

12-7-1999

Victorian Concepts of the Ideal Man as Evidenced Through His Relationships with Animals: "If She Don't Carry You, You May Shoot Her" or "Remember Gyp When You Get Home"

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Victorian Concepts of the Ideal Man
as Evidenced Through His Relationships With Animals:

"If She Don't Carry You, You May Shoot Her"

or

"Remember Gyp When You Get Home"

by

Mary Ann Peebles Soles

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
English at Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia,
December 1999.

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Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of several people to my efforts in writing this thesis. First, I would like to thank Dr. Michael Lund, my director, who inspired me to look for meaning in the use of animals in Victorian novels. Throughout this project, Dr. Lund's enthusiasm and his confidence in my work have served as much-needed encouragement. I also want to express my appreciation to Dr. Lund for his willingness to work on this project primarily via email and "snail mail"; he saved me many hours of driving to and from Longwood. I would also like to thank Dr. Martha Cook for serving on this committee; her attention to detail helped me to put the final polishes on this paper. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Kathleen Flanagan for taking the time to serve on this committee and for helping me to expand my considerations of animals and their significance in Victorian society. I thank Dr. Carolyn Craft, my graduate advisor, for all of her helpful advice and assistance. Finally, I want to mention how much I appreciate all of the professors with whom I have worked at Longwood; I find their enthusiasm for literature, their vast knowledge of the subject, and their commitment to helping their students a refreshing change from today's standards and a true inspiration to those of us who wish to follow their lead.

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Introduction
Animals and Gender Roles
in Victorian England and Its Literature

In Victorian literature, animals play an important role in the lives of the characters. The men and women of Victorian novels use animals for transportation, for sport, for enjoyment, and for amusement, as did the men and women of the Victorian world. Animals, as John Ranlett observes, were fairly significant in the world of Victorian England, as is indicated by new developments like dog shows, animal shelters, and the hobby of bird watching which came about during the mid to late 1800's (26). Critic Ronald D. Morrison notes that the humane movement was an important part of Victorian history, with such supporters as Queen Victoria, Alfred Tennyson, and Robert Browning (65). This movement was widely covered in the press and its popularity led to the founding of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) in 1824 (Morrison 64). In fact, Morrison also notes that this organization became a popular charity that upstanding members of Victorian society often remembered in their wills (65).

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, published in his 1859 work *The Origin of the Species*, also brought the issue of animals and the relationship humans held with these creatures to the forefront of Victorian thought. Prior to the publication of *Origin*, as Joel S. Schwartz notes, " . . . the predominant view of living organisms was that they were products of God's creation and had not appreciably changed in form and function since Genesis" (274). With the emergence of scientific support for the theory of evolution, which asserts, as Darwin points out in his 1871 publication *The Descent of Man*, that "Man is descended from some less highly organized form" (1609), Victorian society had to reconsider its earlier view. As Schwartz argues,

Evolution influenced every aspect of nineteenth-century intellectual activity because it helped shatter the Victorian's faith in their society's immutability. (276)

What Darwin's theory of natural selection enabled Victorian society to reason, however, is that man was still superior to other creatures because of the intellectual advantage he held over other beings. In fact, one of Darwin's contemporaries, Alfred Russel

Wallace, asserted that "'providence' played an important role in the development of the human brain" (Schwartz 275); in other words, God had ordained that humans be "naturally selected" as the fittest forms of life.

Victorian society dealt with this new information primarily in two ways. With the perception of Nature as "red in tooth and claw" as Tennyson's *In Memoriam A. H. H.* claims(1147), one manner of thinking held that if humans were to remain at the top of this earthly chain of being, they must continue to exercise their power over other life forms. This manner of thinking would encourage the use of lesser animals for sport and for transportation, a practice common among Victorian men. The other manner of thinking, as critic Michael L. Campbell notes, held that " . . . men and animals are related and that, therefore, the Golden Rule should apply to animals as well as to men" (63). While the former pattern of thought served to encourage continued mistreatment of animals, the latter prompted a new kindness toward creatures that is evidenced through the popularity of the aforementioned humane movement.

With the prevalence of controversy regarding animals at this time, then, the fact that animals themselves play

a key role in the literature of the period is not surprising. What these animals tell us about the characters with whom they interact is essential. As Harriet Ritvo notes in *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, " . . . the treatment of animals could be seen as an index of the extent to which an individual had managed to control his or her lower urges" (qtd. in Morrison 69). If one's treatment of animals revealed one's character to members of Victorian society, then one can assume that in a Victorian novel, a character's treatment of animals reveals that character's true personality. Campbell argues that Victorian novelist Thomas Hardy, for one,

. . . uses animals to define an idealistic sensitivity toward life that he observes in some people but not in others, and he clearly implies that one's attitude toward animals contains in embryo his attitude toward people, the world, and life in general. (68)

Other Victorian writers depict characters whose sensitivity or lack of it regarding animals is mirrored in their treatment of fellow humans. In *Lady Audley's Secret*, for example, Mary Elizabeth Braddon uses Alicia

Audley's attachment to her dog to demonstrate the girl's kind nature, which is reflected in her love for and devotion to her father and her cousin.

What is most interesting, however, are the relationships between male characters in Victorian fiction and the animals with which they come in contact. The way Victorian male characters are shown to treat animals reveals something about the nature of the men themselves. To understand what these writers are attempting to say about their male characters, it is important to examine the concept of masculinity at the time.

Victorian ideals regarding masculinity and femininity have their roots in early social interactions between men and women, and these ideals, to some extent, are still present today. M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies, in their work *Female of the Species*, attribute the prevalent gender stereotypes to nineteenth-century evolutionists; these conceptions classify men as "dominant, competitive, and aggressive" while women are seen as "submissive, nurturant, and dependent upon . . . males" (159). Elaine Showalter notes that Victorian psychologist Henry Maudsley saw men as having little

"patience" or "sympathy" (*The Female Malady* 123). Women were to be nurturers and preservers of future generations, according to Maudsley contemporary T. S. Clouston, while "Man's chief work . . . was more related to the present" (123).

Men are historically hunters (Martin and Voorhies 160), and while the physical need for hunting was not part of Victorian life, the practice of hunting for sport was an important part of expressing one's masculinity. Often involved in hunting activities was the riding of horses. A fox hunt such as the one Anthony Trollope depicts in *Phineas Finn* was likely a common practice for Victorian men, and the chasing of or hunt for the animals is done on horseback. Victorian stereotypes of man, then, not only involved perceptions of him as aggressive and strong, but also involved that aggression and strength being acted out through activities like hunting and riding. As Elaine Showalter notes, "The love of sport and animals, the ability to withstand pain, . . . and the channeling of sexuality into mighty action" (*Literature of Their Own* 137) are important traits in the heroes of Victorian fiction, as they must have been in the Victorian man.

For such men, another important aspect of life is marriage. Though marriage was of slightly less importance to men than to women, Susan Rubinow Gorsky, author of *Femininity to Feminism*, asserts that this union was one of the ends to which all Victorian men aspired (19). This desire for such a union is reflected in much Victorian literature. As Gorsky argues, "Love and marriage constitute the traditional themes of nineteenth-century literature . . ." (17) and such novels uphold "the glory of marriage" (18). Gorsky expands on the Victorian notion of marriage as it affects each gender; she claims,

Nineteenth-century literature makes it clear; young women marry; young men find suitable jobs that provide position, respectability, identity, and the chance to marry. (21)

Thus, nineteenth-century literature seems to perpetuate its own stereotypes regarding gender and marriage. Successful men and good women are rewarded for their hard work or virtuousness with marriage to a pleasing partner.

What Victorian novels say about their male characters through their treatment of animals is a clue to what type of man this character is. Obviously, male

characters who associate with animals through hunting and riding fall into the stereotype established by nineteenth-century psychologists. Male characters who differ from the Victorian standard for manhood often have relationships with animals that require love and nurturing, traditionally "feminine" qualities. Whether the novelist grants such a character the ultimate reward of a pleasing marital partner reveals whether or not that novelist supports such a stereotype.

In short, the way Victorian male characters are shown to treat animals reveals something about the nature of the men themselves, and goes further to tell us something about their creators, the writers who use their skill to reinforce or to change Victorian ideas about what a man should be. Writers like Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens, and Thomas Hardy present the reader with male characters who fit the prototype of Victorian man, all the way down to their relationships with animals.

In turn, Hardy and other writers, women like Anne Brontë, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and George Eliot, challenge the idea of man prevalent in their time by creating male characters who, through their treatment of

animals, prove to be a little more than the typical Victorian man.

Chapter One

Masculine Ideals in the Works of

Victorian Male Novelists

In developing characters of their own gender, Victorian male writers often turn to the gender stereotypes existing in the society in which they lived. Anthony Trollope's men in *Phineas Finn*, for example, seem to have been taken right out of the world of Victorian England. The important aspects of these men's lives are their careers, their pursuits of beautiful women, and their pastimes of hunting and riding. Dickens and Hardy create similar characters who enjoy such pursuits also; however, these two writers vary from Trollope in that they introduce two other types of men. Both Dickens and Hardy create characters whose masculinity borders on animal nature; both also originate a character whose sensitivity and understanding of animals sets him apart from more traditional men who relate to animals chiefly through hunting and riding.

In *Phineas Finn* (1869), Anthony Trollope uses animals as a vehicle through which to reinforce society's ideas of what a man should be. The title character in his novel, Phineas himself, is seen as a better man because he is a skilled hunter and rider of horses. Early in his career, one of the ways in which Phineas proves himself to the men of Parliament is through his hunting skills. On his first visit to Loughlinter, Phineas engages himself in a morning of "grouse-shooting" with the other men (Trollope 169). Before the hunt even starts, a competition is waged between him and Mr. Bonteen. The one who shoots the most grouse is obviously the better man. Phineas wins the challenge, and is shown to be a better man than Bonteen from that point forward. Bonteen only succeeds at the end of the novel, when Phineas, of his own will, resigns his position. Trollope reinforces one of the traditional ideas of man when he shows that the acceptable relationship between man and bird is that of the hunter/hunted. Success in hunting earns admiration for men; as the narrator points out later in the novel, "To finish well is everything in hunting" (255). Though the idea is not blatantly stated within the novel, Phineas obviously grows a little in the

minds of the other hunters when he shows himself to be the best at grouse hunting.

Phineas is later seen to be a true man when he successfully rides Chiltern's most challenging horse, Bonebreaker. When the foxhunt is over, Phineas is praised for his skill in riding. In fact, despite his pain from the fall, Chiltern makes a point to praise Phineas for such skill, saying, "And, by George, Phineas, you rode Bonebreaker so well, that you shall have him as often as you'll come down. I don't know how it is, but you Irish fellows always ride" (257). Chiltern celebrates Phineas's success, and sees Phineas as a better man because of that success. A man should show skill in controlling the horse he rides; that is the sort of relationship a man should have with a horse.

Lord Chiltern is the character in *Phineas Finn* who is most associated with animals. When he is introduced into the novel, Chiltern himself seems to be something of animal; he is described as having "something approaching to ferocity" in his appearance (77). The term "ferocity" suggests a quality one would normally find in an animal, a "wildness" not necessarily human. From the first

description of him, then, Chiltern seems to be a man who is close to animals.

The means through which Chiltern and Phineas's friendship is advanced is a hunting trip. Chiltern invites Phineas to the Willingford Bull to participate in a fox hunt. Upon inviting Phineas, Chiltern says that he "prefer[s] to have something to do on horseback" (205). Whereas Phineas is skilled at riding but sees it as an infrequent pastime, Chiltern is only happy when he is riding. Indeed, Chiltern is a skilled rider who provides Phineas with the best advice for successful riding. Chiltern understands how the horses like to be treated, perhaps because he is so like an animal himself. About the first horse Phineas rides, Chiltern cautions, "She is heavy in hand if you are heavy at her, but leave her mouth alone and she'll go like flowing water" (247). When Phineas is about to ride Bonebreaker, Chiltern tells him, "Just let him have his own way at everything" (252). Chiltern understands horses better than he does people. He has a ruined relationship with his father and needs advice from his rival to win Violet Effingham. As critic Shirley Robin Letwin argues, Chiltern is not the "romantic ideal" for Violet:

. . . while he pined, he hunted; in between hunts he proposed marriage to Violet, with a highly unpoetic bluntness, and each time that she refused him, he swore it was the last and then tried again.(145)

Hunting even takes precedence over his romantic pursuits, at which he is terribly unskilled. Trollope uses Chiltern's preoccupation with hunting to illustrate Chiltern's manliness that borders on animal-ness time and again.

One indication of Chiltern's extreme masculinity is his obsessive desire to conquer wild horses, horses that do not wish to be ridden. When he overcomes what would seem, by virtue of its name, the most challenging horse, he finds another to ride. Chiltern's ride with this horse, that is only referred to as "the brute" (Trollope 256), is a struggle from the first. Chiltern fights the horse, but is finally unsuccessful. When the horse and Chiltern go down and are injured, the horse has to be shot. In this action, and in a comment made to Phineas, Chiltern reveals his true attitude toward animals; he tells Phineas the name of the first horse Phineas will ride and says, ". . . if she don't carry you, you may

shoot her" (247). Chiltern's attitude is the common attitude of Victorian men concerning animals; that is, animals are good for two things: transportation or killing.

Through the characters of Phineas and Lord Chiltern in *Phineas Finn*, Trollope reinforces the Victorian idea of manhood. A true man can hunt well and ride well; otherwise, he does not associate with animals. By the end of the novel, these men have attained the Victorian dream; each man has an income and each has a wife. Since Trollope gives the two men successful endings, he must uphold their notions concerning animals and their treatment of animals throughout the novel.

In *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), Charles Dickens presents a male character who is even more extreme in his similarity to an animal. When we first meet Hugh of the Maypole, he is described as

Loosely attired, in the coarsest and roughest garb, with scraps of straw and hay--his usual bed--clinging here and there, and mingling with his uncombed locks(Dickens 89)

To the reader, this description of Hugh conjures up the image of a horse or a cow that has just gotten up from

its bed in a stable. At this point, John Willet even admits Hugh's animalistic nature, saying, "He's more at ease among horses than men. I look upon him as an animal himself" (89). Later, Willet expresses his doubt that Hugh even has a soul--something that animals, not humans, lack (99).

In fact, Hugh often refers to himself as a sort of animal, once calling himself a "steed" (218); another time he says he is fiercer than a "wild lion" (308). The narrator describes Hugh's bed at the Maypole as a "lair" (259), and Dennis the hangman associates Hugh with a "thorough-bred bulldog" (339). Throughout the novel, Dickens reaffirms Hugh's likeness to an animal with such images.

Hugh's closeness to animals begins at a very young age. We discover from a conversation between Hugh and Mr. Chester that Hugh was left with only a dog after his mother was hanged. About the dog, Hugh says that at his mother's hanging, the dog ". . . was the only living thing except [himself] that howled that day" (183). Hugh witnesses the unfeeling nature of humankind when none of the crowd at his mother's hanging feels as much pity as his dog does. From that point on, Hugh appears to

associate with animals more than with humans. He spends much of his childhood "mind[ing] cows, and frighten[ing] birds away" (90) to earn money. Perhaps because of this fact, Hugh has a gift with animals. As John Willet tells Mr. Chester, ". . . for horses, dogs, and the like of that; there an't a better man in England than is that Maypole Hugh yonder" (221). In fact, Hugh's job at the Maypole is to tend to the horses that belong to the guests. In almost every aspect of his life, Hugh is associated with animals.

As Hugh's character is drawn out more and more, his brutish behavior becomes more obvious. The first sense we get that Hugh not only looks like an animal, but also acts like one is when he accosts Dolly outside of the Warren. He grabs her and refuses to let her go until he is at risk of being discovered. All of her pleas are lost on his inhuman ears. His savage nature is most clear when he tells her, " I'd sooner kill a man than a dog any day. I've never been sorry for a man's death in all my life, and I have for a dog's" (162). This assertion is proven later in the novel, when Hugh instigates many of the life-threatening actions taken by the mob. He physically attacks individuals who oppose

him and he plans the fires at Newgate and the other prisons and at the Warren. During these mob actions, Hugh loses all rationality and becomes the animal with which he is so often associated. As critic Myron Magnet asserts,

The extreme violence Hugh displays in the riots is the violence definitive of his character, there revealed in full magnitude, when his "ferocious nature" really is "roused." (74)

Dickens, then, uses animals and animalistic descriptions to provide the reader with an idea of Hugh's true nature.

By referring to him in brutish terms, and establishing his closeness with beasts, Dickens prepares us for Hugh's savage actions. Hugh is the extreme man; not only is he skilled at dealing with animals, but he also seems part animal himself. Dickens does not endorse the figure of Hugh as the ideal man; Hugh must pay for his beast-like actions with death. He does not earn the happy Victorian ending; he cannot marry Dolly or any woman. Even as his death approaches, Hugh is still more animal than human. In the prison, Hugh tells Dennis that "To eat, and drink, and go to sleep" (Dickens 571) is all he needs to be happy. Once these basic animals needs are

fulfilled, he desires nothing more. Because Hugh is not really human, he lacks more sophisticated wants.

The only other character Dickens strongly pairs with animals is Barnaby Rudge himself. Since he is the titular hero of the novel, one can assume that Barnaby's associations with animals are not meant to cast him in a negative light.

The man that Dickens creates in Barnaby is a man unlike any other in the novel; perhaps he is unlike any other man in Victorian fiction. Animals are instantly drawn to Barnaby; their instincts say that he can be trusted, and Barnaby returns their trust with kindness. When Barnaby is given a few coins by Mr. Chester, he immediately decides to share his money with his raven, a dog, a goat, some cats, and Hugh (86). Barnaby feels a connection with those animals and that animal-like man that urges him to share anything he has with them.

Later, when Barnaby and his mother move from Chigwell, he finds new animal companions at their cottage in the country. Neighboring dogs are instantly attracted to Barnaby and follow him on his daily wanderings. In fact, when Barnaby and his mother are forced to leave the cottage, Barnaby feels "full of grief at the prospect of

parting with his friends the dogs . . ." (355), and one dog tries to follow the Rudges as they leave their country home. Barnaby feels true regret for having to chase the dog away.

Even Hugh's dog has a special relationship with Barnaby; when Hugh and Barnaby reunite during the riots, one of the first things Hugh tells Barnaby is that he is sure his dog will recognize Barnaby. Hugh's dog, like the other animals, sees a kindness in Barnaby that draws it to him. Barnaby's connection with animals does not stem from his own animal ways, as Hugh's does; rather, Barnaby is that rare man who poses no threat to animals. He does not wish to hunt them, ride them, or use them for his own entertainment; he merely wishes to befriend them. Dickens shows this trait to be a positive aspect of Barnaby's nature.

Of course, the most interesting connection Barnaby has with an animal is his relationship with Grip, the raven. Grip is Barnaby's constant companion, and Barnaby even refers to him as his "brother" (436). Truly, the link between Grip and Barnaby suggests a kinship. In a conversation with his mother, Barnaby uses the phrase "Grip and I thought" (137); in doing so, he indicates a

wisdom in the raven, and he hints that he and Grip are unified. Magnet points out that

. . . it is hard to differentiate between these two. Each of them is capable of a caricature of rational discourse; each inhabits an ambiguous realm between the animal and the human. (79)

Grip, at least, often seems to be more than a mere animal.

Almost from the beginning, Grip seems to know things of which Barnaby is unaware. When Barnaby returns home while his father is there hiding, he never realizes someone else is there. Grip, on the other hand, knows of the man's presence. Describing this scene, the narrator says that the raven was "alive to everything his master was unconscious of . . . " (Dickens 134). Grip can see what the mentally impaired Barnaby cannot; in fact, Grip could be the representation of the intellect that Barnaby lacks. As critic Juliet McMaster asserts, Grip may well be "the canny extension of Barnaby's simple mind" (2). A similar scene occurs after Barnaby joins Gordon's army. When the soldiers come to the hideout where Barnaby stands guard, Grip uncovers what Barnaby cannot see--the

pillage and plunder that the men have taken during what he supposes to be valiant acts:

Grip, after working in secret all the afternoon, and with redoubled vigour while everybody's attention was distracted, had plucked away the straw from Hugh's bed, and turned up the loose ground with his iron bill. The hole had been recklessly filled to the brim, and was merely sprinkled with earth. Golden cups, spoons, candlesticks, coined guineas—all the riches were revealed. (Dickens 440-41)

Grip, the wit, uncovers the truth; Hugh and the rest of Gordon's army are not valiant but corrupt. Barnaby is not cognizant of this fact. Gabriel Varden sees this capability in Grip from the first; in an early scene at Chigwell, Varden refers to Grip as a "knowing imp" and declares that he "more than half believe[s] [Grip] speaks the truth" (53). Varden's speech foreshadows Grip's uncovering of truths.

Further proof that a special connection between Barnaby and Grip exists can be found when Barnaby talks to his mother about his impending death. He asks her

about Grip: "Will they take *his* life as well as mine?" (560). Then, he expresses a hope that they will die at the same time. Barnaby does not see how Grip and he can exist separately from each other; they are like two parts of a whole.

Another interesting aspect of Barnaby's and Grip's connection is revealed in the times that Grip is silent. Grip has much to say throughout the beginning of the novel. Whenever Grip is present, his voice is heard, chirping "I'm a devil" or "Polly, put the ket-tle on" (138). The raven is noticeably silent, however, when Barnaby is involved in the Protestant riots. Grip is present, but so far in the background that he cannot be heard. Interestingly enough, Barnaby's sense has also left him; he is totally blind to the evil of which he is a part. Barnaby, in some ways, becomes wiser because of his participation in these riots. Grip is noticeably silent for a good while after the riots, and Barnaby has new wisdom of his own. He no longer needs Grip to be what McMaster terms an "extension of his mind" (2). When Grip resumes his speech, he is in the presence of horses, that, like the old Barnaby, lack intellects of their own.

In the character of Barnaby, Dickens proposes a new type of man. At the end of *Barnaby Rudge*, the title character finds himself surrounded by animals--"known to every bird and beast about the place" (Dickens 634), caring for Hugh's dog, and still friends with Grip. While the other young men in the novel have married, Barnaby is still alone. Barnaby is good and loving; this fact is obvious in his relations with humans, and most especially in his relations with animals. Dickens uses these animals as vehicles through which to introduce a new kind of man, a man unlike Hugh or even Joe Willet. Dickens seems unprepared, however, to provide a solid place for such a man in Victorian society. Barnaby is alive and happy, but he is unable to attain the nineteenth century dream of marriage, and he is labeled as mentally deficient. Dickens is unwilling to give a man such as Barnaby equal standing in his world even though his name provides the title of the novel.

In *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), Thomas Hardy presents the typical Victorian man in the character of Francis Troy. Troy is much like the character of Phineas Finn or Lord Chiltern in his fondness for women and his overwhelming pride. Throughout the novel, Troy is shown

to have traditional associations with animals; he is both a rider of horses and a man who tries to profit from betting on horse races. After his marriage to Bathsheba, Troy has several arguments with his wife over the loss of her money at horse races. In fact, Troy uses this betting as an excuse in order to obtain money from Bathsheba to help his other love, Fanny (280).

Troy's own animal nature is even more noticeable than these normal masculine associations with animals. Several times, the narrator refers to Troy's "animal spirit" (328) and to the "animal form of refinement in his nature" (351). Almost from the beginning, the reader is told about Troy's lust for beautiful women and of his utter disregard for their feelings. He is a seducer who will say anything to gain the woman he desires. Critic Susan Beegal reveals the truth about Troy's character when she states: "Troy is a false front of words and red uniform, a cardboard cutout of a Byronic hero . . ." (111).

This ability to present himself falsely allows Troy to win the hearts of two women; however, he is ruled by his own desires and his wish for the love, and the money of Bathsheba rules over his own love of Fanny. This fact

reveals his greater devotion to the baser needs. Actually, Troy even equates himself with an animal in his first meeting with Bathsheba, noting that he was " . . . thankful for beauty even when 'tis thrown to [him] like a bone to a dog" (Hardy 172). In a second meeting with the novel's heroine, Troy excuses his extreme behavior toward her, saying that he "may as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb" (183). He thus dismisses his behavior with this phrase and the added note that he is merely a "rough" soldier (183). Later in the same meeting, he chastises Bathsheba for taking away his "one little ewe-lamb of pleasure" (185), that is, herself. Troy, then, equates himself with both a dog and a sheep early in his relationship with Bathsheba; in doing so, he pulls her in as an animal. She is the "ewe-lamb" from which he obtains pleasure; as a dog, he might obtain pleasure from leading her around (as shepherd's dogs do) or by devouring her (as a wild dog might). As a sheep, his obvious pleasure would lie in mating with her. Either way, Francis Troy establishes himself as a man with animalistic tendencies.

This animalistic nature is further emphasized later in the novel, after Troy leaves Bathsheba. In his time

away from Weatherbury, Troy becomes a member of a circus troupe. Indeed, the narrator tells us that Troy won this position through his skill with horses; he "tamed a restive horse" and could hit targets while firing a pistol "from the animal's back when in full gallop" (352). He earns the role of Turpin in a play and is introduced as "Mr. Francis, the Great Cosmopolitan Equestrian and Roughrider" (353). As a member of this circus troupe, Troy is important only because of his adeptness at handling animals; like Chiltern of *Phineas Finn* and Hugh of *Barnaby Rudge*, this adeptness is a result of Troy's understanding of and kinship to the animals themselves.

In his return to Weatherbury, Troy again shows himself to be more animal than human. Once again, he pushes aside his love for the deceased Fanny for his lust for Bathsheba and his desire for monetary support. As one of Farmer Boldwood's men notes, Troy will ". . . drag [Bathsheba] to the dogs" (381) if he reunites with her. Again, Troy's animalistic nature will bring Bathsheba among the animals, just as it did when the two met. He indeed seems to reduce her to an animal at the moment of their meeting, when all she can do is shrink from him and

utter a scream. Likewise, at the moment of his death, Troy himself is reduced finally to an animal; he " . . . utter[s] a long guttural sigh--there was a contraction--an extension--then his muscles relaxed and he lay still" (391). At this final moment, Troy has no profound last words, no apologies for the hurt he has caused; like a slain animal, he dies with a meaningless sound and some slight movement.

Despite Troy's ultimate fate, Hardy upholds this traditionally masculine character as an appropriate one for Victorian society. Troy, as a soldier and equestrian, is given the traditional Victorian rewards that a real man earns. He wins the love and devotion of two beautiful women, one of whom bears his child. The other, Bathsheba, remains loyal to him despite the pain he causes her. Troy's animalism is acceptable; a lust for women and a desire for money would have been expected and possibly even celebrated by the masculine portion of Victorian society. In the same vein, Troy's skill with horses would have been a cause for admiration, as it was with all of the spectators at the fair. Hardy, then, upholds the traditional notion of masculinity through his portrayal of Francis Troy.

Farmer Boldwood is another character who has a close, traditional association with animals. Boldwood's arrival in the novel is announced by the sound of horses' hooves. In fact, during his entire first scene, Boldwood is never seen; Bathsheba only hears his voice and the sound of the horses approaching and then retreating. At his entrance, Bathsheba's attendant, Liddy, is rather amazed at Boldwood's impertinence at bringing his horses to the house, saying, "To ride up the footpath like that. Why didn't he stop at the gate. Lord! 'Tis a gentleman! I see the top of his hat" (77). Indeed, this statement hints at the reality of Boldwood; by outward appearances, he is a gentleman, but inside he is more of an animal.

Throughout the novel, Boldwood is referred to as the highest form of a gentleman. When Bathsheba questions Liddy about who Boldwood is, Liddy refers to him as a "gentleman-farmer" (78). Upon Bathsheba's first sight of Boldwood, he is described in the following manner:

He was a gentlemanly man, with full and distinctly outlined Roman features, the prominences of which glowed in the sun with a

bronze-like richness of tone. He was erect in attitude and quiet in demeanour. One characteristic pre-eminently marked him: dignity.

(95)

Like most Victorian gentlemen, Boldwood wishes to make a proper wife of Bathsheba. As Beegal notes, "[Boldwood] is an old and old-fashioned landowner who seeks to turn a modern business woman back into a household goddess" (111). For all of Boldwood's gentlemanly appearances and aspirations, though, he still displays his true animalistic tendencies.

Like Troy, Boldwood is compared to animals. When he first ignores Bathsheba in church, Boldwood is called "a black sheep among the flock" (Hardy 95) because he is the only man there who does not take notice of the beautiful woman. Much later in the novel, Boldwood equates himself with a dog. In a conversation with Bathsheba, he recalls rescuing her when she fainted, saying, "Every dog has his day; that was mine" (364). At a still later point, as Boldwood pleads for Bathsheba's promise of marriage, he notes that she treats him worse than she would a dog, stating, "You wouldn't let a dog suffer what I have

suffered . . ." (387). Boldwood is thus equated with both a dog and a sheep in the novel.

Farmer Boldwood's associations with animals are also interesting. In public, he attempts to distance himself from animals by riding a carriage rather than sitting directly on the horse. In private, however, Boldwood finds comfort in being among the horses. When he is troubled by Bathsheba's valentine, he goes to the stables to think; as the narrator notes,

This place was his almonry and cloister in one: here after looking to the feeding of his four-footed dependents, the celibate would walk and meditate of an evening till the moon's rays streamed in through the cobwebbed windows or total darkness enveloped the scene. (125)

Boldwood feels most at ease in the presence of animals; he can be himself and think freely around them. This scene makes the first assertion that Boldwood is not as rational as most men, noting his extreme emotions and asserting "If any emotion possessed him at all, it ruled him: a feeling not mastering him was entirely latent" (126). From this point on, Boldwood's gentlemanly façade

begins to crack and his true animal nature is revealed in the conclusion of the novel.

Boldwood resumes his dogged pursuit of Bathsheba when Troy disappears. His final efforts at winning Bathsheba as his wife are tragic. Just as Boldwood seems to have finally won, Troy reenters the picture. This fact is too much for Boldwood to bear; his last semblance of poise is destroyed and he acts on instinct. The murder of Francis Troy reveals Boldwood to be a true animal. When the suitor is faced with the second loss of his love, he is "transformed" (390). Upon Troy's assault of Bathsheba, Boldwood reacts as animal would; he kills the enemy to save her. In this moment, the farmer is described thus: " . . . Boldwood's face of gnashing despair had changed. The veins had swollen and a frenzied look had gleamed in his eye" (390-91). Here, Boldwood loses his façade of dignity; he is overtaken by instinct or what Beegal terms "reactionary passion" (111), a desire to protect what he deems as his own. Even his appearance is animalistic. Surprisingly, once this act of protection is completed and his suicide attempt proves unsuccessful, Boldwood resumes his gentlemanly appearance, kisses Bathsheba's hand, puts on

his hat, and walks out of the door to go to the jail. Ironically, the announcement of Boldwood's fate is accompanied by the sound of horses' hooves, as Laban Tall rides to tell Gabriel Oak and several other men that the murderer's life will be spared. Boldwood's story is concluded in the same manner it began, with the sound of horses' hooves.

In Boldwood's character, then, Hardy presents a man whose animalistic tendencies are too extreme. Despite Boldwood's gentlemanly guise, he is a man ruled by emotion rather than reason, more animal than man. He feels most at home with animals, and he turns to bare instinct when threatened. Because of such characteristics, Boldwood is much like Hugh in *Barnaby Rudge*. Like Dickens, Hardy does not support this extreme behavior; Boldwood is not rewarded for his animalistic tendencies as Troy was. At the end of the novel, Boldwood has been cast off once again by the love of his life and he will likely be imprisoned until death. Hardy, like Dickens, endorses the notion that a healthy association with animals is a positive and even necessary feature of the Victorian man, but men who revert to

animalistic tendencies have no place in Victorian society.

In Gabriel Oak, Hardy presents the most interesting and least traditional connection of man and animal. By nature of his job, Oak is a caretaker of animals, a shepherd. As a shepherd, Oak stands apart from the other men of the novel. His role is to lead the sheep, to nurture newborn lambs, and to sustain the sheep so that they may create a profit. Only Gabriel Oak could have filled the role of shepherd in this novel; Farmer Boldwood is too caught up in his own obsession to care for anything other than Bathsheba, and Francis Troy is altogether too selfish to care for anything other than himself. Oak is the only man who can set his own issues aside to care for the flock.

Gabriel Oak's first act in the novel is that of gaining passage for Miss Everdene when the toll collector refused to allow her to pass. From that initial act, then, the reader sees Oak's kindness and compassion toward others. This kindness and compassion is magnified in our next encounter with him, as he cares for a newborn lamb. In Chapter Two, Oak brings this lamb in from the cold, placing the "little speck of life" (16) by the

stove. When the baby lamb revives, Oak "... [takes] the lamb in his arms, and carrie[s] it into the darkness . . ., placing the little creature with its mother . . ."

(17). Oak insures the safety of the lamb and then returns it to its natural place, beside its mother; in doing so, he reveals himself to be a unique individual. In a similar scene later in the novel, while Oak cares for Bathsheba's flock, he teaches newborn lambs to drink milk from the spout of a teapot near a fire that brings the lambs to life:

. . . Oak pulled the milk can from before the fire, and taking a small teapot from the pocket of his smockfrock, filled it with milk, and taught those of the helpless creatures which were not to be restored to their dams how to drink from the spout (114)

Gabriel Oak nurtures these animals in a way that one would normally expect only of a woman. The lives of these baby sheep are dependent upon his actions, and he cares for them more gently than any other man in Weatherbury could. As Beegal claims, "Gabriel is a bringer of life and liveliness . . ." (118), a clear

distinction that Hardy makes between Gabriel Oak and the other men in the novel.

Oak also cares especially for the ewes of the flock. When his own flock of sheep is driven over the edge of the cliff by one of the herding dogs, Gabriel's first thought is of the ewes that suffered; the narrator notes, "His first feeling now was one of pity for the untimely fate of these gentle ewes and their unborn lambs" (Hardy 41). Only later did he think of the financial loss that would have been most important to another man in his situation. In Chapter Twenty-eight, Oak again considers the feelings of a ewe when he presents a ewe whose lamb had died with another lamb; he

. . . engaged in the operation of making a lamb "take," which is performed whenever a ewe has lost her own offspring, one of the twins of another ewe being given her as a substitute.

(128)

Though the novel suggests that this practice was a common one, the reason for such an action seems only to be for the benefit of the ewe. The twin lamb obviously could have fed from its own mother; therefore, the only real advantage of this action was to the ewe. The shepherd

would receive no extrinsic benefits from this selfless act.

Such connections, though powerful, are not the only ones that exist between Oak and the sheep he tends. He performs the other duties of a shepherd, marking the lambs with "B. E.," his mistress's initials (117), and shearing the wool of the sheep in a manner that his mistress terms "'Well done, and done quickly!'" (153). Even in such acts, though, Oak must be nurturing; when he wounds a ewe in the shearing process, he quickly tends to the wound (155).

Oak's most impressive act of love for the sheep he tends, however, is seen when he disregards his anger at Bathsheba for dismissing him and comes to rescue fifty-odd sheep that are no longer in his care. For these sheep, that had eaten clover and would soon die, Oak is a savior; with a "tube" and "lance" termed his "instrument of salvation" (147), he preserves their lives. Oak is the only man who could do so; as Beegal points out, "Not only is Gabriel the only man who can save the sheep, but also the only man who can wield the dangerous trochar without killing the sheep with the instrument itself" (119). Oak's willingness to help, as well as his rare

ability to save, distinguishes him from most Victorian men.

Though Oak is primarily associated with animals through the sheep he tends, he also has a sensitivity to other animals. At the beginning of the novel, Oak is the owner of two dogs that help him to shepherd the flock. One of these dogs, George, is a valued and longtime partner of Oak's. In fact, Oak even feels some kinship with George; in Chapter Four, Oak realizes:

His dog waited for his meals in a way so like
that in which Oak waited for [Bathsheba's]
presence, that the farmer was quite struck
with the resemblance(Hardy 29)

Several paragraphs later, Oak's likeness to George is again suggested when Oak informs Bathsheba that George has "a temper as mild as milk" (31). Even at this early stage in the novel, the reader can see that Oak has such a mild temper, and thus the similarity between him and George is made obvious. At the hiring fair in Casterbridge, the narrator notes another similarity between Oak and his dog, saying, "Gabriel, like his dog, was too good to be trustworthy . . ." (44). Oak's associations with dogs, then, are just as positive as those with sheep.

Unlike Troy, who is like a dog in the worst way, Oak shares the "good" (44), "mild" (31), and patient--the more human--characteristics that his dog George possesses.

Oak's sensitivity to the feelings of animals is again shown just before the storm that endangers Miss Everdene's wheat ricks. While Troy refuses to accept the fact that a storm is coming and drinks himself into oblivion rather than prepare for such an event, Oak reads the signs that the animals give to indicate that a storm is coming. The presence of the toad in his pathway home and the spiders on his ceiling are significant to Oak because he can glean a greater meaning from their presence; to confirm his notions, he turns to the sheep, who are huddled in fear of the coming thunder. After his observation of the sheep, Oak's keenness in reading these creatures is thus noted:

He knew now that he was right, and that Troy was wrong. Every voice in nature was unanimous in bespeaking change. But two distinct translations attached to these dumb expressions. Apparently, there was to be a thunderstorm, and afterwards a cold, continuous rain. The creeping things seemed to know all about the

later rain, but little of the interpolated
thunderstorm; whilst the sheep knew all about
the thunderstorm and nothing of the later rain.
(254)

The knowledge that Oak gathers from these signs, however,
is not just an indication of his perceptiveness; rather,
his conclusion tells even more about Oak's closeness to
the animal world.

Oak's closeness to this world, though, is unlike the
closeness that Boldwood shares with animals. Boldwood is
close to animals because he himself is primitive and
animalistic while Oak is the best possible human, whose
sensitivity to the animals reveals his own understanding
of and respect for all forms of life. Critic Roy Morell
asserts that Oak

. . . fights [Nature] because he understands
and can sympathetically interpret the doings
not only of his sheep, but also of Nature's
smaller creatures—slug, spiders, and toad . .
. . (126)

This ability to understand such creatures distinguishes
him from the other men in the novel, and it allows him to
save Bathsheba's farm from ruin yet another time.

In Gabriel Oak, then, Hardy introduces the best possible man. Hardy gives this man the name of an angel and follows the name with a personality to match. Oak's kindness and sensitivity regarding animals are merely reflections of the kindness and sensitivity he shows to all living things. Gabriel Oak makes continual sacrifices in order to benefit others; he places his love for Bathsheba aside to be an effective shepherd and bailiff for her and his respect for her prevents him from treating the undeserving Francis Troy with anything but civility. The animalistic Boldwood could do neither of these things, even when his guise of gentility might have required that he should. Troy, himself a "dog," is only able to put aside his own interests after his actions have led to the death of the only woman he truly loved.

Gabriel Oak is unlike any of the male characters created by Trollope in *Phineas Finn* or Dickens in *Barnaby Rudge*. Hardy is far ahead of his male peers with the advocacy of a new kind of man, one much like his female contemporaries envision for the future. While Trollope does not even put forth a character like Oak in *Phineas Finn* and Dickens presents such a character in *Barnaby Rudge* himself but burdens him with a mental deficiency,

Hardy leaps ahead of his time to present this character and reward him for being unlike the typical Victorian man in his reverence for both animals and fellow humans. As critic Maureen E. Mahon states, " . . . Gabriel's patient, intelligent efforts made initially in adversity, are rewarded by success and prosperity" (20). Hardy indeed gives the sensitive and humane Oak the greatest of rewards, the financial stability of two farms and the true and everlasting love and friendship of a woman well ahead of her time, Bathsheba Everdene.

Thus, while Trollope and Dickens adhere to the Victorian concept of man in their novels, Hardy, in a novel written just five years later than *Phineas Finn*, presents a radical character in Gabriel Oak. His character mirrors male figures previously introduced by Victorian female writers like Anne Brontë, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and George Eliot. While Hardy does not actually condemn traditional male characters like his own Francis Troy, he clearly endorses the sensitive Oak as the better man, something that Dickens, some thirty-three years earlier, could not do with his mentally incapacitated Barnaby, who, nevertheless, was a good man.

Chapter Two
The Ideal Man in
Novels by Victorian Women

Even earlier than Hardy introduced Gabriel Oak as a kind of tender hero, Victorian women writers were advocating this type of man in their own novels. While Trollope, Dickens, and even Hardy continued to uphold the traditional notion of masculinity, these women created men who had no need for such pastimes as riding and hunting. Indeed, the heroes of *Agnes Grey*, *Lady Audley's Secret*, and *Adam Bede* see animals as creatures to care for and befriend. This attitude is echoed in these men's treatment of their fellow human beings. Thomas Hardy's Gabriel Oak, though created twelve years later than the hero of the most recent of these three works by female authors, *Lady Audley's Secret*, serves as a fit introduction to the heroes of these women's novels, as he shows a sensitivity for animals foreign to the other male characters in the aforementioned novels by Victorian men.

In *Agnes Grey* (1847), Anne Brontë presents a limited portrayal of a male character who is kind to animals. Mr. Weston, Agnes's saving grace, is a man who has little in

common with the likes of Lord Chiltern or Hugh of the Maypole. The reader never sees or hears of Mr. Weston riding a horse; in fact, he is often walking when Agnes meets with him. As a clergyman, he obviously does not engage in hunting. This lack of traditional male associations with animals, however, is only part of the reason that this character seems to be different from many other male characters.

One of Agnes's first encounters with the man she will come to love is at the house of a sickly neighbor. At this meeting, Weston enters Nancy's home with her missing cat in his arms, announcing, "I've delivered your cat . . . from the hands, or rather the gun, of Mr. Murray's game-keeper" (Brontë 158). Not only does Mr. Weston not participate in the harming of animals, but he also saves them from destruction. Such an act reveals Weston to be a different sort of man from most other men in Victorian fiction, and Agnes takes notice of this fact. As Maria Frawley notes, " . . . it is precisely the fact that Weston is not what he initially seems that makes him attractive to Agnes" (103). In other words, Weston is not the typical man, and because he is not, he

is more intriguing to the novel's heroine, and perhaps to Anne Brontë herself.

This kindness and caring for animals is echoed at the end of the book, when Weston reappears in Agnes's life, bringing her beloved dog Snap with him. Apparently, Weston rescued Snap from the ". . .village rat-catcher, a man notorious for his brutal treatment of his canine slaves" (Brontë 202). Weston informs Agnes that he wishes to keep Snap, as he has become attached to him; Agnes replies, "Oh, I don't want him . . . now that he has a good master, I'm quite satisfied" (245). Agnes realizes that Mr. Weston is unlike the other men in the novel who make it their goal to hunt and torture animals.

Brontë sets forth Weston as a new kind of man. His sensitivity toward animals is a strong indication that he is a better man than most. She upholds this image of him by allowing him to marry the novel's heroine and provide her with the happy life for which she has wished. Anne Brontë, then, uses *Agnes Grey* as a vehicle through which to change Victorian concepts regarding what a man should be. She presents a man who *does not* hunt or ride horses, but who *does* rescue animals from danger, and she makes

him the male hero of her novel. By doing so, she advocates a change in the traditional male to a man more like Mr. Weston.

Like Anne Brontë, Mary Elizabeth Braddon makes the hero of *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) a man who strays from the traditional notion of masculinity. Robert Audley is a character who, from the first, is shown to have a real affinity for animals of all kinds. When Braddon introduces Robert Audley into her novel, she describes him in considerable detail. He is identified as a man "who would not hurt a worm" (Braddon 32). This description is confirmed by the very next statement that tells us:

Indeed, his chambers were converted into a perfect dog-kennel by his habit of bringing home stray and benighted curs, who were attracted by his looks in the street, and followed him with abject fondness. (32-33)

The fact that stray dogs immediately trust Robert Audley indicates a softness of character one would not find in many other men. We soon discover that Robert has not only dogs, but also birds. The first notice we are given of them is when Robert returns home with George Talboys;

he expresses some concern that the birds might "annoy" George(38).

Later in the novel, we are reminded of Audley's connection with animals when he brings two of his stray dogs to Audley Court. He is so attached to these animals that he takes them into his uncle's house. At this time, Alicia Audley points out to Robert that he does not keep these dogs out of pity; rather, he likes having them around. Alicia calls him selfish, saying,

"You take home half-starved dogs because you like half-starved dogs. You stoop down and pat the head of every good-for-nothing cur in the village street, because you like good-for-nothing curs." (115)

Her statement reinforces the idea that Robert Audley is a different kind of man from most Victorian men. A dog that could not be used in hunting would be of little benefit to most men. Such men certainly would not take interest in "half-starved dogs" (115).

Robert Audley's fondness for animals is one aspect of his character that sets him apart from other men. Other aspects of his character add to this distinction. His sensitivity for the feelings of his uncle, his

determination to discover the truth about his friend's disappearance, and the obligation he feels to Clara Talboys, a woman he hardly knows, all show him to be a different sort of man than the typical Victorian one. Audley succeeds in solving the mystery about George Talboys without hurting anyone, and he also manages to win the love of two women, Alicia Audley and Clara Talboys.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon uses Robert's interest in animals as a vehicle to suggest that he is a new type of man; likewise, her depiction of the character of Robert Audley suggests that this type of man might be desirable to Victorian women. Audley finds true happiness in the end; he is married to Clara Talboys, and his family and friends are doing well. The fact that Braddon gives him such an ending suggests that she approves of the way he led his life.

In *Adam Bede* (1859), George Eliot presents a male character who, like Brontë's Mr. Weston and Braddon's Robert Audley, is revolutionary in both his personality and his treatment of animals. Unlike Brontë and Braddon, however, Eliot makes this male character the titular hero of the novel, and she also juxtaposes his idealistic

nature with the selfish and destructive nature of a man who becomes his rival. Ironically, this adversary of Adam Bede's is much like the heroes put forth by Trollope in *Phineas Finn*.

This typical Victorian male hero, Arthur Donnithorne, is everything a man of his time should be; he is a soldier, a hunter, an affluent young man who will become a squire when his father passes away. In short, Trollope's Phineas Finn might have envied Mr. Donnithorne for the secure future that had been handed to him. George Eliot, however, makes no hero of Donnithorne; he is not a man to be envied by the end of this novel.

Arthur Donnithorne's connections with animals are the most traditional ones. In one of his first scenes, the young captain is shown riding his "bay mare" (70) to Hall Farm so that he may inspect the condition of the farm and speak to his tenant, Martin Poyser. The narrator later reveals that such associations with horses make Arthur feel "heroic" (124); he enjoys having stables and feels important when he is able to give orders about the care of his horses. The ownership of such horses, indeed, represents success to Donnithorne; as Eliot notes,

. . . all [Arthur's] pictures of the future, when he should come into the estate, were made up of a prosperous, contented tenantry, adoring their landlord, who would be the model of an English gentleman--mansion in first-rate order, all elegance and high taste--jolly housekeeping--finest stud in Loamshire--purse open to all public objects--in short, everything as different as possible from what was now associated with the name of Donnithorne. (125)

Indeed, in Donnithorne's mind, as in the minds of members of Victorian society, owning a fine horse is one of the main components of being "the model of an English gentleman" (125).

Donnithorne gains other benefits from his associations with horses, as well. In Chapter 12, Arthur finds relief from his distress over his feelings for Hetty; the narrator reflects as the young squire travels to visit Gawaine that there is "Nothing like 'taking' a few bushes and ditches for exorcising a demon" (128). Later in the novel, Arthur again turns to riding as a source of relief from his troubles; when Adam forces Arthur to admit his wrongs to Hetty, Arthur takes a

morning ride to clear his thoughts. On this morning, Donnithorne thinks: "Once on Meg's back, in the fresh air of that fine morning, he should be more master of the situation" (314). Such traditional associations with animals, then, serve to help a man to clarify an unpleasant situation or to distract him from such a situation. Eliot herself notes that,

. . . if there were such a thing as taking averages of feeling, it would certainly be found that in the hunting and shooting seasons, regret, self-reproach, and mortified pride, weigh lighter on country gentlemen than in late spring and summer. (310)

The typical Victorian man could forget his human problems through relations with animals: through hunting, shooting, or as Arthur does, through riding. Truly, Arthur himself " . . . felt that he should be more of a man on horse-back" (310).

Being a man, handling one's problems, or relieving oneself of them could all be accomplished by turning to animals. Eliot exhibits all of these things as she last depicts Arthur Donnithorne on a horse ride. The young squire saves the day and Hetty's life, when he rides to

the Sheriff with the paper that releases Hetty from the death sentence she has received for causing the death of her own child. In this final depiction, Donnithorne appears to be somewhat of a hero; however, Eliot does not uphold this "country gentleman" as a heroic figure.

While Donnithorne's act of saving Hetty, as well as his prowess as a rider, might show him to be the ideal man, the story left untold by his actions with animals is the one that shows Donnithorne, the traditional Victorian man, to be less than a hero.

This young man falls prey to his baser instincts, encouraging the love of woman he could never marry merely because he finds her beauty irresistible. Arthur Donnithorne's actions lead to this woman's loss of virtue, a loss that she can never recover. Because of her belief in Donnithorne's love, Hetty Sorrel forsakes the man who truly loves her, Adam Bede, and she forsakes her own notions of morality, finally becoming the mother of an illegitimate child, a child who dies because of her neglect.

Eliot clearly places the blame for the downfall of Hetty Sorrel on Arthur Donnithorne. Though Hetty herself is shown to be flawed with vanity and selfishness, Eliot

finds that because of her naiveté, the girl is relatively faultless in her own demise. It is Donnithorne whom Eliot faults, asking that "God preserve you and me from being the beginners of such misery!" (389). And Arthur Donnithorne is indeed the beginner of Hetty's misery; his flirtations with her lead her to imagine that the two of them will have a life together, and because she believes this, she gives up her virtue to him.

Eliot paints Donnithorne, a true man's man, as the villain of this novel. His actions cause pain to Hetty, her family, and Adam Bede. In Donnithorne, Eliot shows us what Brontë and Braddon do not show--how a classic Victorian gentleman, with his traditional notions about animals, women, and success, can be a destructive agent for the rest of society. As critic Neil Roberts points out, Arthur, though "warmhearted," is a " . . . thoughtless young man who means no harm but nevertheless causes it" (75). Arthur's "thoughtless" actions lead to his own demise as well; though he still has the power and wealth of a squire at the end of the novel, he lives alone, without the reward of marriage to a loving wife. Eliot clearly punishes Donnithorne for his treatment of

Hetty Sorrel--actions that would have been acceptable in the eyes of most Victorian men.

Like Brontë and Braddon, Eliot creates a new type of man in *Adam Bede*; however, Eliot goes beyond the efforts of Brontë and Braddon as she makes this man the hero of her novel. While Brontë's Weston and Braddon's Robert Audley play secondary roles to the heroines of each novel, Adam Bede is the central figure in Eliot's work. The fact that Eliot chose to focus her novel on Bede is only one indication that she holds him as a model for the ideal man.

Before Eliot even ventures to describe Adam Bede, she puts forth a short description of his dog, "a rough grey shepherd-dog" (5) named Gyp who glances at a figure who is soon identified as Adam. From the first page of the novel, Adam Bede and his dog Gyp are shown to be a team. Throughout the novel, wherever one finds Adam, one also finds Gyp. Adam's treatment of Gyp, as well as Gyp's response to Adam, is a strong indicator of the carpenter's beneficent personality.

At the end of Bede's workday, Gyp "trot[s] at his master's heels" (12), carrying Bede's lunch basket. Eliot emphasizes Gyp's practice of sticking close to his

master throughout the novel, noting once that the "grey, tailless, shepherd-dog" (163) is usually a signal to members of the community that Adam Bede is approaching. Often, Adam's movements are accompanied by the phrase "with Gyp at his heels" (367). The fact that Gyp feels such devotion to his master says something about the goodness of the dog, but it says more about the goodness of the man. Obviously, Adam Bede is a kind and gentle master who cares for the wellbeing of his pet.

Gyp trusts Adam implicitly. From Adam's signals, Gyp decides whether one is to be trusted or not. When Dinah comes to the aid of Lisbeth Bede, Gyp is unsure of the preacher until he sees Adam's response to the woman:

The kind smile with which Adam uttered the last words was apparently decisive with Gyp of the light in which the stranger was to be regarded, and as she turned round after putting aside her sweeping-brush, he trotted towards her, and put up his muzzle against her hand in a friendly way. (118)

Just as Gyp reacts to Adam's treatment of others, he also reacts to Adam's moods. When Adam becomes angry at his father and argues with his mother, Gyp is said to become

concerned, "watching his master with wrinkled brow and ears erect" (42), and the creature refuses the dinner prepared by Lisbeth lest his acceptance of it might upset his master.

In a similar manner, Gyp remains lovingly by the side of his master when Adam is exhausted and grief-stricken by the death of his father. According to the narrator, "The poor dog was hungry and restless, but would not leave his master . . ." (106). Gyp's devotion is reciprocated by his master. When Adam remains at the dance hosted by the Donnithornes, he tells his mother and Seth, " . . . remember Gyp when you get home" (281). Even with the excitement of the festivities, his newly won job, and the prospect of seeing Hetty, Adam remembers his loving pet at home and asks that the dog be treated well in his absence.

In much the same way as Hardy compares Gabriel Oak to animals to highlight his positive features, Eliot draws parallels between Adam Bede's virtues and those of certain animals. Early in the novel, Adam compares himself to a mule or workhorse whose "neck" is in "the yoke" (49) because he must carry the burden of his

father's flaws. This ability to carry such a burden without yielding to weariness highlights just one of Adam's many positive characteristics: his dedication to his family and to doing what is right. Another of Bede's positive characteristics is his patience. About his patience regarding Hetty's love, Eliot writes that Adam is " . . . waiting for [Hetty's] kind looks as a patient trembling dog waits for his master's eye to be turned upon him" (353). Later in the novel, Bede's love for Dinah is equated with Gyp's feelings for his master when Lisbeth Bede tells her eldest son, "Thee't fonder on [Dinah] nor thee know'st. Thy eyes follow her about welly as Gyp's follow thee" (502). Again, Adam possesses the positive quality of devotion that one often finds in a good and well-loved pet.

What Adam Bede lacks in his associations with animals is a typical need for the creatures as a source of transportation or sport. Unlike Trollope's Chiltern, Hardy's Francis Troy, or Eliot's own Donnithorne, Adam does not ride horses or hunt foxes or birds. Bede is actually much like Brontë's Mr. Weston, who walks everywhere. In fact, Bede only seeks the use of a horse on one occasion; he must borrow "Jonathan Burge's good

nag" (529) in order to search for the missing Hetty. The safety of a loved one is the single motivation that would inspire Bede to ride this horse; only when Hetty's life is thought to be at stake does Bede give in to the conventional practice of using horses as transportation. The character of Adam Bede, therefore, is far from the typical Victorian man. He refrains from nearly all common relationships between man and animal, and the special connection that Bede shares with his dog Gyp is far from a traditional one. Indeed, Gyp's own devotion to his master reveals what Adam's actions throughout the novel show--that the carpenter is a man to be trusted, a man whose love and devotion to his family and friends exceed what one would normally find in the Victorian man.

Bede is no scoundrel; he does not toy with women, use them for his pleasure, or abuse them as his rival Donnithorne does, and as Dickens' Hugh, Hardy's Troy, and even Trollope's Phineas do. All of these men are the opposite of Adam Bede; all of them are also fairly typical emblems of Victorian manhood. Eliot puts forth Bede as a better man who has a larger respect for all fellow creatures than any of these men. And, he is far too busy making an honest living and caring for his loved

ones to waste his time riding horses, placing bets, or hunting for sport. In the end, Eliot rewards what John Goode terms Bede's "moral" love⁽³²⁾ with marriage to Dinah, the "woman-saint" of the novel.

Truly, George Eliot uses this novel and its hero as a vehicle through which to transform Victorian expectations of the ideal man; in Bede, Eliot gives a rounded view of what a man could be and should be. While Braddon and Brontë also introduce this sort of man, Eliot goes beyond the introduction to give a full picture of the Victorian woman's ideal man. Then, in order to highlight Bede's positive features, Eliot creates a foil in Arthur Donnithorne, a man who would have been much admired in Victorian society but who becomes despicable in the course of the novel. Donnithorne's actions lead him to a life of loneliness, a life devoid of the importance and respect for which he had once hoped. Through Donnithorne's ending, Eliot shows that she feels the traditional man is flawed, and, therefore, is undeserving of the happy ending she reserves for Adam Bede.

Victorian women writers, then, use their novels as a means through which to suggest a new type of male to the

world of nineteenth-century England. Brontë, Braddon, and Eliot favor a man who is kind to animals, as well as humans, over a man who fits the more stereotypical role of hunter and rider of animals. The fact that such a man is kind to animals is an indication of a goodness present in him that is lacking in other men. The characters of Mr. Weston, Robert Audley, and Adam Bede are ideal men in the eyes of these women writers; by introducing such men into their novels, Brontë, Braddon, and Eliot attempt to suggest a change in the man of their times.

Conclusion

A New Man for the Future

The gender stereotypes that prevailed in Victorian England had a tremendous impact on the portrayal of men and women in the novels written at that time. In crafting their works, these writers were faced with a choice; they could uphold the gender roles as they existed or they could use their writing as a vehicle through which to change ideas about gender. Largely, male writers, the dominant sex, chose to preserve the gender ideals already present. Female writers, perhaps tired of the quintessential Victorian man, used their novels as a method through which to enact change--to suggest a new type of man to society. In either case, these novelists supported the men of their choice with the greatest Victorian reward, marriage to a woman who is desirable for her goodness, her beauty, her purity, or her strength. Characters who were not favored were subject to lesser fates.

While Trollope refuses to visualize a man other than the one already dominant in society, and Dickens

clearly has reservations about a more sensitive man, female writers like Anne Brontë and Mary Elizabeth Braddon obviously desire a change in the masculine gender. These women use their novels as vehicles through which to instigate such a change while Dickens and Trollope's novels generally serve to preserve the perceptions of masculinity already in place. In comparison, Eliot and Hardy make the greatest cases for the dismissal of deeply rooted and enduring conceptions regarding masculinity. The fact that the works by these two novelists were written at a later date than the works of the other writers of their sex might have some bearing on this fact. The origins for the development of a new man are present in the works of Brontë and Braddon; however, Eliot and Hardy best cultivate the notion of a better man whose actions are reflected in his treatment of animals. They create round, creditable men in Adam Bede and Gabriel Oak. These male characters allow readers to see how such a man can be a benefit to society in a way that a man like Trollope's Phineas Finn can never be.

In the works they compose, writers frequently cater to the expectations of the audience for which they write. The male writers who chose to portray men and women in the gender stereotypes identified by nineteenth-century evolutionists obviously gave the Victorian reader what he or she expected in a male character. While such writers sought to gain their audience's approval through conventional plot and characters, other writers attempted to inspire a change in the ideology of their society. By making distinctions in the male characters they portray, these writers used their art as a means of social commentary. They indicated the flaws in the traditional man while presenting an alternative to such a man.

Literature is often a reflection of the time in which it was written. The Victorian novelists examined here were influenced by the expectations of an audience they must satisfy in order to be successful. At the same time, some of these authors felt compelled to use their literary creations as a means through which to deter their society from errors

in its gender perceptions. The result of their efforts is an interesting variety of male characters who either fit or rebel against the gender stereotypes of masculinity perpetuated by nineteenth-century society.

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