it might also be regarded as a factor which clears Marianne of part of the blame in her infatuation with him: if even the sensible sister can be taken in by him, being aware of his faults, the romantic one could hardly be blamed for falling for him. The scene serves to present Austen's mastery of characterization: instead of the stock villain, the novel features a young man who is bad because of weakness not intent, as is so often the case. Still, the moral responsibility remains his.

Willoughby owes this forgiveness not to any actual improvement on his part, but merely to his professed suffering. Although he appears to experience the stage of depression like Marianne, being roused out of his suffering by the news of hers as she is roused out of hers by the news of Elinor's, his depression does not seem to be an opportunity for change as in her case. He does rush to her when he hears

that she is ill, but that is prompted less by remorse or fear of her death than his feelings of guilt and the fear that she will die hating him.

> What I felt on hearing that your sister was dying – and dying too, believing me the greatest villain upon earth, scorning, hating me in her last moments – for how could I tell what horrid projects might not have been imputed? *One* person I was sure would represent me as anything – What I felt was dreadful!" (Austen 319, emphasis in the original)

His depression is not a period of quiet grief, but still intermingled with anger, the accusation of everyone for his own faults, and selfishness. Even when ostensibly confessing his guilt in abandoning Marianne, he dwells upon his own suffering more than on hers, claiming that he is made "contemptible and wretched for ever" (Austen 310) and recalling his feelings during the leave-taking from the Dashwood family:

> I cannot think of it. – It won't do. – Then came your dear mother to torture me farther, with all her kindness and confidence. Thank Heaven! It *did* torture me. I was miserable. Miss Dashwood, you cannot have an idea of the comfort it gives me to look back on my own misery. I owe such a grudge to myself for the stupid, rascally folly of my own heart, that all my past sufferings under it are only triumph and exultation to me now (Austen 313, emphasis in the original).

Willoughby appears to wallow in his own suffering, and this seems inappropriate for a narcissist who usually responds to criticism with "smoldering resentment" or "a burst of rage" (Horney 1950, 195). Willoughby actually does display this inclination when accusing the people he injured most, as alluded to above. But the event also brings out his self-effacing tendencies, and they could hardly have been put to better use than here, because in the self-effacing person's relationship with others,

> his own suffering exonerates him. To put it briefly: ***his suffering accuses others and excuses himself!*** It excuses in his mind everything. . . Suffering not only assuages his own self-accusation, but also wards off all the possible reproaches of others. And again his need for forgiveness turns into a claim. His suffering entitles him to 'understanding' (Horney 1950, 235, emphasis in the original).

Bringing out his self-effacing tendencies and emphasizing his pain indeed appears to be the best solution Willoughby could find for his guilt feelings, since - even Elinor finds that they prompt her to pity: "Willoughby, in spite of all his faults, excited a degree of commiseration for the sufferings produced by them." Yet it is pointed out immediately that her pity is "rather in proportion to his wishes. . . than to his merits" (Austen 321), and that he does not really deserve so much compassion or forgiveness. Although he goes through a process of traumatic grief like Marianne, the outcomes of their processes are quite different for the two former lovers.

After the illness, Marianne reconnects to life, if slowly: in the last stage of grief titled with "acceptance" by Kübler-Ross (99) and with "reorganization" by Bowlby (qtd. in Holmes 93), she adopts the values of sense and self-effacement. She emphasizes that she has been educated through her suffering by acknowledging that her sister is right in her values and conduct:

> 'I am not wishing [Willoughby] too much good,' said Marianne at last with a sigh, 'when I wish his secret reflections may be no more unpleasant than my own. He will suffer enough in them.'
> 'Do you compare your conduct with his?'
> 'No. I compare it with what it ought to have been; I compare it with yours.' (Austen 333)

Marianne compares herself to two opposing examples of young women, Elinor and Eliza, that represent two possible outcomes for her, although the comparison with the second example, the seduced Eliza, is surrounded by secrecy and presented a blank. It is pointed out discreetly in the same conversation that "such designs" as Willoughby had on Eliza, he did not have upon Marianne, as his confession proves him "fickle" but not "wicked" (Austen 332). Although there is again a modest silence upon the matter, the reader can fill in the void to question why Willoughby was more restrained in Marianne's case: presumably because she had a family and social circle to protect her and condemn him, not because he is any more moral than before. Even the danger of being in Eliza's place, as pointed out before, is unacceptable for a heroine. Eliza's role as an alter ego is not dwelt on, as an alternative Marianne she is one of the underlying blanks in the text,

serving to point out the outcome of passion and sexual feelings as strong as Marianne's if coupled with less luck. Eliza's other role is less of a blank: she forms an important part of Marianne's education, since Marianne states that Willoughby's seduction and desertion of her are the turning-point that make her forswear him: "I could never have been happy with him, after knowing, as sooner or later I must have known, all this." "This," or "libertine practices" (Austen 337), as the seduction is decorously alluded to, mark Marianne's education and switch to values represented by her sister.

It is clear that the change in Marianne is an education: Gilbert and Gubar (157) as well as Paris (1978, 174) point out that Marianne's condition at the beginning of the novel is one of immaturity. Gilbert and Gubar describe the process of change from immaturity to sense as one of oppression with the claim that Marianne and Emma, like other "imaginative girls" in Austen's novels, are "mortified, humiliated, even bullied into sense" after which they "learn the necessity of curbing their tongues" (159-60). Paris, on the other hand, defines this change as one that she experiences through her own faults, and leads to the attainment of virtue:

> Marianne is the first of Jane Austen's heroines to undergo a conversion, that is, to have her self-effacing trends brought to the fore, as a result of the suffering which is consequent upon her errors. Her goodness is rewarded by the gratification of her romantic feelings (1978, 187-88).

Marianne rightly models her new, mature conduct on Elinor, who is "a character who does not need to correct herself" (Fogus 55). Marianne embraces what Paris calls Jane Austen's "code of values and conduct:"

> The values which it endorses include prudence, judgment, good sense, self- knowledge, sensitivity, perceptiveness, propriety, civility, self-control, sincerity, integrity, respect for authority, dutifulness, responsibility, unselfishness, consideration of others, self-denial, humility, gratitude, moderation, patience, fortitude, tenderness, generosity, warm feeling, domestic affection, and the sanctification of marriage by love and mutual esteem (Paris 1978, 170).

As the unselfishness, self-denial and humility indicate, the values are mainly those relied upon also by the self-effacing solution in Horneyan terms. Indeed, Marianne seems passive and obedient in the last chapter of the book. Her idealized image appears to have changed for the opposite of what it had been at the beginning of the novel, as embodied by Willoughby. Whereas her goals, which she had attempted to live out vicariously with him, had been money for art and luxuries, rebelliousness and the enjoyment of sexual feelings, her new partner Colonel Brandon provides her with versions of these goals that are in keeping with the code and with the self-effacing solution.

The Colonel has "two thousand a year without debt or drawback" (Austen 188): in accordance with Austen's ironical treatment of Marianne's fate, this is exactly the amount that she had found necessary for her home with Willoughby. However, there is no indication that this money is used for frivolities, books and music, horses or hunters. Nor is she seen in the last chapter of the book indulging in her fondness for music and dancing, but "entering on new duties, placed in a new home, a wife, the mistress of a family, and the patroness of a village" (Austen 366). While the narrative voice does not refer to the old values, the blank is easily filled in by the reader to make clear the step from girlhood to wifehood, to duty instead of gratification. The goals that she pursued when following the idealized image presented by Willoughby are discarded, and the duties ignored at that point are now taken up instead. The narrative voice also discloses, as clearly as propriety permits, that the sexual feelings between Marianne and her husband are not as passionate as they had been with her and Willoughby, since her marriage is founded on "no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship" (Austen 365). This blank is one that leaves few options to the reader when filling in: when the narrative voice speaks of sentiment, the word love is not even mentioned, the lack of passionate love is evident.

It is especially the relationship between Marianne and Colonel Brandon that makes her change of heart and preferences appear somehow unconvincing, or rather indicates that her change may not be real maturation, but merely a change "from one destructive solution to another" (Paris 1997, 11). The narrative voice

claims that “Marianne could never love by halves; and her whole heart became, in time, as much devoted to her husband, as it had been to Willoughby” (Austen 366). Just how this change of heart is accomplished is another blank. The irony in those passages indicates that Marianne did not enter the union too willingly. It is the wish of all her family that she should marry Brandon:

> Precious as was the company of her daughter to her, she desired nothing so much as to give up its constant enjoyment to her valued friend; and to see Marianne settled at the mansion-house [Brandon’s home] was equally the wish of Edward and Elinor. They each felt his sorrows, and their own obligations, and Marianne, by general consent, was to be the reward of all (Austen 365).

There is an underlying tone, in spite of the irony, that Marianne may indeed be remuneration for Delaford living, sponsored by Brandon, which enabled Edward and Elinor to marry. In any case, Marianne is indeed led into the marriage by “the confederacy against her,” consisting of her family. In clear contrast to her activeness during the mischief with Willoughby, she is not only shown as passive, but even barely aware of what is happening to her: “She found herself at nineteen . . . placed in a new home” (Austen 366). Although the courtship itself, beyond the scope of the novel, is a blank, this passage steers the reader to the idea that Marianne indeed finds herself married when she can no longer resist.

Canbar’s claim that “the narrator’s assurance” of Marianne’s developing love for her husband “seems unconvincing” (36) is not unfounded: the narrative voice ironically emphasises that the Colonel is a man “whom, two years before, she had considered too old to be married, – and who still sought the constitutional safeguard of a flannel waistcoat” (Austen 365). The lack of credibility in the ostensibly happy domestic unions, which inevitably form the closures in Austen’s novels, has often been commented on by critics:

> Many critics have already noticed duplicity in the ‘happy endings’ of Austen’s novels in which she brings her couples to the brink of bliss in such haste, or with such unlikely coincidences, or with such sarcasm that the entire message seems undercut: the implication remains that a girl without the aid of a benevolent narrator would never find a way out of either her mortifications or her parents’ house (Gilbert and Gubar, 169).

The marriage with Colonel Brandon, who is in love with Marianne and has no financial impediment to marriage, does not appear contrived or in haste, but there is clearly sarcasm in the emphasis on Marianne's acceptance of the feeble middle-aged man in the flannel waistcoat. The novel's reticence upon the development of Marianne's love for this rather paternal figure suggests that she might have accepted this partner, together with the values and lifestyle represented by him, as a matter of what might be termed psychological expedience. This is all to be filled in by the reader who is presented with a lot of blanks concerning Marianne's feelings as well as those of the Colonel, whose passion is never described, at the very end of the novel. The expansive solution that she attempts to embrace at the beginning of the novel proves untenable since the dream-world created by the relationship with Willoughby collapses with his departure. Since this causes great suffering, Marianne switches to an opposing solution provided by a partner who offers not only financial security and social status, but the self-effacing values and conduct which have proven to be much safer, causing less suffering, than the expansive ones.

Marianne's love for her husband appears less like a real attachment than an effort of the narrative voice to provide for the necessary romance in the happy ending though with the tongue in cheek alluded to, or perhaps an unconscious effort of Marianne herself to fall in love with her husband in order to both gratify her own romantic inclinations that might still survive and at the same time to wholly adapt to her new self-effacing solution: in the case of the self-effacing person, "without love he and his life are without value and without meaning. *Love therefore is an intrinsic part of the self-effacing solution*" (Horney 1950, 228, emphasis in the original).

Since Willoughby experiences the same collapse of the dream-world of the relationship and similar suffering after this separation, he might also be expected to undergo similar change during the novel, which would indicate that he is not only a tool for Marianne's change but a character in his own right. The narrative voice claims in the last paragraphs that he is truly penitent: "that his repentance of

misconduct, which thus brought its own punishment, was sincere, need not be doubted" (Austen 366). True penitence would involve not only forswearing all former conduct and values like Marianne, but also doing this on moral grounds.

Elinor, however, doubts this repentance and his moral rightness even after the confession and points out that he does not repent of his behaviour because he now perceives of it as morally wrong, but for selfish reasons: "he regrets what he has done [. . .] because he finds it has not answered towards himself. It has not made him happy" (Austen 338-39). In his confession scene, Willoughby does not profess any moral change or even change of conduct for the future, but merely dwells on his future unhappiness as he dwells on his past suffering throughout the scene: "I must rub through the world as well as I can. Domestic happiness is out of the question" (Austen 320). Regarding marital happiness as impossible implies that he will not switch to a self-effacing solution like Marianne to accept the new partner as a love object. Since he also continues to enjoy luxury with his wife's money with "his breed of horses and dogs," he also seems to continue the same lifestyle and values as before as stated in the last paragraphs of the novel, possibly also continuing his flirtations: his comments on the looks of "many a rising beauty" (Austen 366-67) will easily be filled in to reveal that he does not give up ogling beautiful women.

Marianne goes through a process of education in the novel, in terms of shedding the expansive idealized self and adopting the self-effacing one. Willoughby makes this education necessary by preferring his wife's money to Marianne's love and by his seduction of Eliza, which prove the moral wrongness of this solution to Marianne. To emphasize this education plot and to provide for a fairytale ending, Willoughby is then also used for the "vindication pattern" (Paris 1997, 15) of the novel: to glorify the morally right characters and for a sense of poetic justice, he must be punished in the plot. This punishment is not death or severe unhappiness; the characters are given realistic lives instead of the romantic ones that they yearned for at the beginning of the novel: it is emphasized with clear irony in the last chapter that, just as Marianne does not "[fall] sacrifice to an

irresistible passion" or end an old maid but marry Colonel Brandon, Willoughby also ends up not a lovelorn character but rather content:

> But that he was for ever inconsolable, that he fled from society, or contracted an habitual gloom of temper, or died of a broken heart, must not be depended on – for he did neither. He lived to exert, and frequently to enjoy himself.

Willoughby's punishment consists not only in the loss of Marianne, but also in the dramatic irony of his fate. Marianne marries the man whom Willoughby states that he "could least bear – " (Austen 321). The fact that he cannot finish this sentence makes it clearer to the reader filling in this blank than any insult that the Colonel is the man whom he can least bear to see by her side because of his guilt feelings due to having seduced Brandon's ward, and the resulting hostility. His reason for having abandoned Marianne in the first place, his lust for money, provides an even greater instance for dramatic irony:

> His punishment was soon afterwards made complete in the voluntary forgiveness of Mrs Smith, who, by stating his marriage with a woman of character, as the source of her clemency, gave him reason to believe that had he behaved with honour towards Marianne, he might have been at once happy and rich (Austen 366).

The idea that could have had all that he wanted if he had behaved in a morally right way not only emphasizes the moral message of the rhetoric, it also proves all of Willoughby's strivings and lust throughout the novel futile. His punishment serves to make him ridiculous in the eyes of the reader. It does not appear to have as much effect on his life and behaviour as Marianne's education does. Marianne changes her values and preferences completely and adopts the self-effacing solution that the novel presents as right, and is shown as a happy, though subdued, character in the last paragraphs of the novel. Willoughby, whose fate is alluded to after that of Marianne to make the point, is shown to be unreformed and still thinking of Mrs Brandon, as she is now referred to: the final statements about him restate his punishment, which is basically that of having no complete peace of mind, unlike the reformed Marianne who is happy in her new self-effacing role.

3.2.

The Male Sexual Predator as threat to happiness and morality in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

A. Charlotte Brontë

In Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (henceforth to be referred to as *JE*), there is again a male sexual predator who represents the heroine Jane's idealized image, through whom she vicariously lives out her suppressed expansive tendencies, and who makes the education and vindication plots of the novel possible. Rochester is an interesting subject for study because this character is barely discussed in criticism on this work, most studies being focused on the heroine. Jane indeed dominates the discussion in criticism, which is not surprising because the world of the novel appears to revolve around her. By making this heroine the sole focalizer, indeed the only focus and narrator of the novel, Brontë sidesteps any objective view of the characters. Jane is an unreliable narrator, the only source of comment and evaluation on herself and all other characters in the novel, the rhetoric of which is an effort throughout to vindicate her. The comments of the narrative voice on the heroine and the male sexual predator who tempts her can thus be trusted even less than the narrator's in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, since they belong to a biased character inside the action, instead of an omniscient narrator who is presented as cool and objective, which is part of Austen's ironical stance. Since Jane is the narrator, access to Rochester is also limited to her observation and evaluation, which makes an analysis of this character difficult. Throughout most of the novel, the character is a complete blank – although the narrator knows about him at the point of narrating, she narrates every scene of confrontation without information so that the reader can share none of her hindsight.

The introduction of the male sexual predator into the narrative takes place in a manner at least as dramatic as that in *Sense and Sensibility*. The scene of the first meeting between Rochester and the narrator Jane even bears conspicuous traces of the scene of Willoughby's introduction: it is again a scene of an accidental fall

and a mysterious helper, although here the roles are reversed. It is the frail young girl who saves the man with the "considerable breadth of chest" (*JE* I, 144) lying injured and prostrate, instead of the other way around.

This scene is an interesting variation on the motif of the dashing hero saving the helpless lady. It is more a subversion of the romantic clichés than a simple inversion of the classic motif. Just before Rochester's arrival, the clatter of his horse's hooves reminds Jane of "a North-of-England spirit, called a 'Gytrash,'" and evokes the fantastic atmosphere befitting a dramatic "fairytale meeting" (Gilbert and Gubar, 351) between lovers in romance. However, this atmosphere is shattered immediately by the heroine-narrator who declares "nursery stories" like that about the Gytrash "rubbish" and, upon the arrival of the rider, explains that "the man, the human being, broke the spell at once" (*JE* I, 142).

The motif of the saviour and the helpless lady is not simply inverted, but the characters are put on a more equal footing here than in the scene of the first meeting in *Sense and Sensibility*. The injured man is not wholly helpless: Rochester gets up from the ground on his own in spite of his sprained ankle, and even retrieves his horse when Jane cannot because she is "mortally afraid of its trampling fore feet" [*sic*.], albeit "leaning on [her] with some stress" (*JE* I, 146). Although this leaning might be taken as a precursor of Rochester's figurative leaning on Jane in his dependence at the end of the novel, he does not appear weak in this scene. On the contrary, he acts in the manner of a master speaking to an inferior, interrogating Jane as to where she lives and who she is, and commanding her about. "I must beg of you to come here" does show some courtesy, but "just hand me my whip. . . now make haste with the letter to Hay, and return as fast as you can" (*JE* I, 146) are sentences that would probably not be addressed to someone of a similar social standing. It is also significant that Jane is "disposed to obey" (*JE* I, 146) even his order to lead the horse she is afraid of. Although injured and saved, Rochester is still a strong figure who can command the helper.

The scene constitutes another example of the "insulting behaviour" which Karen Horney mentions as often "precipitat[ing] a dependent relationship" (1950,

245) between an expansive man and a self-effacing woman, as in the first meeting in *Sense and Sensibility*. Jane is impressed and intrigued by Rochester who orders her about and cross-questions her, appearing unimpressed by her. Yet the parties are slightly more equally balanced: although there is considerable difference of status, as Rochester's condescension emphasizes, he is dependent on her help to continue on his way.

Again going against "the dictates of romance" (Mooneyham 33), the narrator-heroine declares herself not fascinated by the hero: "it *was* an incident of no moment, no romance, no interest in a sense" (*JE* I, 147 emphasis in the original). Yet the fact that she is preoccupied with him, as she has not been with persons like Mrs Fairfax or Adèle, suggests that the declaration is untrue and that she is interested in him: "I had [his face] still before me when I entered Hay, and slipped the letter in the post-office; I saw it as I walked fast down hill all the way home" (*JE* I, 147.) Rochester is now so important in the narrative that the next chapter begins not with Jane's daily work, but conjectures on him: "Mr Rochester, it seems, by the surgeon's orders, went to bed early that night; nor did he rise soon next morning" (*JE* I, 150). Jane's explicit comment that his face is "dissimilar to all the others hanging [in the gallery of memory]: firstly, because it was masculine" (*JE* I, 147) clearly indicates that her interest is sexual, and it is understandable that a mature man who strikes up a conversation with her would spark her interest, bearing in mind that her previous experience with men is extremely limited, and Rochester is one of very few men she has met in her life besides her headmaster, an obnoxious cousin, and servants: "I had hardly ever seen a handsome youth, never in my life spoken to one" (*JE* I, 144). Jane's real feelings appear to be stated but are actually blank, they are filled in by drawing parallels between the information a few pages back.

The stranger who attracts the heroine is not a charming youth like Willoughby, but a man almost past his prime "with stern features and a heavy brow" (*JE* I, 144) and rough manners. However, Jane makes it clear that the plainness and sternness are precisely the qualities that appeal to her, and make their relationship possible:

> Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman, I should not have dared to stand thus questioning him against his will, and offering my services unasked. . . but the frown, the roughness of the traveller set me at my ease (*JE* I, 144).

Jane does not appear immediately smitten like Marianne by Willoughby, but is intrigued by his "harsh caprice" (*JE* I, 153) on her second meeting with Rochester in Thornfield, when he refrains from proper greetings and conventional conversation: "the eccentricity of the proceeding was piquant: I felt interested to see how he would go on" (*JE* I, 153). Since she is the narrator as well as the heroine, she would be expected to provide the narrative comments on Rochester, but instead of giving an opinion about him, she merely describes him in great detail at each of their meetings, not stating but suggesting that she is still preoccupied with Rochester: on the first meeting at Thornfield, she "recognised his decisive nose, more remarkable for character than beauty; his full nostrils, denoting, I thought choler; his grim mouth, chin and jaw" (*JE* I, 152); on the second, she studies his "granite-hewn features" and "great, dark eyes" which she admits to be "very fine eyes, too" (*JE* I, 167); during the gathering at Thornfield, she admits that "my master's colourless, olive face, square, massive brow, broad and jetty eyebrows, deep eyes, strong features, firm, grim mouth – all energy, decision, will, – were not beautiful, but they were more than beautiful to me" (*JE* I, 224). Weisser states that the repeated sketches of Rochester's masculine and stern face not only emphasize his masculinity, but also indicate that his character is difficult to determine:

> Rochester himself is described by the narrator again and again, as though Charlotte Brontë were struggling to pin down the exact qualities which will do their work on the as yet unexpressed 'real' self of Jane Eyre. . . The strength of desire and will which is the characteristic of Rochester's 'masculine' sexuality calls to mind the image of the thorn trees surrounding the mansion, in which physical size and 'might' evoke imaginative and sexual power (62).

Rochester is always shown in full scenes and dialogues; there is hardly any summary or commentary: the reader is invited to participate in the process of getting to know him and filling in the blank. Iser points out that this "initiates the

act of imagination" so that the reader can experience the action in the text as if it were his own: "In order for such an experience to be possible, the distance between the story and the reader must at times be made to disappear, so that the privileged spectator can be made into an actor" (1974, 37).

Rochester's qualities emerge as the novel develops, but they certainly "do their work" on Jane, who recounts the features and words of her employer at great length. The only other person to comment on Rochester is frail old Mrs Fairfax who can merely inform Jane that he is "always civil" (*JE* I, 126) and "considered a just and liberal landlord by his tenants" although he is "rather peculiar, perhaps" (*JE* I, 132). This is an intriguing blank, since it is not to be filled in for a while, but it is not condemnatory, which means that there is effectively no comment or information of any worth about Rochester that Jane could rely on but her own. For the reader, there are no schematized elements but those provided by the narrator, who commands the steering. Rochester appears as an intriguing, "peculiar" and even potentially dangerous man about whom very little can be known at first, very different from the charming youth Willoughby, but nevertheless fascinating for the heroine. He is blank who is continually circumambulated but not quite filled in.

The few comments that Jane can make about the stern, mature Rochester throughout the novel, and the many descriptions of him, combine to form a portrait that appears different from the description of the narcissist type in Horneyan theory at first glance, but does have some characteristics in common with this type and even with the young lively Willoughby. Rochester is certainly not "uncommonly handsome" (Austen 41) like the hero of *Sense and Sensibility* and does not seem to have the "often-fascinating charm" of the typical narcissist, at least towards Jane, whom he fascinates with gruffness. Yet the urge to impress people, which is one of the primary characteristics of the narcissist and alluded to in the previous chapter appears also in Rochester, though not "regardless of their factual importance" (Horney 1950, 194), but rather in the case of upper-class women. In the first scene where he is set against people from his own social stratum, during the gathering of the party at Thornfield, he is suddenly not the

grim and sullen master as towards Jane and Mrs Fairfax, but an affable gentleman who lavishes compliments on Jane's rival, Blanche Ingram, and lets himself be commanded by her. For all his usual "moodiness, his harshness" (*JE* I, 188) and his "sarcasm" (*JE* I, 242), often witnessed by Jane, there is no indication that the flattering remarks addressed to Blanche are ironical, in which case any sarcastic tone or sneer must have been commented on by Jane who observes the conversation jealously. The cold tone of Jane's own denigrating comments on Blanche, who is scathingly described as "evidently bent on striking [her auditors] as something very dashing and daring indeed" (*JE* I, 230), makes Jane's hostility clear to the reader, who can fill in her jealousy although the word is never uttered, but no corresponding coldness is visible on Rochester's side.

> 'Mr Rochester, now sing, and I will play for you.'
> 'I am all obedience,' was the response.
> 'Here then is a Corsair-song. Know that I doat on Corsairs; and for that reason, sing it 'con spirito.''
> 'Commands from Miss Ingram's lips would put spirit into a mug of milk and water.'
> 'Take care, then: if you don't please me, I will shame you by showing how such things ***should*** be done.'
> 'That is offering a premium on incapacity: I shall now endeavour to fail.'
> 'Gardez-vous en bien! If you err wilfully, I shall devise a proportionate punishment.'
> 'Miss Ingram ought to be clement, for she has it in her power to inflict a chastisement beyond mortal endurance.'
> 'Ha! explain!' commanded the lady.
> 'Pardon me, madam: no need of explanation: your own fine sense must inform you that one of your frowns would be a sufficient substitute for capital punishment.' (*JE* I, 231, emphasis in the original).

Rochester later claims that the honeyed words, indeed the whole courtship of Blanche, were devised just to make Jane jealous: "I wished to make you as madly in love with me as I was with you; and I knew jealousy would be the best ally I could call in for the furtherance of that end" (*JE* II, 30). Yet his flirtation not only gives the impression that Rochester is not too harsh to fawn upon pleasing ladies of his own standing, it also undermines his claims of profound love for Jane. Most critics seem to accept the claim of the fake courtship, and Donald D. Stone even

declares that “it is obvious that a ‘realistic’-minded man like Rochester would not marry her even if he were free to do so”, for no other reason, apparently, than the foible for Corsairs and the fact that she is “tall and dark-skinned, resembling a ‘Spaniard’” (116).

In fact, Rochester is more likely to be attracted rather than put off both by Blanche’s size and by her darkness: he explains to Jane that “(she’s an extensive armful: but that’s not to the point – one cannot have too much of such a very excellent thing as my beautiful Blanche)” (*JE* II, 14). He appears to mutter this to himself; significantly, this passage is given in brackets in the text. In can be seen as a half-blank, and the reader can fill it in as a real opinion as opposed to the irony Rochester pretends it to be. As John Sutherland shrewdly points out,

> Blanche has the physical attributes to which Rochester is addicted. Like her predecessor, Miss Ingram is ‘moulded like a Dian’; she has the same ‘strapping’ beauty and jet-black tresses that captivated Edward in Jamaica fifteen years before (75).

Adèle’s mother is French, which is also another hint to show that Rochester is “addicted” to exotic beauties. Sutherland claims that it is indeed Blanche that Rochester means to marry, until his first attempted wedding is prevented by Mason and he tries to make do with Jane secretly:

> Rochester had every intention of marrying Blanche Ingram, until the arrival of Richard Mason at Thornfield Hall. . . Bluntly, Rochester proposed to Jane as a *faute de mieux* – the *mieux* being Blanche Ingram. The notion sometimes advanced that the Ingram courtship was a charade designed to ‘test’ Jane is unconvincing. There was no need to test her, and if there were a need something much less elaborate might be devised (at the very least, something that might not land Rochester in a breach-of-promise suit). (78-79, emphasis in the original.)

Like Willoughby who feels entitled to both his wife’s money and Marianne’s love, in accordance with the narcissist who “feels rather that his needs or his tasks are so important that they entitle him to every privilege” (Horney 1950, 195), Rochester also seems to regard the realization of all his wishes and needs as his right. Horney points out that this is a common characteristic of expansive types: the type who moves “in the direction of “*arrogant vindictiveness*” also “feels

entitled both to having his neurotic needs implicitly respected and to being permitted his utter disregard of others' needs or wishes" (1950, 197-200, emphasis in the original). Rochester feels entitled to marry although his lawful wife is alive, and to scheme and plot to secure the bride he wants most, although the candidates might be profoundly hurt in the process: when Jane points out, during his narrative of his roving years through Europe, that he could not marry, he replies "I had determined, and was convinced that I could and ought" (*JE* II, 93). Similarly, he feels no remorse in having proposed to Blanche Ingram and later deserted her, since, as he claims, "her feelings are concentrated in one – pride; and that needs humbling" (*JE* II, 30).

Rochester's partiality for mastery and his bent to regard his own needs as more important than those of others clearly show that he is expansive. He exhibits not only the urge to impress of the expansive type, but also the authoritativeness of the person who embraces "the appeal of mastery" (Horney 1950, 187): although Paris points out that it is Jane's "feistiness. . . that charms Rochester" (1997, 151), there is no indication that he does not also relish her calling him "sir" and "Mr Rochester" even during their courtship (*JE* II, 26) since he never requires her to stop doing so and only once asks her to call him by his first name when accepting his proposal (*JE* II, 20) – the very lack of such a request is an important blank that is filled in to reveal his mastery. Rather than being narcissist, Rochester appears to be the arrogant-vindictive type who is prone not only to self-centeredness and disregard for others but also to "violent rages." Rochester displays two such "spells of vindictive fury" (Horney 1950, 200) when his plans to marry Jane are thwarted: when his brother-in-law Mason interrupts the wedding, he "lifted his strong arm – he could have struck Mason – dashed him on the church-floor" (*JE* II, 67). but refrains from the blow. Similarly, when Jane declares she will leave him, he threatens her: "Jane! will you hear reason? . . . because, if you won't, I'll try violence" (*JE* II, 82). Rochester's violence is visibly restricted so as not to cause any actual harm but halt just before the blow, but it is undeniably present. The blank here is very dramatic and visual: although he

lowers his hand right before the blow, the reader will mentally "finish" the gesture and "see" the violence in the scene.

Jane's comment in this latter scene that "the crisis was perilous; but not without its charm" indicates that this roughness is attractive for her, just like his "granite features." By being bold and potentially violent when declaring his love for her and claiming her, Rochester fulfils two of Jane's needs at once: the need for love, and that for vicarious mastery. Jane's expectations from life, which are later centred in her idealized partner, are not as neatly listed as Marianne's in *Sense and Sensibility*, but they are discernible throughout the novel. Especially the needs for love and for a vicarious outlet for expansive tendencies are outlined clearly at the beginning of Jane's narration. The first event in the novel, presumably the first that Jane considers worth recounting in her life, is her rebellion against the Reeds, the reason for which she sums up when accusing her aunt Mrs Reed: "You think I have no feelings, and that I can live without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so" (*JE* I, 41).

From this point on, Jane's life appears to be a search for the love that she has been denied as a child, while carefully keeping in check her anger at this denial and her violent impulses that go with that anger. Her confession of her need for love to Helen is among the most quoted passages in the novel: "to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I would willingly submit to have my arm broken" (*JE* I, 85). This desperate need for love, which is among the characteristics of the self-effacing person, appears to clash with Jane's later wish for liberty. Yet, as Paris points out, that wish materializes only after the person who gives her affection disappears:

> As long as Miss Temple is there to give her warmth and approval, Jane lives contentedly at Lowood "in allegiance to duty and order"; but as soon as Miss Temple leaves, Jane develops a powerful longing for "Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment" (1997, 151; quotation *JE* I, 107).

Jane's longing for liberty displays the repressed expansive tendencies that stand in the shadow of her need for love. Even her wish for professional success is translated into terms of love: speaking of her first longing for success at Lowood school, when dreams of painting and translating replace those of food, she

comments on her preference of the school over her aunt's house with Solomon's words: "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith" (*JE* I, 92).

As Paris points out, Jane's expansive tendencies come to the foreground when no one to love her is near. The restlessness and longing for liberty that appear with the absence of Miss Temple continue at Thornfield where she is bored and yearns for knowledge and experience, until "at this point Rochester returns to Thornfield and Jane's restlessness disappears" (1997, 152):

> Anybody may blame me who likes, when I add further. . . that then I longed for a power of vision which might overpass that limit; which might reach the busy world, towns, regions full of life I had heard of but never seen: that then I desired more of practical experience than I possessed; more of intercourse with my kind, of acquaintance with variety of character, than was here within my reach (*JE* I, 138).

Although they are secondary to her need for love, Jane's expansive tendencies are as clear as her "vindictive and rebellious impulses" (Paris 1997, 151) which she exhibits during her rebellion against the Reeds. However, even stronger than these is "her need to be good": "She dares not do anything that might prove Mrs Reed to have been right in calling her wicked" (Paris 1997, 151-52). So her anger and violence must be repressed until a suitable real or vicarious outlet is found; Jane declares the words "Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment" "so hollow and fleeting that it is mere waste of time to listen to them" and embraces the idea of "a new servitude" (*JE* I, 107).

The need for love will prove to be a way for an outlet for the expansive tendencies, which can be indulged vicariously, but Jane's wish to have everything "respectable, proper, ***en règle***" (*JE* I, 110, emphasis in the original) in her servitude, very few pages after her gasps for liberty, is another blank very easily filled in to reveal her need to keep within the bounds of propriety. Her passionate love for a fascinating man must also be absolutely virtuous.

Rochester appears to be an ideal partner for Jane, both to fulfil her need for love and to provide her with a vicarious outlet for her expansive tendencies. Jane's declaration that she feels "akin to him" (*JE* I, 225) and his calling her "my

equal. . . and my likeness" (*JE* II, 19) show that she identifies with him, so far that Rochester is indeed Jane's "alter ego" (Paris 1997, 151) or "projected ego" (Showalter 136).

Rochester not only loves Jane in spite of her lack of conventional beauty or social standing: "You – you strange – you almost unearthly thing! – I love as my own flesh. You – poor and obscure, and small and plain as you are – I entreat to accept me as a husband" (*JE* II, 19). He also displays the expansive traits that she would like to indulge in but for her need to be good: he is domineering and wrathful, commanding everyone including her and threatening violence when not obeyed. He can function as a vicarious outlet for her repressed rebelliousness and anger: "As a rich upper-class male, Rochester is able to act out his resentments, and Jane can experience her own forbidden impulses through him" (Paris 1997, 154).

Rochester's role as an outlet for Jane's expansive tendencies has been noted by many critics, though these tendencies have been variously defined: Eagleton emphasizes the masculine quality of Jane's longings, stating that "she settles astutely for a vicarious expression of her competitive maleness through him" (31). Weisser, on the other hand, stresses the quality of aggression which Jane can live out by merging with Rochester: "not least important for Jane's sense of selfhood is the opportunity for aggression conferred by her 'assimilation' with her masculine counterpart" (63). The resentments, the maleness, the aggression, as well as "Jane's anger" which "horrified the Victorians" (Gilbert and Gubar 338) are all different appellations for her expansive tendencies lived out through Rochester.

He provides her with other forms of experience too: with vicarious access to the outside world, which is safer for her than trying it out on her own – something which she, interestingly, never does in spite of her longing for variety, by trying to work as a teacher in a city, for example. He tells her of his own adventures and stills her thirst for them vicariously, letting her partake of his "a century's advance in experience" (*JE* I, 170) over hers. Significantly, Jane emphasizes that the "glimpses of [the world's] scenes and ways" that he opens up to her are not "its

corrupt scenes and wicked ways" (*JE* I, 187) but delivered so as not to disturb her modesty. As long as his sexual escapades are in the past and not in actual contact with her, marking her as less than virtuous, his "underdog past" (Eagleton 20) is also appealing to her: in Paris's words, "she wants him to *have had* an adventurous existence" (1997, 164, emphasis in the original).

As far as Rochester's preferences in a partner can be gathered from the text, again in a scene taking place after the crisis where he explains his motives long after the developments to fill in the blanks formed in the first half of the novel, the union seems to be a perfect one for him too. He claims to have spent years travelling in Europe looking for "a good and intelligent woman, whom I could love: a contrast to the fury I left at Thornfield" (*JE* II, 94). The fury Bertha appears to be his negative standard or bad showcase, exactly what he does *not* want for both himself and his prospective partner: not only must that partner be a contrast to the mad wife, but he himself, as he declares, indulged in "dissipation – never debauchery: that I hated, and hate. That was my Indian Messalina's attribute" (*JE* II, 94). What exactly is the difference between the two, what constitutes "any enjoyment that bordered on riot" (*JE* II, 93), is not explained as it would probably trespass the boundaries of modesty and presented as a very important blank to be filled in, but Paris conjectures that "he contents himself with one mistress at a time" (1997, 155), while he refers to his mad wife with the name of the Roman empress famous for her sexual voraciousness and, ironically, her bigamy.

Despising any trace of Bertha's taint in himself, Rochester hints his need for reformation shortly after he first meets Jane: "does that leave hope for me [. . .] of my final transformation from Indian-rubber back to flesh?" (*JE* I, 169). The ideal partner, who must be absolutely pure and "intelligent" in order to be the opposite of the mad promiscuous wife, is to lead him to virtue with her good example as Bertha tainted him with her bad one. It is also significant that he indicates this hope for reformation, only thinly veiled behind his sarcasm, minutes after expressing pride in his toughness: "I flatter myself I am hard and tough as an Indian-rubber ball" (*JE* I, 168). Referring to rubber as "Indian rubber" instead of

"India rubber", as it was known at the time, may also be a subconscious reference to the taint acquired in the West Indies, as the term "Indian Messalina", quoted above, also indicates.

Since "she longs to reform him, and he longs to be reformed" (Paris 1997, 155), Jane seems to be the ideal partner for him: with "the air of a little nonnette; quaint, quiet, grave, and simple" (*JE* I, 167), as he describes her, all her sexuality repressed and erased from her looks, she appears to be the opposite of Bertha with her aggressive sexuality. She appears to be otherworldly in his eyes, so much so that he calls her a "little elf," a "mustard-seed", "delicate and aërial" (*JE* II, 24-25), more a sexless, ethereal being than a woman. Jane's sexuality, in his commentary, is often a blank. Her "rigorous morality" (Paris 1997, 155) also ensures that she will be both a good example and a guide for him.

Paris points out that "in Horneyan terms, Rochester perceives Bertha and Jane as embodiments of his despised and idealized selves. He dreads becoming like Bertha and aspires to emulate Jane" (1997, 156). For a short while, Rochester can live out his dream of pure love and purification by love with Jane, just as she can live out her expansive tendencies with him. But his very disgust with debauchery makes him, paradoxically, a danger of seduction to Jane: if she agreed to stay with him in spite of the living legal wife, she would in time be degraded in his eyes and find herself in the position of his disowned wife and discarded mistresses.

Jane is in actual danger of seduction during their courtship, due to his strong sexuality and their proximity in the same house. The sexual tension between them is a blank: again circumambulated, but easily filled in by the reader, since there also many hints to guide him. Mrs Fairfax, who, as Sutherland points out (78), is probably aware of the identity of Bertha, warns Jane about the danger of seduction: "In this case I do fear there will be something found to be different to what either you or I expect" (*JE* II, 33). The warning seems enigmatic at that point, but the old lady's shock at the news of their engagement and her clearer admonition to "try and keep Mr Rochester at a distance: distrust yourself as well as him. Gentlemen in his station are not accustomed to marry their governesses" sets Jane on her guard. Although this is not explicit, her effort to have Adèle in the

carriage when going to Millcote, having "the chill of Mrs Fairfax's warnings, and the damp of her doubts" (*JE* II, 34) upon her, is easily deciphered as a way to avoid being alone with him and possibly be seduced. Similarly, her teasing him during their courtship is a method to shun not only his boredom but also his sexual advances, keeping him "in reasonable check." This is made clear not only by Mrs Fairfax's approval, who is afraid of the seduction on Jane's behalf, but also by Rochester himself: "Mr Rochester affirmed I was wearing him to skin and bones, and threatened awful vengeance for my present conduct at some point fast coming" (*JE* II, 45). She is "wearing him to skin and bones" not only by her repartee, but also by keeping him off bodily until the wedding, and the "point fast coming" can be no other but the wedding night.

The danger posed by the male sexual predator is not only the loss of virginity, but also abandonment, as exemplified by Rochester's first wife and former mistresses. Apparently disgusted with female sexuality, he disowns Bertha when she is "intemperate and unchaste" (*JE* II, 88) and expresses revulsion at the position of his later mistresses as sexual servants:

> It was a grovelling fashion of existence: I should never like to return to it. Hiring a mistress is the next worse thing to buying a slave: both are often by nature, and always by position, inferior: and to live familiarly with inferiors is always degrading (*JE* II, 95).

When Rochester makes this statement, Jane significantly realizes "that he would one day regard [her] with the same feeling which now in his mind desecrated their memory" (*JE* II, 95) if she were to accept a position of mistress and remain with him: there is a strong sense that the mistresses are lowly not just because of their social status, but because they are sexually charged, and that they degrade Rochester by sexual contact. He also reveals irony in. this passage by his dislike of the inferior status of the women: the reader can easily draw the parallels and conclude that he must have chosen these women precisely *for* their inferior status, in order to receive sexual service from them: his mistresses are women who are kept by him, not rich independent women. Hence keeping him off bodily is as important for Jane to avoid seduction as fending off his efforts to dress her in silks like the mistresses during their courtship, which she shrewdly sees as a step

towards being put in their position. Recognizing his tendencies to be a "three-tailed bashaw" who would like to rule over his "harem inmates" (the allusions to "Stamboul" and the "Grand Turk" emphasize Rochester's inclination to regard women not as partners but as concubines, as Orientals supposedly would at that time) Jane claims, "I will not be your English Céline Varens [his first mistress]" (*JE* II, 39).

While Jane is in real danger of seduction and abandonment by Rochester, he is also in some danger during his relationship with her. In spite of his apparent harshness and austerity, however, he has no pretensions of hard-heartedness like Willoughby, rather he emphasizes his passionate love and bleeding heart. Although he claims that the infidelity of Céline Varens caused him no profound feelings, since "she deserved only scorn" (*JE* I, 184), when she announces her decision to leave after the aborted wedding ceremony Rochester insists that losing Jane will mean doom and death to him: "Then you condemn me to live wretched, and to die accursed?" (*JE* II, 101).

While emotional suffering is later seen to be a threat that is fulfilled, Rochester is also in actual physical danger during the relationship. While it is Jane who rescues him from perishing in the fire set by Bertha, feminist criticism also argues that in a sense, it is again Jane who started the fire, since Bertha is but her other self:

> Bertha, in other words, is Jane's truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphaned child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead (Gilbert and Gubar, 360).

The identity of this "nighttime specter" (Gilbert and Gubar, 359) who attacks Rochester and Mason and destroys Jane's veil before the wedding is a very important blank, one that functions as the key to the Gothic mystery element of the novel. It is virtually impossible for the reader to fill this blank until the mad wife in the attic is revealed when Rochester attempts to marry Jane. The sham wedding and the disclosure of Rochester's first wife reveal in hindsight that Rochester also faced the serious danger of being found out during his relationship with Jane, since it becomes clear, also in hindsight, that she would have left him

in that case. Ironically, he is safe from being found out during his relationships with the detested mistresses, but when he attempts a fake wedding with a pure bride, the truth about his first wife is revealed.

The disclosure of Bertha, and Jane's ensuing moral choice to leave Rochester, mark the crisis of the relationship, a break-up possibly even more dramatic than the one in *Sense and Sensibility* since neither party really wants to leave the other. The dream-world of vicarious living collapses for both Jane and Rochester, and both characters are seen to go through the process of traumatic grief.

As in Willoughby's case, the emotional process that Rochester experiences after the crisis is a blank, unknown until another explanation scene near the end of the novel. Since Jane is the narrator and the focalizer, however, her suffering is portrayed in great detail, and again corresponds to the stages of traumatic grief outlined by psychologists.

According to Bowlby, as noted in the previous chapter, the first stage of this grief is "an apparent calmness based on emotional shutdown in which all feelings are suppressed, or reality denied, until the bereaved person is in a safe enough position to let go a little" (qtd. in Holmes 90). Jane's first reaction to the realization that she must leave the man she loves is not a denial of the truth as in Marianne's case, but the "apparent calmness" is clearly seen, to the degree of numbness. Being "compulsively conventional" (Paris 1997, 157), Jane does not respond to the bad news with fits of crying and protestations like the rebellious Marianne, but endures the spectacle of the mad wife silently, then locks herself in her room "not to weep, not to mourn, I was yet too calm for that, but – mechanically to take off the wedding dress, and replace it by the stuff gown I had worn yesterday, as I thought, for the last time" (*JE* II, 73). The act is described only in these few words and thus presents a blank which, however, is filled in to denote a distancing of herself from the dress that signifies the aborted wedding and the disillusionment connected with it.

Jane's response to the end of the love affair is characterized by a repression of rebellion, in complete contrast to Marianne's: whereas the immaturity and still unformed character of the latter is shown by her denial for as long as possible to

accept the finality of the break-up and the responsibility of the man she loved, Jane realizes immediately, in spite of her shock, that the break-up is unavoidable: the order given by her own mind is "Leave Thornfield at once " (*JE* II, 76). Yet even when an emotional reaction is visible and she may be regarded as having passed on to the stage of anger, she shows no anger towards Rochester who is responsible for her disappointment. In keeping with her compulsive "need to be good" (Paris 1997, 151), her wrath is directed against herself, in the form of self-hate, first blaming herself for the whole affair, and then for leaving him in spite of his entreaties:

> I should fear even to cross his path now: my view must be painful to him. Oh, how blind had been my eyes! How week my conduct! . . . I abhorred myself. I had no solace from self-approbation: none even from self-respect. I had injured – wounded – left my master. I was hateful in my own eyes (*JE* II, 75; 108).

Jane definitely shows a self-effacing tendency in forgiving Rochester "on the spot" (*JE* II, 77) without any recriminations. On the one hand, this appears to be harmonious with her need to be good: she does not stoop to anger and hatred towards him, even when hurt and bitterly disappointed. On the other hand, this absence of any hard feelings except towards herself also constitutes a blank which leads the reader to question the reliability of the narrator: it appears barely possible for a woman whose hopes have just died, "struck with a subtle doom" (*JE* II, 74), to really forgive the sinner though she hates the sin, without any reproach at all. Although Jane does admit "I don't like you so well as I have done sometimes" to Rochester upon the narrative of his changing mistresses (*JE* II, 95), and comments on the danger of becoming despised like them if she would agree to be one herself (in the passage quoted earlier, *ibid.*), she does not lose a syllable upon having been almost duped into a sham marriage.

Her decision to leave is also taken, and declared as, based not on emotions but the absolute necessity of conforming to "laws and principles" (*JE* II, 102). The narrator Jane seems to be meticulous and candid in the portrayal of her feelings at this point in the narrative, but those feelings still present a blank, allegorized as "Feeling [. . .] that clamoured wildly" and "Despair [that] added, 'Farewell, for

ever!'" (*JE* II, 102; 105). She is thereby alienated from herself, and conspicuously devoid of any of the hostility towards Rochester that might reasonably be expected. Only Jane's bout of weeping, one of very few in the novel, helps the reader reconstitute the apparently missing (or blanked out) animosity:

> I had been struggling with tears for some time: I had taken great pains to repress them, because I knew he would not like to see me weep. Now, however, I considered it well to let them flow as freely and as long as they liked. *If the flood annoyed him, so much the better* (*JE* II, 83, italics added).

Jane reveals here a half-concealed wish to at least annoy him by crying, the only hint to guide the reader to understand that her forgiveness may not be as complete as she claims (yet another blank in the text). The tears are a suitably feminine and passive way of revenge since Rochester dislikes them. The weeping functions as a classical female weapon, not only as a means of revenge, but also to calm Rochester down, as he comments: "If I storm, you have the art of weeping" (*JE* II, 84). The word "art" is as telling as Jane's having "considered" to let her tears flow: even in this early stage of anger and desperation, she appears to be so far in control of herself and her emotions that tears appear not only as a way of displaying her emotional injury, until now repressed under the guise of merely "a white cheek and a faded eye" (*JE* II, 77), but as a feminine weapon cunningly set in motion when the situation requires.

In spite of this episode of artfulness, Jane is definitely seen to suffer truly during the long stage of depression that follows her aborted marriage. Like Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility* who almost dies because of fever, she gets to the "point where it becomes a proposition to sink or swim" (Horney 1950, 256-57) which demonstrates the condition of a self-effacing woman in a dilemma between giving up on life and trying to adapt to the end of a morbid relationship with an expansive man. Although she is led on by a "frantic effort of principle", Jane gets perilously close to desperation which is wholly opposite to her principles of Christian goodness: "I had some fear – or hope – that here I should die" (*JE* II, 108). Still, her self-control is so strong, even when destitute and

fleeing, that when the death-wish is next voiced, it is formulated in a way that is not in discord with religious principles:

> Hopeless of the future, I wished but this – that my Maker had that night thought good to require my soul of me while I slept; and that this weary frame, absolved by death from further conflict with fate, had now but to decay quietly, and mingle in peace with the soil of this wilderness (*JE* II, 113).

The decision to die appears to be ascribed not to herself, but to God, clouding the ideas of desperation and possible suicide. During her wanderings, Jane continues to experience both moves in the dilemma outlined by Horney, "the one to go under" and the one "in the direction of health" (1950, 256-57). In her agony, she still ponders that she cannot accept the idea of death: "Why do I struggle to retain a valueless life? Because I know, or believe that Mr Rochester is still living: and then, to die of want and cold, is a fate to which nature cannot submit passively" (*JE* II, 120). Although Jane declares the parting from Rochester to be final throughout the narrative of the break-up and never loses a word, either as the young character or the wiser narrative voice, to indicate any other outcome, her clinging to life because of Rochester may be construed and filled in as a glimmer of hope that they might be reunited. Yet, her second reason for living indicates a simple survival instinct which rebels against death from cold and hunger, and which guides her even through the "climax" and "pang of exquisite suffering" (*JE* II, 127) when she is denied entry to the Rivers house and humiliation is added to her agony.

The arrival at the Rivers' and the days spent in bed there denote Jane's confrontation with death and her return from that point: she sees a "spectre of death" when refused entry and is declared to be "a mere spectre" herself immediately afterwards (*JE* II, 127-8). The confrontation with death and the return from death to life are in a sense similar to Marianne's: in both cases, the scrape with death signifies the end of the life in which the heroine attempted to live out the expansive tendencies represented by the male sexual predator, just as the later convalescence marks a rebirth with a new self-effacing idealized self.

The main difference between the processes of grief for the two heroines is that while Marianne is more than willing to continue with the expansive idealized self and Willoughby who represents it, even ready to yield to seduction, and is forced to the self-effacing idealized self by circumstances, Jane actively refuses the values represented by the male sexual predator as well as his physical advances, and her self-effacing tendencies are emphasized rather than newly adopted. Marianne is "mortified, humiliated, even bullied into sense" (Gilbert/ Gubar 159) by being abandoned and later confronted with the news of Willoughby's promiscuity, and she is led into accepting the self-effacing Brandon and the self that he represents by the "confederacy against her" (Austen 365). Jane, on the other hand, makes the decision to leave Rochester herself, declaring her resolution to "keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man" (*JE* II, 102), and for her the stage of acceptance marks not a conversion to the self-effacing idealized self, but a confirmation of her decision.

Just how right this decision has been is pointed out by the text and its blanks: whereas Rochester is the centre of Jane's world in the pages preceding and during her flight from Thornfield, he is not referred to for more than forty pages after Jane has found a refuge with the Rivers family. This is a very conspicuous blank, and while it steers the reader into focussing wholly on Jane's life without Rochester, the first mention of his name after this interlude occurs in Jane's long and emphatic vindication of her choice to leave him:

> Which is better? – To have surrendered to temptation; listened to passion; made no painful effort – no struggle. . . to have been now living in France, Mr Rochester's mistress, delirious with love half my time – for he would – oh, yes, he would have loved me well for a while. He *did* love me – no one will ever love me so again. I shall never more know the sweet homage given to beauty, youth, and grace – for never to any one else shall I seem to possess these charms. He was fond and proud of me – it is what no man besides will ever be. – But where am I wandering, and what am I saying; and above all, feeling? Whether it is better, I ask, to be a slave in a fool's paradise at Marseilles – fevered with delusive bliss one hour – suffocating with the bitterest tears of remorse and shame the next – or to be a village-schoolmistress, free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook in the heart of England? Yes; I feel now that I was right when I adhered to

> principle and law, and scorned and crushed the insane promptings of a frenzied moment (*JE* II, 159-60, emphasis in the original).

Jane's question to herself of whether her choice was right appears to be a rhetorical one, hardly necessary to be answered. Yet since she loses herself in memories of Rochester in the midst of it, and almost has to nudge herself back to questioning her thoughts and feelings and concluding that her decision was right, the blank that represents Rochester in the previous pages is filled in to denote Jane's yearning which is almost as intense as her loyalty to her principles. But in spite of her continuing love and her dreams "charged with adventure, with agitating risk and romantic chance" in which she repeatedly meets Rochester, which are referred to shortly after the rhetorical self-questioning, Jane as the narrator never contradicts her asserted properness in leaving him, and she rises from the dreams "tranquil, settled, prepared for the steady duties of the day" (*JE* II, 169).

Apart from this passage and her dreams, Rochester is not referred to during the chapter(s) describing the period Jane spends in Yorkshire, and his character as a blank does not change. Marking her acceptance, Jane focuses on other ties of affection, just as the beginning of Marianne's acceptance is marked by her interest in her sister's condition: Jane bonds with the Rivers sisters, urges St. John to marry the girl he loves and be happy, and the discovery that they are her relatives is "a blessing, bright, vivid, and exhilarating" (*JE* II, 194).

Just as Jane "lives contentedly at Lowood 'in allegiance to duty and order'" while "Miss Temple is there to give her warmth and approval" (Paris 1997, 151; quotation *JE* I, 107), the new ties which characterise her self-effacing acceptance go in tandem with Jane's renewed emphasis on self-effacing values. Although she cherishes her independence as a school teacher, and even more her newly gained fortune, Jane's great plan when the latter is secured and divided up among the cousins is not "Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment" (*JE* I, 107) for which she had yearned only a year before. Instead, she values domesticity and looks forward to preparing Moor House for Christmas, causing St. John – who is as ambitious as Jane can be when her expansive tendencies are let out – to express his hope that

she will “look a little higher than domestic endearments and household joys” which are, uncharacteristically, “the best things the world has” (*JE* II, 201) for Jane at this point.

It is worth pointing out that, unlike Marianne who presents a mature, responsible picture wholly unlike her former self in the last pages of *Sense and Sensibility*, there are few references in the text to Jane’s return to the self-effacing idealized self apart from her clear vindication of her moral choice and her domestic joys. This may at first appear to be yet another blank, like the conspicuous absence of references to Rochester in these pages. But Jane’s self-effacing tendencies need not be pointed out with details like newly attained civility and responsibility as in Marianne’s case: in Jane, they are already at the forefront and clearly to be seen in her important decision to leave Rochester. Neither are there any self-effacing characters specifically set up to serve as examples like Elinor and Brandon in the Austen novel: although Jane admires Diana and Mary, and has learned from the examples of Helen Burns, Miss Temple and Mrs Fairfax who are all self-effacing at times, she herself is the best example of self-effacing devotion to morality in the novel.

Jane’s experience of disappointment in love is not educational in the same way that it is for Marianne since the heroine who herself refuses temptation is in much less need of moral correction than Marianne who almost invites it: Jane’s stage of acceptance is not an education and moral maturity as it was in *Sense and Sensibility*. Not only is Jane shown as standing on firm moral ground from the beginning; another reason why she cannot be said to undergo a real education can be seen in Paris’s claim that she does not experience real moral growth in the novel, but is helped along by an unrealistic fairytale ending:

> Although she still has the insecurities, compulsions, and conflicts induced by her childhood, she does not have to outgrow them to avoid their destructive effects. By solving her problems for her, the author encourages us to see Jane as a strong, mature person who achieves an ideal happiness. Jane’s psychological problems must be obscured, of course, if we are to accept the self-congratulatory rhetoric that contributes to our sense of vindication and growth (1997, 160).

While Jane appears to be "a strong, mature person" who defies temptation, achieves independence and finally gets to marry the man she loves against all odds, it takes a second look to realize that the independence and happy outcome are indeed not really her own doing, but due to miraculous developments in the second half of the plot. The siblings in front of whose door she breaks down turn out to be her cousins, the far-away uncle in Madeira leaves her a fortune which endows her with financial independence and power to match Rochester's, and Rochester himself is widowed and left free to marry Jane on the terms that fit her best: since she is rich and he maimed, they are no longer unequal. Jane's "psychological problems," her "compulsive compliance" to traditional values and "submissive[ness] towards people she admires as her superiors" (Paris 1997, 160-62) continue, but the end of the novel is arranged in such a way as to ensure a happy ending in spite of the earlier obstacles to a union with Rochester.

Since Jane does not have to be convinced to give up the expansive male sexual predator and the idealized self he represents, helping hints from the narrative voice to steer the reader away from his values and towards self-effacing moral ones also appear hardly necessary. Jane herself as the narrator provides ample vindication of her moral decision, as in the passage quoted above. Yet there is an interesting blank which complements and strengthens the absence of hostility towards Rochester pointed out previously: not the man, but merely his actions are declared to be reprehensible. Whereas the narrative voice in *Sense and Sensibility* turns from an enthusiastic to a neutral and finally to a condemnatory tone concerning Willoughby, leading the reader gradually to think less and less of him until the final declaration of his villainy, Rochester is never condemned, but cherished by the same narrative voice (belonging to Jane) that unambiguously renounces his values. Her "personal involvement," stated by Rimmon-Kenan as one of "the main sources of unreliability" of narrators (100), makes it clear that she is indeed an unreliable narrator, especially when it comes to evaluation of the hero she loves. The subtle steering of the reader to relinquish both the male sexual predator and his values is not found in *Jane Eyre*: Jane voices her moral decision quite openly and bluntly, contrary to Iser's warning that the reader "must not feel

that the author wants to lead him by the nose" (1974, 37), and the hero himself is not relinquished at all, so that he can be embraced again when miraculous plot developments make their reunion possible.

It is only in the scenes of that reunion and the previous break-up that the reader can catch glimpses of Rochester's condition. Due to his character as a blank, as in Willoughby's case, his psychological development after the parting is not shown in its entirety, but this male sexual predator also seems to go through the main stages of traumatic grief.

Rochester's first response to the break-up is visible during the scene itself: unlike Jane who is numb and quiet, but much like the immature Willoughby and Marianne, he reacts with the denial pointed out by Kübler-Ross as one of the common symptoms of the first stage of traumatic grief (34). In perfect accord with his long-standing denial of his wife's presence, he admits her existence only when confronted with legal documents in the aborted wedding scene, and later claims that she is not actually his wife at all: "you shall yet be my wife: I am not married" (*JE* II, 84). Similar to Jane the narrator, who allegorizes her emotions and alienates them from herself, freeing herself of hostility, Rochester also allegorizes his urge to abandon his wife by shifting that responsibility onto a personified concept:

> "'Go,' said Hope, 'and live again in Europe. . . That woman, who has so abused your long-suffering – so sullied your name; so outraged your honour; so blighted your youth – is not your wife; nor are you her husband" (*JE* II, 91).

Rochester attempts to continue the dream-world of the relationship by denial, and reacts with the anger that both characterizes his role as an expansive, proud lover and represents the second stage of traumatic grief. Although, as mentioned before, he does not resort to actual violence, he threatens Jane that he is "not a gentle-tempered man" and will "try violence" if she will try to realize her plan to leave him (*JE* II, 85, 83). His obstinate and violent resistance against the break-up, denoting both immaturity and immorality, stands in stark contrast to Jane's cool-headed resignation: whereas she gives him the cold comfort that they are "born to strive and endure" (*JE* II, 101), he refuses to bow to the inevitable

separation, just as he refuses to acknowledge any but the absolute minimum of responsibility for having married Bertha and attempted to dupe Jane.

Rochester's efforts to deny responsibility for his own and his lover's suffering are again reminiscent of the male sexual predator in *Sense and Sensibility*. Just as Willoughby blames Eliza for the seduction and Colonel Brandon for the ensuing trouble, Rochester claims that he was "cheated into espousing" Bertha (*JE* II, 69), divesting himself of any blame for having married unwisely, and tries to persuade Jane to stay by claiming that Bertha is not really his wife. In spite of the blank formed by the absence of any reproach or recrimination by Jane, Rochester's irresponsibility becomes clear to the reader precisely by his obstinate rejection of that blame, and by the comparison with Jane who, as the model for self-effacing morality, bows to moral law, decides to leave Rochester, and even blames herself for having to make him suffer.

The suffering of the hero is again harder for the reader to follow than the heroine's, the latter being the focalizer as in *Sense and Sensibility*. As in Willoughby's confession, it is in similar scenes that the male sexual predator's past misery and later repentance is divulged. In a sense, it is in these scenes that the blank formed by this character is filled in, at the end of the novel, much as the identity of a criminal is revealed to the reader on the last page of a detective story. Whereas the first confession scene after the aborted wedding reveals the background to Rochester's first marriage, the second scene of that kind, immediately before the end of the novel, is the only one which comes within reach of disclosing his despair after the separation from Jane. However, not only the details of Rochester's true suffering remain concealed, but even his voice is hidden from the reader; his words are indirectly rendered by Jane instead of in the dramatic dialogues often elsewhere used in the couple's conversations:

> I should not have left him thus, he said, without any means of making my way: I should have told him my intention. . . Violent as he had seemed in his despair, he, in truth, loved me far too well and too tenderly to constitute himself my tyrant (*JE* II, 267).

The lack of any narration of Rochester's plight without Jane, except for this short reference that only pertains to Jane's flight and is told in her voice, is a

remarkable blank. The reader might fill it in to arrive at the conclusion that Jane as the narrator wants to brush aside old suffering, as she does when telling Rochester of the hardship on her flight, to make way for new happiness: after this passage, neither character refers to their previous pain any longer, but spend the next pages until their decision to marry speaking of Rivers and Rochester's jealousy of him.

The blank could also simply point to Jane's ignorance of his state of mind during her absence, or to her fondness of his proud superiority which has been an outlet for her own expansive tendencies from the beginning, and which would not agree with helpless despair over the loss of a loved one. Horney explains that sentimentality does indeed stand in the way of unfettered expansiveness, pointing out that in the arrogant-vindictive person, "the hardening of feelings [. . .] allows for an unhampered growth of the drive for the triumphant mastery of life" (1950, 203).

Conversely, the self-effacing person seeking vicariously to live out expansive drives through the partner, like Jane does, values that unrestrained pride in the expansive partner, so much so that Horney claims that any loss of that pride might mean the end of the relationship: "if in the course of the relationship he discovers that the god has feet of clay, he may sometimes lose interest – because he can no longer transfer his pride to him" (Horney 1950, 243-44). Admitting to pain and desperation because of love, as opposed to admitting his love (which Rochester does profusely) might constitute weakness in Rochester, so his suffering is implied only in the word "despair" and one single tear which "trickle[s] down the manly cheek" (*JE* II, 273). Not only the absence of any more lamenting and tears, but also the emphasis on Rochester's masculinity, seem required to stress that he is still powerful and expansive.

That manliness is obvious in spite of his blind helplessness although, as Gilbert and Gubar point out, many critics interpret Rochester's loss of a hand as a symbolic castration (368). The masculinity and bodily impairment, combined with Jane's unexpectedly inherited money, ensure "a complex blend of independence,

(she comes to him on her own terms, financially self-sufficient), submissiveness, and control" which appears to be the ideal relationship for both:

> The maimed and blinded Rochester, for example, is in an odd way even more 'masculine' than he was before (he is 'brown', 'shaggy', 'metamorphosed into a lion'), but because he is helpless he is also 'feminine'; and Jane, who adopts a traditionally feminine role towards him ('It is time some one undertook to rehumanise you') is thereby forced into the male role of protectiveness (Eagleton, 30).

Her financial independence is the first statement that Jane makes immediately after revealing her identity to Rochester (*JE* II, 260), which shows the importance of her newly gained economic power. She seems to exercise this power by provoking his jealousy over Rivers for quite a while. But the "complex blend" which leads to the happy ending between her and Rochester can only be attained when Rochester not only makes it possible for her to realize her expansive tendencies through him, but also bows to the moral rules prescribed by "her need to be good" (Paris 1997, 151). In contrast to the rake Willoughby, who never really undergoes a true reformation although he confesses the story of his crimes to Elinor, Rochester's stage of acceptance appears to indicate a moral change.

Rochester's first confession scene after the aborted wedding is not much different from Willoughby's: in both, the reasons for their promiscuous behaviour are explained, but it is also indicated that the male sexual predator is not yet turning away from immorality. Just as Willoughby tells Elinor of his love but shakes off responsibility for his seduction, Rochester explains the reason for his attempted sham wedding as the search for a chaste and intelligent partner, which is clearly a search for a bigamous relationship. His second confession scene, however, comprises not only an explanation of reasons but declarations of penitence: "I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconcilement to my Maker" (*JE* II, 276).

This declaration of moral reform takes place under circumstances which remove moral obstacles to a happy ending: the first wife is now dead, and Rochester apparently shows true remorse and a heartfelt wish not to sin again. The

prayer after the confession is both an ostentatious show of newly found morality and a declaration of his resolution: “I humbly entreat my Redeemer to give me strength to lead henceforth a purer life than I have done hitherto” (*JE* II, 278). The end of Rochester’s process of traumatic grief, the humble acceptance of fate, leads him to forgiveness and reunion with the lost partner.

The happy ending, however, is attained under circumstances which both fit Jane’s need to obey moral laws, completing the education pattern, and show a clear pattern of her vindication precisely because of this obedience. Not only is Rochester widowed, he is also seriously injured and blind. This is a suitable device to ensure that he will be dependent on Jane and not stray any more, making certain that love is “Rochester’s whole existence. Because of his disability, Jane is the exclusive object of his attention” (Paris 1997, 167). But the maiming and blinding is also clearly a severe punishment by the narrative for all his previous sins against the heroine. Since this hero, for all his misdemeanours, is not shown to be as reprehensible as the one in *Sense and Sensibility*, and most importantly since he repents, he is not punished by unhappiness and cruel irony as in Willoughby’s case, but by the loss of a hand and his eyesight. Like the passages quoted above, in which Jane assures the readers of how right she proves to have been in having opposed an illegitimate union, the attempted bigamist’s punishment is also a clear instance of her vindication. Eagleton points out how the marring fulfils the functions of fitting moral laws, revenging the heroine and punishing the hero:

> The crippled Rochester is the novel’s sacrificial offering to social convention, to Jane’s subconscious hostility and, indeed, to her own Puritan guilt; by satisfying all three demands simultaneously, it allows her to adopt a suitably subjugated role while experiencing a fulfilling love and a taste of power” (32).

With a husband who is still strong and masculine, but tamed and widowed, Jane can both live according to moral laws and act out expansive tendencies, to the extent that she can gently boss over her proud but dependent husband. Her needs for love, mastery and goodness are met at the same time. Her happy ending, attained after a long period of suffering and an almost equally long wait for the

first wife to die and the hero to reform, emphasizes the moral message of the novel.

Since the heroine behaves in a morally right way, is proved right, and finally is rewarded with the reformed hero who is punished for his immorality, the novel is unmistakably didactic. The moral message is clear even though the happy union appears as questionable to the reader as the moral conversion of the hero: as Paris points out, the marriage in which Jane "has no life of her own but lives through Rochester" (1997, 167) is, in Horney's terms, a "morbid dependency", the "first characteristic" of which is "a woman's total absorption in the relationship" (Horney 1950, 247). What makes the dependency appear so happy is the fact that it is shared, "because he needs Jane as much as she needs him" (Paris 1997, 167). Indeed, although Jane mentions Adele and her cousins in the "Reader, I married him" – epilogue, hardly any aspect of her marriage is spoken of besides her bliss with Rochester and his regained eyesight –and while it is stated that her husband could see his firstborn's eyes, that boy's character and even his name remain as blanks, as do any possible siblings: they can only be filled in with an understanding that children take a second place in their lives, just like Adele who is sent away to school because Jane has no "time and cares" to spare: "my husband needed them all" (*JE* II, 281).

Jane inexplicably lives in Ferndean – a "desolate" and "insalubrious" spot (*JE* II, 253-54) – with the husband who jealously occupies all of her time. Just like the choice of abode, the love of the hero might appear questionable to a critical eye. John Sutherland, who claims that Rochester marries Jane only because his attempt to marry Blanche is thwarted in time, underlines the resemblance of the story to the fairy tale Bluebeard, even to the extent that Rochester might have pushed Bertha off the roof or at least not have stopped her jump, and suggests that regaining his eyesight might give Rochester, who only married Jane for convenience after having been maimed, might stray once more:

> Supposing Edward Rochester had emerged from the blazing ruins of Thornfield with his limbs and organs intact, would it have been Jane he cried for at midnight? Possibly, possibly not. Blind and crippled, no comtesse, Blanche Ingram, or signorina will have him now. Only Jane will. Doubtless if, instead of killing Bluebeard, the wife's brothers had

> merely blinded him and cut off a hand (with the threat that if he did not behave himself they would come back and cut off some more), the old rogue might have become a tolerably good husband. But what if, like Edward Rochester, after ten years of marriage, his sight were to return and – barring the minor blemish of a missing hand (common enough, and indeed rather glamorous in those post-war years) – Bluebeard still cut a handsome figure. Could one be entirely confident that his wife-killing ways would not return? (80)

Although this might appear to be a very pessimistic reading, the danger that Rochester might revert to his old role as a philanderer is not to be ignored, and even if it may be exaggerated to suggest he murdered his wife, it is clear that he kept her imprisoned for years. What really happened between him and Bertha is as much a blank for the reader as the remaining life of Jane and Rochester after the closure of the novel; by definition, what comes after the happy end is outside of the novel's scope. It is equally clear that Jane, who longed for "Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment" (*JE* I, 107) accepts a self-effacing role as her husband's nurse and companion in a desolate spot, and that the once proud and rich husband is brought down a few notches to depend on his wife, first physically, then, probably, psychologically. Taming a male sexual predator and making a loving and dependent husband of him is a great attempt in a romantic novel, even if the novel shows some blanks which are hard to bridge or some passages which are hard to believe: its passion still convinces the reader of its enduring power. A novel with similar elements, by Charlotte Brontë's youngest sister Anne, shows the attempt to marry a male sexual predator who is not pruned and trimmed like Rochester, and the disastrous results it leads to.

B. Anne Brontë

Like the novels previously analysed in this study, Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (henceforth to be referred to as *TWH*) features education and vindication plots which are made possible by a male sexual predator representing

the idealized image of the heroine, Helen, and through whom she vicariously carries out her suppressed expansive tendencies. Resembling Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë's novel is told by a narrator who is at the same time within the action – in fact, by two different narrators, the heroine Helen and the hero Gilbert Markham. However, Gilbert does not reveal much more about the motivations of the male sexual predator Arthur Huntingdon than Helen, who is his wife and, due to her "personal involvement," an unreliable narrator (Rimmon-Kenan 100).

Thus the male sexual predator is again a blank, disclosed only by the narration of Helen through the medium of a diary kept over years. This leads to an interesting twist in the narration: whereas the result of Huntingdon's behaviour, the fact that his wife has to live away from him and faces the disapproval of society, is clear from the beginning, his existence and the conduct that led to her flight are only made known towards the second half of the novel. Furthermore, since Huntingdon's behaviour is related through Helen's diary, begun at least five or six years before the events in the first part of the novel, it is impossible for the Helen of the diary to share her hindsight with the reader, something which Jane Eyre could have done but was simply unwilling to do. Being a diary, the narration about Huntingdon begins with Helen's first meeting with him, and thus shows as little observation and knowledge about him as the reader has.

Huntingdon's introduction into the narrative, as pointed out, takes place well into the novel which begins with an impending love affair between Helen and Gilbert; however, it is almost the first incident in Helen's diary, which she hands to Gilbert to explain her aloofness. The scene in which he is brought into the story echoes the introductions of Willoughby and Rochester: like in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, the character of the male sexual predator is linked to the concept of rescue. The reversion of the roles of saviour and accident victim in *Jane Eyre*, where Rochester's temporary dependence on Jane is a premonition of their later relationship, is not to be found in this novel: as in Marianne's case, Helen is quite conventionally saved from a misfortune by the dashing young hero suddenly appearing out of nowhere. This time, the gallant saviour materializes not

on a field, like the previous heroes, but in a ballroom, and saves Helen from the unwanted company of a boring suitor.

While the character of the mysterious hero is again a blank, there are some indications serving as forewarnings to the later revelation of his personality. The fact that he plays the role of the saviour only within the confines of the ballroom, instead of really being of practical use like Willoughby carrying Marianne when her ankle is twisted, is a premonition that his natural habitat is that of society entertainment and drinking, and that he will turn out a ne'er-do-well. Another important hint is his tendency to break social codes by openly laughing at Helen's conversation with Boarham, being "evidently much amused" at her distress before asking "the lady of the house" for an introduction to Helen, and his selfishness is visible in openly laughing at her discomfort when monopolized by the boring Mr Boarham, and as openly referring to his own role as rescuer from that attention: "Come I'll preserve you from that infliction" (*TWH* 107).

Helen the narrator, whose account of the scene is fresh, seems to have no idea of the implications of this behaviour. But Huntingdon's conduct is important for the reader in the process of filling in the blank of the character of this new person in the tale who is clearly very important: "it is the implications and not the statements that give shape and weight to the meaning" (Iser 1976, 168). There is no indication that Helen is surprised or hurt by Huntingdon's jokes about her distress – being her diary, feelings like these could have been mentioned if they existed. The lack of any affront because of this rather ungentlemanly behaviour is a blank and proves that Helen is charmed by the unconventional manners of this man, the reverse of Mr Boarham's, from whom he saves her: "There was a certain graceful ease and freedom about all he [Huntingdon] said and did, that gave a sense of repose and expansion to the mind, after so much constraint and formality that I had been doomed to suffer [with Boarham as company]" (*TWH* 106).

Just as Huntingdon's first appearance in the narrative as a gallant hero conforms to the repertoire of novels of courtship, the manner in which he fascinates the heroine is also remarkably alike to that of both Willoughby and Rochester, and to the beginning of a morbid relationship between a self-effacing

woman and an expansive man, as outlined by Horney: “insulting behaviour frequently precipitates a dependent relationship” (1950, 245). Like Marianne, whose infatuation begins with her embarrassment when being carried in the arms of the mysterious lover, and Jane who relishes being bossed about by the injured Rochester, Helen is also charmed by the newly introduced hero who similarly humiliates her, if not by the aforementioned open laughter at her distress, but much more unmistakably on their second meeting until which she has spent much time thinking only about him.

Helen’s mortification becomes obvious when, rifling through her drawings, Huntingdon discovers his own portrait sketched on the back of a picture, takes it as “an eternal monument to his pride and my humiliation” and walks over to Helen’s rival Arabella, leaving her to deduce, “he despises me, because he knows I love him” (*TWH* 123-24). At first sight, Helen’s shame at her unrequited love appears to be a *non sequitur*. The blank formed by the seemingly unfounded embarrassment becomes understandable when a statement from very few pages previously is taken into consideration: just before the introduction of Huntingdon, Helen’s aunt and mother figure emphasises that “ a girl’s affections should never be won unsought” (*TWH* 103), echoing Richardson’s famous dictum from 1751, which applied for many generations of women, that it was “immoral as well as impolitic for a girl to allow herself to feel love for a suitor until he had actually asked for her hand in marriage” (Watt 174.)

Although the reason for Helen’s mortification is a blank, it is thus easily bridged: her embarrassment is quite similar to that of Marianne. As in *Sense and Sensibility*, being visibly attracted by the “manly beauty” (Austen 42) of the hero, who displays no such attraction himself, is a weakness on the woman’s part; and since Helen’s love for the hero is already very strong at this point, her humiliation is proportionately greater than Marianne’s on her first meeting with Willoughby. Helen’s greater embarrassment, based on her greater love and the hero’s worse behaviour, conveys more than an impending love affair. Whereas the pain of seemingly unrequited love is normal for a young girl and consistent with the repertoire of romantic literature, Huntingdon’s open flirtation with Arabella is a

distortion of a motif in that repertoire. The eternal triangle in narratives of courtship, where the heroine suffers some pain of jealousy but is later chosen over her rival, as Jane appears to be preferred over Blanche, is a recurring motif, but Huntingdon's relationship with Arabella, which later blooms into an affair when they are both married, diverges from the repertoire to form a hint of his sexual escapades later in the narrative.

Helen's mortification at the hands of Huntingdon, due to his loose morals concerning sex, is portrayed as clearly as the condition of her innocent love permits: he humiliates her not only with his first apparent indifference, but also by placing her in a compromising situation even when he is supposedly obeying social rules and proposing to her. Instead of "first seeking the permission of her relatives, as etiquette demanded" (White, 393*n*.), Huntingdon makes the proposal in a furtive and barely legitimate manner, leaving Helen to the disapproval of her aunt when she finds the couple alone and kissing, and to the danger of ruining her reputation if they should be found by someone else. Although the implications of Huntingdon's carelessness are not stated, the severe reactions of characters who witness a kiss between an unmarried couple help the modern reader to fill in the blank and infer that kissing before marriage is a serious matter: Margaret in *Sense and Sensibility* runs to tell her mother and sister of Marianne's dalliance, whereupon the family is sure of her engagement; Mrs Fairfax in *Jane Eyre* is shocked and worried on Jane's behalf when she sees her and Rochester embracing and kissing; and Helen's aunt admonishes Huntingdon in a manner that appears to be as cold and stern as propriety permits: "I should have felt disposed to judge more favourably of your pretensions, if you too had chosen another time and place, and – let me add – another manner for your declaration" (*TWH* 133).

The extent of humiliation to which Huntingdon subjects Helen is more than the premonition of the shame she will later endure due to her husband's drinking, adultery and his leaving her prey to other dissolute men: if humiliation, however "subtle and insidious", indeed "precipitates a morbid dependency" as Horney claims (1950, 245), the degree of humiliation suffered at the beginning can be

taken as indicative of the morbidity of the relationship, extending even to Helen's forced legal dependency on her husband later.

With his lack of restraint in sexual matters and his tendency to break social codes, Huntingdon very much resembles Rochester who also kisses Jane in front of others and makes her jealous by flirting with Blanche. Helen, on the other hand, is much less in control of the affair than independent Jane who enjoys bantering with Rochester: Helen is reduced to tears and subjected to interrogations by her aunt, a mother figure that Jane does not have, and in fact supplies for herself. It is not surprising that the first evaluative comments about Huntingdon come from this aunt. Her comment about him, clearly explaining her husband's evaluation of him as "a bit wildish" as "destitute of principle, and prone to every vice that is common to youth" (*TWH* 107), is given immediately after Huntingdon's introduction in the narrative. This serves the purpose of acquainting the reader with his destructive character much earlier than Helen can be. Since the reader is introduced to Helen as a widow and learns of her marriage through the diary narrative, the quick disclosure of the husband's profligate nature also helps to free Helen from the guilt of later abandoning him – the result of which, her life alone with her son, the reader knows of before its reasons.

The narrative voice itself, which is Helen's, cannot be trusted to give reliable comments about Huntingdon at this stage since she is inexperienced and head over heels in love; and like in the other novels, there is simply no one to supply information about the male sexual predator when it could be useful – before the heroine commits herself into his hands emotionally and, as in Helen's marriage, legally and financially. Seriously unfavourable comments and hints about Huntingdon follow not many pages after the unconventional proposal, but clearly too late in the narrative to have any effect on Helen, since by the time that Arabella asks, "Are you sure your darling Huntingdon deserves all the love that you give to *him*?" *(TWH* 187, emphasis in the original), she is already married to him.

The answer to Arabella's question is a blank in the process of being revealed as negative. Huntingdon's character, like those of the male sexual predators in the

novels previously studied, is a blank; he is never the focalizer but only seen from Helen's point of view in her narrative. The rakish qualities, hinted at with his introduction, become much clearer afterwards: even before the wedding, Helen confides to her diary that she must give his conduct "a harder name than thoughtlessness" (*TWH* 145) when he cheerfully recounts to her a scene of persuading a man to debt through gambling. She also admits that while he is "no accomplished hypocrite" he is, in short, "selfish" (*TWH* 158). With his childish egotism, his fondness for his wife which is like that for a pet, and his merry narrations of unscrupulous drinking and debauchery, Huntingdon is clearly the irresponsible narcissist outlined in Horney's theory, with the "unquestioned belief in his own greatness and uniqueness" who is "unscrupulous, or at least unreliable" (194-95).

Huntingdon is a very destructive character; the scenes of disgusting drunkenness, flagrant adultery and strong insults are striking. But he is not exactly an example of the proud arrogant/ vindictive type who displays "violent rages" and "spells of vindictive fury" due to his "need for vindictive triumph (Horney 197-98). He is simply very selfish and irresponsible: he leaves Helen alone for months at a time, during which time he expects her to write to him, while he is "sometimes too idle and often too busy" (*TWH* 173) to answer her. Although Helen is still so much in love that she cannot see the full scope of his egotism, his self-centeredness during and after this visit to London leads her to refer to his upbringing as the "*crime* of over indulgence" (*TWH* 177, emphasis in the original) which she vows to avoid – the plot rests on this decision to make her yet unborn son a different man than his father.

Huntingdon reaches the climax of irresponsibility and carelessness against his wife when their marital differences come out into the open: he clearly breaks the sanctity of the marriage vow not only by his own adultery but by speaking of his wife's sexual matters to other men, and pandering her to others. Instead fulfilling his role as head of the family and protecting her, he leaves her not only alone but as prey to the men he invites to the house, openly declaring "anyone among you, that can fancy her, may have her and welcome" (*TWH* 277).

The scene is significant as a display of Huntingdon's lack of dependability not only because of actual danger that his guests might take the offer seriously, but more importantly because the disclosure of a woman's sexual matters before others is a breach of trust and, at the same time, leaves Helen in great danger of scandal and disgrace. This is doubly humiliating for Helen since it is related to her by Hargrave, the would-be lover she is trying to keep at bay. The humiliation escalates later when she must openly speak of accusations against her own fidelity before all the men, and force Hargrave to testify for her.

Huntingdon proves careless towards his son as well as his wife: although he refuses Helen's suggestion to separate and let her live with Arthur, and thwarts her first attempt running away since he objects her plan to "bring him up to be a dirty Yankee tradesman, or a low, beggarly painter" (*TWH* 287) instead of a gentleman, he is otherwise indifferent to Arthur's health and upbringing. He grudges his infant son the time that Helen spends in the nursery (*TWH* 200), and later his parenting is restricted to teaching his son "to tipple like papa, to swear like Mr Hattersley, and to have his own way like a man" (*TWH* 273). If his pinnacle of irresponsibility towards Helen is leaving her prey to other men, the pinnacle of irresponsibility towards his son is the governess he brings in, who is actually his mistress. This act symbolizes the contamination of both his house and his son's soul with his sexual debauchery, and is serious enough for Helen to act out her plan of escape.

Whereas the infidelity, drinking and mutual hostility in these pages reveal a very unhappy marriage, it is clear from the beginning of Helen's diary that the relationship begins with love, at least on Helen's part, and that Huntingdon at first seems to be an adequate partner for her, able to allow her to live out her repressed expansive tendencies. As with Marianne in *Sense and Sensibility* and Jane in *Jane Eyre*, these tendencies are indicated before the introduction of the male sexual predator: Helen shows a slightly rebellious spirit in the first recorded conversation with her aunt, replying to her admonishment about the troubles that beauty can bring with the question, "Have *you* been troubled in that way, aunt?" From her pondering, "I wonder if *she* ever was in love" immediately afterwards, it is

discernible that she considers the aunt inexperienced in either affection or beauty (*TWH* 104-05, emphases in the original). Bell states that her replies are "pointedly saucy" and "her deftness of evasion . . . quite delightful" (89). Helen's tendency to impertinence becomes important later when she speaks uncomfortable truths not only to her husband but also to his friends.

Helen clearly shows her headstrongness in rejecting her first possible suitors, declaring that she would "rather be an old maid and a pauper, than Mrs Wilmot" (*TWH* 109), and also turning down respectable Mr Boarham whom her aunt recommends. Like Marianne who shows a tendency to break social rules even before the advent of Willoughby, Helen complains of the rule that every gentleman must lead a lady assigned by the host to dinner:

> What a tiresome custom that is, by the by – one among the many sources of factitious annoyance of this ultra civilised life [*sic.*]. If the gentlemen *must* lead the ladies into the dining-room, why cannot they take those they like best? (*TWH* 113, emphasis in the original)

Similarly, like Jane who longs for "Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment" (*JE* I, 107), Helen complains of boredom in the very first lines of her diary (*TWH* 102). Another sign of defiance is visible in her seeking comfort in drawing during that boredom: like Marianne's fondness for music and Jane's fantastical pictures, her immersion in art is also an escape from social rules. Later it even becomes her means of escape from her husband when she gains her livelihood by painting.

Compared with Marianne's wild roaming of the countryside with Willoughby and Jane's desperate need for freedom, Helen's expansive and rebellious tendencies appear rather subdued. When the reader fills in the blanks in her characterization created by Helen's naturally biased account of herself, it becomes clear that her rebelliousness is largely limited to her strong sexual feelings: she wants to avoid the possible partners that are not attractive to her and desires Huntingdon. The cheekiness against her aunt is only visible in the context of defending Huntingdon to her. Similarly, she turns to drawing in the first parts of the novel because she can think only of him and can "draw and think at the same time," trying to "paint or sketch" his face (*TWH* 102-03). She complains about dinner customs because she cannot be seated with him, and of the tediousness of

country life because she misses him (*TWH* 103); and her rejection of Boarham appears to be against her own professed principles – in the first pages of her diary, Helen tells her aunt that she values respectability more than sexual attractiveness:

> . . . not only should I think it *wrong* to marry a man that was deficient in sense or principle, but I should never be *tempted* to do it; for I could not like him, if he were ever so handsome and ever so charming in other respects. . . for without approving I cannot love (*TWH* 105, emphasis in the original).

However, her claims about her desired qualities in a partner are evidently idealistic since she finds "upright, honourable, sensible, sober, respectable" (*TWH* 109) Mr Boarham boring, spelling his name as "Bore'em" (*TWH* 105). Like in the case of Marianne whose choice in a partner can be understood from her criticism of the lack of Edward's qualities, Helen's choice of desired qualities in her partner is better discernible from the list of undesired qualities, than the idealistic declaration to her aunt: Helen explains that she will not marry Boarham because

> Firstly, he is, I think, forty years old . . . secondly, he is narrow-minded and bigoted in the extreme; thirdly, his tastes and feelings are wholly dissimilar to mine; fourthly, his looks, voice, and manner are particularly displeasing to me; and finally, I have an aversion to his whole person that I never can surmount. (*TWH* 109)

Like Marianne, Helen wants a partner who resembles herself, one who shares her tastes and feelings. Moreover, she has an unexplained "aversion" to the older man which can easily be construed as a lack of sexual attraction. Helen is also repulsed by Mr Wilmot who is opposite of Boarham: he is "wicked" (*TWH* 105), and what exactly he presses her to under the influence of wine which "rendered him infinitely the more disgusting" is a blank, decorously circumscribed as "he waxed more fulsomely tender, and more repulsively warm" (*TWH* 114). Still it is clearly understood that Helen is put off both by his drinking and by his excessive sexuality – it is telling that this character has the name of the famous seventeenth-century rake. The irony in this first hint of Helen's preference of a partner is that her husband is little later revealed to be similarly prone to drinking and sex as the man Helen finds repulsive because of these qualities.

In this part of the diary which describes the courtship, however, she clearly feels the strong sexual attraction for Huntingdon that she cannot feel for her other suitors, although this cannot be clearly expressed, but is to be understood by filling in the blanks: when he kisses her, she is "trembling with anger and agitation – and I don't know what besides" (*TWH* 123), the feeling that is not pronounced can easily be filled in as arousal. As Jackson points out, "Clearly, Helen responds to Arthur's sexual charm – but it is real, and the journal makes the reader understand that Helen has physical desires that older people are not taking into account in their very Victorian way of managing her future" (476-77).

However, there are also indications that her timidity about sexuality continues even with Huntingdon, even though she is "roused physically by him" (Bell 95), since she is "in no hurry at all" for the wedding and content with non-sexual affection: "it is happiness enough, to know that we *are* to be united; and that he really loves me, and I may love *him* as devotedly, and think of him as often as I please" (*TWH* 140, emphasis in the original). This is a premonition of her later distress because of Huntingdon's sexual escapades – and probably also his excessive sexual demands of her, which are not stated but which his name should have warned readers of, since "Huntingdon" indicates hunters that roam freely and catch whatever they can.

Helen's preoccupation with Huntingdon's faults, and her wish to better him, are evident from the beginning of their relationship: her declaration of a wish for a principled man is not dissemblance to her aunt or to herself. It also shows more than a youthful idealism that disappears when she falls in love with a dissolute man. Helen tells her aunt that she would consider her life "well spent in the effort to preserve so noble a nature from destruction" (*TWH* 117), and it becomes clear from her own musings that this wish is not stated to appease the morally righteous aunt but is in fact a genuine desire to devote her life to Huntingdon's moral reformation:

> There *is* essential goodness in him; and what delight to unfold it! If he has wandered, what bliss to recall him! If he is now exposed to the baneful influence of corrupting and wicked companions, what glory to deliver him from them! - oh! If I could but believe that Heaven has designed me for this! (*TWH* 119-120, emphasis in the original)

This martyr-like zeal in Helen indicates that her expansive tendencies, like Jane's, lean in the direction of morality: in spite of her rebellious streak, she is in the grip of the same "need to be good" (Paris 1997, 151) as Jane and requires the same of her partner, and desires to feel her mastery in leading him to the right path. In Horney's terms, her expansive tendencies are of the perfectionist kind: this type has "high standards, moral and intellectual" (1950, 196). In this sense, Helen's relationship with Huntingdon is different from the cases in the other novels: she does not want to live out her expansive tendencies by vicariously partaking of Huntingdon's life, his freedom to break social rules and be dissolute. Rather, she wants to live out her perfectionist tendencies through him by leading him to repentance and moral reform.

Although Helen's tendency to be saucy seems inconsistent with her moral perfectionism, the latter is probably less a matter of temperament than early and strict education by her aunt, for the very reason that Helen later makes every effort to ensure her own son's good moral instruction. Sutherland points out that while nothing is said about Helen's family history, her estrangement from her father, the fact that the mother is never mentioned, and her husband's incapability to find her at her brother's abode indicate another blank about Helen that is only to be gleaned from these clues:

> Helen is illegitimate – one of her debauched father's by-blows. As the central narrative makes clear, in the world of Brontë's novel a weakness for drink goes together with the grossest sexual delinquency . . . [This] would also explain why Mrs Maxwell is at such pains to instill a high level of sexual morality in her ward (77).

In Anne Brontë's first novel, *Agnes Grey*, there is a reference to the belief that "reformed rakes make the best husbands, *everyone* knows" (184, emphasis in the original). This statement is effectively proven to be untrue by the fact that it is made by the character Rosalie Murray who later makes a very unhappy marriage with a dissolute, adulterous man like Huntingdon. The author appears to have continued the motif of trying and failing to tame a former rake in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*: Helen's expectations from the partner through whom she plans to

live out her expansive tendencies are similarly disappointed. She marries him out of sexual attraction and a wish to morally reform him, and is frustrated on both counts. Naturally for the romantic repertoire, the couple's sexual relations are never clearly alluded to, but the blank can be filled in thanks to Helen's first disillusioned entry in her diary after her wedding:

> He is very fond of me – almost *too* fond. I could do with less caressing and more rationality: I should like to be less of a pet and more of a friend, if I might choose – but I won't complain of that: I am only afraid his affection loses in depth where it gains in ardour (*TWH* 158, emphasis in the original).

Her husband's sensuality now seems to be too much for Helen. More than Huntingdon's inclination to drink, it is later his sexual behaviour, the fact that he has no idea of "restraining his natural appetites" (*TWH* 177) that later wholly estranges his wife from him and triggers her escape. He playfully claims that he will reform and go to church in order to win the approval of Helen's aunt (*TWH* 135), but quickly makes it clear that he will never reform. The diary narrative makes it possible here for the narrator to disclose this to the reader while she is not aware of herself: in the notes, Kathryn White points out that "the reader can see through Huntingdon and it is difficult to see why an intelligent woman like Helen cannot, except that she has a streak of the martyr in her character and a misplaced pride in her own capacity to change him" (392-93*n*). Of course, she is also unrealistic in her account of him since she is in love with him in the first months of their relationship, but by the time the honeymoon is soured by his humiliating accounts of his time of sowing wild oats, and cut short by his selfish wish to return, Helen is already disappointed.

Huntingdon's actions during the increasingly long periods when he leaves her alone in the country are blanks for Helen, as well as for the reader, who only follows her focalization. It is to be assumed that they include drinking bouts, long sessions of gambling, and probably also sexual adventures, but the absence of any reference whatsoever to his actions, when they are so important as to keep the couple apart for months on end and effectively wreck the marriage, forms a very conspicuous blank. Rather than giving information as to what men do when they

are left to themselves, the time Huntingdon spends away from home serves to outline how he gradually sinks into debauchery and is estranged from Helen, who apparently does not want to know what her husband is doing without her, and claims not to ask him because of pity (*TWH* 176). Her expansive tendency to enjoy sexual feelings seems to evaporate as Huntingdon's dissipation continues and she finds another focus for her love and educational efforts in her son: although the sex issue remains a blank, the absence of references to caresses, and Huntingdon's jealousy of her affection for her son, suggest sexual coldness between the couple after Arthur's birth:

> I resumed my seat in the easy-chair, and gave my little one a shower of gentle kisses to make up its other parent's refusal.
> 'There goes!' cried the jealous father. 'That's more, in one minute, lavished on that little senseless, thankless oyster, than you've given me these three weeks past.' (*TWH* 190)

Disappointed in the father and unable to find fulfilment for her needs in the relationship with him, Helen gratifies not only her need for love but also her need to provide moral guidance through her son: she concentrates on Arthur's moral education.

Although Huntingdon's motivations and thoughts can only be followed through the account of his wife who is the focalizer, it becomes clear early in the narrative that he is as disappointed by the relationship as her. Helen wants a partner who will allow her to live out her expansive tendencies for sex and moral guidance and is overwhelmed by the former and thwarted in the latter. What Huntingdon wants in a partner is even more difficult to ascertain than in the cases of Willoughby and Rochester since there is not even a confession scene where the male sexual predator explains his motivations. It is clear that he flirts with Arabella as well as Helen at the beginning of their courtship, implying to Helen that this is a ruse to make her jealous and accept him, much like Rochester claiming to have staged the engagement to Blanche to make Jane jealous: "if *you* don't value me, I must turn to someone who will" (*TWH* 127, emphasis in the original).

As in Rochester's case, the male sexual predator has no reason to plot to make the heroine jealous, since it is clear from Helen's tears and drawings that she already is in love with Huntingdon. Clearly he enjoys the attention of both women and possibly would make a better match with the lively Arabella who is as prone to dissoluteness as himself: "she will neither deplore his faults nor attempt the amendment, but rather aggravate them by her own" (*TWH* 128). Helen does not explicitly state this, but the blank can be easily filled in since the faults are clearly those of Huntingdon's wildish quality. It can be assumed that, like Rochester turning to Jane instead of Blanche (as Sutherland claims), Huntingdon turns to Helen as a *faute de mieux* – because Arabella, like him, plays double and also "tries to enslave" (*TWH* 128) Lord Lowborough against whom Huntingdon, being a commoner, has no chance. Although Helen never alludes to being quite obviously a second choice, it appears that Huntingdon proposes to her when it becomes clear that marrying the woman who shares his tastes and attracts him, so much so that she later becomes his mistress, is, if not out of the question, probably too great an undertaking for a man as idle as Helen pronounces him to be (*TWH* 177).

Even if Helen is a second alternative to Arabella, it is not quite clear what attracts Huntingdon to her and prompts him to leave his merry bachelor life – except that it later turns out that he does not really leave it but continues his debauchery. Together with her clear affection, her beauty is probably an important factor in catching his attention: Bell claims that "he is manifestly affected as deeply as his roué's heart can be by the unequivocal revelation of her feelings towards him, and urged on at the same time by his desire for her virginal youth and beauty" (101).

The warning by Helen's aunt, immediately before his introduction, that "beauty is that quality which, next to money, is generally the most attractive to the worst kinds of men" (*TWH* 104) must ring in the reader's ears as the courtship of Huntingdon and Helen progresses. Iser claims that during the reading process, what is read is continuously compared to what has been read before, so that new information shows the previously read one in a new light: "every reading moment

sends out stimuli into the memory . . . reading does not merely flow forward, but the recalled segments also have a retroactive effect, with the present transforming the past" (1976, 115). In that sense, the slow revelation of Huntingdon's debauchery will remind the reader of the aunt's warning which immediately precedes his introduction, and the reader will fill in the blank, the unformulated connection, to understand the subtle hint that Huntingdon is indeed one of those worst kinds of men.

Some scenes of Helen's narrative of dialogues with her husband indicate that he might also be attracted by her moral principles and shyness, if not in the way that she expects. He appears amused by Helen's coyness before their engagement when she is bewildered by his flirtation and her own sexual feelings. When she insists that he return her drawing of him he reacts with an "insulting, gleeful laugh" (*TWH* 126) and proposes to her shortly afterwards. It is to be inferred that her protestations and tendency to be headstrong are rather attractive qualities: although Frawley claims that he "prefers her to have a quiet demeanor, suiting her subordinate position as a woman" (129), this argument is faulty because it is based on a quotation that is misunderstood since it is Hattersley, not Huntingdon who quotes him in a letter, who says "I must have some good, quiet soul that will let me just do what I like" (*TWH* 173).

There is an indication that Huntingdon regards his wife as an example of the Victorian "Angel in the House". Although this does not amount to a preference for a chaste, virtuous woman, almost a sexless being, as in Rochester's case, since Huntingdon is everything but disgusted from worldly women, he sees Helen as ethereal compared to the sinfully mundane Arabella with whom he flirts, just as Rochester regards Jane as a "sprite" contrasting with his worldly mistresses: "she is a daughter of earth, you are an angel of Heaven; only be not too austere in your divinity, and remember that I am a poor, fallible mortal" (*TWH* 185).

What Huntingdon expects from his "angel" (*TWH* 133) is again only to be understood from his complaints when he is unsatisfied with what he gets: like the similarly rakish narcissist Willoughby, he "likes to be pleased" (*TWH* 159) and wants all his partner's attention, showing the typical attributes of the narcissistic

type in Horney's theory who "needs endless confirmation of his estimate of himself in the form of admiration and devotion" (1950, 194). He claims that during church service her concentration on prayer instead of on him makes him "jealous of his maker" (*TWH* 160); a very serious religious offence, as Helen points out. He is similarly jealous of the time and attention she spends on their son (*TWH* 189) and forbids her to go to her estranged father's funeral (*TWH* 210).

An important difference between Huntingdon's case and the male sexual predators in the novels previously studied is the apparent lack of repressed tendencies in him to be lived out with the heroine: unlike Willoughby who seems to value Marianne's love, though not enough to marry without money, or Rochester who cherishes the moral education provided by Jane, Huntingdon does not try to share Helen's interests, does not care about her efforts about his moral reform, and shows no intention of changing his narcissism. When Helen points out his selfishness, he responds only with "so it is; there's no help for it" (*TWH* 191). In this sense, what he wants in a partner is probably limited to the selfish expectations Helen realizes only after the birth of their child:

> . . . his notions of matrimonial duties and comforts are not my notions. Judging from appearances, his idea of a wife, is a thing to love one devotedly and to stay at home – to wait upon her husband, and amuse him and minister to his comfort in every possible way, while he chooses to stay with her (*TWH* 191-92).

Since these expectations are not only selfish, but also unrealistic, Huntingdon is as quickly disappointed by his choice of wife, whose dwindling interest in sex is also discernible from blanks formed by the guarded terms of "matrimonial duties" and "ministering to the husband's comforts." Helen's attentions, which focus on trying to better Huntingdon, apparently become too boring and annoying to him after a while. Although he tries to mollify her at first, he is impervious to her attempts to reform him (*TWH* 193). Conversely, he does better himself and drinks less for a while upon the entreaties of his mistress Arabella. Helen is humiliated profoundly when this is explained to her by the mistress:

> I told him, in few words, that I could not bear to see him degrade himself so, and that I should cease to – no matter what I told him – but

> you see the reformation I have wrought; and you ought to thank me for it (*TWH* 250).

Though the important information is not uttered and ostensibly remains a blank, it is clear that Arabella threatens to withhold sex if Huntingdon drinks – a threat that Helen must have made, and followed through, often in the marriage, since Huntingdon drinks and complains of her coldness especially after the birth of Arthur. It is obvious that within the first two years of their marriage, Helen has lost her sexual and educational influence on her husband, who now experiences both with another woman, proving worthless her attempts to better him through her love and self-sacrifice.

In the novels studied previously, the morbid relationships between a self-effacing woman and an expansive male sexual predator end when the neurotic needs of the parties are no longer gratified because they conflict with other neurotic needs: when the need for money forces Willoughby to marriage with another woman, or the revelation of Rochester's wife forces Jane away from life as a mistress. In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, the love relationship between the couple is also effectively over by the time that Huntingdon's affair becomes clear to Helen: she can no longer gratify her expansive needs through him, and his sexual attraction is directed at another woman, by whom he lets himself be educated, if at all. His expectations from his wife appear to be limited to her attention and obedience, which she in turn thwarts when she finds out about his affair: "henceforth, we are husband and wife only in the name" (*TWH* 241).

The signs that the crisis between the couple will occur are much clearer than in other novels: whereas the revelations of the secret relationships of Willoughby and Rochester come as a surprise, Huntingdon's dissoluteness and his early flirtations, as well as the long trips of debauchery, show the reader again and again that this character deteriorates, although Helen who recounts this development believes the opposite, joyously noting "Yes, I *will* hope!" (*TWH* 232, emphasis in the original) immediately before finding out about the mistress. It is only when she is confronted with a love scene between Huntingdon and Arabella

that she is forced to accept what other characters, Hargrave and the nurse Rachel, already know and readers surmise.

If the revelation of the male sexual predator's secret relationship is less sudden than in the other novels, the developments after this turning point contrast even more with the pattern in the other novels. The physical parting is not immediately connected to the estrangement of the couple, but deferred for years during which Huntingdon continues his affair with Arabella and Helen focuses on her son who provides her with more chances of education:

> Here was Arthur left to me at last; and rousing from my despondent apathy, I exerted all my powers to eradicate the weeds that had been fostered in his infant mind, and sow again the seed they had rendered unproductive. Thank Heaven, it is not a barren or a stony soil; if weeds spring fast there, so do better plants. His apprehensions are more quick, his heart more overflowing with affection than ever his father's could have been; and it is no hopeless task to bend him to obedience and win him to love and know his own true friend (*TWH* 288).

To Helen, Huntingdon is a factor who prevents her son's moral education, from whom she runs away in order to remove that son from his influence when he attempts to "defile" his son "by their contaminating kisses" (*TWH* 302) when he smuggles in a mistress as a governess. The secrecy which surrounds the flight shows clearly that for Helen, Huntingdon is a source of danger: she leaves money and status, declaring "I am not going to sell my child for gold, though it were to save both him and me from starving" (*TWH* 308).

The danger that the male sexual predator poses to the heroine is different in this case than in the other novels. The young heroines in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Jane Eyre* risk being seduced and abandoned by their lovers. Their early victims, the abandoned, pregnant, first lover of Willoughby and Rochester's discarded mistresses, embody this danger and make it tangible. But although Helen is put in danger of losing her reputation because of Huntingdon's careless flirting before the marriage, she does what should protect her from the peril of seduction and abandonment and marries him. However, the novel here diverges from the repertoire of novels of courtship to continue the narration beyond the courtship and wedding, and show that the heroine can be in much greater danger within

wedlock. Huntingdon leaves her in danger of committing adultery, a more serious sin than fornication (which premarital seduction would be), leaving her unprotected from the advances of his friend Hargrave and giving him reason to offer his consolation and help for revenge when Helen is distraught by Huntingdon's adultery and debauchery:

> "By *all means*, leave him!" cried he earnestly, "but NOT alone! Helen! Let *me* protect you! . . . God has designed me your comfort and protector – I feel it – I know it as certainly as if a voice from Heaven declared "Ye twain shall be one flesh"– and you spurn me from you –" (*TWH* 279, emphases in the original).

Hargrave is clearly also a male sexual predator, though in a minor role, serving to point out the depravity of Huntingdon, since he leaves his wife practically in Hargrave's hands. By posing a temptation to sin for Helen, he also fulfils the role of the male sexual predator in the narrative: whereas Helen is not attracted to him in the way she is to Huntingdon, she is tempted to show "a seeming encouragement of Hargrave's advances" (*TWH* 247) in order to revenge herself on her adulterous husband.

It is also Hargrave who recounts to Helen the conversation quoted before in which Huntingdon offers his wife to his debauched friends (*TWH* 277). Since Hargrave has a strong motivation to defame Huntingdon to his wife whom he himself wants to seduce, there is again "personal involvement" in this case, which indicates that he too is likely to be an "unreliable narrator" (Rimmon-Kenan 100). Whether Huntingdon makes the offer as a joke, as drunken nonsense or seriously, is never explained and remains a blank. The fact that he accuses his wife of infidelity immediately afterwards indicates that he is not so careless about handing her over to friends as he claims, but it is clear that Helen finds herself in great danger of being prey to a group of drunken men from whom she would not be able to protect herself if they should take their host's offer seriously. This is more serious peril than seen even in the case of the pregnant Eliza in *Sense and Sensibility*, clearly showing the consequences of daring to marry a male sexual predator.

While the open discussion of the marriage breakdown and the accusations against her fidelity are insulting, Helen fears less the social danger than the moral one to which Huntingdon submits her, just as to Jane her personal integrity is more important than her social standing when she leaves Rochester. Trusting her religious belief, Helen can console herself with "the solace of a good conscience and a hopeful trust in heaven" (*TWH* 263) and fortify herself against the feelings of shame at her husband's adultery:

> I shudder at the thoughts of going down to breakfast – how shall I encounter them all? – Yet let me remember it is not I that am guilty: I have no cause to fear; and if they scorn me as the victim of their guilt, I can pity their folly and despise their scorn (*TWH* 242).

But whereas she defers her escape at first in order not to part from her son (*TWH* 240), she finally realizes her flight precisely to "deliver him from such a parent" (*TWH* 284). The rhetoric of the novel, formed by Helen's narration, suggests that the danger posed to Arthur's soul and morality is greater than that to his mother, so great that she declares the boy's death preferable to a return to his "unworthy father" (*TWH* 305/ 307).

The crisis between the couple, as pointed out before, takes place not as an isolated event when a secret is revealed: although Helen relinquishes her role as wife as well as her cooperation in sex when she learns about Huntingdon's affair, the couple lives together for years during which the relationship disintegrates slowly and painfully. The dream-world of living out repressed expansive tendencies vicariously through the partner does not collapse suddenly. Helen's disillusionment begins with the honeymoon and peaks with her husband's adultery and his preventing his son's education. Huntingdon refuses a separation and insists on having his wife and son in his house to keep up appearances, but it is clear that he is also disappointed in his expectations. During the slow dissolution of the relationship, both partners are seen to go through the five stages of traumatic grief outlined by Kübler-Ross, which are experienced by Helen and Huntingdon in a manner and time span different from the processes after the clear-cut separations in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Jane Eyre.*

It will be recalled that the first stage of traumatic grief after the loss of a loved one or a separation is shock, characterized by "denial and isolation" (Kübler-Ross 34). Helen clearly remains in this stage for a very long time: her denial of her husband's true character that begins when she meets him and falls in love continues until after the wedding when she admits that she made a mistake in marrying him (*TWH* 158).

Her hope in his moral reformation and her attempts to attain it continue for years, since these attempts satisfy her expansive need to educate him. Whereas her denial of her husband's irrevocable dissoluteness continues to his deathbed, when she still tries to help by encouraging his repentance, the denial of his infidelity ends when she witnesses his adultery, which begins the stage of anger. Although she feels guilt for her "bitter feelings" which she believes "no true Christian could cherish" (*TWH* 247), she hates her husband, regarding him as her "greatest enemy" (*TWH* 243) and feeling tempted to pay back his infidelity in kind:

> . . . he flatters himself that I love him devotedly still, in spite of my pretended indifference. On such occasions I have sometimes been startled by a subtle, fiendish suggestion inciting me to show him the contrary by a seeming encouragement of Hargrave's advances; but such ideas are banished in a moment with horror and self-abasement; and then I hate him tenfold more than ever, for having brought me to this! (*TWH* 247)

This long period of cold wrath and hatred corresponds to the stage of anger outlined by Bowlby and Kübler-Ross. The stage of Bargaining, the intermittent stage after anger that constitutes the search for "some sort of agreement which may postpone the inevitable happening" (Kübler-Ross 72), is a blurred and complex stage in Helen's grieving process when she appears to struggle against accepting the inevitable breakdown of the marriage. She emphasizes that she is adamant in being his wife "in name only" (*TWH* 241) from the point when Huntingdon's affair is revealed. However, her efforts to prevent his excessive drinking by using his weakness for his mistress as a motivation, pointing out that drinking will make him ugly and repulsive to her, are given on the same page as these protestations, which appears to be more than an example of her perfectionist tendencies. Helen's confession that she could "pardon all" and "be avenged"

(*TWH* 253) if he could feel her suffering indicates that at this early stage of the grieving process, immediately after the revelation of Huntingdon's secret affair, she tends to seek for alternative solutions to continue the relationship.

In the narrative, Helen is seen to remain in the long period of suffering and depression for years. The weariness of life, a symptom of depression that is also seen in the depression stages of Marianne and Jane, is very clear in her case as well: after the first year of the couple's life in "dual solitude" without "love, friendship or sympathy," (*TWH* 252), having decided to remain married only nominally, Helen clings to the education of her son to save herself from despair, which Jane avoids with religious scruples alone:

> Another year is past, and I am weary of this life. And yet, I cannot wish to leave it: whatever afflictions assail me here, I cannot wish to go and leave my darling in this dark and wicked world alone, without a friend to guide him through its weary mazes, to warn him of its thousand snares, and guard him from the perils that beset him on every hand (*TWH* 256).

The stage of depression and despair also corresponds to the end of a morbid relationship in Horney's terms, when the self-effacing woman has to relinquish her dependent relationship with an expansive partner. As Horney points out, the woman is "actually at the point where it becomes a proposition of sink or swim" (1950, 256). The two moves that set in at this point, to give up and die or fight and end the depression, are seen in the long, near-fatal illnesses that both Marianne and Jane experience at the end of their stages of depression. For both, the near-death situation is a symbolical death of the old idealized self that is found by vicariously living the expansive self of the partner, and the convalescence a symbolic rebirth with a new self-effacing self.

The stage of painful depression is the most important element in the education pattern of these novels. The suffering brought about by the breakdown of the attempt at vicariously living out expansive tendencies with the male sexual predator teaches the heroine to relinquish that idealized self and turn to a self-effacing, morally acceptable self, embodied by a new, or bettered, partner.

In Helen's case, however, there is no single act of crisis in the relationship. Her suffering because of the disintegration of the marriage begins shortly after the honeymoon, when her husband's selfishness and dissoluteness begin to become clear to her and she gives the first indications that she has made an error in marrying him and has been "wilfully blind:"

> I must confess, in my secret heart, that Arthur is not what I had thought him at first, and if I had known him in the beginning, as thoroughly as I do now, I probably never should have loved him, and if I had loved him first, and then made the discovery, I fear I should have thought it my duty not to have married him (*TWH* 158).

Although she emphasizes that she does not regret her marriage, second thoughts about this step, and with them the process of education due to her suffering, begin at this point. After the birth of Arthur, she claims that she is more mature and realistic about the marriage, indicating that her education about the character of her husband continues: "my bliss is sobered, but not destroyed; my hopes diminished, but not departed" (*TWH* 188).

Although there is more than one dramatic incident signifying the breakdown of the relationship, the revelation of the mistress and Huntingdon offering up Helen to his friends among others, there is one scene which is similar in nature to the near-death situations experienced by Marianne and Jane. Helen's reaction to her husband's violent discovery of her escape plan and his preventing her by taking away her money and burning her possessions is, as Berry points out, a "death-like torpor" (90) expressed in a train of negative adjectives: "I did not attempt to follow him, but remained seated in the armchair, speechless, tearless, and almost motionless" (*TWH* 286). It is clear that Helen is desolate since her escape plan is ruined, less for her own sake than for her son's: "I am forbidden to save my son from ruin, and what was once my only consolation, is become the crowning source of my despair" (*TWH* 287). However, like the other heroines who fight the urge to give up and die, Helen shakes off her inertia: the next entry in her diary, two months and merely a page later, divulges her struggle to teach her son to despise alcoholic drinks (by mixing them with emetics) so as not to become like his father, as well as her new plan to escape with her brother's help.

This chapter, appropriately titled “Hope Springs Eternal in the Human Breast,” reveals not only her plans to struggle for release from the expansive life style of her husband, but also her clear hostility against him: Helen begins her entry with the words, “Having now got rid of Mr Huntingdon for a season, my spirits began to revive” (*TWH* 288), indicating both her hatred in her relief to be rid of him and her estrangement in calling him by his last name. As in *Sense and Sensibility*, the process of the heroine’s shift from the values of the male sexual predator towards self-effacing values is marked by a corresponding change in the comments of the narrative voice about that character.

Since Helen is both the narrator and the victim of Huntingdon’s excesses, her change from blind adoration to hatred is clearly visible in her own comments about him. These comments not only convey his gradual decline, but also serve to steer the reader in the direction of rejecting his increasingly more destructive values. Whereas she mentions his “ineffable but indefinite charm” (*TWH* 114) during their courtship, which effectively captures her, later her “cup of sweets. . . is dashed with a bitterness” even before they are married when she hears of his encouraging Lord Lowborough to gamble and lose his fortune (*TWH* 145). Later, as Huntingdon’s drinking bouts, long absences for trips of debauchery and, finally, his affair become clear, the reader does not actually need comments by the narrative voice to be guided to think less and less of him as these actions are enough to show his depravity. Still Helen’s comments also support the gradual revelation of Huntingdon’s character. After the narration of some smaller quarrels, she states,

> We have now been full two years united – the “romance” of our attachment must be worn away. Surely I have now got down to the lowest gradation in Arthur’s affection, and discovered all the evils of his nature: if there be any further change, it must be for the better. . . surely we shall find no lower depth than this (*TWH* 191).

The comments about the low gradation and depth, depreciatory without revealing too much, are a blank, but indicate that Helen regards what she has seen of her husband’s alcoholism and flirting as the lowest that he can possibly sink. However, the information and the comments that she records in the diary little

later show that much further depths can be reached, when Helen reacts to the revelation of his affair: “it is not enough to say that I no longer love my husband – I HATE him!” (*TWH* 243)

It is significant that although Huntingdon’s depravity is shown quite explicitly in the novel, Helen does not react with any statement or epithet worse than the one reference to her hatred, except her record of feeling joy at having got her son “many leagues away from his unworthy father” (*TWH* 306). One exclamation of hatred and one mention of unworthiness seem to be a remarkable lack of wrath against an alcoholic and adulterous husband, constituting a blank that is quite as conspicuous as Jane’s seeming lack of hostility after Rochester’s attempt at bigamy. Just like Jane with her compulsive “need to be good” (Paris 1997, 151), Helen is prevented from reacting with more hostility and resentment by her moral perfectionism, which makes her feel guilty at her hatred of him and her contemplation of revenge (*TWH* 247). It is clear that the increasingly condemnatory information and commentary about Huntingdon serves to turn the readers as well as his wife against him. Although Helen claims, “if I hate the sins I love the sinner” (*TWH* 118) when she is freshly in love with Huntingdon, she does not long remain with this same attitude as Jane does towards Rochester until the end, but hates him so much that derogatory comments from others are not necessary for long to make her aware of his nature.

Helen’s personal hostility against her husband appears minimal considering the circumstances: even her final decision to leave him is not formed in her mind out of anger or her own suffering, but to make sure that her son “should be delivered from his father’s corrupting influence” (*TWH* 301). In spite of this seeming lack of pejorative comments, the reader’s relinquishment of Huntingdon and the values represented by him is achieved by clear means that are not in real accordance with the subtle steering outlined by Iser: “he [the reader] must, rather, be gently guided by indications in the text, though he must never have the feeling that the author wants to lead him by the nose” (1974, 37). Quite the contrary, the reader is steered in a very unambiguous manner. Huntingdon’s tendency to depravity, alcoholism and flirtation are evident from his very introduction, as

pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, and constitute clear warnings about his character that are later realized.

The reader is also guided away from the values of the male sexual predator by the comments of characters who witness those actions which remain a blank to Helen, and who can thus make clearer and more depreciatory statements about him than she can: during one of Huntingdon's long absences, Hargrave states that his behaviour during that trip, though again unexplained, is "infamous;" later, when Huntingdon and his friends shift the location of the revelries to Helen's home, he escapes the drinking party exclaiming, "I positively *detest* the man!" (*TWH* 195, 215; emphasis in the original) The condemnation of the male sexual predator continues with comments of other friends in depravity besides Hargrave, whose efforts to seduce Helen, which continue over the years, can be considered a factor that makes him unreliable as a narrator or commentator of Huntingdon's actions to her: Lord Lowborough, brought to ruin and cuckolded by Huntingdon, calls him an "infernal demon," and Hattersley states he is "downright weary" of his friend (*TWH* 268, 294).

The fact that even his former friends wash their hands of the male sexual predator is a strong sign that his power is waning: significantly, Hattersley's remark of tiring with Huntingdon's debauchery, and his unconvincingly quick moral reform with the help of letters written by his wife and shown to him by Helen, take place immediately before Helen's escape. Symbolically, Helen gratifies her perfectionist expansive tendencies once, reforming at least one immoral man before she escapes from another. The fact that she attempts this with the only man among this circle of friends who shows hope of reform indicates that Helen's education has proceeded so far that she shows no further tendency to attempt to reform a man who is as incapable of responding to her effort as her husband. That martyr-like tendency is the most important expansive trait that has to be cured, and thus her abandoning it the most important part of her education.

Helen's education is not merely a process of relinquishing character traits and actions that are lived out with the expansive partner, as it is the case with Marianne, who ceases her rebelliousness as well as her tendencies to spend money

and disobey social rules after accepting a life without Willoughby. Like Jane who does not really need to be educated to choose the morally right action and refuse being a mistress, Helen is not shown to be fundamentally wrong in her moral stance, but wrong in her choice of a partner. She acknowledges this towards the end of her narrative: "I told her I was sensible of my error: I did not complain of its punishment" (*TWH* 301). Admitting her mistake to her aunt is an important step in Helen's education since the aunt is the first person in the narrative to point out the true character of Huntingdon and to warn Helen against the marriage; thus admitting the error is a symbolic confession and repentance to a "higher authority" who knows of the true state of the relationship.

In the other novels, the male sexual predator who precipitates the heroine's education also undergoes a process of traumatic grief. In Huntingdon's case, the process he experiences is very difficult to follow since, as pointed out before, there is not even a final confession scene where he explains his feelings and motivations. Helen's account of his actions reveals that he exhibits some symptoms of traumatic grief after the breakdown of his marriage, although in a manner that is very different from hers.

The first stage of denial appears to be a chronic condition with Huntingdon: he denies responsibility as well as problems in the relationship almost until his death. Just as he never acknowledges his alcoholism as a problem and merely complains of his deteriorating health (*TWH* 176), he refers to his first flirtation with Arabella as "a jest, a mere nothing" (*TWH* 183). He also denies the seriousness of his later adultery and refuses his wife's request for a separation, referring to her objection to living with him as "fastidious caprices" (*TWH* 241). His wilful denial of his faults and shortcomings corresponds to the narcissistic type outlined by Horney whose "capacity to overlook [his own] flaws, or to turn them into virtues, seems unlimited" (1950, 195): even on his deathbed, he is unwilling to accept the fact of the death he has brought on himself by his alcoholism: "I'm not going to die yet – I can't and I won't" (*TWH* 346).

Huntingdon does not actually go through the first stage of traumatic grief but, more correctly, is stuck in denial almost until his death. Consequentially, he

experiences the other stages not in the order mostly seen after a traumatic event, which leads to acceptance, but exhibits anger and depression over a period of years, without undergoing psychological change and reaching acceptance. He reacts to every disappointment and every disobedience with anger, mortifying Helen by attacking servants (*TWH* 199), and does not refrain from offering his wife to his friends for her refusal of her marital duties (*TWH* 277). As it seems, "his injustice and ill-humour . . . this adventurous fretfulness and nervous irritability" (*TWH* 204) comprise less a stage of grief due to the breakdown of his marriage, which he denies although the dissolution has begun at this point, and rather a character trait exacerbated by drinking, which corresponds to the "burst[s] of rage" of the narcissist who feels misunderstood (Horney 1950, 195).

Although Huntingdon frequently complains of his wife's "marble heart" and claims she will "kill him by inches" (*TWH* 252), he does not actually go through the stages of bargaining or depression. The latter also indicates that he cannot benefit from the educational effect of suffering either: he "will not learn, change, concede and compromise to make his marriage work" (P.J.M.Scott 79). His long and stomach-turning illness at the end of the narrative serves as a punishment by the novel's rhetoric, but it does not bring about a moral reform or repentance. Since he is not educated by his suffering, he cannot reach the acceptance stage marked by the acceptance of a new, self-effacing self as in Rochester's case: though Helen forgives him, he dies without confession, repentance or moral reform.

This death is as much a plot device to enable Helen to reach a happy ending as it is a fitting punishment by the rhetoric for Huntingdon's villainy: as in the other novels studied here, the male sexual predator makes the education pattern of the novel possible by making the heroine suffer and grow morally, after which the vindication plot is realized by her validation and his punishment. Helen's education is a forced and severe one: although her "spiritual pride" and "arrogant folly" (PJM Scott 78/ 85) which prompt her to undertake the task of reforming Huntingdon do not seem to be more serious offences than Marianne's rebelliousness and Jane's thirst for liberty, Helen is forced to relinquish her

expansive traits and accept a self-effacing self in a far longer and arguably more miserable process than the other heroines. Whereas it takes Marianne and Jane a year each to shake off the effects of the crisis, accept the self-effacing selves and be rewarded with Willoughby and Rochester respectively, Helen suffers more than five years of marriage and a whole month nursing him through an illness that involves not only sleeplessness but also disgusting smells.

Huntingdon's long and torturous illness is a punishment for both spouses: for the male sexual predator, it is the ultimate one that leads to death, for Helen, it is the last and most dramatic part of her education, the punishment for both her wrong choice and for leaving him. The act of leaving the family home and removing her son is justified by the rhetoric: "in duty to my son, I must submit no longer," Helen informs her aunt (*TWH* 301). However, this act is tantamount to abduction or theft, since not only her possessions, but also herself and her son are among "the chattels which the marriage laws of England have made over to him" (Sutherland 73) at the time of the novel's publication, so that in spite of the suffering that mother and son endure at the hands of Huntingdon, the penance of "redemptive labor" (Judd 82) in nursing him is necessary to free Helen from guilt.

Being set free after Huntingdon's death marks the last stage of traumatic grief for Helen. This stage is that of acceptance, which in the novels studied previously is the point when the heroine adopts a new self-effacing self embodied by a new or, in the case of Rochester, a morally reformed partner. Helen is also seen to exchange her expansive tendencies with more prudent ones and rewarded with a new partner after her education, one who is not a male sexual predator but a good choice.

Like Marianne who renounces her expansive tendencies at the end to marry Brandon and Jane whose thirst for liberty disappears after being reunited to Rochester, Helen seems to give up her expansive perfectionist tendencies in her second marriage. The artistic inclinations in all these heroines mysteriously evaporate when they reach the stage of acceptance: just as Marianne is never mentioned to sing or Jane to draw after getting married, Helen does not seem to paint after Huntingdon's death. Her painting is both the expression of

independence and the means for it, since it becomes her source of income when she escapes: when Huntingdon burns her painting equipment, "her sole remaining means of independent expression," this is not merely a "symbolic burning of Helen's creativity and identity" (Berry 89) but first and foremost an attempt to prevent Helen from determining her own life. Since expansive activities like earning money are to be abandoned when she accepts a self-effacing identity, painting is also discreetly discarded.

Similarly, the rebelliousness against social rules and sauciness against her aunt are erased from Helen's behaviour: having learned to be calm "by dint of hard lessons" (*TWH* 269) and seen the shrewdness of her aunt's advice, she is careful to observe both etiquette and the aunt when planning her second marriage. She does not rush into marriage stubbornly like with Huntingdon: "As my marriage is not to please myself alone I ought to consult my friends about the time of it" (*TWH* 380).

The fact that Helen agrees to this waiting period, and her insistence before Huntingdon's death that she and Markham not communicate for six months (*TWH* 316), indicate more than readiness to obey social rules: this compliance shows that Helen is not guided by her sexual impulses any more. She insists on abiding by the rules and sending Markham away although the sexual attraction between them is evident:

> One minute I stood and looked into her face, the next I held her to my heart, and we seemed to grow together in a close embrace from which no physical or mental force could rend us. A whispered "God bless you!" and "Go – go!" was all she said; but while she spoke, she held me so fast that, without violence, I could not have obeyed her. At length, however, by some heroic effort, we tore ourselves apart, and I rushed from the house (*TWH* 318).

This clear decision to withstand sin shows that Helen's moral perfectionism, like Jane's wish to have everything "respectable, proper, *en règle*" (*JE* I, 110, emphasis in the original), endures after her education. But her expansive tendency to educate others in morality seems to disappear with the death of Huntingdon who proved uneducable until the end. There is to indication after her stage of acceptance of what Frawley calls "her hubris, her special arrogance, that to

suppose that she can be good enough for two, reform the rake, and save the sinner's soul" (133). Markham states at the end of his narrative that Arthur "has realised his mother's brightest expectations", but there is no reference to any efforts on Helen's part to further educate him, Markham, or the "promising young scions" (*TWH* 381) that are probably the children from the second marriage. The children from the marriage after the acceptance, like those of Jane and Rochester, again form a remarkable blank, being wholly outside the scope of the novel. For the formation of the heroine's character, it is the relationship with the male sexual predator and, in Helen's case, with her first child born before the acceptance of the new self, that matter, since they bring about that acceptance.

Although Markham is part of the happy ending, many critics disapprove of the choice of this character as a hero. Markham could indeed be regarded as another example of a male sexual predator since his behaviour towards Eliza Millward, his first love before meeting Helen, is no different from Willoughby's towards Marianne, "snatching a kiss" (*TWH* 35) from her and leading her to believe he will propose. Unsurprisingly, he is called a "fop" (Frawley 138) and a "coxcomb" (Liddell 95) by critics who also object to him on grounds of his violent temper: he beats Lawrence, whom he suspects to be Helen's lover, almost unconscious.

In spite of these flaws, or more correctly because of them, Markham is an appropriate partner for Helen insofar as he demonstrates that he is different from his predecessor. While Huntingdon is a menacing character, he is languid, never physically active or dashing, and Helen seems to have to objection to Markham's impetuousness just as Jane is charmed by Rochester's inclination to be violent: "All the Brontë sisters seemed to think that manliness implied strong physical impulses and unmannerly behaviour" (Pinion 256). But whereas Huntingdon is only interested in the gratification of his narcissistic pride, Markham's role as narrator and focalizer in the first and last parts makes his worthiness clear. Even before meeting Helen, he states to his mother that he at least plans to be selfless: "when I marry, I shall expect to find more pleasure in making my wife happy and comfortable, than in being made so by her: I would rather give than receive" (*TWH* 46). Being the focalizer, he reveals that he feels "ardent love" for Helen

and “heart-felt sorrow for her late afflictions” (*TWH* 352/54). While Huntingdon shows no change for the better in his character and behaviour, Markham acknowledges his faults and strives for betterment:

> Gilbert’s self-centeredness and petulance are never completely eradicated, but when he recognizes his faults, he readily admits them or asks Helen’s forgiveness. Gilbert is considerably matured over the course of his love for Helen Huntingdon and ends the novel by becoming not an ideal but a believable marriage partner (Jackson 475).

Markham’s vigor is important when the couple is finally reunited: like Jane and Rochester, Helen and Markham need to find a balance of power and submission. The scene where their wedding is planned can also be regarded as a new instance of Helen’s expansive tendencies, since she is clearly an very active agent in the proposal, almost asking Markham to marry her. Also, very much like Jane who comes to a weakened Rochester as a strong and financially independent woman, Helen here faces Markham as a widow with a fortune at her disposal which gives her power over Markham that she did not have over Huntingdon. The fact that Markham loves her before knowing of her money, but shrinks from contacting her after finding out about it, is indicative of the genuineness of his love and his decency as well as of the power that this fortune gives Helen:

> And could I bear that she should think me capable of such a thing? Of presuming upon her acquaintance – the *love* if you will – accidentally contracted, or rather forced upon her against her will, when she was an unknown fugitive, toiling for her own support, apparently without fortune, family or connections – to come upon her now, when she was re-instated in her proper sphere, and claim a share in her prosperity, which, had it never failed her, would most certainly have kept her unknown to me for ever? . . . No! The very idea was intolerable (*TWH* 372, emphasis in the original).

The marriage reiterates the central theme emphasized by the rhetoric that marriage should not be entered into rashly and on sexual impulse alone: both lovers seek the approval of their elders, Helen from her aunt, Markham from his mother (*TWH* 383-84*)*. Although the subplot about Esther Hargrave, whose mother almost succeeds in coercing her into a marriage as bad as Helen’s, proves that parental choice is not necessarily the right one, gaining the approval of elders

and society is important to make the marriage which marks the acceptance of the new self complete.

Whether that new self accepted by Helen constitutes a true education or merely a switch "from one destructive solution to another," as Paris claims to be the case with Jane (1997, 11), is moot since there is very little information about Helen's life with Markham, all of which is narrated by him. Although the lack of Helen's narration in this last part of the novel might represent a blank, there is hardly any reason to suspect Markham's summary that they are "blessed . . . in each other's society." At the very least, there is no indication of the blandness of Marianne's marriage or of mutual dependency and morbidity of Jane's, but the statement that they "lived and loved together" (*TWH* 383).

3.3

The Male Sexual Predator as a threat of doom and death in Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*

Hitherto, the analysis of the role of the male sexual predator has been limited to one novel by each novelist, since the characters in the novels chosen for the analysis are the most conspicuous and unequivocally seductive characters in the works of these novelists. In the analysis of the works of Elizabeth Gaskell, however, looking at two novels seems necessary since Bellingham in *Ruth* (1853) continues what Carson in *Mary Barton* (1848, henceforth to be referred to as *MB*) begins: whereas the danger of being seduced and abandoned by a male sexual predator from the upper class is merely implied in the first novel, which still leads to a happy ending for the heroine, the second novel explores the consequences of actually surrendering to that seduction. In that sense, the two novels belong together, and will be analysed under the same headings.

In the introduction of the male sexual predator into the narrative, *MB* seems to diverge from the leitmotif drawn by previous novels, in which this type almost invariably makes a dramatic entrance: Mary's as yet unnamed lover is merely shortly mentioned in passing as "a lover, not beloved, but favoured by fancy" (*MB* 46). But after this he does not make an actual appearance until the scene in which the worker George Wilson comes to his house to beg for an infirmary order for another worker from Carson's father, the mill-owner. Contrasting sharply with the "gaunt, pale, unwashed, unshaven weaver" (*MB* 78) who is close to starvation, the young man, about whom the narrative voice disclosed that "he was handsome, and knew it" (*MB* 77) on the previous page, is shown chatting about spending inordinate amounts of money for luxuries like scents and flowers. His extravagance is thus clearly displayed, and also alluded to by his sister (*MB* 78), in the very first scene in which he features.

It is interesting that, uniquely among the novels studied, the male sexual predator is introduced in a scene where the heroine is absent, and moreover one which is not in the context of the love story: although Carson leaves the room "anxious to be in time to have a look and a smile from lovely Mary Barton" (*MB* 79), this is merely a very small reference to Carson's role as would-be lover; the scene is important as the first one in which a worker and a factory owner come face to face.

The greater importance of the class conflict in the novel also appears to be one reason why the first actual meeting between the heroine and the male sexual predator is a blank, and not given in detail. This is quite a conspicuous blank since the heroine is important enough for the novel to be named after her, and her relationship with Carson important enough for her later lover Jem to be indicted when Carson is murdered later. The perfunctory manner in which Carson's introduction and courtship are treated appears to suggest that Mary's second love story matters more than the first, and that Carson himself matters more when dead than when alive.

It is unclear whether the embarrassment inflicted by the male sexual predator upon the heroine, which, as Horney claims, often begins a "morbid dependency"

(1950, 245) is also present in the first meeting between the couple in this novel: it is shortly explained that Carson met "the beautiful little milliner . . . while lounging in a shop where his sisters where making some purchases, and afterwards never rested till he had freely, though respectfully, made her acquaintance in her daily walks" (*MB* 91), but the particulars of the meeting are not given. The very conditions conveyed by the narrative voice, however, suffice to indicate that this is again a case of humiliation like in the first meetings of lovers in the novels studied previously: the fact that the difference in their social status is evident from their business in the shop, since the Carson family are rich buyers, whereas Mary must have been buying materials for her workplace at the dressmaker's, indicates that Mary is disadvantaged and hence suffers embarrassment. Similarly, the detail that Carson searches for her later, without the interference of probably disapproving sisters, indicates mortification.

The introduction of the male sexual predator in *Ruth* again reverts to he tradition seen in other novels studied here: like Willoughby and Huntingdon, Bellingham makes his first appearance in the role of the rescuer, and even twice at that. His first emergence, for the heroine Ruth and the reader simultaneously, takes place during a ball where he treats Ruth kindly and offers her a flower "as thanks for her dexterous help" (*Ruth* 16) in stitching up his dance partner's torn skirt; at their second meeting he rides his horse into a cold river to save a boy from drowning (*Ruth* 22). That boy is later reported to have become his groom (*Ruth* 434).

In both scenes, the gentleman is dashing and in the role of the rescuer. Conversely, Ruth suffers a slight humiliation in both cases, likely to precipitate a morbid dependency as pointed out by Horney. Like Mary, she is in a subordinate position at their first meeting, forced to serve his partner as an "assistant" but actually as an attendant seamstress, literally kneeling at the lady's feet and commanded by her with a "cold and authoritative" voice (*Ruth* 14). The river scene, on the other hand, is the first of many occasions when Bellingham offers her money: although here this is to cover the doctor's expenses for the little boy he saves, it not only makes Ruth uncomfortable since she is "afraid of the

responsibility implied in the possession of so much money" (*Ruth* 25), but it is also a premonition of the times when Bellingham tries to force money upon her to cover up his seduction and she, invariably, refuses and returns it. Clearly the humiliation is present even at the beginning, and Ruth's overestimation of Bellingham in the following pages shows the start of a very morbid dependency, the exaggeration of her assessment of him pointed out even by the narrative voice:

> His spirited and natural action of galloping into the water to save the child, was magnified by Ruth into the most heroic deed of daring; his interest about the boy was tender, thoughtful benevolence in her eyes, and his careless liberality was fine generosity; for she forgot that generosity implies some degree of self-denial (*Ruth* 27-28).

While Carson is introduced almost by the way, there are also very few remarks about him by the narrative voice to describe his character and role to the reader. Although he is not wholly externalized, the narrative voice conveys his thoughts and motivations to speak for themselves, without clearly commenting on this character: whereas it is only stated that he is "to use his own expression to himself, quite infatuated by her" (*MB* 91), implying that he may not be that deeply in love since only he himself claims it, it is clearly stated that "he knew he was handsome, and believed himself fascinating" (*MB* 134), which conveys his vanity and selfishness. Although there are as yet no explicit negative comments about this male sexual predator, the first hint from the narrative voice serves to warn the reader about his character, with the same warning directed at Mary, prophetically indicating later troubles: "Alas! poor Mary! Bitter woe did thy weakness work thee!" (*MB* 46)

There is more information as to Bellingham's character, and even the reasons for its condition, in *Ruth*: his unkind remark to the old woman whose grandson he saves that her house " is more fit for pigs than human beings" (*Ruth* 26) is given immediately after the rescue, to dampen any admiration of him on the reader's part (though not, as pointed out, on Ruth's). It is also made clear that being a spoilt child with an indulgent mother has kept him immature: "The fact of his being an only child had given him, as it does to many, a sort of inequality in those

parts of the character which are usually formed by the number of years that a person has lived" (*Ruth* 31).

Although there are no explicitly derogatory remarks here, Bellingham's villainy is conveyed by this blank just as by that of the lack of comments during the seduction scene. The early statements that "his thoughts had been far more occupied by Ruth than hers by him" and that he is "puzzled by the impression she had produced on him" (*Ruth* 31) make clear that he is, unlike the male sexual predators in the novels by Austen and the Brontës, occasionally the focalizer. However, the focalization shifts completely to Ruth exactly at the point where it would be most interesting to know how and why he decides to seduce her. The reader is left to form his own opinion from Bellingham's actions alone in that scene when he acts out his character as male sexual predator: he is wholly externalized, just like Willoughby in the ballroom scene; only "the change in Mr Bellingham's countenance" (*Ruth* 55) is stated. The tone of his voice seducing Ruth is conveyed like the stage directions in a play: "'Will you not come with me? Do you not love enough to trust me? Oh, Ruth' (reproachfully), 'can you not trust me?'" (*Ruth* 57). The effect of this minutely observed persuasion is greater than any amount of pejorative comments by the narrative voice could be.

The male sexual predators in Gaskell's novels are similar not only to each other, but also to the narcissist outlined by Horney, whose "feeling of mastery lies in is conviction that here is nothing he cannot do and no one he cannot win" (1950, 194): Carson is so vain that he has "no doubt of the effect of his own personal charms" (*MB* 134), so far so that he cannot believe Mary's refusal:

> For an instant he was surprised; the next, vanity came to his aid, and convinced him that she could only be joking. He, young, agreeable, rich, handsome! No! she was only showing a little womanly fondness for coquetting (*MB* 158).

In congruence with Horney's narcissist who "needs endless confirmation" (1950, 194), Carson "likes to be of consequence to the belle of the room." The remark of his sister Sophy, answering the other sister Helen who makes this observation, is prophetic: "He is a good, kind brother, but I think him vain, and I think he hardly knows the misery, the crime, to which indulgent vanity may lead

him" (*MB* 239). Indeed, it could be said that it is Carson's irresponsible self-importance that leads to his death, since he first forwards the most unscrupulous resolution against the workers during the meeting between workers and factory owners, and then draws an insulting caricature which makes the workers decide to "avenge us on yon chap, who had so little feeling in him as to make game on earnest, suffering men" (*MB* 221). The prophetic connection between the sisters' conversation and Carson's death is evident since news of his death arrive immediately after the quoted dialogue.

Similarly fascinating, irresponsible and careless, Bellingham is another perfect example of Horney's narcissistic type: "young and elegant" (*Ruth* 15), he has no scruples to persuade Ruth to leave with him when she has nowhere else to go and then to seduce her; later he washes his hands of her and trusts his mother to "dismiss her, as you wish it; but let it be done handsomely" (*Ruth* 90). The share of his mother's spoiling in his character, her "indulgence" and "wayward disposition" (*Ruth* 32), are as evident as the "*crime* of over indulgence" (*TWH* 177, emphasis in the original) in the raising of Huntingdon; and quite in accordance with the narcissistic type who is often "the favoured and admired child" (Horney 1950: 194).

In the novels studied previously, the male sexual predator temporarily provides the heroine with an outlet for her expansive tendencies, so that she can gratify her expansive needs, usually some sort of rebellion against social rules like incivility, vanity or extravagance, through him. These needs are often implied, as in *Jane Eyre*, or even listed, as in as in *Sense and Sensibility*, before the introduction of the male sexual predator. In *Mary Barton*, the heroine also has some expansive tendencies which she attempts to live out with Carson, notably a vanity resembling his, indicated by the information that she "liked to make an impression" (*MB* 32). A slightly rebellious streak, like with the heroines in the other novels studied, is also to be seen when Mary envies the freedom of Will the sailor: "I wish I were a boy; I'd go to sea with you" (*MB* 226). The most important expansive trait, however, is her clear ambition to escape the working class by marrying Carson: "Mary was ambitious, and did not favour Mr Carson

the less because he was rich and a gentleman . . . Mary dwelt upon and enjoyed the idea of someday becoming a lady" (*MB* 91-92).

This ambition is clearly dangerous: it is "infused" in Mary (*MB* 91) by her aunt Esther who left home, to an eventual fall into prostitution, with a similar plan. This aunt is both an example and a constant reminder of the dangers of seduction by the rich lover and the ensuing prostitution that may await Mary. However, it is made clear in the same passage that Mary not only wants an honourable solution for social mobility, in other words, she aims at marriage, not at becoming a 'kept' woman. Most importantly, she wants this more for her father's sake than her own: her daydreams about entering the upper class centre mostly around

> . . . the day when she should ride from church in her carriage, with wedding bells ringing, and take up her astonished father, and drive away from the old dim work-a-day court for ever, to live in a grand house, where her father should have newspapers, and pamphlets, and meat dinners, every day, – and all day long if he liked (*MB* 91).

This makes it clear that Mary should not be regarded as a coldly calculating, greedy character, but more as a dutiful daughter who means to take care of her only remaining relative in the only way that appears possible, since her profession does not earn her any money during her two-year apprenticeship. The inclination to rebel against the common lot of workers, the dingy court, the enforced lack of information (which, significantly, comes first in the form of newspapers and pamphlets when contemplating what would make John Barton happy) and the scant food, however, remains.

From his first mention in the text, it is emphasized that Carson is " a lover, not beloved" (*MB* 46); indeed, apart from his status and money, it is not clear what could motivate Mary to really love him, or what he could offer her that she really needs. Although the qualities that she wants in a partner are not as clearly listed as those wanted by Marianne and Jane, information may be gleaned that being left without a mother and almost without a father (he is hardly ever at home and, due to the opium he takes, usually not himself); living without money and often without food, what she needs is someone to offer psychological and financial

support. It is also clear that she does feel real love for Jem, who is a worker like her and thus cannot offer her the status and comfort she wants (*MB* 152). Carson is "gay and handsome" (*MB* 161), but although Mary is naive enough to believe that he means to marry her, her reluctance to meet him when her father is out of town, failing to provide even the minimal protection of his presence, indicates that he is not really trustworthy in her eyes. A consequence of this, in turn, is that he does not provide the psychological support that he could do by making sure that she can rely on him; on the contrary, he later even makes her more uncomfortable and uneasy due to his persecution and threats.

Although he does offer financial support, the offer is made under terms which are unacceptable for Mary: she is not content with a loveless marriage only for the sake of money and status, and means to break off the relationship; when Carson tries to mollify her with a reluctant proposal, she retorts: "I said I was sorry, and humbly begged your pardon; that was before I knew what you were. Now I scorn you, sir, for plotting to ruin a poor girl" (*MB* 161).

Whereas Mary's expansive needs, to be lived out with a partner as pointed out, are the simple ones of psychological and financial support, the needs of the heroine of *Ruth* are even simpler: she is in need of human affection. Her situation as an apprentice dressmaker is the working-class version of Jane Eyre's condition at Lowood school. Lonely, cold and underfed like Jane, Ruth only has Jenny for support who is just as sickly and hopeful as Jane's only friend Helen Burns, and who is similarly taken away prematurely due to an illness. Thus Ruth's one great need is for love and attention, and although this is in itself a self-effacing need (Horney 1950, 226), Ruth's condition as a worker without family connections or self-assertiveness makes a rebellion of even wishing for any gratification of that need.

That rebellion also occurs at a point again conspicuously similar to Jane's: just as Jane "lives contentedly at Lowood" while Miss Temple is there "to give her warmth and approval"; (Paris 1997, 151), and thirsts for liberty after that teacher is gone, Ruth submits to long working hours demurely while she can count on the sympathy of Jenny, who is in the role not only of confidante but also of a teacher.

But she does seek solace in Bellingham when "the warning voice and the gentle wisdom" (*Ruth* 31) that Jenny represents disappear: it is stated that "almost insensibly, Jenny's place in Ruth's heart was filled up" and that she is "ready to value and cling to sympathy" (*Ruth* 39, 44).

Ruth is "obedient and docile by nature" (*Ruth* 61), so selfless as to suggest Jenny in her place as assistant seamstress to the ball where she first meets Bellingham, since Jenny is more diligent than herself. She is imbued with a "need to be good" (Paris 1997, 151) which makes her feel that meeting Bellingham, since it must be "a great pleasure . . . must be in some way wrong" (*Ruth* 43). But in spite of these self-sacrificing qualities, in indulging in Bellingham's attention she displays the same rebellion against social rules as do the saucy heroines of the novels previously analysed who revel in incivility, bantering and flirting. Even being together with him in public, as distinct from submitting to sexual seduction, means that she inadvertently breaks important social rules. This is evident in the anger of Mrs Mason, her employer, at seeing Ruth "standing with a lover, far away from home" (*Ruth* 54). Although it is emphasized that Mrs Mason overreacts because she is angry at quite another matter, it is clear that receiving Bellingham's attentions makes Ruth a rebel, and it is to be assumed that the rebellion lies less in the intimacy with a young man and more in the fact that the young man is from a social class higher than her own: it would not exactly be considered a compromising situation for Marianne to be seen with Willoughby or Jane with Rochester.

Ruth differs from Mary not only in that she fully and steadfastly loves the rich male sexual predator who seduces her, but also in her complete lack of ambition, plans or daydreams concerning him. In spite of her "childlike dependence on others" (*Ruth* 80), she makes no plans to marrying Bellingham and escape her own class; the only "castles in the air" (*Ruth* 87) she builds while waiting for him are those of him awaking from his fever to call her to his side. Her dream-world only consists of his presence and attention, however full they may be of his slight insults like "little blockhead" (*Ruth* 66), which indicate a very morbid dependency.

In both *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*, the heroine, who is respectively threatened and seduced by the male sexual predator, barely provokes any real emotion of love and has no real influence on the man who so steadfastly pursues her with no recognizable intention but seduction. Since Carson is characterized only in very few statements, although he is the focalizer in some passages of the narration, it is unclear what he looks for in a partner and which of his needs are met by Mary. It can be understood, however, that he is attracted not only by the looks of the "beautiful little milliner" but also by her combination of romanticism and common sense: "There was something of keen practical shrewdness about her, which contrasted very bewitchingly with the simple, foolish, unworldly ideas she had picked up from the romances" (*MB* 91). If Mary's romantic notions are those concerning a marriage to raise her status, as the next paragraph about her ambition to marry Carson also implies, it is unclear how and what exactly Carson would know of them. It is unthinkable that decorum and her own modesty should allow Mary to speak about dreams of marrying him, and he claims not to have known of these ambitions when she upbraids him for having planned to ruin her. Thus it is unclear which romantic notions are meant, and what attribute in Mary really attracts Carson.

Carson is rather scantily characterized, which implies that he is not a very significant character in his own right; his murder and the ensuing complications are more important. However, his feelings for Mary are not left as much a blank as those of other male sexual predators: his own confession of his emotions and motivations takes place early in the narrative and is combined with comments by the narrative voice to give a very clear idea about his role in his relationship with Mary. While he claims that he is "infatuated by her," even "more in love with her than ever" (*MB* 91, 162) after she ends the relationship, the quality of that love, as recognized by Mary when told that he did not plan to marry her, is described in explicitly condemning terms by the narrative voice:

> It was a relief, to gather that the attachment was of that low, despicable kind which can plan to seduce the object of its affection; that the feeling she had caused was shallow enough, for it only pretended to embrace self, at the expense of the misery, the ruin, of one falsely termed beloved. She need not be penitent to such a plotter! (*MB* 160)

Bellingham does not appear to have more profound feelings towards the heroine of *Ruth* than Carson towards the young seamstress in *Mary Barton*. Although Bellingham's love is not as clearly and condemningly described, he seems to be fascinated by her simply because of her childlike manner and innocence: "There was, perhaps, something bewitching in the union of grace and loveliness of womanhood with the *naiveté*, simplicity, and innocence of an intelligent child" (*Ruth* 33). The fact that both male sexual predators find the attributes of the young working girls "bewitching" suggests that the girls have some quality that is different from the "*agaceries*" (*Ruth* 33, both emphases in the original) of women from their own social class, and that this quality, which lies in a combination of seemingly mutually exclusive concepts like shrewdness and romanticism; and childishness and womanliness, is especially attractive to the young man. The young male sexual predators are "bewitched" by the young seamstresses whom they nevertheless speak of as "foolish" (*MB* 161) and "stupid" (*Ruth* 66), which strongly implies that the relationship is especially enjoyable for them when the girl's supposed stupidity makes them feel smarter and stronger by comparison.

Bellingham's love is not commented on by the narrator, like Carson's is, but the dialogue which immediately precedes Ruth's seduction and stands for this blank of the boudoir scene which could not possibly be described in a respectable Victorian novel shows his motivation, based on sexual attraction, more clearly than comments. Having refrained from any "rash, passionate word" so as not to "startle her" (*Ruth* 33) before the excursion, Bellingham begins calling her "my love" when he finds her in tears after having been fired by Mrs Mason for having been seen by her with him on their outing (*Ruth* 56). At the same time he threatens her with his absence by alluding to business in London that is clearly invented, exhorts her to come with him, and claims that she is "indifferent" about their "separation" when she hesitates. The combined effect of subtle threatening, vehement protestation of love and complaint of her own lack of it, which is ironical since she is sobbing because of the prospect of losing him at that moment,

suffices to persuade Ruth to follow him; but the emptiness of his protestations of love is evident not only from their peculiar timing, exactly when he sees his chance to seduce her now that she has no home to go to, but also from his behaviour after the seduction.

Already bored with her before his illness, he does not make much of an effort to defend Ruth to his mother when she blames the girl for the affair afterwards. His "I led her wrong" (*Ruth* 88) is a rather weak statement of responsibility considering it is the only one in the novel, and he quickly acquiesces to the easy solution of going back with his mother and abandoning Ruth: "Ruth has not been so much to blame as you imagine, that I must say; but I do not wish to see her again, if you can tell me how to arrange it otherwise, without behaving unhandsomely" (*Ruth* 90). The quick desertion clearly suggests that Bellingham's love is also of the "low, despicable kind" like Carson's, and similarly only focussed on sexual seduction.

The two characters are similar not only in the lack of depth and genuineness of love for the heroine, but also in their lack of any real interest in, or reaction to, any of the heroine's actions, as a result of which they are not influenced by the heroine at all. Mary's declaration that she does not love him, and her scorn when she realizes he meant to seduce her, do not lead Carson to think about his behaviour but only amuse him as a "charming capricious ebullition" (*MB* 162). This indicates that even her most scathing remarks are of no importance to him since he considers her unimportant as a person. Bellingham similarly not only lacks any real sympathy for Ruth's plight as a seamstress or an unwed mother, but considers it again an amusement when they happen to meet again: whereas Ruth is crushed under her guilt, to him "the whole affair was most mysterious and piquant" (*Ruth* 285).

Significantly, for all their protestations of love, the male sexual predators show no empathy also in the sense of living out any of the tendencies of the heroine. More impervious to the heroine's influence than even Huntingdon who at least makes an outward show of letting himself be guided by Helen at the beginning of the relationship, Carson remains completely untouched by the

example of Mary. Whereas she is, for all her initial ambition to escape the working class, a hard worker not only at her usual workplace but also "trying to earn a few extra pence by working over hours at some mourning [clothes]" (*MB* 149), Carson remains "unfettered by work-hours" (*MB* 91). The only interest he shows in active work-life is his zeal in proposing measures that are hostile to the workers, while privately he insults them with his caricature, which contrasts sharply with Mary's compassion for her fellow workers visible in her "anxious desire" (*MB* 81) to help a sick woman. Whereas at first glance it appears that Carson's callous behaviour is not influenced in the least by Mary, it is also possible that his eagerness to triumph over the workers and to insult them is an action of revenging himself on the working class for Mary's rejection, which takes place in the narrative immediately before the meeting where Carson attacks and insults the workers. Even if Carson is influenced by Mary so far as to want to take out his anger on her class, however, this shows malice rather than empathy.

Bellingham's lack of love and compassion for Ruth also indicates that he is not influenced by her strong tendency to seek for love. Although he claims to love her, almost repeating the text of the first seduction by again accusing her, "I begin to think you never loved me" (*Ruth* 300) when they meet again, his action proves the opposite since he threatens her in the same scene:

> "You forget that one word of mine could undeceive all these good people at Eccleston; and that if I spoke out ever so little, they would throw you off in an instant. Now!" he continued, "do you understand how much you are in my power?" (*Ruth* 301)

Bellingham's threat of disclosure, indicating that she who is the victim has to fear shame and punishment, while he who is the perpetrator of the seduction escapes, demonstrates the severity of the danger which the male sexual predator in Gaskell's novels poses to the heroine. In these novels, the danger of seduction and abandonment in not implied as in *Sense and Sensibility*, nor secondary to the danger of moral corruption as in *Jane Eyre* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, but very real and tangible.

In *Mary Barton*, the fate of a working-class girl who surrenders to the seduction of a man from a higher class is represented by Mary's aunt Esther, and

in a much more direct and visible manner than in the other novels: whereas the seduced Eliza in *Sense and Sensibility* and Rochester's discarded mistresses in *Jane Eyre* are only spoken of and never actually seen, Esther is unique as an example of the seduced and abandoned girl since she not only appears on the scene but actively takes part in the plot. She not only embodies the danger for Mary, but recognizes it before everyone else, and tries to rally John Barton and Jem to protect Mary "from being such a one as I am" (*MB* 145).

Esther's personal appearance and action embody the horrors in the life of a fallen woman which are thus much more impressive than the vague mention of the victimised girls in the other novels. It is important to note that, although Esther features but briefly in the novel, she is definitely not a blank as Eliza or the former mistresses. The male sexual predator that leads her astray remains an almost complete blank, except for the information that he is "an officer" (*MB* 188), indicating that he, like Carson, has no important role in the plot except for the fall of the girl he is connected with. But Esther herself displays the misery of the fallen woman in detail. The "faded finery, all unfit to meet the pelting of that pitiless storm" (*MB* 143), the alcoholism, the pain of losing her daughter and living as an "outcast prostitute" (*MB* 185), are made very clear in the short scenes in which she appears.

The connection between Esther's fall to prostitution and the danger of the same for Mary is beyond doubt: Mary's ambition to marry wealth, which leads her into danger because of her relationship with Carson, is an "old leaven infused years ago by her aunt Esther" (*MB* 91); it is Esther's running away from home to be with her rich lover that leads to the early death of Mary's mother and Mary herself being left without supervision; and the significance of the bodily resemblance between aunt and niece is easily recognized even by the previously careless John Barton: "He often looked at Mary, and wished she were not so like her aunt, for the very bodily likeness seemed to suggest the possibility of a similar likeness in their fate" (*MB* 147).

Esther sees the danger for Mary in the supposed love for a rich man, as in her own case a few years earlier: "As she is loving now, so did I love once, one above

me far" (*MB* 187). Unlike Esther and Jem, whom she is warning in this scene, the reader is aware at this point that Mary does not love Carson, whom she has just rejected for this reason. Since her aunt claims that "she is innocent, except for the great error of loving one above her in station" (*MB* 192), this might be taken to mean that Mary is wholly innocent. But it is clear that Mary shares some of the blame of the relationship for her "giddy flirting" (*MB* 183), which leads to the fight between the rivals later, and to Jem's indictment.

Her lack of emotional commitment does not mean that she is out of danger either: it is clear that Carson means to "obtain her as cheaply as he could" (*MB* 157), meaning to seduce and abandon her, but although Mary is not in danger of being seduced because of being in love like Esther and Ruth, she is endangered by Carson because of her very refusal. Whereas he cannot physically assault or rape her in the street, the sexual violence is implied, though left to inference as a blank, from the description of his harassment after her refusal:

> . . . her persecuting lover . . . lay in wait for her with wonderful perseverance, and of late had made himself almost hateful, by the unmanly force which he had used to detain her to listen to him, and the indifference with which he exposed her to remarks of the passers-by (*MB* 183).

Carson not only handles Mary with physical force, which is, significantly, not "manly" but "unmanly", dandyish and worthless, but also subjects her to remarks from people around them. This recalls all the "insult [and] curse" (*MB* 186) Esther receives from people who see her. As in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, the revelation of her emotional and sexual life before strangers, and being subjected to their glances and remarks, is a great danger to a woman and implies worse in the fate of the actual prostitute. This is also emphasized when Mary is forced to testify about her relationship with Carson and Jem in court:

> And who was he, the questioner, that he should dare so lightly to ask her of her heart's secrets? That he should dare to ask her to tell, before that multitude assembled there, what woman usually whispers with blushes and tears, and many hesitations, to one ear alone? (*MB* 382)

The note about the "pert young barrister, who was delighted to have the examination of this witness" (*MB* 382) indicates that this examination is more than a tepid bureaucratic measure and really a danger of scandal for Mary: Matus remarks that he "practically salivates over the cross-class love triangle apparently at the heart of the case" (81). But although subjected to questioning, harassment and impertinent remarks, Mary escapes the actual doom of seduction and abandonment which is the crux of the plot in ***Ruth***. To what extent the seduction is Bellingham's doing, and to what extent Ruth has any share in the responsibility for it, is a matter of debate both in the novel and among critics: Ruth's docility and inability to withstand any firm order are emphasized just as her "childlike dependence on others" (*Ruth* 80) and lack of parental protection from sexual harassment. The narrative voice actively exhorts the reader to minimize the blame to be put on Ruth during the scene before the seduction: "Remember how young, and innocent, and motherless she was!" (*Ruth* 56)

However, for all that Ruth is claimed to be blameless, she is later shown to be indeed a fallen woman for living with Bellingham and giving birth to an illegitimate child. She can only redeem herself by penance, hard work and dying after selflessly nursing the very man who seduced her. The extent of a girl's share of the responsibility in her seduction is a complex issue in the novel: while the narrator is lenient, the mother of the seducer does not hesitate to put the blame squarely on Ruth's shoulders, warning Ruth against "entrapping" more young men "into vice" (*Ruth* 92). No comment is given here, but this blank serves to draw the reader's attention to the cruel irony in the culprit's mother blaming the victim. The fact that no one else, from the benevolent Bensons to the harsh Bradshaw who throws Ruth out when he finds out that her child is illegitimate, asks about the child's father or even utters a word about the man who must be involved in the matter, is another conspicuous blank in the narrative: with all the blame centred on Ruth and her son, the very lack of mention of the father looms like a ghost of the real culprit, reminding the reader of his identity precisely for the absence of comments on his blame.

As pointed out before, comments are also absent in the scene that represents the sexual seduction which cannot be conveyed directly in the novel: in the scene where Bellingham persuades Ruth to get into the carriage, he is wholly externalized and uncommented. It is clear that he subtly threatens the girl and coaxes her with protestations of love, and although no comments are made concerning him, the emphasis on Ruth's ignorance and innocence draws the attention to his share in the outspoken crime of illegitimate sex that is about to happen: "she was little accustomed to oppose the wishes of any one – obedient and docile by nature, and unsuspicious and innocent of any harmful consequences. She entered the carriage, and drove towards London" (*Ruth* 61).

An important point here is that the coach goes towards London: immediately before finally stepping into it, Ruth begs Bellingham to take her to Old Thomas who lives at Milham, a father figure who ventures to warn her against Bellingham, to which he seems to acquiesce: "if you will go to Milham you must go in the carriage" (*Ruth* 61). It is clear, however, not only from the remainder of the narrative but from the detail that he utters the promise "hurriedly" (*Ruth* 61), that this is a lie, and that Ruth is not only threatened and coaxed but also lied into her seduction. The possibility that Ruth might after all be conveyed to a safe place and escape her fate is another instance of irony, especially since the next chapter reveals that she is so far in Bellingham's power that he has taken her to neither of the places indicated before, neither to Milham nor to London, but to Wales.

Sutherland claims that the shift of setting to Wales, with nearly two months missing in between chapters IV and V, is a device deliberately employed to acquit Ruth of most of the blame in her seduction, more specifically, to skip over that scene of sexual seduction since in a scene like that options that she did not take must have come up:

> Why did Gaskell not describe the London episode: the defloration of Ruth? Because it was painful. . . Secondly, it would have been difficult to present Ruth to the reader in such a way as not to make her seem in some part guilty of her downfall. . . She could have taken her chances with her guardian, explained her innocence to Mrs Mason, even have gone to the local clergyman. Even in the London inn – or house of assignation – where her pearl without price was lost, Ruth did not *have* to give in (assuming Henry [Bellingham] did not force her). A firm

> "no" would have sufficed to preserve her virtue (578-79, emphasis in the original).

According to Sutherland, Ruth, like Tess Durbeyfield, "must take some small responsibility for what happens" (212). The main argument is that Ruth, as Sutherland claims Tess does in a seduction similarly left as a blank and inferred from hints, agrees at least partly in the seduction, because she feels sexual desire. However, it is not only unclear if Ruth does feel sexual desire or merely affection; it is not even safe to argue that she knows what exactly she should strive to protect herself against: in keeping with the prevailing Victorian practice of raising girls in ignorance about "what it is they must avoid" (Stoneman 103), Ruth is woefully ignorant about the subject of sex, possibly so far that she might not even know what sex is: "She was too young when her mother died to have received any cautions or words or advice respecting *the* subject of a woman's life – if, indeed, wise parents ever directly speak of what, in its depth and power, cannot be put into words" (*Ruth* 44, emphasis in the original).

It is also more than debatable whether "a simple no" would indeed have sufficed to stop such a determined young man from having sex with a girl who has nowhere to go but to follow him, and no one to defend her (now that Mrs Mason has washed her hands of her and declared she will tell Ruth's guardian to do the same), and whether Ruth who is, as emphasised, "obedient and docile by nature" (*Ruth* 61), would be able to firmly refuse the only man to show her any affection. The fact that Bellingham has all the conditions in his favour and Ruth feels that she has no other options but to obey him for survival makes the seduction essentially not much different from a rape: it is improbable that the childishly naive Ruth could think of the options outlined by Sutherland. But even if she had been forcibly raped, it does not follow that Bellingham would have been held more responsible for Ruth's fate, at least before the law, than he is in the narrative: if Ruth cannot even force her point of being taken to Milham, it is unthinkable that she could force her point of remaining a virgin or, being raped, make sure that he is brought to court. Sutherland claims that the reason why

Bellingham does not try to seduce or rape Ruth in town is because "it would look bad if Ruth laid a bastard to his charge in the 'assize town' where he lived, and claimed that he had promised marriage" (578). Whereas it is not clear whether he ever made that kind of promise, it is unthinkable that she could force him to take responsibility before court when he is a rich gentleman and she a poor young woman with no support.

The significance of the long blank of the seduction, and the beginning of Ruth's short time as Bellingham's mistress, has also been remarked on by critics: D'Albertis points out that Gaskell "declined to represent the scene of her heroine's sexual initiation, the one act most often designated as integral to Victorian social definitions of prostitution" (75). This is in keeping with Gaskell's "resolute refusal to conflate sexual transgression with economic exchange" (*ibid.*), keeping her free of the taint of prostitution. By skipping over the seduction, the narration attempts to keep Ruth as pure, in the reader's view, in the symbolically charged pure white flowers Bellingham decks her out in Wales, as with the similar white camellia he gives her at the beginning of the novel. Similarly, the blank also serves to skip over that period when he gives her money and presents. Ruth confesses "while he . . . loved me, he gave me many things" (*Ruth* 127). But later, she pays for her medical treatment by selling his last present, and by refusing to accept money from him throughout the rest of the narrative, avoids the conflation of sex and money and accusations of prostitution.

The underlying, though again never clearly mentioned, issue of prostitution is the only danger posed by Bellingham that Ruth can escape, with the help of the Bensons. Becoming a prostitute like Esther seems to be the only option for a girl who loses her virginity outside of marriage. When Bellingham, for the first time in years, wonders what has become of Ruth, he guesses that "there was but one thing that could have happened" (*Ruth* 278); just as the shopkeeper, who tells Ruth's former student and friend Jemima the gossip concerning Ruth, conjectures "one knows, they can but go from bad to worse, poor creatures!" (*Ruth* 321). It is only the lie told by the Bensons about Ruth being a widow that makes it possible

for her to live with them, earn a livelihood and raise her son Leonard in peace, escaping the fate of Esther.

That lie is such an important turning-point that Anderson suggests it is "the real fall" in the novel, more important than the actual sexual fall: the anger of her employer Mr Bradshaw at finding out about Leonard's illegitimacy not only supports the view that lying "to protect the heroine and crucially alter her circumstances" (133) constitutes a grievous sin. It also suggests that in his view and, by extension, that of "the world" criticised in the novel, since hiding Ruth's lack of wedlock is a great crime, a fall to prostitution is the only socially acceptable fate for a fallen woman, as paradoxical as this is:

> The world has decided how such women are to be treated; and, you may depend upon it, there is so much practical wisdom in the world that its way of acting is right in the long run, and that no one can fly in its face with impunity, unless, indeed, they stoop to deceit and imposition (*Ruth* 351).

The blame and shame of the relationship fall entirely on Ruth, in spite of her sexual ignorance and lack of options, and the fact that the seduction was perpetrated by Bellingham who, as Sutherland suggests, must have had "Cyprians" (576) with him in the infamous "reading party" (*Ruth* 63/64) in Wales before going there again with Ruth, and is hence sexually experienced. The first instance of social censure for her crime takes place even before their separation, and it is significant that Ruth is hit and scolded by a child, who is supposedly innocent and does not know about sexual matters; however, the child justifies his blow with the statements of parents and hence again the world: "She's a bad naughty girl – mamma said so, she did; and she shan't kiss our baby" (*Ruth* 71). The small incident, started by the "small" person, indicates that greater danger of censure and being ostracized awaits Ruth who will not have Bellingham by her side, just as he is not there to defend her in this case.

Bellingham not only subjects Ruth to the fate of a fallen woman and the censure of society without defending or supporting her, he even attempts to repeat the seduction when they meet again years later. As with the first time, the all-important sexual act itself is not alluded to, but it is clear for the reader as it is for

Ruth that when Bellingham reminds her of their time in Wales and promises to pay for Leonard's education "if only those happy times might return" (*Ruth* 298), he means that he wants her to become his mistress again. This time, Ruth can save herself from what would be "wilful guilt," worse than what she, more leniently, terms "the errors of my youth" (*Ruth* 301), since she is no longer ignorant of the issue and has the means of rejecting him, even when he tries the same method of obtaining the object of desire as Carson, reluctantly offering to marry her.

By refusing this proposal, which she shrewdly recognizes as a sham, declaring "you have baited me" (*Ruth* 303), Ruth paradoxically saves herself and her son from the danger of moral corruption posed by Bellingham, although accepting would save them from the public scandal that takes place when Leonard's illegitimacy becomes known, Ruth is discharged and Leonard does not leave the house for a year. As D'Albertis points out,

> Bellingham's tardy offer to 'make an honest woman' of Ruth relies upon the supposed structural similarity between a marriage of convenience and simple prostitution; in Gaskell's novel this form of worldly benevolence is rejected outright (83).

Bellingham's proposal is merely prostitution at a higher price than he was previously prepared to pay to enjoy Ruth again. In this sense, Ruth, just like Mary, refuses wedded prostitution, i.e. a marriage for the sake of money and status with a man she declares she no longer loves (*Ruth* 302).

However, in his second attempt at seducing her, Bellingham endangers not only Ruth but also her son. Ultimately, her refusal of Bellingham is for the same reason as Helen's decision to leave Huntingdon in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*: to prevent any further contact, and thus the possibility that the innocent son might become a sinner like his dissolute father. As Stoneman points out, "Bellingham's sexual self-indulgence, which created her desire, also disqualifies him as husband and father" (109), especially since he remains wholly without the penance experienced by Ruth. She declares her decision to keep her son away from the danger of contamination by his father in the clearest and harshest terms spoken by her in the entire narrative:

> You shall have nothing to do with my boy, by my consent, much less by my agency. I would rather see him working on the roadside than leading such a life – being such a one as you are. . . If there were no other reason to prevent our marriage but the one fact that it would bring Leonard into contact with you, that would be enough (*Ruth* 303).

Since there is a relationship that ends with an abrupt separation in both *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*, the process of traumatic grief following that separation is visible in the characters of these novels, as in those studied previously. With the collapse of the dream-world of living out the repressed tendencies through the partner, Mary and Ruth experience most stages of traumatic grief, the severity of which corresponds to their respective emotional commitment to the male sexual predator.

For Mary, the end of the relationship itself is not a shock since she chooses to end the flirtation when she realizes that she cannot love Carson. Although she shows shock when she learns of his death, feeling "too shocked" to think of Jem, there is neither any trace of the numb alienation from her feelings as in Jane's case, nor a denial of the reality or the consequences of the situation as with Marianne and Helen: the fact that Mary can sensibly end the relationship with Carson when she realizes he cannot fulfil her expectations of love, and later rally her spirits to save Jem from being hanged as his murderer, indicates that she is not in shock but in full command of her powers, and hence that she was not emotionally committed to Carson.

The real shock for her is the point when she is confronted with the collapse of the dream-world of marrying into the upper class. This collapse takes place when she realizes that she loves the labourer Jem, right after having initially refused him: "she could not have told at first. . . why she was in such agonized grief. It was too sudden for her to analyse, or think upon it" (*MB* 151-52). In terms of being a preamble to the educative stage of depression, this is the first stage of traumatic grief, although it is the cause rather than the result of the physical parting in the narrative from the male sexual predator.

Ruth, on the other hand, displays a clear example of the shock outlined by Bowlby when she is abandoned by Bellingham. She feels so completely numbed

that “she could not think, she could believe anything”, she also attempts to deny the finality of the separation:

> “Oh, perhaps,” she thought, “I have been too hasty. There may be some words of explanation from him on the other side of the page [of his mother’s stern letter], to which, in my blind anguish, I never turned. I will go and find it.” (*Ruth* 94)

Ruth also shows the same symptoms when the couple meet again years later, with the “awful dizziness which wrapped her up, body and soul” (*Ruth* 268) and her initial attempt to deny speaking to Bellingham by withdrawing to her room. The repetition of symptoms indicates that Ruth’s love is still alive, until she consciously decides, “he has no love for his child, and I will have no love for him” (*Ruth* 273), which serves to give her the strength to withstand the second seduction, the first of which she submitted to because of that love.

The second stage, characterized by anger, is visible only in Mary’s case: her outspoken scorn of Carson when she finds out about his plan “to ruin a poor girl” (*MB* 161) looks like righteous anger, but it is also a reaction to that clear collapse of her dream-world in which she is sure of his intention to marry her. That anger dissolves quickly, however, and afterwards she is driven on her quest to save Jem not by wrath but by her restless energy, since she loves him, again showing her lack of emotional commitment to Carson.

In keeping with the character portrayed uniformly as meek and obedient, Ruth never shows any anger: merely declaring “he has left me, sir” (*Ruth* 96) to Benson, which is the only complaint she utters in the novel. She refrains from anger, even when Bellingham attempts seduction a second time: “in all she had said there was no trace of the anger and resentment for his desertion of her, which he had expected would be a prominent feature” (*Ruth* 299). This lack is definitely not a sign of emotional reserve: as in Jane’s case, Ruth is simply too driven by her “need to be good,” exacerbated by being held responsible for her seduction by everyone for years, to be angry at the seducer; even reproaching herself for the one harsh refusal: “Oh! if I had not spoken so angrily to him – the last things I said were so bitter – so reproachful! – and I shall never, never see him again!” (*Ruth* 304)

The long stage of depression and despair, which is a prerequisite to the acceptance which marks the point when the character is educated by that suffering, is experienced by both heroines after the collapse of the dream-world. In Mary's case, her depression is not really due to separation from Carson and his death, but is more the necessary education for proving herself worthy of a final acceptance with Jem; she is "sorrow-stricken in mind" (*MB* 154) when he leaves her after being refused by her at first, and "desolate" in "a depression of body and mind" (*MB* 350) when it seems impossible to get his friend Wilson to Liverpool in time to provide the alibi to save him. The scrape with death which marks the shift from the destructive expansive idealized self to the new self-effacing one also occurs in conjunction with Jem: it is after his acquittal that she falls ill with a fever in which she hallucinates with "wailing moans of despair" (*MB* 394).

The depression experienced by Ruth is much more protracted and emphasized: since she is assumed to be gravely criminal, a very long and severe penitence and suffering is considered necessary, which is present from her "wildest, dreariest crying that ever mortal cried" and "prostration of woe" (*Ruth* 96, 114) immediately after her abandonment until her early death. Ruth experiences the stage of depression and despair not only through her own suffering: the most severe punishment for her is the consciousness that her child also suffers for his illegitimacy. It is pointed out very early, immediately after the news of the pregnancy, that "she must strengthen the child to look to God, rather than to man's opinion. It will be the discipline, the penance, she has incurred" (*Ruth* 121). Leonard actually becomes a recluse after learning of his mother's sin. It is whispered that he must "feel it much" (*Ruth* 365), but here, again, "it", being the shame of illegitimacy, is an unuttered blank. The boy's suffering, like his mother's, ends only with her early death and vindication.

Ruth experiences more than one near-death experience: the first one occurs shortly after her abandonment, which throws her into an illness that is quite different from Mary's raving. "Stricken and felled", Ruth lies "in death-like quietness" (*Ruth* 114), which is a precursor of her actual death at the end of the narrative.

The stage of acceptance, which marks the switch to a new, self-effacing self, is also clearly present in the case of both heroines, although again with important differences. For Mary, the acceptance of a self-effacing new self begins early: she chooses life with Jem who is "a poor mechanic, with a mother and aunt to keep" (*MB* 152) over a mercenary marriage with Carson. To attain the life of love and labour, as pointed out, the suffering and near-death experience are necessary. The scrape with death is as much a plot device to heighten excitement as a sign of Mary's abandonment of her old ambition of social climbing: significantly, after the court case and her illness she does not go back to work at the dressmaking shop, where she acquired the 'romantic notions' of marrying rich. This is an important symbolic relinquishment of morally dangerous preferences: although needlework was among "acceptable female employments" (Matus 67), since it necessitates late hours and provides contact with luxurious materials and dangerous upper-class men, "sewing itself becomes a metonymy for all morally dangerous forms of female labor" (Judd 84).

The change in Mary in this last stage of acceptance might look less self-effacing than the opposite: instead of passive obedience, Mary shows action, embarking on a dangerous journey to save Jem. In the words of Colby, she "develops male traits of independence and toughness" (37). However, the significance of these traits is not their masculine quality but the fact that they are the opposite of Mary's first idealized self, that which she planned to achieve by marrying Carson. By marrying him she would attain entrance to the upper class, wasting time with "all the elegant nothings appertaining to ladyhood" (*MB* 92). She would end up like Carson's mother who is an example of factory-girl-turned-lady herself, a useless woman who indulges in "the luxury of a headache" because of "mental and bodily idleness" (*MB* 237). Instead, Mary opts for a love marriage with a labourer and a life characterized by work, although significantly she works within her home.

The stage of acceptance begins early in the narrative in *Mary Barton*, but even earlier in *Ruth*: the heroine accepts the severity of her sin from the point of abandonment and devotes the rest of her life to penance. The most important

factor in Ruth's education is her son, her declaration when she learns about her pregnancy marks the beginning of her acceptance: "Oh, my God, I thank thee! Oh! I will be so good!" (*Ruth* 118). Benson recognizes that the responsibility for her child, which she could not provide for herself, is a very important factor in her moral reformation: "if the present occasion be taken rightly, and used well, all that is good in her may be raised to a height unmeasured but by God" (*Ruth* 121).

All of Ruth's life after the birth of her son is devoted to penitence, thanks to a sense of responsibility for him. It is the responsibility for Leonard that makes Ruth later decide to refuse Bellingham when he reappears. This is a clear parallel to Helen's decision to remove her son from his father's sphere to prevent his becoming like Huntingdon: shortly after giving birth Ruth has dreams of her son seducing and abandoning a girl, just as Bellingham does with herself; and later declines Bellingham's proposal explicitly to prevent Leonard becoming like his father. Refusing the proposal of the man she still loves (*Ruth* 304) in spite of her claim to the contrary to protect her son's moral education, although marrying him would provide earthly comfort and social status, is part of her penance. The last part is her diligence and patience in nursing, which ultimately leads to her death.

A change in the comments of characters and of the narrative voice concerning the male sexual predator usually marks the stage of acceptance for the heroine and her switch from his values to self-effacing ones. At this point, comments about the male sexual predator become clearly critical in the novels previously studied. In *Mary Barton*, this clear criticism of Carson takes place early, when Mary is confronted with his aim to seduce her instead of marrying her: in the passage quoted earlier, she sees that his attachment is of a "low, despicable kind" (*MB* 160). There are no other remarks or epithets about Carson himself, but the biting remarks on his "attachment," and hence his emotions, are enough to mark him as a character to be avoided.

In Carson's last scene before his murder, his replies to Jem's warning to treat Mary right are not explicitly commented on. However, his "contemptuous tone" and "taunting laugh" (*MB* 209/10) again give him a menacing air. After this scene, comments about him cease completely, since Mary has accepted Jem and

his values already, further persuasion by the narrative voice for the reader to do the same is unnecessary.

The lack of negative comments by the narrative voice about the male sexual predator in ***Ruth*** is as conspicuous as the lack of such comments by the characters. As pointed out before, Leonard's father is barely referred to. The only comment occurs in Miss Benson's statement when returning the money left by his mother upon Ruth's request, telling Ruth that she is right in returning it: "they [Bellingham and his mother] don't deserve to have the power of giving: they don't deserve that you should take it" (***Ruth*** 127).

The narrative voice is even less deprecatory: derogatory comments are not even found at the very end of the narrative when Ruth dies while nursing Bellingham. It is wholly up to the reader to infer his guilt from this blank of missing accusations. Just as Bellingham is wholly externalized and his speeches given without comment, in the first seduction scene, the access to his viewpoint is limited to the statements that he is "in a mood to be irritated" and "impatient" (***Ruth*** 302/03) at his second attempt to seduce Ruth. The externalization is again prevalent, it is stated that he "***looked*** very fierce and passionate and determined" (***Ruth*** 300, emphasis added). The only scene in which the narrative voice conveys open criticism is the one right after Leonard's birth, indicating Ruth's awakening sense of responsibility for her child:

> Slight speeches, telling of a selfish, worldly nature, unnoticed at the time, came back upon her ear, having a new significance. They told of a low standard, of impatient self-indulgence, of no acknowledgement of things spiritual and heavenly (***Ruth*** 163).

This is an uncharacteristically explicit condemnation of Bellingham, who, to preserve the blank at least in this sense, is not named in this passage but easy to infer. The emphasis on his lack of self-sacrifice and spirituality indicates the importance of these attributes in Ruth, which strengthen from this important turning-point of her child's birth, up to the point where she refuses Bellingham for his lack of them.

Although both male sexual predators in Gaskell's novels claim to love the heroine, they show fewer symptoms of traumatic grief than even the unreformed

Huntingdon of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Since especially the lack of the depression stage indicates the lack of suffering and ensuing education, this absence shows not only the lack of repentance in the male victimizers but also, by contrast, emphasizes the importance of that education in the female victim.

Carson seems to display some symptoms of traumatic grief when his dream-world of possessing Mary collapses: his first reaction upon her decision to leave him is denial. Yet this self-confidant refusal to accept Mary's choice seems to have less to do with his emotional commitment, since his initial aim, as he openly states to Mary, is sexual rather than romantic, and more with his firm belief that his wealth, and the bait of sharing it – legitimately or illegitimately – with her, will be enough to bring the girl from the working class under his power:

> She'll come round, you may depend on it. Women alway do [*sic.*]. they always have second thoughts, and find out that they are best in casting off a lover. Mind, I don't say I shall offer her the same terms [i.e. marriage] again (*MB* 162).

The "unmanly force" (*MB* 183) which Carson uses to try to persuade Mary and the "excess of passion" (*MB* 211) in his meeting with Jem also seem to be symptoms of the stage of anger. However, the former is rather another instance of his confidence due to his knowledge of the impunity that his social status gives him, and the latter is anger not because of the collapse of the dream-world of his love affair but because of the collapse of that impunity: for perhaps the only time in his life, Carson's status is shaken by Jem, who disregards all rules that prescribe the workers' respect to their employers and strikes Carson down.

It is clear that Carson neither suffers nor changes his attitude towards Mary or the workers after this incident, since he threatens both Jem and Mary: "I will never forgive or forget your insult. . . Mary shall fare no better for your insolent interference" (*MB* 211). In the very next chapter he acts as "the head and voice of the violent party among the masters," proposing resolutions "provocative of animosity" (*MB* 215) against the workers, which leads to the decision to murder him. Any further change in this character is hence impossible.

While Carson's denial and anger indicate at least some resemblance to the process of traumatic grief, there are even fewer of these symptoms in Bellingham.

It is true that he denies the importance of the relationship when agreeing to abandon Ruth, begging his mother to "spare me all this worry" (*Ruth* 90) about paying her off, and also denies all responsibility for his son, but these are not parts of a stage, rather, they are instances of his continuous irresponsibility in keeping with his narcissistic character. Whereas his offer to pay for Leonard's education, and raise him as his own son after marrying Ruth, seems to be an important step towards assuming that responsibility, this is not really the case since the attempt is both belated and insincere, and Bellingham here decides simply to "bid a higher price" in his own words, for Ruth (*Ruth* 302). It is by reminding herself forcibly of his irresponsibility that Ruth can decide to refuse him:

> He left me. He might have been hurried off, but he might have inquired – he might have learnt, and explained. He left me to bear the burden and the shame; and never cared to learn, as he might have done, of Leonard's birth. He has no love for his child, and I will have no love for him (*Ruth* 273).

Bellingham's condition after abandoning Ruth is left as a long blank, without even a confession scene as in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Jane Eyre* in which the male sexual predator explains his motivation and suffering. When Bellingham reappears years later, there is no mention of any anger or depression suffered by him due to the separation from Ruth and the collapse of a dream-world with her. Although he goes through two scrapes with death, delirious fevers through which Ruth nurses him, these do not lead to any reformation or mark any change in his expansive idealized self and corresponding values: just as he awakes from his fever in Wales with the careless decision to leave Ruth, he awakes from the second unrepentant and careless.

Ruth significantly refuses him on the grounds of his lack of repentance and education. "The time that has pressed down my life like brands of hot iron, and scarred me for ever, has been nothing to you" (*Ruth* 302-03), she says. Bellingham's unfeeling offer of a tip to Sally, at the bedside of the dead Ruth, is a sign of that missing moral reformation: it is another instance of his continuous attitude of trying to solve every problem in life with money, in contrast to Ruth's self-effacing values of moral righteousness and compassion. Completely unaware

of the impropriety and immorality of his actions, he shows the last example of this unrepentant and immoral attitude by offering Mr Benson money for Leonard's further education, and with the claim "I have done my duty" after making only the offer of money and being refused. Similarly, the last instance of his egotism is his selfish claim of Ruth, against the people who, in contrast with him, have offered her love and support for years: "I wish my last remembrance of my beautiful Ruth was not mixed up with all these people" (*Ruth* 454).

In both *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*, the heroine accepts a self-effacing idealized self with correspondingly self-sacrificing values. However, while Mary, like the heroines in the novels previously studied, is rewarded with a partner who represents that new idealized self and is endorsed by the rhetoric which vindicates her, the vindication in *Ruth* is focussed only on the heroine and her child.

Since Mary's emotional commitment to Carson, and hence her involvement in living out the dream-world of expansive tendencies with him, is minimal, her weaning of those expansive tendencies takes place early: having rejected Carson and social mobility, she is rewarded with Jem after having further proved herself worthy by her suffering and her effort to save him. It is made unmistakably clear that Jem is the right choice for her: not only does he love her "on and on, ever more fondly" (*MB* 47), but it is also emphasized that he is the trustworthy support that Mary needs. It is made clear early in the narrative that he is very dependable, his only weakness being his love for Mary:

> [John Barton] now and then admitted the thought, that Mary might do worse when her time came, than marry Jem Wilson, a steady workman at a good trade, a good son to his parents, and a fine manly spirited chap – at least when Mary was not by; for when she was present he watched her too closely, and too anxiously, to have much of what John Barton called 'spunk' in him (*MB* 47).

Jem is such a dutiful son that he goes to work in spite of his dejection after being refused by Mary, since his mother needs him and "he could not squander away health and time, which were to him money wherewith to support her failing years" (*MB* 163), which plainly shows that he is of the self-effacing tendency that Mary must also adopt. Similarly, his willingness for self-sacrifice is visible in his

readiness to allow his execution rather than let Mary know that her father is the real murderer. Jem remains constant to his class, far from ambition for social mobility or excessive class consciousness like John Barton who becomes Carson's murderer in his class struggle. He also displays constancy in personal matters, loving Mary "with all his heart and all his soul" (*MB* 162) even after her initial refusal. At the same time he refrains from contacting her again, which emphasizes his contrast to Carson's class-based overconfidence in trying to persuade Mary to return, just as his description as a "manly chap" contrasts with the "unmanly force" used by Carson. Jem's dignified reserve initially makes Mary desperate. However, by teaching her patience, making her suffer and later exert herself as he suffers and endures the danger of execution for her sake, Jem ensures that the relationship is an equal one, based on love and mutual self-sacrifice, in keeping with self-effacing values.

In the case of the heroines of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Jane Eyre*, the switch to self-effacing values and the match with the corresponding partners is criticized as being unconvincing and showing no real maturity. The final solution in *Mary Barton* appears to be similarly contrived, since Mary and Jem can only escape the taint of class conflict, murder and danger of prostitution by leaving the scenes of Carson's murder and Esther's fall far behind them and going, as it were, into exile by emigrating to Canada. This is indeed reminiscent of the unnaturally asocial retirement of Jane and Rochester.

In the case of the Gaskell novels, emigration is an attempt at creating a personal peaceful solution, since a socially based solution for inequality and prostitution is impossible even in the fictional narrative: Mary's attempt to escape her class, and her later return to her class, are given in a personal and domestic context, with the plans to marry Carson and the later choice of Jem.

The education of the heroine through her "luring temptation" (*MB* 153) by Carson, and her rejection of that temptation and later suffering, is as clear as her later vindication. Similarly, Carson's death is as explicitly a mark of his punishment as Jem's acquittal and his marriage with the reformed Mary. This punishment of the male sexual predator seems severe for a character who does not

display as much villainy as Huntingdon, hardly enough to merit death, but, as pointed out previously, the death is a plot device to heighten excitement and embody class conflicts, which are again resolved on a personal level: the brotherhood of masters and workers is shown simultaneously with the punishment of the last culprit when John Barton dies in the arms of Carson senior, whose son he murdered.

In spite of the displacement and the lack of real solutions, Mary finds a happy ending with Jem and her child, which is non-existent in *Ruth*. Ruth's acceptance of self-effacing values takes place very early: as previously pointed out, her character is "docile and obedient by nature" (*Ruth* 61), although her desire that appears to trigger her seduction is considered aggressive and expansive. However, Ruth not only proves her final abandonment of desire when she refuses Bellingham's proposal, but also displays the crucial self-effacement in her devoted nursing of the sick and poor, so that she is ultimately vindicated in the eyes of everyone. As Judd points out, this "redemptive labor. . . leads directly to her death, but also to her social and spiritual salvation" (82). She becomes a saint-like character; the poor feel "love and reverence" (*Ruth* 429) for her, and her son, who spends a year as a recluse because of his shame, can finally feel proud of her:

> 'Thou! thou her bairn! God bless you, lad,' said an old woman, pushing through the crowd. . . . Many other wild, woe-begone creatures pressed forward with blessings on Ruth's son, while he could only repeat:
> 'She is my mother.'
> From that day forward Leonard walked erect in the streets of Eccleston, where 'many arose and called her blessed.' (*Ruth*, 430)

The shame of illegitimacy seems to disappear towards the end when Leonard, together with his mother, is vindicated. Moreover, his future is ensured precisely for his lack of a legitimate father since Mr Davis, the surgeon who is Ruth's employer, suggests adopting him and taking him up as his apprentice, offering a dignified and acceptable future for the boy which contrasts with the one offered by Bellingham: "Of course, I knew Leonard was illegitimate. . . it was being so

myself that first made me sympathize with him, and desire to adopt him" (*Ruth* 441).

It is also the fact that an illegitimate person can become a respectable professional like Mr Davis that suggests the lessening of the shame of the issue, but it is not enough to save Ruth who dies in a last act of self-effacing devotion, nursing her seducer through an illness which he survives but she does not. This death is another issue in the novel that is a matter of debate: Stoneman claims that the death is "not part of her repentance but the desperate result of the failure of the redemptive process" (115). Matus, on the other hand, sees the infection which Bellingham spreads but survives as "a metaphor of sexual taint . . . [he] is the contagious, infecting presence that no woman's strength or immunity can withstand" (131). In that sense, Bellingham's survival and Ruth's death can be read as another blank denoting his evil nature and her defencelessness.

While the death of the character is indeed a shock for the reader, it is no more than the natural result of the plot: Ruth's death, like Esther's, is the unavoidable fate of a fallen woman in a Victorian narrative, for the same reason that John Barton is killed and Mary and Jem are sent into exile. A socially based solution for the problem of sex outside of marriage is simply not possible, and even the saint-like Ruth, selfless and revered as she is, cannot be accepted into Victorian society as a full member, by marriage with a new partner and a happy ending. A death by self-sacrifice is the only vindication possible.

The importance of vindication by death is emphasized: whereas the poor people respect Ruth even before her death because of her efforts on their behalf. Bradshaw, who represents authority and threw her out in disgrace when finding out about her secret crime, visits her home after her funeral. This marks the very last lines and hence the conclusion of the novel, showing the last and greatest sign of Ruth's posthumous vindication:

> The first time, for years, that he had entered Mr Benson's house, he came leading and comforting her son – and, for a moment, he could not speak to his old friend, for the sympathy which choked up his voice, and filled his eyes with tears (*Ruth* 458).

The punishment of the male sexual predator, which normally forms part of the heroine's vindication, is less explicit in *Ruth* than in all other novels. Being scolded by Sally when, visiting Ruth's body, he offers her a tip, is a snub, but hardly an important chastisement. The lack of punishment for the male sexual predator is a surprising blank in this novel. It is probably hard to accept especially for many modern readers that, for all Ruth's self-sacrifice, and Bellingham's selfish callousness, he should escape unscathed while she dies. It is a blank that is hard to fill in and make sense of, since killing the character off or at least describing greater social censure for him may have provided more poetic justice.

One way of explaining the blank, however, may be that the rhetoric, while vindicating the heroine, here aims to show that even when the fallen woman is impeccably selfless and saint-like, no poetic justice is possible for her or her seducer in the real world: just as a revolutionary solution for Mary Barton or a happy ending for Ruth is simply not possible in the novel since it is unthinkable in the Victorian society that produced these novels, the punishment of the seducer is similarly simply not an option since things do not work like that in the society subtly criticized in the novel.

The real punishment for Bellingham lies again in the blank of its absence: it is for the reader to think upon the important lack of a fitting sentence for the person who bears the blame for Ruth's suffering and early death, and to become conscious of the responsibility of the male side in a seduction. The only clear admonishment of his crime comes from Benson who presents another example of important blanks formed by the lack of clear utterances in accusations against him: "Men may call such actions as yours, youthful follies! There is another name for them with God" (*Ruth* 454).

Bellingham is not punished by unhappiness, maiming or death as the male sexual predators in other novels, but is merely excluded from the life of his son as he is "excluded from the Benson household, the sanctified moral center of the novel" (D'Albertis 85). In terms of his non-existent effect on his son, this is not unlike Huntingdon's death; Benson's last words emphasize the decision to keep him away from the boy as Helen keeps Arthur away from Huntingdon: "I thank

God, that you have no right, legal or otherwise, over the child. And for her sake, I will spare him the shame of ever hearing your name as his father" (*Ruth* 454). In this sense, Bellingham is treated as if he was dead, but leaves with a drizzle instead of a thunderbolt like Huntingdon. As in *Sense and Sensibility*, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *Mary Barton*, the heroine's education is emphasized by the lack of the same process in the male sexual predator, and her vindication by society contrasts sharply with his exclusion from the same society in the novel.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

An important, if not the major, part of the English novel, from Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) onwards, is dominated by narratives of courtship and attempted seduction. This novel typically plays out the important turning point of coming-of-age in the life of the principal heroine, which is represented by her choice of a marriage partner. This choice both connotes the heroine's establishing a place for herself in society, through exchanging the role of daughter for that of wife and mother, and stands for her choice of her own identity, represented by her husband, in the adult role. In order for the heroine to fulfil that role worthily, an education process to shed her previous childishness and make her into a mature person is necessary.

This study has attempted to show that the specific character type of the male sexual predator is an integral part of this education process: it is the suffering caused by this character that matures the heroines of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* and *Ruth*. He is also a similarly essential part of the ensuing vindication of the heroine, which consists both of her validation and his punishment. His role is like that of a catalyst, since he brings about psychological and emotional changes in the heroine, but – with the exception of Rochester in *Jane Eyre* – usually does not show any change himself. The male sexual predator, who appears in the novels studied here as a possible marriage partner, is a tempting, sexually attractive character who represents the values and lifestyle that the heroine, often unconsciously, desires. In Horneyan terms, he embodies her repressed expansive idealized self, since the heroine is expected by her social surroundings to be self-effacing, i.e. ready to sacrifice

herself, and the opposite of the extroverted expansive type for whom “the appeal of life lies in its mastery” (Horney 1950, 192).

In the novels studied, the values and lifestyle that the male sexual predator represents are revealed to be destructive and morally wrong, which leads to a collapse of the dream-world in which the heroine lives out her own expansive tendencies vicariously through this character. Together with this collapse, previously laudatory or neutral comments by the narrative voice and by other characters change to a condemnatory tone, which combines with a clear disclosure of the male sexual character’s villainy. As a consequence, the rhetoric of the novel leads the reader to abandon expansive values together with the character who represents them, and to turn to the markedly opposite alternative. The heroine goes through a process of traumatic grief, the last stage of which consists of severe depression which educates her through suffering, and a death-like illness following which she is symbolically newly born: after the scrape with death, she is seen to adopt a new, self-effacing idealized self, marked by clear-headedness and responsibility.

For instance, the male sexual predator Willoughby in Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* is presented as physically attractive and dashing, rash and thoughtless, but not intentionally evil. The heroine, who shows repressed tendencies to break social codes, spend money and enjoy sexual feelings, enjoys a time without caring about etiquette and poverty with this character, who later deserts her without an explanation in order to marry a rich woman and continue his extravagant lifestyle. The heroine Marianne, deep in depression because of being forsaken, survives a near-fatal fever due to this despair and is later informed that Willoughby seduced a girl and abandoned her when pregnant. With the revelation of this secret, the narrative voice and other characters proclaim the male sexual character “deep in hardened villainy” (Austen 176), which is partly mitigated by his confession later in which he admits to his love for the heroine and his weakness in preferring wealth to her. The heroine agrees to marry the less attractive, but reliable and paternal Brandon, who is older, but still mysterious and masculine; Willoughby is

punished with unhappiness in the same page that recounts her wedded bliss, which make the heroine's vindication complete.

Rochester in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, on the other hand, offers the heroine the passion and action that she craves, but the dream-world again collapses when he is revealed to be already married. This male sexual predator differs from Willoughby not only in his exterior, since he is not conventionally handsome but sexually exciting, but also in his characterization. His motivation is explained in detail, although there is no access to his viewpoint as in *Sense and Sensibility*, and his expansive tendencies are shown to be weaker then his bond with the heroine, who goes through a period of suffering and a death-like illness after which she is explicitly shown to be right in refusing a life as Rochester's unwed mistress. Unlike the other male sexual predators in the novels studied, Rochester not only occasions the heroine's education, which mainly consists of being proven right in rejecting a sinful life, and is punished in her vindication by the loss of his hand and eyesight, but also shows psychological change himself through his own repentance, and the heroine is rewarded not with another self-effacing male character, but with Rochester himself who is forced into a more submissive and self-effacing position by his disfigurement and the heroine's miraculous financial independence. There is also no change in the comments of the narrator, who is the heroine, about this character since the rhetoric guides the reader away from the character's destructive values but not from the character himself.

Helen, the heroine of Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, shows similar tendencies to disregard etiquette and enjoy sexual feelings, which are gratified by the dissolute male sexual predator Huntingdon. The heroine also shows an expansive tendency to morally educate her partner, which is frustrated quickly when Huntingdon proves impossible to educate. He furthermore proves that the danger of seduction and abandonment by a male sexual predator does not disappear with lawful marriage, since he leaves his wife in danger of adultery and abandons her to the advances of other men even when they are married, and also endangers his son by forcing him to be depraved like himself. The dream-world

collapses when even their sexual bliss is disturbed by his debauchery, and the heroine goes through a long period of severe suffering after which her tendency to mastery disappears together with the propensity to choose a mate due to sexual attraction only. Huntingdon is described in less detail than Rochester and as less dashing than Willoughby; he is mostly characterized by scenes of drinking bouts and clear instances of adultery, which mark him as a iniquitous character although condemnatory comments by the narrator, again the heroine, are few. The rhetoric guides the reader resolutely away from Huntingdon after a very short initial passage where he appears attractive to the heroine and the reader, and he is killed off by an illness contracted due to his alcoholism which punishes him and leaves the heroine to marry a self-effacing and caring character, vindicating her.

The male sexual predators in *Ruth* and *Mary Barton* by Elizabeth Gaskell are almost identical in their characterization, and rather similar to Austen's Willoughby: both Carson who woos Mary Barton, and Bellingham who seduces Ruth, are extravagant, dashing, and irresponsible. However, they gratify the heroines' expansive tendencies and thus trigger the education of the heroines in different ways: for the heroine of *Mary Barton*, the expansive lifestyle she desires is a carefree and inactive one in the upper class which Carson represents, and which she wants to enter by marrying him. However, her lack of emotional commitment to him, which is emphasized by the narrative voice throughout, not only saves her from seduction and makes her bring down the dream-world of vicarious living on her own account, but coupled with her realization of his destructiveness, i.e. his intention to seduce and abandon her, also sets off her education. The heroine abandons the search for social mobility and is rewarded with a labourer, while Carson is murdered; less as a punishment and more as a complicating plot development. Bellingham in *Ruth*, on the other hand, fulfils her need for love and attention, which is regarded by society as rebelliously expansive since she submits to his seduction, and abandons her when pregnant, leaving her to a long period of suffering and repentance after which she is morally educated so far as to be presented as saint-like, being vindicated in her self-sacrificing death. Like Carson, Bellingham shows no psychological change or repentance

himself; and is not clearly punished in the plot. Neither are the male sexual predators clearly condemned by the narrative voice, although the rhetoric in both novels unambiguously guides the reader towards condemning them and appreciating the values of the heroine: they are shown to be morally wrong and destructive, rather than said to be so.

Horneyan theory has been useful in this analysis mainly because it serves to elucidate why the male sexual predator is especially titillating and fascinating to the heroine. Although this also has to do with youth and sexual attraction, the key to the character's lure is that he offers the heroine what she has to stifle in herself: Horney explains that the self-effacing person "admires in an aggressive type the expansive drives which for the sake of his integration he must so deeply suppress in himself" (1950, 220). This theory also explains the nature of the heroine's change in behaviour: while on the social level this is an endorsement of traditional values, it is also a switch to a more securely useable alternative after the collapse of the expansive solution and the suffering it brings.

While Horney's theory is useful for analysis, it benefits from a combination with other theories: the addition of Bowlby's theory of attachment and Kübler-Ross's theory of traumatic grief has been necessary to account for the change and education of the characters after psychological trauma. Similarly, while Horneyan theory accounts for the "proposition of sink and swim" (1950, 257) that the self-effacing woman experiences during the dissolution of the morbid dependency to the expansive man, which clearly corresponds to the near-fatal illnesses of the heroines before their forswearing the male sexual predators, the theory fails to account for the psychological change in the expansive partner at the end of the same relationship. The motivation and inner workings of that character are left as blanks in the novels and in psychoanalytic texts alike.

Iser's theory of blanks in the text has been very helpful in this study since it helps to identify implied meanings that otherwise elude the reader: the immediacy of sexual seduction in Willoughby's rape of Marianne's lock, or in Rochester's bodily proximity to Jane in the carriage, for instance, can only be understood by filling in the gap of the unsaid. With the application of this theory, it also becomes

obvious how widely blanks are used to make the rhetoric guide the reader without giving him "the feeling that the author wants to lead him by the nose" (Iser 1974, 37). The lack of condemnatory comments by the narrator about the male sexual predator in most of the novels under investigation in this thesis, especially where, like in *Ruth*, he clearly wreaks harm on the heroine, directs the reader to uncover the villainy of the character himself, without being clearly commanded by the narrative voice.

While Horneyan theory explains the conflict between the expansive and self-effacing values that is at the forefront in these novels, this conflict can also be seen as a clash between opposing social values. Eagleton interprets the power plays in *Jane Eyre* as the confrontation between the "outcast bourgeoise" (32) Jane, and Rochester who clearly belongs to "the gentry" (20), while for Parrinder the conflict in the novel is that between conservative Tory values (represented by the puritanical heroines) and liberal Whig values (represented by the rich and dissolute heroes) in society:

> In its simplest form, the happy ending of the courtship plot rewards the most morally deserving pair of lovers while thwarting all rival claimants. The politics of the happy ending depends upon its relationship to the conventional hierarchy of wealth and breeding. Most often . . . the established social power is unexpectedly reaffirmed while the aristocracy is revitalized by an infusion of social responsibility and Christian virtue – the typical dowry, as it were, of a clergyman's daughter, even though the latter may be (like Jane Eyre) an heiress in disguise. Novelists like Austen and Charlotte Brontë lead us through romantic complications, intricate false alarms, and delicate misunderstandings to an endorsement of Tory England (185).

The male sexual predator is indeed of a markedly higher social class than the heroine in each novel studied here: Marianne is a gentleman's daughter but without a dowry, whereas Willoughby is enriched by his aunt and later his wife; Jane works for a living in Rochester's house; Helen is of obscure origin and interpreted as illegitimate by some critics. Mary Barton and Ruth belong to the working class, which is markedly below that of their male sexual predators. Moreover, there is clearly a difference in moral values between these parties just as there is a social and financial boundary between them. The heroines are

educated in traditional moral principles, which undeniably back the social construct led by the class to whom the male sexual predators belong. In that sense, the male sexual predator also plays a social role: he embodies a class structure that has to be held up but that is permeated by moral values from the class represented by the heroine.

The character type studied here fulfils a psychological and social role, but is barely recognizable as a character in his own right: for example, Allen claims that "Rochester is not so much a man as a most powerful symbol of virility [and] a school-girl's dream of a man" (190). Although he is the most comprehensively characterized and ultimately the only redeemed predator character in the novels studied, even Rochester appears more a symbol, an agent for education and a reward, than a round character; the other male sexual predators are even more flat. In spite of the confession scenes in *Sense and Sensibility* and *Jane Eyre* and the occasional passages in *Ruth* and *Mary Barton* which allow some access to their viewpoint, these characters are presented as blanks, their motivation and inner dynamics veiled from the reader. They seem to be contrivances, as it were, for the change in the heroine, and function as parts of the female protagonist's story and the embodiment of her idealized self.

It is very hard to focus on the male sexual predator since he is a blank and the heroine, so to speak, blocks the view. It is not a coincidence that almost all novels studied here bear the name of the heroine ("the tenant of Wildfell Hall" is, of course, an epithet for Helen): the reader is led to follow the heroine and identify with her by the rhetoric, and the male character is usually only seen through her restricted viewpoint. In order to analyze the male sexual character, it was therefore necessary to start with the female prey – the male characters could only be described in terms of the females.

The question remains whether this dependency of the analysis of the male character on the female counterpart is a result of the dynamics of seduction plots, or whether this is connected with the fact that the novels studied here were written by women. The latter idea appears probable, since the limited access of the women writers to the minds and intimate conversations of men, would at least

partly account for the conspicuous blanks surrounding especially the details of the male sexual predator's character and his motivations. In a social environment in the first half of the nineteenth century, it would be difficult for a young woman writer to witness conversations between men, share intimate secrets concerning possible plans of sexual seduction, or imagine their thoughts and desires concerning sexual matters, which partly explains the clear focus of the narrative on the heroine. Further study of other novels with plots of courtship and seduction from the eighteenth century, by both men and women, could be illuminating in this respect; an interesting point of study, for example, would be the question whether the same character type in works by male writers is portrayed in more detail, and his motivations more clearly to be discerned. Further study of this kind would lead to more insight into the role and function of this character type, that remains as fundamental a part of seduction and courtship as courtship and seduction are an essential part in the domestic novel.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Kuglin, Ayşegül
Nationality: Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth: 30 July 1976 , Stockholm
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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MA	University of Sussex at Brighton	2001
BA	University of Istanbul, English Language and Literature	1999
High School	Çankaya Anadolu High School, Ankara	1994

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2006- Present	Bilkent University, FAE	Instructor
2001 – 2006	METU, FLE	Research Assistant
2003 – 2006	Bilgi Yayınevi	Literary advisor
2000 – 2001	Bilgi Yayınevi	Translator
1999	İnkılap Yayınevi	Translator
1997 – 1998	Çınar Yayınları	Translator
1999	Atv	Trainee reporter
1996	Cumhuriyet	Trainee reporter

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Advanced German, basic French, basic Latin

HOBBIES

Music, Mythology, Fantasy, Fan fiction

APPENDIX B

TURKISH SUMMARY

AUSTEN, CHARLOTTE VE ANNE BRONTË, VE GASKELL'İN ROMANLARINDA CİNSEL AÇIDAN AVCI ÖZELLİKLERİ GÖSTEREN ERKEK KARAKTERİN ROLÜ

Giriş

Cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakter, dünya edebiyatının ilk örneklerinden bu yana belirgin bir karakter tipi olarak çeşitli türden edebiyat eserlerinde sıkça görülür. Homeros'un *İlyada* adlı destanındaki Achilleus kadar, Chaucer'ın *Canterbury Hikâyeleri'ndeki* genç şövalye ve William Shakespeare'in *Cymbeline*'deki Cloten ile İachimo ve *Kısasa Kısas*'taki Angelo gibi çok sayıda oyunundaki erkek karakter de, kadınları baştan çıkarmayı hedefleyen bu karakter tipinin örneklerindendir. İngiliz Restorasyon dönemi tiyatro oyunlarında da sıkça görülen, örneğin Oliver Goldsmith'in *Fethetmeye Tenezzül Ediyor* ve William Wycherley'in *Taşralı Zevce* adlı oyunlarındaki erkek kahramanlarda seçilebilen bu karakter, özellikle 17. yüzyıldan itibaren roman ve oyunlarda ön planda olmuştur. Samuel Richardson'ın *Pamela* ve *Clarissa* adlı romanlarında aynı adlı kadın kahramanları baştan çıkarmaya çalışan bu karakter tipi, genç kadının erdemi tercih ederek reddetmesi gereken günahkârlık seçeneğini temsil eder ve böylelikle Richardson'dan sonraki roman geleneği için bir örnek oluşturur.

Victoria dönemindeki İngiliz edebiyatında, cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakter, bu çalışmada incelenen romanların yanı sıra pek çok farklı eserde de yer alır. Bu karakter örneğin Charles Dickens'ın *Zor Zamanlar* adlı romanındaki James Harthouse, Thackeray'nin *Gurur Dünyası* adlı

romanındaki George Osborne, George Eliot'ın *Adam Bede* adlı romanındaki Arthur Donnithorne ve Thomas Hardy'nin *Tess* adlı romanındaki Alec D'Urberville karakterlerinde de görülür. Dünya edebiyatında ise Tolstoy'un romanı *Savaş ve Barış*'taki Anatole Kuragin ve Stendhal'in romanı *Kırmızı ve Siyah*'taki Julien Sorel belirgin örnekler sayılabilir ve bu karakter tipinin İngiliz edebiyatıyla sınırlı olmadığını gösterir.

19. yüzyıl romanlarında, baştan çıkarmaya çalıştığı kadın için iffetini yitirme ve kötü yola düşme tehlikesi arz eden ve büyük önem taşıyan bu karakter tipi, 20. yüzyıldan itibaren, büyük ihtimalle değişen toplum yargıları nedeniyle önemini yitirmeye başlar. Evlilik öncesi cinsel ilişkinin büyük bir suç ve günah olma özelliğinin kaybolmaya başlamasıyla beraber, cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter ancak Nabokov'un *Lolita* adlı romanındaki Humbert Humbert gibi küçük yaştaki kıza tasaddi ve John Osborne'un *Öfke* adlı oyunundaki Jimmy Porter gibi şiddet içeren davranışlar gösterdiğinde tehlikeli sayılır. Ancak bu çapkın karakter tipi, komik bir figür olarak "pembe dizi" de tabir edilen modern romans türü basit romanlarda da görülür.

Richardson'ın romanlarında, 19. yüzyıl romanlarında ve "pembe dizi" türü romanlarda sık sık kadını zor kullanmaksızın baştan çıkaran bu karakter tipi, kadını iffet ile cinsel cazibe arasında tercih yapmaya zorlayarak anlatı içinde ahlaki mesajların verilmesine olanak verir. 19. yüzyılda, toplumsal kısıtlamalar altında yaşayan kadınların ulaşamadığı özgürlük, rahatlık ve tasasız yaşam gibi kavramları temsil eden bu karakter tipi, psikanalist Karen Horney'ın tabiriyle kadının kendine dair idealize imgesini de temsil eder.

Söz konusu olan, kadın kahramanın ön planda olduğu romanlar oluşum romanları olduğu ve kadın kahramanın eğitilme ve olgunlaşma süreci ön planda olduğundan bu idealize imge değişir: cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakterin yıkıcılığının farkına varmak ve onu temsil ettiği değerlerle beraber reddetmek, kadın kahramanın eğitiminin önemli bir parçasıdır. Bu şekilde bu karakter tipi kadının değişimini tetikler ve romanın eğitim şablonunu mümkün kılar. Ayrıca anlatının sonunda kadın kahramanın ödüllendirilmesiyle paralel

olarak mutlaka romanın retoriği tarafından cezalandırılır ve kadın kahramanın haklı çıkması şablonunun da yerine getirilmesine katkıda bulunur.

Cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakterin başka bir özelliği de kişiliğinin, iç dinamiklerinin ve güdülenmesinin okur tarafından tam olarak anlaşılmamasıdır, bu da kadın kahramana odaklanmayı ve onunla özdeşleşmeyi pekiştirir. Erkek kahraman burada İser'in okur tarafından okuma süreci boyunca yavaş yavaş doldurulan ve okurun okunan metne anlam kazandırmasına yarayan boşluklar kuramına da uygundur. Anlatının başında çekici ve olumlu bir kişi olarak görülebilen cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter, yıkıcı ve zararlı özellikleri ortaya çıktıkça hakkındaki boşluklar doldurulur; boşlukların tedricen dolması ve kişiliğinin olumsuz yönlerinin ortaya çıkmasıyla beraber anlatıcı ve farklı karakterlerin de onun hakkında olumsuz yorumları artar.

Bu çalışmanın savı, Jane Austen'ın *Ateş ve Kül*, Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë'nin *Şatodaki Kadın* ve Elisabeth Gaskell'in *Ruth* ve *Mary Barton* adlı romanlarındaki cinsel açıdan avcı davranışları gösteren erkek karakterin, elde etmeye çalıştığı kadın kahramanın idealize edilmiş imgesini temsil ederek romanların eğitim ve haklı çıkarma şablonlarını mümkün kıldığı yönündedir.

Kuramsal altyapı ve metodoloji

Alman asıllı Amerikalı psikanalist Karen Horney'ın kuramı, ayrıntılı olmasının yanı sıra sahih ve mantıklı olduğundan bu çalışma için uygun görülmüştür. Horney, iç çatışmaların nevrozlara yol açtığı ve nevrotik kişinin iç çatışmalarıyla başa çıkabilmek için üç ana kişilik ve davranış yapısından birine başvurduğu savından yola çıkarak üç ana nevrotik kişilik tipi çizmiştir.

Bu üç yapı arasında, kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısı fedakârlık ve uysallığı en önemi değerler olarak görür ve güçlü, atak kişilere boyun eğmesi ihtimali yüksektir. Özellikle bu çalışmada analiz edilen kitapların ortaya çıkığı toplum yapısında kadınların bu kişilik özelliklerini ve davranışları göstermeleri uygun

görüldüğünden kadın karakterlerin anlatıların sonunda bu kişilik tipini benimsemeleri şaşırtıcı değildir.

İkinci ana kişilik yapısı olan yayılmacı kişilik yapıları arasında üç alt tür vardır, bunlardan narsisistler hayranlık ve takdir bekleyen, bencil kişilerdir. Bu çalışmada incelenen cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakterler de çoğunlukla bu özellikleri gösterirler. İkinci alt türe ait olan mükemmeliyetçiler yüksek ahlaki ölçütlere sahip ve diğer insanlara karşı tahammülsüz kişilerdir. Üçüncü yayılmacı alt türüne ait kişilerden oluşan, küstah ve kinci tip ise Horney'a göre edebiyatta özellikle ilgi uyandıran kötü ve kindar tiplemelere benzeyen, çıkarcı ve intikamcı kişilerden oluşur.

Horney'ın çizdiği üçüncü ana kişilik yapısı ise toplumla ilişkisi kopuk olan kişiliktir. Bu tip insanlar ise yakın ilişkilerden kaçınır ve her türlü çatışmadan uzak durarak huzur bulur.

Horney'ın kuramının bu çalışma için özellikle önemli olan noktası, bir kişilik yapısını seçmiş olan kişide diğer eğilimlerin bastırılmış olarak da var olduğu savıdır. Buna göre bilhassa kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısına sahip kişiler, yayılmacı kişilik yapısına sahip kişilere hayranlık duyar ve kendi bilinçaltında var olan güçlü ve aktif olma arzusunu bu kişiler üzerinden dolaylı olarak tatmin etmeye çalışır. Özellikle kadınların güç, şöhret, macera gibi bastırılmış arzularını beraber oldukları erkekler üzerinden dolaylı olarak tatmin ettikleri göz önünde bulundurulursa, analiz edilen romanlardaki kadın kahramanların da bu gibi isteklerini cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterler üzerinden tatmin etme eğilimleri açıklık kazanır. Horney'a göre kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısına sahip kişiler (özellikle kadınlar) ile yayılmacı kişilik yapısına sahip kişiler (özellikle erkekler) arasındaki bu tür ilişki çoğu zaman dengesizdir ve erkeğin kadını utandırması ya da aşağılamasıyla başlar; Horney bu ilişkiye 'hastalıklı bağımlılık' adını verir.

Horney'ın kuramına ilaveten kullanılan Wolfgang İser'in okur tepkisi kuramı, Almanya'da Konstanz üniversitesinde 1974'te şekillenmiştir. Bu kuramda İser, metinde tam olarak açıklanmayan ve ifade edilmeyen kısımların boşluklar oluşturduğunu ve okurun bu boşlukları verilen ipuçlarına dayanarak kendi

çıkarsamalarıyla doldurarak anlam yaratma sürecine katkıda bulunduğunu savunur. Boşlukların metinde belirli bir şekilde yer almasıyla, okur da bu boşlukları yazar tarafından beklenen şekilde doldurur ve tasarlanan sonuca ulaşır. Bu kuram, bu çalışmada özellikle cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakterin kendisi açısından önemlidir: içyapısı ve kafasından geçenler bilinmediğinden, bu karakter kendi başına bir boşluk teşkil eder. Bu boşluğun içi, davranışlarından gelen ipuçlarının yardımıyla okur tarafından tedricen doldurulur.

Austen'ın *Kül ve Ateş* adlı romanında kadın kahramanın asilikten vazgeçmesi için katalizör olarak cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter

Bu romanda cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter olan Willoughby, ortaya çıktığı sahneden itibaren çarpıcı ve çekici bir erkek olarak betimlenir. Kadın karakter Marianne Dashwood düşüp ayağını sakatladığı anda aniden beliriveren erkek, onu kucağına alarak evine taşımakla kahraman rolünü oynamakla kalmaz, bu şekilde dönemin ahlaki sınırlamalarına karşı gelerek kadını utandırır, gücünü ve üstünlüğünü ortaya koyarak yayılmacı kişilik yapısını sergiler. Bu sayede Horney'ın ifadesiyle 'hastalıklı bağımlılığı' başlatmış olur.

Marianne'in kendisi gibi müziğe, lirik şiire, doğaya ve romantizme düşkün bir eş aradığı, bunu yanı sıra da asiliğe ve toplum kurallarını hiçe saymaya eğilimli olduğu önceden belirtilmiştir; kendisi de bu özelliklere sahip olan Willoughby onun için uygun bir eş gibi görünür ve Marianne bu yayılmacı eğilimlerini bir süre onun üzerinden dolaylı olarak yaşar. İkili görgü kurallarını hiçe sayarak sorumsuzca baş başa zaman geçirir. Cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin kadın kahramanı karşı karşıya bıraktığı tehlike bu noktada belli olur: alt tabakadan olmadığından ve kendisini koruyabilecek kişiler olduğundan Marianne gerçek anlamda baştan çıkarılma tehlikesi altında değildir, ama hakkında dedikodu çıkması tehlikesi vardır ve kısa süreli de olsa bu gerçekleşir.

Willoughby'nin açıklama yapmaksızın aniden Marianne'den ayrılmasıyla bir kriz yaşanır: Marianne'in yayılmacı eğilimlerini erkek üzerinden yaşayabildiği hayal dünyası çöker ve Marianne Bowlby ile Kübler-Ross tarafından açıklanan bir

travmatik yas sürecine girer. İlişkinin gerçekten bittiğini kabullenemediği uzun bir şok ve inkâr döneminden sonra çevresini suçladığı bir öfke dönemi yaşar. Öfkeden sonra yaşanan depresyon ve ümitsizlik döneminde ise yaşadığı acıyla birlikte eğitimi gerçekleşir; ateşli, tehlikeli bir hastalık geçirir, sembolik olarak ölüp nekahetinden yine sembolik olarak kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısını benimseyerek yeniden doğar.

Aynı sırada Willoughby'nin önceden bir kızı hamile bırakıp terk ettiği ve para için başka bir kızla evlendiği öğrenilir; okur da Marianne ile beraber hem Willoughby'den, hem de onu temsil ettiği değerlerden, toplum kurallarını umursamamak ve sorumsuz davranmak gibi özelliklerinden uzaklaştırılır. Daha uysal ve sorumluluk sahibi, kendini geriye çeken bir kişilik yapısı edinen Marianne, kendisi de bu kişilik yapısına sahip olan ve bu değerleri temsil eden yaşça büyük Albay Brandon ile evlenir. Anlatının son bölümünde müzik, şiir ve macera merakından hiç söz edilmez, bir evin sahibesi olma sorumluluğu ön plandadır. Bu çift arasındaki ilişki hiç anlatılmasa ve aralarında gerçek bir aşkın geliştiği inandırıcı olmasa da bu mutlu son Marianne için bir ödül sayılabilir.

Willoughby ise uzun bir günah çıkarma sahnesinden Marianne'in ablası Elinor'a suçlarını itiraf eder, Marianne'i sevmesine rağmen narsisist kişilik yapısı gereğince lüks ihtiyacının aşkından güçlü olduğu ve para için evliliği bu yüzden kabul ettiği anlaşılır, ancak bu itiraf iç dinamiklerini anlaşılmasına yardımcı olsa da suçunun silinmesini sağlamaz. Başlangıçta bu karakteri olumlu sözlerle tanıtan anlatıcı, sonlara doğru Willoughby'nin suçları ortaya çıktıkça daha eleştirici ve sert bir tona bürünür, sonunda bu karakterin zayıf, kötü ve zararlı biri olduğu hem anlatıcı, hem diğer karakterler tarafından ifade edilir. Ancak karakter zayıflığı açık yorumlardan da çok açık ifade edilmeyen boşluklarla, okurun algılayıp içini doldurabileceği şekilde verilir; örneğin sevdiğini iddia ettiği kadına parayı tercih etmesi, sonradan evlendiği kadını da, baştan çıkardığı kızı da kendisinden çok suçlaması açıkça yorum yapılmaksızın zayıf ve bencil kişilik yapısını sergileyen unsurlardır. Willoughby Marianne gibi psikolojik bir değişime de uğramaz; anlatıda mutsuz bir evlilikle ve Marianne'i aklından çıkaramamakla cezalandırılır ve kadın kahramanın haklı çıkması şablonu yerine getirilmiş olur.

Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre* ve Anne Brontë'nin *Şatodaki Kadın* adlı romanlarında mutluluk ve ahlaka karşı tehdit olarak cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter

Charlotte Brontë

Jane Eyre'de kadın kahramanın hâkimiyeti ve cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakterin boşluk olma özelliği ön plandadır: kahraman Jane aynı zamanda anlatıcı olduğundan erkek karakter de okur tarafından ancak onun algıları ve yorumlarıyla sınırlı olarak takip edilebilir. Erkek karakter Rochester da Willoughby gibi bir düşme ve yaralanma sahnesiyle okura tanıtılır; ancak bu romanda kaza geçiren kişi Rochester, yardım eden de Jane olduğundan geleneksel kurtarıcılık sahnesi altüst edilmiş olur. Rochester'ın mağrur ve sert tavrı nedeniyle rollerin tam anlamıyla tersine çevrilmediği, erkeğin kadınsı ve yardıma muhtaç bir kişilik taşımadığı belli olur, tersine Rochester bu tavrıyla Jane'i aşağılayarak yine üstünlüğünü ortaya koyup bir hastalıklı bağımlılığı başlatır.

Rochester'ı devamlı düşünen, yüzünü tekrar tekrar betimleyen Jane'in ona âşık olduğu hemen anlaşılır, ancak anlatıda Rochester de ona âşık olarak gösterilse de tavırlarından, küstah ve kinci bir kişilik yapısına sahip olmakla kalmadığı anlaşılır. Jane onu gururlu olarak tasvir etse de evine davet ettiği zengin ve güzel Blanche'e kur yapmaktan geri durmaz. Bunu Jane'i kıskandırmak için yaptığını söylese de bazı eleştirmenler bu iddiayı inandırıcı bulmaz ve Rochester'ın güvenilir olmadığını söyler; romanda Jane de çeşitli metreslerini ahlaksızlıkları gerekçesiyle terk etmiş olan, kendisini de erdemi nedeniyle sevdiğini iddia eden Rochester'ın, teklifi gereğince metresi olmayı kabul etse kendisini de aynı gözle göreceğini anlar.

Burada da aynı zamanda kadın kahraman olan, yani bilgisi ve yorum yeteneği kadar güvenilirliği de sınırlı olan anlatıcıya ait yorumlardan çok, açıkça ifade edilmeyen noktalar karakter hakkında bilgi verir. Okur tarafından içi doldurulan ve ifade edilmediği halde anlaşılabilen boşluklar arasında hem Rochester'ın Jane'le gönül eğlendirirken aslında zengin ve güzel Blanche ile evlenme niyeti, hem de Jane'e karşı arz ettiği ve Jane'in bilinçli şekilde kendini koruduğu baştan

çıkarılma tehlikesi vardır. Erkeğin Jane ile baş başa kalmaya çalıştığı ve onun nikâha kadar bundan bilerek kaçındığı ancak üstü kapalı şekilde anlatılır ve boşlukların doldurulmasıyla anlaşılır.

Sevgiye muhtaç olduğu kadar kendini erdemli olmaya mecbur hisseden, ama bununla çelişen bir özgürlük ve macera dürtüsüne de sahip olan, bilhassa içindeki öfke ve kini ahlaki ilkeleri gereğince bastırmak için büyük çaba harcayan Jane, yayılmacı eğilimlerini gururlu, özgür davranışlı, öfkeye kinini dışa vurmaktan çekinmeyen, maceralarını onunla paylaşan Rochester üzerinden dolaylı olarak tatmin eder. Ancak evlenmek üzereyken Rochester'ın zaten evli olduğunun anlaşılmasıyla yine kriz yaşanır ve hayal dünyası çöker. Erkeğin önerdiği metres hayatı, Jane'in kesin ahlaki ilkeleriyle bağdaşamadığından, üstelik bu durumda erkeğin bağlılığının da sona ereceğini anladığından Jane Rochester'ı terk eder. Kararı kendisi vermiş olsa da travmatik yas sürecini yaşar: hissizleştiği kısa bir şok döneminden, ve mükemmeliyetçiliğe eğilimli kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısı nedeniyle çok bastırılmış bir öfke aşamasından sonra yine uzun bir baygınlık yaşadığı ölüm benzeri bir hastalık geçirir. Bu hastalıktan sonra, önceden belirtilmişken kesin olarak pekiştirilen bir kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısıyla sembolik olarak yeniden doğar.

Bu romanda cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter belirgin şekilde cezalandırılır: karısının öldüğü yangında Rochester da bir elini ve gözlerini yitirir. Ancak bunların da etkisiyle, diğer romanlardaki erkek karakterlerin tersine kendisi de işlediği suçlardan pişmanlık duyan ve değişim geçiren Rochester, daha sonra Jane ile tekrar birleşir ve kadın kahramanın eğitimini tetikledikten sonra ödüllenmesine de katkıda bulunarak onun haklı çıkması şablonunu mümkün kılar.

Çoğu eleştirmen, her iki karakterin de psikolojik değişimini ve olgunlaşmasını zorlama ve inandırıcılıktan uzak bulur: Jane'in davranışları özünde büyük bir değişiklik göstermez, ahlaksız ve rahat bir metres hayatı yerine erdemli ve zor hayatı seçerek tavrını pekiştirmiş olur, ama bundan sonra onu ödüllendiren olaylar doğal ve inandırıcı değildir; tanımadığı amcasının ona büyük bir miras bırakması, tanımadığı kuzenlerinin kapısında bayılması ve Rochester'ın karısının kaza geçirip ölmesiyle erkeğin dul kalıp evlenebilmesi gibi zorlama mucizevî

gelişmelerdir. Rochester'ın eğitimi ise daha da şüphe uyandırıcıdır: kimi eleştirmenlere göre zaten Jane'i seçmemiş olan, Blanche ile yapmak istediği evlilik engellendiğinden Jane'e yönelen Rochester, ciddi şekilde sakatlandığından pişman görünür, uysallaşır ve kendisine bakmaya hazır olan Jane'i kabul eder, ancak anlatıda belirtildiği üzere görme yeteneğini tekrar kazandıktan sonra ahlaki eğitiminin kalıcı olmadığı ortaya çıkabilir.

Anne Brontë

Bu romanda yine kadın kahraman ön planda ve aynı zamanda anlatıcıdır, cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter de yine ancak onun gözünden ve onun yorum ve anlatısıyla verilir. Üstelik bu romanın zamansal kurgusu nedeniyle okur önce kadın kahraman Helen ve ilk bölümün anlatıcısı, Helen'e âşık Gilbert Markham ile tanışır; onlarla özdeşleşme teşvik edilir. Cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter Huntingdon ise uzun bir geriye dönüş bölümünde, Helen'in yıllar önce tuttuğu hatıra defteri vasıtasıyla anlatılır, anlatının bu özelliğinden dolayı da bu karakterin betimlemesinde anlatıcının sonradan kazanılan deneyimlerle yorum yapması mümkün değildir. Hatıra defteri bölümündeki anlatıcı genç Helen, Huntingdon ile ilgili olarak okurla aynı düzeyde bilgiye sahiptir.

Huntindon'ın anlatıya giriş sahnesi, diğer cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakterlerin giriş sahneleriyle belirgin şekilde benzerlik taşır: yine zor durumdaki kadın kahramanı kurtarmaya gelen kahraman rolünde ortaya çıkan Huntingdon, bu sefer gerçek bir kazada yardıma koşan Willoughby'nin aksine, sosyete eğlenceleri dışında işe yaramaz bir kişi olduğunu ima edercesine, kadın kahramanı bir balo salonunda sıkıcı bir erkekle sohbet etmekten kurtarır. Hem bu sahnede, hem de bir sonraki karşılaşmalarında Helen'i ciddi şekilde aşağılar ve utandırır: onun resimlerini karıştırır, kendi resmini yapmış olduğu görünce kadının ona âşık olduğunu anlar ve köşeye sıkıştırarak aşkını itiraf ettirerek gülünç durumda bırakır. Üstelik onu öperek o dönemde ciddi bir skandala neden olacak bir harekette bulunur ve halası tarafından yakalanıp azarlanmasına neden

olur. Bu şekilde yine onun üzerinde hâkimiyet kurarak üstünlüğünü sergiler ve bir hastalıklı bağımlılığı başlatır.

Huntingdon, evlenme teklifini bile toplum kurallarına aykırı bir şekilde, vasilerinden izin almak yerine onu baştan çıkarmak üzereyken yapar; âşık olduğu adamla evlenen ve bu şekilde baştan çıkarılıp terk edilmekten kurtulan Helen'in, günah işlemeye zorlanma ve toplum tarafından dışlanma tehlikesinden kurtulamadığının ilk iması da bu şekilde verilmiş olur.

Helen'in de diğer kadın kahramanlar gibi asiliğe eğilimli olduğu, onu büyüten halası ve enişte sinin seçtiği erkekle evlenmeyi reddetmesinden ve görgü kurallarını eleştirmesinden anlaşılır. Ayrıca, yine açıkça ifade edilmeyip okur tarafından doldurulan boşluklardan anlaşıldığı üzere cinsel güdüleri de güçlüdür ve Huntingdon'a, önceleri ancak ahlaklı ve erdemli bir erkeği sevebileceğine dair iddialarına karşın cinsel cazibesi yüzünden kapılmıştır. Ancak asıl yayılmacı eğilimini gösteren özelliği, Huntingdon'a ahlak hocalığı yaparak içki, kumar ve çapkınlıktan vazgeçirmeye çalışmasıdır; aslında ahlak kurallarına uygun olsa da bu kibir ve ataklık üzerine kurulu olduğundan yayılmacı bir özelliktir.

Helen kocasıyla beraber yıllar geçirir ve yaşadıklarını hatıra defteri vasıtasıyla anlatır. Bu süre uzun olsa da anlatımda cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakterin yıkıcı ve zararlı özellikleri diğer romanlarda olduğundan daha erken bir dönemde, ilişkinin başlarında ortaya çıkmaya başlar: Huntingdon daha balayında düşüncesiz ve bencil davranışlarıyla karısının eğlenmesini engeller, onu kır evine götürüp kendisi kumar ve içki âlemleri için giderek artan uzunlukta ve sıklıkta gezilere çıkar. Çocuğu olduğunda da onunla ilgilenmek yerine karısının kendisiyle ilgilenmediğinden şikâyet eder. Anlatıcı olan Helen aşağılayıcı yorumlar ve eleştirilerden kaçınsa, mümkün olduğu kadar kocasını korumaya ve davranışlarını değiştireceğine ümit etmeye çalışsa da doldurulan boşluklardan Huntingdon'ın içki tüketiminin, kumarbazlığının ve en önemlisi evlilik dışı ilişkilerinin son derece ciddi bir hal aldığı anlaşılır.

Huntingdon'ın Horney tarafından çizilen narsisist tipine uygun, çok sorumsuz ve bencil bir karaktere sahip olduğu anlatı ilerledikçe daha da belirgin hale gelir. Londra'daki âlemlerde kendi gibi alkolik ve kumarbaz arkadaşlarıyla tam olarak

ne yaptığı boşluk olarak kalırken, Huntingdon daha sonra arkadaşlarını evine çağırır; Helen hem onların gürültülü ve utanç verici sarhoşluk sahnelerine ve kocasının kendini ve onu küçük düşürmesine boyun eğmek zorunda kalır, hem de misafirlerden birinin güzel karısının, kocasının metresi olduğunu öğrenir.

Bu sırrı öğrenince, Helen bir şok yaşar. Her ne kadar atak, cinsel olarak girişken ve asi yayılmacı eğilimlerini Huntingdon'ın üzerinden dolaylı olarak yaşayabildiği hayal dünyası ancak bu noktada çökmemiş, hayal kırıklığı daha balayında başlayıp çift arasındaki çözülme yavaş yavaş ve durdurulamaz şekilde ilerlemiş olsa da, bu olay hayal dünyasının çöktüğünü en belirgin şekilde ortaya çıkarır. Helen de kendisini yalnız bırakan, ahlaki eğitim çabalarına da yanıt vermeyen kocasıyla bağlantısını en aza indirir ve dönemin yasaları ve toplum kuralları gereğince boşanması veya kocasını terk etmesi mümkün olmadığı için zorunlu olarak kocasıyla aynı evde yaşamayı kabul eder; sadece ismen evli olacakları ifadesiyle, üstü kapalı olarak açıklanan bu durumun, boşluk doldurulduğunda Helen'in artık kocasıyla cinsel ilişkiye girmeyi reddettiği anlamına geldiği anlaşılır.

Yayılmacı eğilimini kocasıyla yaşadığı hayal dünyası çökünce Helen uzun bir travmatik yas sürecine girer: Marianne ve Jane gibi ölüme benzer bir hastalık geçirmez ama artık kendisine yabancı olan kocasıyla geçirdiği yılların ölüm gibi olduğu, kadının çaresiz olduğu ve büyük acı çektiği anlaşılır. Bir yandan da çabalarını oğluna yöneltip onun babası gibi serseri ve bencil olmasını önlemeye çalışır, yine yayılmacı, asi bir tavır gibi görünebilen, kocasına kendisini eve hapsetme yetkisi veren yasalara karşı gelerek oğlunu alıp evi terk etme eylemini de oğlunu korumak için gerçekleştirir. Kocasının kendisine karşı hakaretlerine, acı dönemi ve bunun meydana getirdiği eğitim ve olgunlaşmayla kazandığı kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısı gereğince sabırla tahammül eden Helen, Huntingdon yeni metresini oğlunun mürebbiyesi kisvesi altında eve getirince, artık yıkıcı olduğu anladığı cinsel güdülerden oğlunu korumak için gizlice onu alıp kaçar ve oğlu için fedakârlık yaptığından aslında kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısını kanıtlamış olur.

Huntingdon karısına karşı büyük suçlar işler, hatta üstü kapalı bile sayılamayacak şekilde sarhoş arkadaşlarına onu elinden almalarını teklif eder ve karısını hem cinsel saldırı tehdidine maruz bırakır, hem de başka bir erkeğin ona kur yapmasına neden olur ve Helen'in ona yüz vermesi için eline koz da verir. Anlatının sonunda suçları karşılığında çok ciddi şekilde cezalandırılır: avlanırken kaza geçirir ve bırakmaya yanaşmadığı içkinin etkisiyle kangren olur, ağır ve acılı bir şekilde, kıvranarak ve çığlıklarla ölür.

Helen'in, yanlış bir seçim yapıp cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren bir erkekle evlenmesi sonucunda çektiği acının etkisiyle olgunlaştığı, eğitimden geçtiği, asi yayılmacı tavrından vazgeçip kendini geriye çeken bir kişilik yapısını benimsediği de anlatı sonunda iyice belirgin hale gelir. İkinci evliliğinde eş seçimini sadece cinsel cazibeye göre yapmadığı bellidir; toplum kurallarına harfiyen uyar; kocasını ya da daha sonra doğan çocuklarını da ahlaki yönden eğitmeye yeltenmez. Kendisini seven, güvenilir ve aynı zamanda cazip bir karakter olan Markham ile ödüllendirilir ve haklı çıkma şablonu da bu şekilde yerine getirilir.

Gaskell'in *Mary Barton* ve Ruth adlı romanlarında kötü yola düşme ve ölüm tehdidi olarak cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren karakter

Bu bölümde aynı yazarın iki ayrı romanı incelenmektedir, zira cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakter tarafından baştan çıkarılıp terk edilme tehlikesi Elizabeth Gaskell'in romanı *Mary Barton*'da ancak ima edilirken, *Ruth* adlı romanında bu tehdit gerçekleşir. Bu açıdan bu iki roman beraber incelenmesi gereken bir bütün oluşturmaktadır.

İki romanın karakterleri de benzerlikler taşır: *Mary Barton*'daki Harry Carson da, *Ruth*'taki Henry Bellingham de yakışıklı ve cazip olarak nitelendirilen ve zengin üst sınıfa mensup gençlerdir. İkisinin de bencil, ilgisiz ve son derece sorumsuz olduğu bellidir, Horney'ın çizdiği narsisist tipine bire bir uyarlar. Ayrıca ikisi de tanıştıkları sahnede kadın kahramanı utandırıp ona karşı üstünlüğünü sergileyerek birer hastalıklı bağımlılık başlatır: Carson kız

kardeşleriyle beraber alışveriş yapıp para harcarken, terzi çırağı olan ve ustası için malzeme alan Mary ile karşılaşır, Carson'ın gücünü ortaya koyması için aralarındaki statü farkı yeterlidir.

Bellingham ile yine terzi çırağı olan Ruth'un karşılaştığı sahne ise Ruth'un elbisesi yırtılan hanımlara yardımcı olmak için hazırda beklediği, erkeğin ise sökülen eteğini Ruth'a diktiren zengin bir güzelin kavalyeliğini yaptığı bir baloda gerçekleşir; Bellingham yine işçi sınıfına ait olduğu belli olan Ruth'tan farklı bir konumdadır, üstelik Ruth eteği sökülen kadın kendisine çıkıştığı için de utanç içindedir. İkinci karşılaşmalarında Bellingham nehre düşen bir çocuğu kurtarıp Willoughby gibi kahraman rolüne büründüğünden kadın karakter için çok cazip hale gelir.

İki romandaki cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakter birbirlerine çok benzerken, Mary ile Ruth aslında oldukça farklıdır: Mary diğer romanlardaki kadın kahramanlar gibi asiliğe eğilimi olan, oldukça rahat ve bağımsız bir kadındır, ancak çok parasız ve yalnız olduğu için maddi ve manevi desteğe ihtiyacı vardır. Yayılmacı eğiliminin en önemli belirtisi ise kendisine kur yapan Carson'la evlenerek sınıf atlamak ve bol paralı rahat bir hayata kavuşmak istemesidir. Çok masum ve uysal olduğu sık sık vurgulanan Ruth'un ise aslında yayılmacı bir eğilimi yoktur, ama yetim ve yalnız olduğundan sevgi ve ilgiye muhtaçtır; üst sınıfa ait ve kötü emelleri olan Bellingham'in kendisiyle ilgilenmesine izin verir, bu da toplum kurallarına aykırı olduğu için Ruth kişilik yapısının aksine yayılmacı bir davranış göstermiş sayılır.

İki romanda da cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin kadın kahraman için gerçekten ciddi birer tehlike arz ettiği kesindir. *Mary Barton*'da sınıf atlamaya çalışmanın, özellikle de zengin erkeklerle ilişkinin baştan çıkarılıp kötü yola düşme ve fahişe olma tehlikesi anlamına geldiği, hem anlatıcı ve karakterlerin uyarılarından, hem de Mary'nin, âşık olduğu zengin adamla evlenip sınıf atlamak için yıllar önce evden kaçan ve fahişe olan teyzesi Esther örneğiyle açık şekilde belirtilir. Ayrıca Mary Carson yüzünden toplumun tepkisine maruz kalır, özellikle de onun öldürülmesinden sonra mahkemede aşk hayatıyla ilgili rahatsız edici sorularla muhatap olur. Ruth için ise tehlike en ciddi şekilde

gerçekleşir: kadın kahraman, baştan çıkarılıp hamile olarak terk edilir, yardımsever Benson ailesi sayesinde oğlunu huzur içinde büyütse de yıllar sonra oğlanın evlilik dışı doğduğu ortaya çıkınca hem anne, hem oğul toplum baskısını ve utancı yaşarlar.

İki romandaki çiftlerin ilişkisi de kısa sürer ve kolayca çöker: *Mary* Barton'da sadece eğlence peşinde olan ve işçi sınıfının dertleriyle hiç ilgilenmeyen, tersine işçilerle dalga geçen ve sendika ile patronlar arasında yapılan bir toplantıda onları aşağılayan Carson'ın Mary'ye manevi destek vermesi söz konusu değildir. Mary de ona âşık değildir; bu nedenle ilişkiyi bitiren de kendisi olur. Carson'ın verebileceği maddi destek de Mary'nin kabul edemeyeceği metreslik şartlarına bağlıdır: ayrılık konuşması esnasında Carson onunla evlenmeyi değil, metres hayatı yaşamayı planladığını ağzından kaçırınca Mary onu azarlar ve terk eder, Carson da kısa süre sonra işçileri aşağıladığı için intikam olarak Mary'nin babası tarafından öldürülür; zaten tam kurulamayan, kadın kahramanın yayılmacı eğilimlerini erkek üzerinden dolaylı olarak yaşadığı hayal dünyası böylece kesin olarak yıkılmış olur.

Ruth'ta ise cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakter, kadın kahramanın yayılmacı görünen ilgi ve sevgi ihtiyacını ancak çok kısa bir süre karşılar: bir handa Ruth ile kalırken hastalanınca annesinin ona bakmaya gelip Ruth'u kovmaya karar vermesini fırsat bilerek, zaten bıkmaya başladığı kızın biraz para verilerek kovulmasına göz yumar. Bu şekilde Ruth, Bellingham'a hem maddi, hem manevi ihtiyacı devam ederken aniden yüzüstü bırakılır.

Krizden sonraki acı çekme, eğitim ve olgunlaşma süreci de iki romanda da, farklılıklara rağmen belirgin şekilde yer alır. Her iki cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakter de, aynı Willoughby ve Huntingdon gibi, olgunlaşma ve ahlaki ve psikolojik gelişme emaresi göstermez. Mary, Carson'ı öldürmekle suçlanan, kendisinin gerçekten aşık olduğu işçi delikanlı Jem'e aşık olduğunu anlar ve Jem'le beraber parasız ve işçi sınıfında bir hayatı kabullenir. Jem'i idamdan kurtarmak için uzun ve zorlu bir yolculuğa çıkar, mahkemede ifade de verdikten sonra aynı Marianne ve Jane gibi hummalı, ölüme benzer uzun bir hastalık geçirir. Yine asilik ve sınıf atlama merakı özelliklerine sahip yayılmacı

kişiliği sembolik olarak ölür, bu özelliklerini terk eden Mary uysal ve tokgözlü bir kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısıyla yeniden doğar.

Yüksek sınıftan bir erkekten sevgi görme ihtiyacı hariç zaten kendini geriye çeken bir kişilik yapısına sahip olan Ruth ise çok ciddi ve uzun bir acı çekme ve kefaret sürecinden geçer: yıllarca kendini oğluna feda ederek yaşar, yıllar sonra karşısına çıkan ve hala âşık olduğu Bellingham'in gecikmiş evlenme teklifini, aynen Helen gibi oğlunun babasının etkisinde kalıp onun gibi olmasını önlemek için reddeder ve sonunda oğlunun evlilik dışı doğmuş olduğu anlaşılıp işinden atılınca hastabakıcılık yaparak kefaretini öder. Fedakâr ve uysal kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısını tam olarak kanıtlayan bir şekilde, hasta olan Bellingham'e uzun süre baktıktan sonra ondan kaptığı hastalık sonucu ölür.

Kadın kahramanın haklı çıkması şablonu da iki romanda farklı şekilde işlenir: Mary'nin ödüllendirilmesi, diğer romanlardaki kadın kahramanlar gibi güvenilir bir erkekle evlenmesi şeklinde olur; hem âşık olduğu, hem de ona ihtiyacı olduğu maddi ve manevi desteği verebilen Jem ile Mary mutlu olurken, Carson daha romanın sonundan önce öldürülerek cezalandırılır. ***Ruth***'ta ise bu şablon mutlu sonla biten romanların klasik yapısına tamamen ters bir şekilde uygulanır: Ruth kendini feda ederek yaşadığı kasabadaki pek çok kişiye hastabakıcılık ettiğinden halk günahlarını affeder ve onu neredeyse bir aziz mertebesine yükseltir; oğlu da annesiyle gurur duyar. Ancak onaylanmasına rağmen kadın karakter mutlu bir sona ulaşamaz, aziz mertebesine uygun bir ölüm döşeği sahnesiyle ölür. Bellingham'in gerçek anlamda cezalandırılmaması ise pek çok okurun anlam veremediği bir boşluktur: Ruth'un öldüğü hastalığı, onu baştan çıkarmış olan karakter sorunsuz atlatır, ölüm ya da mutsuzlukla da cezalandırmaz. Sadece yok farz edilir ve oğluyla herhangi bir ilişki kurması kesin olarak engellenir, bu şekilde de hem olabilecek en üstü kapalı şekilde cezalandırılmış, hem de etkisini bir sonraki kuşağa aktarması önlenmiş olur.

Sonuç

Samuel Richardson'ın eserleriyle başlayarak, 17. yüzyıldan itibaren İngiliz roman kültürünün önemli bir parçasını oluşturan kur ve baştan çıkarma konulu romanlar, genellikle kadın başkahramanın hayatındaki önemli bir dönüm noktasına odaklanır. Önemli bir kadın kahraman üzerine odaklanan bu romanlar, oluşum romanı da olduğundan, kadın kahramanın toplumdaki yerinin ve kimliğinin belirlenmesi sürecini anlatır. Kadın kahraman için toplumdaki konumu, kimliği ve yetişkin olarak rolü seçtiği eş vasıtasıyla belirlendiğinden, en önemli dönüm noktası bu eşin seçimidir, kadın kahramanın toplumdaki yetişkin rolünü hakkıyla yerine getirebilmesi için de olgunlaşması ve bir eğitim sürecinden geçmesi gereklidir.

Bu çalışmada, cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin bu eğitim sürecinin gerekli bir parçası olduğunun kanıtlanmasına gayret edilmiştir: Jane Austen'ın *Ateş ve Kül*, Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre*, Anne Brontë'nin *Şatodaki Kadın* ve Elisabeth Gaskell'in *Ruth* ve *Mary Barton* adlı romanlarındaki kadın kahramanların yayılmacı eğilimlerinden vazgeçip olgunlaşmasını sağlayan, erkek karakterlerin yol açtığı acı çekme ve onunla bağlantılı eğitim sürecidir. Kendisi – *Jane Eyre*'deki Rochester haricinde – değişimden geçmediği, ancak kadın kahramanın değişmesine neden olduğu için, katalizör olarak tanımlanabilecek bir role sahiptir. Bu romanlarda cazip bir olası koca olarak ortaya çıkan bu erkek karakter, kadının yayılmacı idealize imgesini temsil eder.

İncelenen romanlarda, cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin temsil ettiği yayılmacı değerler ve davranışların yıkıcı ve zararlı olduğu kanıtlanır, bunun sonucunda kadın kahramanın yayılmacı eğilimlerini erkek üzerinden dolaylı olarak tatmin edebildiği hayal dünyası çöker. Çöküşe paralel olarak, anlatıcı ve diğer karakterlerin erkek karakter hakkındaki önceden olumlu olan yorumları da kınama ve eleştiriye dönüşür, bu şekilde kadın kahramanla beraber okur da cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin temsil ettiği değer ve davranışlardan uzaklaştırılır. Ayrılık sonucunda travmatik yas sürecinden geçerek acı çeken kadın kahraman da acının sonucunda olgunlaşır ve yayılmacı eğilimlerinden vazgeçerek onun tersi, kendini geriye çeken, uysal bir kişilik yapısı

benimser; bu çoğu örnekte kadın kahramanın sembolik olarak ölüp farklı bir kişilik yapısıyla yeniden doğduğu ağır bir hastalıkla anlatılır.

Karen Horney'ın kuramı, bu çalışmada özelikle cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin, kadın kahramana neden bu denli cazip geldiğini açıklaması açısından faydalı bir kuramsal temel oluşturmuştur. Yayılmacı kişilik yapısına sahip olan bu karakter tipi, kadın kahramanın sahip olduğu, ama kendi iç dengesini koruyabilmek için bastırmak zorunda olduğu eğilimleri temsil eder. Kadın kahraman, bu erkekle beraber olarak yayılmacı eğilimlerini dolaylı yoldan tatmin etme fırsatı bulur. Ayrıca Horney'ın kuramı, kadın kahramanın davranış değişikliğini de açıklar. Kadın kahramanın asi ve sorumsuz olmaktan vazgeçip uysal ve güvenilir bir karakter yapısı edinmesi, toplumsal düzlemde daha geleneksel ve toplum tarafından onaylanan değerlere doğru bir dönüşüm olarak görülebilse de, psikolojik açıdan da acıyla sonuçlanan yayılmacı çözüm yerine, daha güvenli kendini geriye çeken çözüme geçilmesi olarak yorumlanabilir.

Horney'ın kuramı karakterlerin analizinde çoğu zaman faydalı olsa da, bazı noktaları aydınlatmak için yeterli olmamıştır. Örneğin travmatik yas sürecinin açıklanması için Kübler-Ross ve Bowlby'nin kuramlarına başvurulması gerekli olmuştur. Benzer şekilde, Horney hastalıklı bağımlılık türündeki ilişkinin bitiminde kendini geriye çeken kişilik yapısında sahip kadının ölüm ile yaşam arasında gidip gelmesini açıklarken, yayılmacı kişilik yapısına sahip erkeğin bu noktadaki psikolojik durumuna açıklık getirmemiştir. Kuramdaki bu nokta, romanlardaki kadın kahramanın ilişki sonundaki ölüm benzeri hastalığıyla birebir örtüşmektedir, ancak cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakter romanlarda olduğu kadar psikanalitik kuramda da açıklanmayan bir boşluk olarak yer almaktadır.

İser'in okur tepkisi kuramı da bu çalışmada faydalı olmuş, okur tarafından doldurulan boşluklar kavramı incelenen romanlarda üstü kapalı şekilde ifade edilen ya da ima edilen pek çok noktanın açığa kavuşmasına yaramıştır. Ayrıca bu kuram boşlukların okur yönlendirilmesi için kullanımına, örneğin Ruth'ta cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin açık şekilde kınanmamasına rağmen kötülüğünün gösterilmesine de açıklık getirmiştir.

Roman kahramanları arasındaki çatışmalar psikolojik olduğu kadar toplumsal çatışmaların yansımaları olarak da görülebilir: kadın kahraman her örnekte cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterden daha aşağıda bir toplumsal konuma sahip olduğundan bu karakterler aynı zamanda sınıf temsilcileridir. Öte yandan eğitilmeleri sonucunda Püriten değerleri de temsil eden kadın kahramanlar tutucu Tory, zengin ve sorumsuz erkek kahramanlar ise liberal Whig eğilimlerini de temsil eder. Romanlarda bu açıdan kadın kahramanlarının erkekleri ahlaki yönden etkilemelerinin önemi de vurgulanır.

İç dinamikleri ve düşünceleri hiçbir noktada okur tarafından tam olarak anlaşılamayan cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin analizi oldukça zordur: romanların odak noktasında kadın kahraman bulunduğundan inceleme için erkek kahramanın kadın kahraman üzerindeki etkisinden yola çıkmak zorunlu olmuştur. Cinsel açıdan avcı özellikleri gösteren erkek karakterin analizinin, kadın kahramana bu kadar bağlı olması, incelenen romanların tümünün 19. yüzyılda yazmış olan kadın yazarlara ait olmasıyla ilintili olabilir. Dönemin şartları gereği erkeklerin düşüncelerini paylaşmak ve erkekler arasındaki konuşmaları takip etmek kadın yazarlar için son derece zor olacağından kadın kahramanın odak noktasında bulunması ve erkek kahramanların boşluklar oluşturması doğal sayılabilir. Bu konuda yapılacak farklı çalışmalar, kur ve baştan çıkarma konulu romanların önemli bir ögesini oluşturan bu karakter tipinin rol ve işlevinin daha iyi anlaşılmasını sağlayacaktır.