

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Placement and Displacement:

The Fallen Woman in Discourse

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in English at Massey University.

Anna Dacre

1993

Abstract

This thesis is an invitation to reconsider the process of reading and representing the fallen woman. It combines an eclectic theoretical approach, drawing on works by Foucault, Derrida and Kristeva, with the metaphor of colonisation and the palimpsest.

Using this construction, the thesis examines the placement of the fallen woman in discourse. The first section discusses how she falls in discourse, and uses textual and visual examples (predominantly Esther Barton from Gaskell's Mary Barton, Monica Widdowson and Rhoda Nunn from Gissing's The Odd Women). The reading of these figures uncovers three characteristic issues in the fallen woman's representation: her construction as murderer, the 'justice' of her death, and her pornographic interaction with the reader.

This examination of the placement of the fallen woman continues in the second section. Here, the thesis explores how representations of her placement in discourse also suggest a displacement--that is, how her fall *in* discourse is a fall *from* discourse. Reading her site as a palimpsest of colonising representations uncovers the placement and displacement of the fallen woman in discourse.

Acknowledgements

Lotsa warm fuzzies to the staff in the English Department-- especially Dr John Dawick (who started me out on all of this, unbeknown to him), Drs Wawick Slinn and John Needham (who provided the arguments along the way), and Dr Russell Poole (who supervised and guided both me and the thesis).

A special Yo! to my amazonian and amazing mother whose own intrepid adventures gave me the courage to return to uni.

And love and thanks and love to my partner Claire who has been sounding board, co-writer, typist, secretary, editor, proofreader, and the cutest tealady. . .

P.S. Would you like your head back now? ☺

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
List of Figures	v
Introduction: Colonising Her Fall	1
1. Murdering the Other: Esther's Cautionary Tale	8
2. Justice and Justification: Monica's Intentional Fall ...	29
3. In the Eye of the Reader: Rhoda's Unnaming	50
II. Falling from Discourse	68
4. Taking her Literally	69
5. The Semiotic Issue	86
Conclusion: The Order of the Symbolic	94
Works Cited	97

List of Figures

Figure 1: Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present', No. 1	
'Misfortune'	15
Figure 2: Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present', No. 2	
'Prayer'	16
Figure 3: Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present', No. 3	
'Despair'	16
Figure 4: René Magritte, 'Le Viol'	61

Introduction:

Colonising Her Fall

The nineteenth century obsession with public morality and female sexuality expressed itself in an outpouring of literal and visual representations of both the saintly and the sinning woman. Medical, legal and religious discourses first defined different forms of deviancy and then sought to contain, explain and expunge these 'aberrations' of the 'natural' order¹. In this ongoing process of organising sexuality and constituting categories, 'the fallen woman' is an arbitrary and constructed term. The continuing reconstruction of this category signifies a social struggle for possession of the term's meaning and currency. Thus, the fallen woman is the site of a cultural war fought through representation.

These representations work to delineate a shape, and so shape a space in discourse. In an almost cartographical project,

¹These discourses operate as Foucauldian 'apparatuses of sexuality' (Merquior, 123); they work to erect a code, or norm, of sexuality which is "always a construct devised for the benefit of those in power, entailing the creation of 'laws' which both determine what is true and false, good and bad, acceptable and unacceptable, and justify the punishment of those who deviate from or challenge this norm" (Sellers, 5). A fuller discussion of Foucault's related concepts of discourse, sexuality and power is found in Merquior, Sellers and Vicinus.

representations form and reform the image of the fallen woman--producing a densely populated and colonised space. The processes of *inscription*, *description* and *ascription* are colonisations that invade and occupy this space². The fallen woman is invaded by a male seducer who *inscribes* his mark upon her body. Diverse representations take over this body and text, naming and *describing* it fallen. Readings of these representations are seized and promoted by advocates of different causes who *ascribe* them meaning and signification. Through these processes of representation, the body, space and text of the fallen woman are colonised.

These continual reinscriptions function as a palimpsest--a parchment manuscript in which the first writing is erased so that the material may be reused by overlaying further textualisations. Each reinscription (or colonisation) of the fallen woman is then an overlay in this palimpsest, overwriting prior inscriptions. Implicit in this process of overwriting is the principle of value. The act of valuation occurs when one textuality is considered redundant and is superseded by the writing of an overlay. This constitutes censored erasure, but the erasing dynamics are never absolute--traces of another writing remain visible through the overlay. Thus, the

²The use of a spatial model to describe the processes of representing the fallen woman led naturally to the metaphor of colonisation. This image was strengthened by readings of Nancy Hartsock, who refers to the coloniser's process of constructing women as the colonised other. While Hartsock uses this metaphor in a critique of Foucault, she quotes extensively from Albert Memmi's The Colonizer and the Colonized. This text provided a general model of colonisation, which was extrapolated to describe the outpouring of representations that occupy the site of the fallen woman.

colonising overlay is similar to a transparency, which may be read in conjunction with the text that it uncovers and covers up.

Once the site of the fallen woman is recognised as a palimpsest, her representations may be read as traces of successive colonisations. Reading these traces reveals the interaction between the intention of different textual overlays, and the tension that exists between them. Thus, rather than consisting of accumulative additions, the shaping and mapping of the figure of the fallen woman is a cumulative system formed by repeated overwritings of her site.

These overwritings consist of representations of fallen women, *and* critical readings of these representations. Critical readings cover the representation with another colonising representation and, hence, add to the cumulative process of overwriting the site of the fallen woman. However most critics, when reading specific overlays, have not acknowledged this process or their participation in it. George Watt blindly engages in this type of critical colonisation during his discussion of the "great writers of the nineteenth century" (7) who studied the sexual fall. Watt refers to Gaskell, Hardy, Dickens, Eliot, Collins, Gissing and Moore, and discusses their representations of the fallen woman. His reading of their overlays is a hierarchical valuation according to contemporary constructions of women:

[these writers were] able to highlight the intense and complex problems of the Victorian women from all classes, expose the sham respectability which personifies the patriarchy, and give themselves the role of social reformer in the process. (7)

This ranking of representations is the reimposition of a principle of value on the overlay of the palimpsest. In his own overlay, that assigns value to other representations, Watt writes a narrative that "simultaneously presents and represents a world, that is, simultaneously creates or makes up a reality and asserts that it stands independent of that same reality" (Sarup, 142)³.

Watt's, and others', naming of writers as 'social reformers' is a similar imposition of value. Each representation of the fallen woman is already a reforming of her space. Those representations that have been declared social reformations are merely favourably viewed re-formings. In this manner, the fallen woman is possessed, inscribed and shaped to fulfil a contemporary political agenda.

Similarly, recent feminist critics have attempted to uncover, in presentations of the fallen woman, evidence of an aggressively repressive Victorian consciousness--to read her as "the neurosis of a culture" (Auerbach, 31). Françoise Basch sketches a figure of wretchedness and poverty who is exploited and outcast from society. In contrast, the fallen woman has been exalted by some contemporary critics who read her marginal construction as a symbolically central function of Victorian hegemony. Nina Auerbach provides some acknowledgement of this process of claiming and categorising the fallen woman when she speaks of her "not only as she was but as she was created" (51). However,

³ Watt's critical narrative seems similar to the concept Fredric Jameson names 'ideologemes' ("narrative unities of a socially symbolic type" [Jameson, p. 185]). See also Sarup's discussion of Jameson and 'narrative'.

rather than an act of creation, the construction of the fallen woman is a cumulative process of production. Acknowledging these overlays as colonisations returns the study of the product to an exploration of its means of production and its intended function.

The continual manipulation and colonisation of the space of the fallen woman is indication of her arbitrary naming. She is the shifting and cumulative function of literal, visual and symbolic representations. The palimpsest of the fallen woman is a layered, though not ranked, transcript of contradictory and repeating representations. The reading of the palimpsest is a reading of attempted erasure, visible traces, and imposed reinscriptions. It reads the fallen woman as continual process and production, and as a colonised space in language. In naming and shaping the fallen woman, each inscription seeks to colonise in an endless process of reformation and hence reclamation of body, space and text.

* * * *

This thesis does not set out to draw conclusions or put forward startling revelations concerning the nature of the fallen woman or of Victorian society. Neither is it an exhaustive study of representations of the fallen woman. Instead, it uses the metaphor of colonisation and the palimpsest to articulate the forming and reforming of her site. This thesis is then an invitation to reconsider the process of overlaying representations of the fallen woman. While this is itself yet another overlay, yet another occupation and colonisation of the space of the fallen woman, it is at least overt in its reinscription.

Using this construction of the fallen woman, the reinscription reads existing representations to examine the placement of the fallen woman. It uses an eclectic theoretical approach, drawing on works by Foucault, Derrida and Kristeva. The first section of the thesis discusses how the fallen woman falls in discourse, and uses textual and visual examples (predominantly Esther Barton from Gaskell's Mary Barton, Monica Widdowson and Rhoda Nunn from Gissing's The Odd Women). The reading and rereading of these figures uncovers three characteristic issues in her representation: the fallen woman's construction as murderer, the 'justice' of her death, and her pornographic interaction with the reader.

This examination of the placement of the fallen woman continues in the second section. Here, the thesis explores how representations of her placement in discourse also suggest a displacement--that is, how her fall *in* discourse is a fall *from* discourse. Thus, reading her site as a palimpsest of colonising overlays un-covers the placement and displacement of the fallen woman in discourse.

I.

Falling
in
Discourse

1. Murdering the Other: Esther's Cautionary Tale

The nineteenth century sought control over female sexuality by containing it and confining it to the private and sacrosanct enclosure of marriage. The fallen woman implied a transgression of this boundary to an association with the public prostitute. While crucial differences exist between these two figures, the association of the prostitute is integral to the construction of the fallen woman. The lost Aunt Esther in Gaskell's Mary Barton, for example, is identified as a prostitute in the context of her construction as fallen. Esther's tale is a cautionary one, devised to chasten the tempted by displaying the consequences of a moral fall. Her descent to further degradations, and the radiating tragedy of consequences from her fall, are constructed as inevitable. This fall from morality, to an association with the outcast and public prostitute, is the destruction of the saintly ideal of woman. Representations of the fallen woman imply her as murdering this idealised other.

* * * *

Conventionally the fallen woman descends further to the ranks of the prostitute, following her initial fall. Yet, in being named 'fallen', she is both associated with the figure of the prostitute and

differentiated from her. While the prostitute is condemned for her absence of virtue, that is, her repeated and exhibited sexuality, the fallen woman is deemed to have fallen from virtuous origins. Lynda Nead examines the categorising of these 'sexual deviancies' in visual representations. The prostitute, she argues, appears the most complex and contradictory character. Predominantly from the working-class, she was a significant target in the nineteenth century debate on morality. This seems due to the public and continuing nature of her transgressions, and its commercial basis. The prostitute made public and commercial what was regarded as private and sacrosanct, threatening social stability and public morality. Although displaced to the very bottom of the social hierarchy and belonging to the 'residuum', the figure of the prostitute suggested autonomy and financial independence.

While still transgressing gender ideals, the fallen woman remains powerless and dependent on social judgement and compassion. The nominal reference to her fall indicates her respectable origins, and thus her deviancy is construed as a lapse in judgement⁴. Hence, the fallen woman construct relies on a fall from respectability not to the class of the prostitute, but to the immorality suggested by the metaphor of the prostitute.

Gaskell's Esther Barton appears a conventional representation of the decline of the fallen woman to this image. There is a progression from the sexual fall to degradations such as

⁴This is seen in the fall of Maggie Tulliver (in George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss). Maggie does not fall sexually, but her drift down the river in the company of Stephen Guest represents a lapse in judgement. This lapse is written as her social downfall.

alcoholism and prostitution, which inevitably lead to death. Esther is introduced in the text through her absence and the suggestion of her fall:

'Then you've heard nothing of Esther, poor lass?'
asked Wilson.

'No, nor shan't, as I take it. My mind is, she's
gone off with somebody. My wife frets, and thinks she's
drowned herself, but I tell her, folks don't care to put on
their best clothes to drown themselves . . . (42)

Already her fall is associated with a symbolic death. The later identification of Esther as a prostitute is then in the context of constructing and naming her fallen status; it is a consequence of her initial fall. Esther's path is demonstration of the fallen woman's descent from an immoral act to economic ruin and the commercial contamination of the prostitute.

Read as a recognisable re-presentation of the lost and erring woman, Esther's construction and the nature of her destruction have drawn little critical comment. Conforming to the Victorian "ineradicable alignment of sexuality and mortality" (Barreca, 1), this image of the fallen woman appears too acceptable and familiar to provoke study. During the nineteenth century debate on morality and prostitution, William Rathbone Greg found in Esther's representation the familiar and cautionary tale of the fallen woman. He cited her as an illustration of the despairing descent of the fallen woman into prostitution. Esther, he claimed, "though in a work of fiction, is a faithful picture of the feelings of thousands of these poor wretches" (Fryckstedt, 137). Greg's enthusiasm for this representation may be read as indication that it conformed to his own manuscript of the fallen woman. Thus, Esther was colonised

and invested with the truth of realism; she was taken as the generalised space of the fallen woman, dramatising an inevitable path.

Similarly, Esther has been used to illustrate the claims of William Acton, another nineteenth century moralist. Studying prostitution and other 'sexual disorders', Acton attempted to reconcile his belief in female passivity with his desire to hold woman culpable for 'her' deviancies. What he arrived at, as both cause and consequence of a woman's fall and subsequent descent into prostitution, was "vanity, vanity, and then vanity" (Valverde, 175). Through his explanation of the love of finery, Acton was able to realise his concept of woman as both passionless and sinful. In a prophecy of Acton's argument, John Barton accuses Esther of this vice of vanity:

'Not but what beauty is a sad snare. Here was Esther so puffed up, that there was little holding her in. . . . You see Esther spent her money in dress, thinking to set off her pretty face; and got to come home so late at night, that at last I told her my mind: my missus thinks I spoke crossly, but I meant right, for I loved Esther, if it was only for Mary's sake. Says I, "Esther, I see what you'll end at with your artificials, and your fly-away veils, and stopping out when honest women are in their beds; you'll be a street-walker, Esther . . ."' (43)

In her descent to prostitution, Esther fulfils this prophecy: 'Thee'll may be bethink thee o' some words I spoke, which put thee up at th' time; sommut about street-walkers" (169). During this debate by Greg, Acton and others over the causes and

consequences of a woman's downfall, Esther was colonised as the familiar and cautionary figure of the fallen woman.

Although this approach remains unchanged, Esther has received cursory attention in more recent readings of Mary Barton. These readings have rarely included Esther, generally referring to her only in the context of Ruth, Gaskell's more lengthy study of the fallen woman. Thus, Esther's colonization has been as the 'mere' repeated re-presenting of the familiar portrait of the fallen woman. In discussing Mary Barton, critics have focused on Gaskell's "sympathetic and perceptive study of working class life" (Lansbury, 11). "Most critics of Mary Barton begin", Patsy Stoneman notes, "with the *a priori* assumption that it falls into a clear category of fiction, the 'industrial' or 'social problem' novel" (68). In this context, elements such as the love story, the murder plot, or Esther Barton are considered extraneous to the focus of 'class confrontation'. Marxist and feminist readings have given only passing attention to the figure of the lost Aunt Esther, considering her "very much outside the major concerns of the work" (Watt, 20). Esther's function has been seen as a reminder to the reader of "what Mary might have become should the temptation Carson provided held ultimate sway" (Watt, 20).

Yet, despite being perceived as a peripheral character in the text, Esther is integral to the mechanics of the plot and is fundamental to social constructions. Mary, lacking her natural mother, is shadowed on either side by the protective figures of Alice Wilson and Esther Barton whose divergent paths signify virtue or vice. Esther appears as the antitype to Mary, warning the reader

of the dire consequences precipitated by the first step of a moral fall:

It seemed worse than death to reveal her condition to Mary, else she sometimes thought that this course would be the most terrible, the most efficient warning. She must speak; to that she was soul-compelled; but to whom? . . . To whom shall the outcast prostitute tell her tale! Who will give her help in her day of need? (207)

Each appearance of Esther is in the context of an act to save Mary Barton from a similar fate, and to warn the reader of the perils facing Mary and a woman's honour. Esther intercepts John Barton to 'save' Mary from a liaison with Carson (her own fall was initiated by just such a liaison). The obsessive telling of her story to Jem is in the vein of the Ancient Mariner: "The spell of [Mary's] name was as potent as that of the Mariner's glittering eye. 'He listened like a three-year child'" (208). This allusion to the Ancient Mariner is overtly didactic in its explication of the warning function of the fallen woman's representation. Although Jem acts as the wedding guest in this image, the greater audience for Esther's tale is the reader and young women such as Mary Barton.

While Esther's function is didactic and she is woven into the social fabric of the text as outcast, the pureness of her motives also confounds the conventional description of the immoral woman. She returns the valentine, used as gun-wadding, to spare Mary the ignominy of having her name associated with the murder. On each occasion that she attempts to save Mary, although misreading the signs, Esther's motives remain pure. Similarly, when she resorts to prostitution to acquire medicine for her daughter, it is a misdirected action resulting from a pure motive. This indicates her fall is a

lapse in judgement, and hence a fall from respectability. Her further descent into prostitution is a metaphor for this lapse, and constructs the inevitable descent of the fallen woman.

Thus the fallen woman is constructed by her initial act *and* by her descent to an association with the prostitute. The implied inevitability of this descent is characteristic of didactic representations of the fallen woman. Her tale of tragedy is repeated in Augustus Egg's 1858 trilogy 'Past and Present'⁵. The first painting in this series, 'Misfortune', presents the fall of the woman (Figure 1) through the discovery of her adultery. This identifies the cause of the tragedy whose consequences are played out in the accompanying paintings. 'Prayer' depicts the disconsolate daughters grieving some years later, and the third of the paintings, 'Despair', marks the woman's degradation and social expulsion (Figures 2 and 3).

The prostrate figure of the wife dominates the foreground of 'Misfortune', giving her discovered fall a visual form. The setting for this fall adds social context to the private tragedy as the parlour, a sacred female and family space, is profaned. The ramifications of this act are symbolically enacted as the stability of the family crumbles and falls.

⁵Anne J. d'Harnoncourt suggests that the title 'Past and Present' may be an error arising from a misreading of Ruskin's academy notes for 1858 (Nochlin, 243). This is, nevertheless, the title by which the work is commonly known and identified; readings have been framed (in both criminal and pictorial senses) and contextualised by this title, regardless of Egg's intentions. Of greater significance is perhaps the social acceptance of this title--it has been considered relevant and applicable.



Figure 1: Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present', No. 1 'Misfortune', 1858 (Source: Piper, 273).

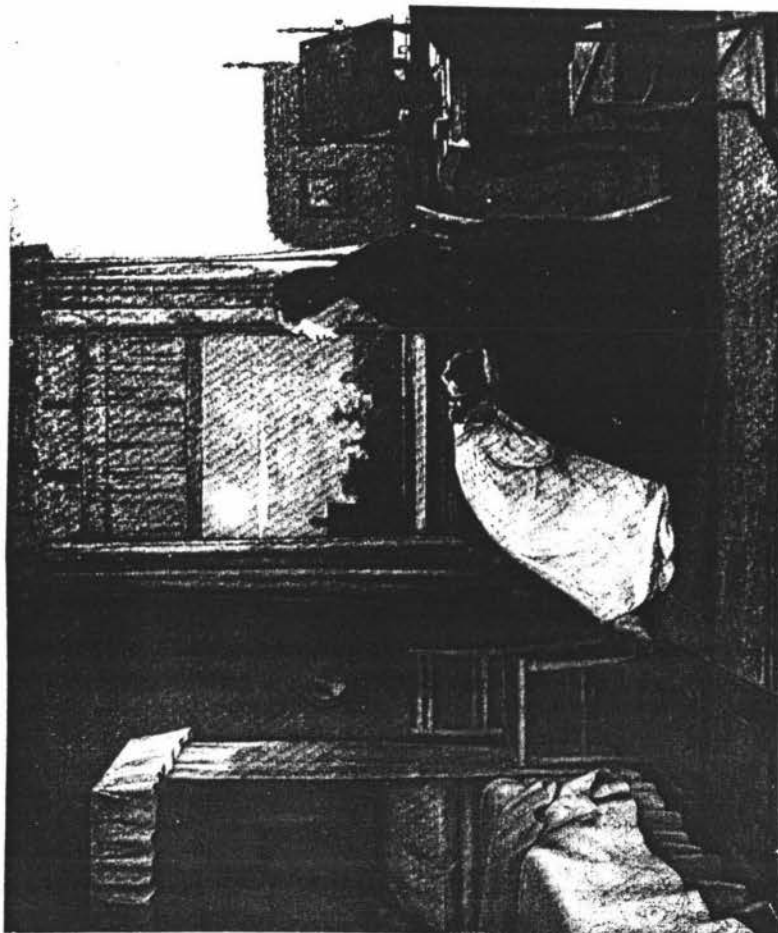


Figure 2: Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present',
No. 2 'Prayer'.

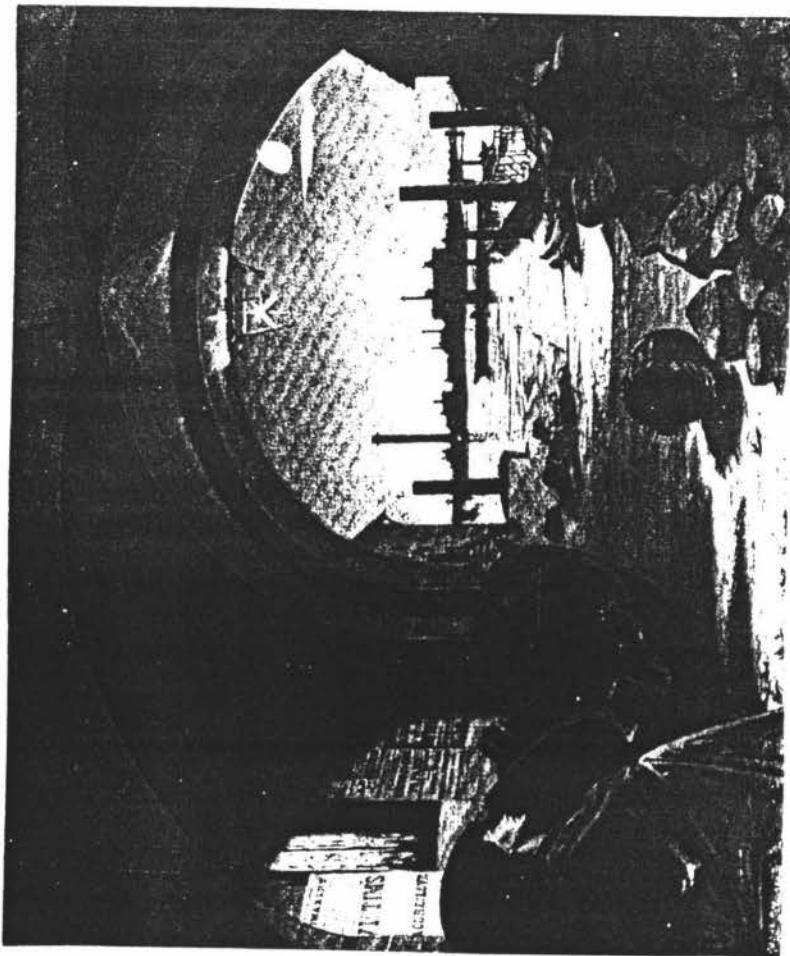


Figure 3: Augustus Leopold Egg, 'Past and Present',
No. 3 'Despair'.

Thus, the canvas is a collage of motifs rendering symbolic comment on the woman's fallen morality: the half-eaten apple on the table (stabbed by a knife) while the other half lies rotting on the floor, the reflected open door suggesting her public sexuality, the umbrella and portmanteau in the foreground indicating the forthcoming expulsion (reiterated in the print hanging above the woman's portrait of the expulsion from Eden⁶). All evoke the horror of her fall.

While the wife's immorality is given as cause for the breakdown of the family, a primary symbol in this didactic representation is the French novel on the chair. In response to this foreign invasion of immorality, the English patriarch slumps in his seat while the neglected children use the novel as base on which to construct a house of cards. The French novel has usurped the place of the family bible as central text:

it indicates the source of the woman's deviancy and the cause of her fall from virtue. . . . By contaminating woman's moral values and feminine purity, the entire social structure collapses. (73)

In this cautionary representation, the wife's infidelity has a dual cause: woman's immorality, which is associated with weakness and the Biblical fall, and woman's corruption through contact with these immoral forms of fiction. These descriptions of female virtue appear contradictory: one suggests that she is impure and

⁶Nead refers to this print as 'The Fall'. However, unlike the print above the husband's portrait, which is a copy of Stanfield's image of a shipwreck (Edelstein, 205), this print is not a copy of any known original. Nead's titling of it as 'The Fall' is her own reading, and places the moment of discovery of a fall and the moment of expulsion as simultaneous.

corrupting, while the other proposes a purity from which she deviates and is corrupted. Yet whether this popular fiction is the symbol of her corruption or the corrupting force in a causal chain, the novel functions as signifier for the fallen woman, supplementing the construction of her fall.

In this representation, the presence of the novel prescribes and describes the fall of the woman, cautioning other women against the reading of fiction and the temptation of falling. This cautionary tale is further developed through the lengthy sub-title which is the narrative explicator of the trilogy. Speaking from the perspective of the present, the accompanying narration places each painting in a radiating spiral of cause and consequences:

August the 4th. Have just heard that B-- has been dead more than a fortnight, so his poor children have now lost both parents. I hear she was seen on Friday last near the Strand, evidently without a place to lay her head. What a fall hers has been!

The condescending tone betrays the warning function of this text. It also reveals the social attitude towards the fallen woman. In the designation of the woman as 'fallen', she forfeits her right to parenthood; the subtitle suggests that the wife, while outliving the husband, is already lost to the children and hence they are identified as his poor children. Further, the fallen woman is named only as 'she', diminishing her person and denying her identity. In contrast, the husband's identity is protected through a deliberate concealment, rather than denial, of his name.

The placement of the fallen woman face down, and so faceless to the onlooker, is indication of her relationship to society.

The bourgeois domestic interior of this centre painting, characterised by horizontals and verticals, is violently slashed apart by the diagonal figure of the fallen woman. This implies her desecration and destruction of family values, and also aligns her with the floor--a visual expanse that dominates and spreads to the edges of the canvas. While this may be read as metaphorical confirmation of the fallen woman's debasement, and the spreading of misfortune, it also aligns her with the floor as the painting's central and most solid mass. The ritualised representation of the prone fallen woman indicates "her power as well as her humiliation" (Auerbach, 35). Functioning as visual metaphors, the placement of the woman and the icons in the room suggest this woman's morality is fundamental to society. Visually dominating the centrepiece, it is her example that determines the fate of the family.

This fate, suggested by 'Misfortune', is painstakingly detailed in 'Prayer'. The children, now grown, bear the stigma of their mother's impropriety in their reduction of circumstances and their grief for the dead father. Thus, suffering and misfortune infects all those touched by 'her' misconduct. If the moral purity of women is in peril, then so too is the social stability of the family and the Empire; her morality is "the source and index of public morality" (Nead, 92).

The fall of the woman thus warns society of its own future. The third of the images, 'Despair', paints a gloomy final picture. The fallen woman clutches a dead child, "the fruit of her sin in her arms" (Nochlin, 227), and looks longingly across the river from the desolation of the city limits. The sanctity and comfort of home is contrasted with the expulsion to the city of outside. The woman

has fallen from the idealised space of the private family parlour to a public exposition of her sin. Posters, pasted on the arches under which she shelters, advertise temptation to others (Piper, 270), and imply her inevitable decline to commercialism. Like Esther, this woman has fallen from her respectable origin to an association with the public prostitute. The triptych is intended to function as a menacing deterrent, maintaining that the sequence from 'Misfortune' to 'Prayer' and 'Despair' is the inevitable fate of the fallen woman.

This sequence of radiating effects is also visually displayed through the order in which the paintings were hung. Confounding a temporal form of progression, the discovery scene ('Misfortune') appeared as the centrepiece. It was flanked on either side by 'Despair' and 'Prayer', and the three were hung as a tableau within a single frame, although the precise arrangement of the lateral pictures is unknown (Nead, 72). This order, or deliberate mis-order, taken with the title by which the triptych is known, becomes a figurative mirroring of the entrapment of the fallen woman in past and present. There is no escape from the focal nature of the fall and no progression from it. The fall is precedent and antecedent to remaining life. The repetition of a wisp of cloud under the moon in paintings No. 2 and 3 suggests the simultaneity of these portraits; they occur at the same time, some years later. The father has now died and the image of the apple stabbed through the core, like a heart, suggests that the woman's fall is the cause. The fallen woman and the daughter share the same profile in these two later paintings, gazing upward toward the moon, though different attitudes are evident in each. While one is in prayer grieving for lost parents, the other is in despair. Thus the immediate action of these depictions, the present, is the recollection of the past. This,

along with the central placement of 'Misfortune', suggests a moral rather than temporal organisation. The cataclysmic act of adultery stretches across these temporal boundaries to be united with its aftermath, the two paintings that flank it. The reading required then is the tracing of radiating moral consequences. The reading passes back and forth, returning always to the focal fall of the woman as explicator and cause of the ensuing tragedy that surrounds her.

This melodramatic and emotive sequence presents the fallen woman as murderer: she holds one death in her arms, is symbolically culpable for another and for the destruction of the family, and considers the final despairing act of taking her own life. These are signifiers for her suggested status as murderer, in a sequence which is heavy in symbolism and implication. The fallen woman has murdered the idealised image of a wife and mother, and this murder necessitates the subsequent killing of her self.

Egg's triptych displays an array of death and disorder. It is the process of reading this array that forms a sequence and assigns a culpability to the fallen woman. The tracing of this culpability and the radiating consequences indicates the presence of a social reasoning that has *already* constructed the fallen woman as murderer. The implied deaths surrounding Egg's fallen woman then arise from the central focus of the triptych--the woman's first sin and destruction of a private morality. The symbolic detail in and the presentation of the triptych indicate the intertextual status of this visual representation; Egg's rendering of the 'she' as murderer is a cumulative construction which is traceable and recognisable because of its repeated nature. 'Past and Present' has been read

as a cautionary tale that reproduces familiar images, in a manner similar to Greg's reading of Esther Barton. Thus, in the colonisation of representations, overlay is read with reference to a known textualisation in the search for recognition and reproduction of commonality⁷.

Esther's representation as fallen woman also presents her as murderer. Alice Wilson's unfortunate toast to "absent friends" recalls "the absent Esther" (53), and that night, Mary Barton, her sister, dies in childbirth. The recalling, or naming, of Esther seems directly accountable for the death of her sister who is her physical double. Stoneman argues that this "seems ironically to point out their moral divergence" (79). However, the alternation of these two characters implies that they are dual aspects in the construction of woman. The moral fall of Esther has precipitated the death of her sister, an idealised mother figure. Thus, the fall of a woman is the death of the constructed other.

This doubling of characters is further confirmed by the maternal role that Esther attempts to adopt in relation to the child Mary Barton. In this role, Esther visits the young Mary and the doubling of the two is explicit:

⁷This construction of the fallen woman as murderer may in part be traced to the equation of sexual release with the loss of vitality. The Victorians considered a man's sexual release as "a kind of 'expenditure' that depleted his physical strength as well as his moral resolve, bringing him closer to death with every orgasm" (Barreca, 4). Thus, women were perceived to sexually drain the energy of men, shortening their lifespan. This vampire-like construction of the sexual woman reaffirms the status of the fallen woman as murderer. She takes the life of others.

There, against the moonlight, stood a form, so closely resembling her dead mother, that Mary never doubted the identity, but exclaiming (as if she were a terrified child, secure of safety when the protecting care of its parent)--

'Oh! mother! mother! You are come at last!'

She threw herself, or rather fell into the trembling arms, of her long lost, unrecognised Aunt Esther. (287)

Esther has borrowed the name 'Mrs Fergusson' and the garb of respectability "in order that her niece might not be shocked and revolted, by the knowledge of what her aunt had become:--a prostitute; an outcast" (294). Although Stoneman suggests that at this moment "Esther functions as a mother for Mary, and the madonna/magdalene double is united" (79), the scene relies on a mistaken identity. What Mary recognises is "likeness which was not identity" (293); thus, Esther is the fallen double of the idealised mother.

This doubling in the construction of woman, and the murdering of the other, is repeated between Esther and the young Mary Barton. Esther speaks to Jem of her concerns for Mary:

'Oh! Jem, I charge you with the care of her! I suppose it would be murder to kill her, but it would be better for her to die than to live to lead such a life as I do. (212)

Esther's motives to save Mary are pure, but her actions are misdirected. Her own corruption prevents the proper enactment of this saintly-saviour role, and instead, Esther associates herself with the murderer. However, it is the killing of Esther, not Mary, that is required to restore order. Esther's life must be taken in payment

for that of the feminine other whom she has murdered. It is this second death that will give, to the young Mary Barton, the life that was taken from her mother when Esther, her mother's dual, became a fallen woman.

This presentation of Esther as murderer recurs in the telling of her story to Jem. The child she bears is the issue of her fall and, like the infant pictured in Egg's 'Despair', it dies. The death of this child seems a consequence of the economic ruin that follows Esther's moral downfall; thus, Esther is implicitly culpable⁸. It is the innocent aspect of womanhood that Esther murders in her fall, and her daughter is described in these saintly terms:

'My darling! my darling! even after death I may not see thee, my own sweet one! She was so good--like a little angel. What is that text, I don't remember,--that text mother used to teach me when I sat on her knee long ago, it begins "Blessed are the pure"--

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

(211)

In murdering the feminine other, Esther murders her child.

This symbolic construction of the fallen woman as murderer is given visual referent in the juxtaposition of colours that accompanies Esther's fallen status. The natural "fresh rosy cheeks" (43) of both sisters is contrasted with the figure that

⁸Beth Kalikoff speaks of the fallen woman as seeming to represent "a national moral problem that assaulted belief in the rational as thoroughly as murder did" (99). She strengthens this connection by noting the incorporation of infanticide in many representations of the fallen woman.

intercepts John Barton: "the gauze bonnet, once pink, now dirty white, the muslin gown, all draggled, and soaking wet up to the very knees" (168). The finery of Esther's clothing has faded and been soiled along with her morality. Even her face is falsely coloured: faced with John Barton's abuse and the spurning of his warnings, "In vain did her face grow deadly pale round the vivid circle of paint" (169). This contrast of red and white reveals the dualism which has defined the fallen woman. The whiteness, or purity of woman, is tainted by the spilt blood of her fall. This blood is from her broken hymen and is also the blood shed by a murderer. It is the evidence of her sin and the disease she represents. Esther's spitting of blood is a symbolic form of bleeding that stains her with guilt and confirms her soiling of the saintly image. Thus, her fallen and murdering status is suggested by this juxtaposition of colours and their associations.

The construction of Esther as fallen relies on her association with the prostitute and implied status as murderer. John Barton, when accosted by Esther, first identifies her as a prostitute and only from her voice does he recognise "the long-lost Esther; she who had caused his wife's death" (169). He speaks of a final retribution for Esther's 'murder' of his wife: "'at the judgement day [Mary'll] rise, and point to thee as her murderer; or if she don't, I will'" (169). Thus, Esther is initially identified as a prostitute. When John Barton recognises her, he names her a fallen woman and a murderer.

The paths of John and Esther Barton are paralleled; both characters are constructed as fallen and as murderers. At the close of this exchange, a policeman "concluding from Esther's unsteady, reeling fall, that she was tipsy, . . . took her in her half-unconscious state to the lock-ups for the night" (170). This

foreshadows Esther's alcoholism, and also John Barton's descent into opium addiction. Further, John Barton murders, becomes an addict and is condemned, like his accused, to the torment of reliving the past in the present⁹:

I didn't know that I should be more haunted than ever with the recollection of my sin. . . . I would go through Hell-fire if I could but get free from sin at last, it's such an awful thing. As for hanging, that's just nought at all. (433)

A symbolic death of the self has taken place, and physical death is a welcome release. As with Egg's halting of time, Esther lives *in* the present *with* the past, and cannot hope for a future. When Jem greets her "with a cordiality that forgot the present in the past" (209), his freedom is contrasted with Esther's entrapment:

'Such as live like me could not bear life if they did not drink. It's the only thing to keep us from suicide. If we did not drink, we could not stand the memory of what we have been, and the thought of what we are, for a day. (213)

The fallen woman and this murderer share the same purgatorial state of despair. Their punishment of death is already prescribed and Esther is emphatic that there is no salvation or escape: "'But it is too late now;--too late,' she added, with accents of deep despair"

⁹A fuller discussion of John Barton's fall is found in Stoneman. She discusses the innocence/guilt opposition of the valentine/gun-wadding, which suggests his act of murder to be motivated by love. However, Stoneman places this reading of John Barton's fall and his murdering in the context of a critique of fatherhood: "The 'murder plot' demonstrates how the dominant ideology sanctions vengeance, not succour, as the expression of paternal 'care', and the 'romance plot' offers Jem as the worker/father of the future" (84).

(213). They live in a purgatorial state, expelled to the margins of society.

This outcast status, seen in Egg's final image, is repeated with Esther. She looks through the window to her home of old. As she sinks to the ground, Mary and Jem rush outside; there, "fallen into what appeared simply a heap of white or light-coloured clothes, fainting or dead, lay the poor crushed Butterfly--the once innocent Esther" (464). Her name of The Butterfly is an ironic version of Alice's return to nature. Unlike Alice, who is able to retreat into childhood on her deathbed, Esther has only the memory of innocence. She remains fallen and murderer:

'Has it been a dream then?' asked she wildly. Then with a habit, which came like instinct even in that awful dying hour, her hand sought the locket which hung concealed in her bosom, and, finding that, she knew all was true which had befallen her, since last she lay an innocent girl on that bed. She fell back, and spoke word never more. She held the locket containing her child's hair still in her hand, and once or twice she kissed it with a long soft kiss. She cried feebly and sadly as long as she had any strength to cry, and then she died. (465)

Following her death, the parallel with John Barton is made more explicit. Fallen woman and murderer are laid together in one grave. Nameless and timeless, these two 'fallen' characters seem to replay a pre-scripted demise. The tenderness of their treatment does not exonerate the individual, and a social pardon is not possible. Any forgiveness is dependent on the deaths of John and Esther:

They laid her in one grave with John Barton. And there they lie without name, or initial, or date. Only this verse is inscribed upon the stone which covers the remains of these two wanderers.

Psalm ciii. v. 9. --'For He will not always chide, neither will He keep his anger for ever.' (465)

Both John and Esther have erred and fallen, and must face the consequences of having taken the life of another.

The fallen woman murders the idealised woman who is constructed as other, and the murder of this other construct necessitates the subsequent murder of the female self that dared to displace it. This representation of the fallen woman acts as a cautionary tale, and her eventual death is a textually contrived restoration of order. Thus, the fallen woman is herself killed in retribution for her murder of the feminine other.

2. Justice and Justification: Monica's Intentional Fall

Representations of the fallen woman identify her as the object of disorder--the disease in the system. Her murder of the Other construct necessitates a subsequent second murder, her death. This is seen in critical readings of Gissing's The Odd Women and representations of Monica Widdowson, which indicate the continuing social struggle to define and confine the fallen woman. They reveal the 'taking' of Monica to illustrate other debates, in a continual process of critical colonisations. Investigation of the nature of Monica's fall reveals a complex series of falls and fallen women. From this can be read a societal need for the public naming of a woman as fallen, in order that a moral justice is seen to be satiated. In the prescribed death of the fallen woman, "transgression is punished and the hegemonic codes of morality are confirmed" (Nead, 181). That is, the death of Monica (her fate as a fallen woman) is justified through the public, albeit mistaken, judgement of her as an adulteress. Thus, the justice of her death is verified by earlier textual suggestions of her fallen nature; she embarked on a "course of dishonour" (250), and the mere intention to fall is taken as the act of transgression. Narration and critical readings justify the desire for vengeance by a representation that

demands justice. Thus, the desire for justice may be read as the justification of desire.

* * * *

Criticism of The Odd Women has debated the biographical sources of Gissing's fictional creations, the historical accuracy of the text, and Gissing's treatment of 'The Woman Question'. These three approaches are colonisations of the text and the space of the fallen woman. The most prevalent of these critical colonisations is the biographical. In a review of recent studies, David Eakin observes that they are "most specifically and most frequently focused on the novelist's view of women, both in his personal life and in his fiction" (Eakin 1978a, 16). Responding to Carol Lansbury's paper on 'Gissing and The Female Surrogate', Eakin comments that "Too often and too easily Professor Lansbury imposed Gissing's personal life on his fictional world" (Eakin 1978b, 15).

This trend is apparent in other critics. Following an uninspiring reading of The Odd Women, Katherine Linehan further reduces the text by contextualising it within the personal psychological development of Gissing. Although admitting to finding "slender evidence on which to hypothesize about the causes of Gissing's unusual freedom of philosophical and artistic imagination in The Odd Women" (373), she still completes her reading of the text with many biographical details. Linehan covertly parallels Gissing's biography with his fictional creations, concluding that Gissing's "own sensitivities had early been heightened by his involvement with prostitute Nell Harrison and by his sympathy for the position of his two spinster sisters" (373).

Other critics have similarly resorted to records of Gissing's biography, his personal letters and relationships, to establish a definitive ruling on the text's political perspective. David Grylls interweaves the words of Gissing's fictional creations with his own reconstruction of Gissing's personal character. Everard's dictum, "Men have kept women at a barbarous stage of development, and then complain that they are barbarous" (Grylls, 168) is read as a transcript of Gissing's beliefs. Discussing the varieties of marriage types catalogued in The Odd Women, Grylls describes "One group, dear to Gissing's heart, [which] consists of men cursed with inadequate wives" (168), and suggests that these "gloomy exempla might well be interpreted as disruptively personal" (168).

In these biographical readings, the debate over the feminist sympathies of The Odd Women has been fuelled by references to texts that 'document' Gissing's views on women. Letters, such as the one written to Eduard Bertz, have been read as candid and complete records of Gissing's philosophy, and used to argue or to question his altruistic motives of equity:

My demand for female 'equality' simply means that I am convinced there will be no social peace until women are intellectually trained very much as men are. More than half the misery of life is due to the ignorance and childishness of women. The average woman pretty closely resembles, in all intellectual considerations, the average male idiot--I speak medically. . . . I am driven frantic by the crass imbecility of the typical woman. That type must disappear, or at all events become altogether subordinate. (Markow, 59)

Although appealing to medical discourse, with its associated aura of objectivity, Gissing's response to this type of woman reads as intensely personal; his feminist allegiances seem motivated by the distress brought to his own life by these 'idiots'¹⁰. However, Lloyd Fernando sympathetically argues that it was Gissing's own "harrowing experiences" that led him to condemn woman who intellectually brought down their husbands and who sought "an exaggerated degree of independence in their lives" (123). Fernando mitigates this implication of 'anti-feminism' with a claim of noble intentions: Gissing's "perspective of wider social concern . . . is attenuated by his residually *petit-bourgeois* presuppositions" (128).

According to this school of biographers, the character of Monica Widdowson is derived from Gissing's first wife, the prostitute Nell Harrison, tempered with the emotionally and intellectually deficient second wife, Edith Underwood (these are the two categories Linehan uses to describe Gissing's wives [373]). Gissing's attempts to mould and rehabilitate these women was not, Fernando claims, "a rewarding task" (109); they refused his roles and rejected his authority. Similarly, Monica will not be moulded by her husband, Widdowson. Thus, she is read as the fictional

¹⁰Interestingly, this letter to Bertz appears the most well quoted of all of Gissing's writings (Markow, Grylls, Fernando, Linehan and Cotes all discuss it, and many others refer to it). Yet, from Gissing's own remarks, it is difficult to ascertain any humanitarian concern which includes women. His words suggest that educating women is profitable solely because of the benefits it provides to men. The ambiguity surrounding his use of the term 'subordinate' is perhaps indicative of a slippage of intention--does he wish this type of woman to become subordinate in numbers, or just subordinate to men?

recreation of Gissing's wives--one of the many uneducated women whose 'ignorance and childishness' bring misery to their unfortunate husbands.

These biographical readings use one set of textual records as code to 'make sense of', that is give truth to, the signs in this fictional text. This form of reading names interpersonal texts as statements of truth, in opposition to novels with their characteristic fictionality. It ignores the commonality of texts where all are constructed versions of a perceived truth that is presented for an audience--whether that audience is an other or an othered self. Convinced that this other set of private texts is explicator of the public and fictional counterparts, critics have read Gissing's letters as a metalanguage. To read Monica as written this way acknowledges women only in terms of their consequence on male experience.

Rather than enriching the medley of attitudes and reigning sense of ambivalence in the text, these personal revelations have been cited as evidence of Gissing's, and hence the text's, anti-feminism. They are taken as a truth and a totality. Yet the text displays a rumbling of dissonant voices from conflicting patriarchal and feminist ideologies. These cannot be put to rest by the assertion of Gissing's overriding philosophy. Deirdre David describes the uncertain ending of The Odd Women as "born of differentiated and interlocking contradictions" (119). Thus the text concludes not with resolution, but with the resonance of ambivalences. Biographical readings have censored these ambivalences and attempted to read The Odd Women by covering it with fragments of other texts. The collage produced is a

distorted array of character analyses of George Gissing; it is also a cover-up of The Odd Women whose text remains un-read. This reductive reading may keep the author alive, but it is certainly the death of the text. The search for the biographical sources for Gissing's fictional creations has overwritten the text of The Odd Women with the reconstituted fiction of Gissing's life.

Further overwritings occur in a second critical approach that considers the historical accuracy of the text. The minutiae of detail and intricate social fabric of The Odd Women have prompted its colonisation as an historical source and illustrator. Rhoda Nunn and Mary Barfoot's feminist speeches have been identified as near-literal transcripts of essays from contemporary journals (Markow, 58). Alison Cotes proclaims the accuracy of Gissing's descriptions of the life of a shop girl: "Again, socially and sociologically Gissing has his facts correct" (10). To verify these claims, she compares the hours worked, wages earned and general conditions of Monica's position with the 1886 Report of the Shop Hours Select Committee. Further, she cites Monica's decision to wed, and her colleagues' conversations, as dramatisation of the report of that committee:

the majority of shop assistants look upon marriage as their one hope of release, and would, as one girl expressed it, 'marry anybody to get out of the drapery business'. (11)

Similarly, Nan Maglin finds such merit in the accuracy of this social documentation that she gives a lengthy paraphrase of Monica's working conditions (229). Thus, whereas Esther Barton was borrowed from fiction to serve as transcript in a public debate, Gissing has been praised for transcribing a contemporary debate

into this fictional context. This medley of debate, documentation and other forms of citation seduces the reader, and critic, into a mistaken search for a totalising truth. Monica and Esther are fictions taken to illustrate a debate reproduced in different contexts. Both texts claim a realism and consider themselves validated by their commonality with other textualisations. In an approach similar to that used by the biographical critics, this focus on historical accuracy uses one set of textual records to verify and validate Gissing's fiction.

A more recent critical approach has considered The Odd Women's representation of 'The Woman Question', which was a problematic issue for Victorians at the turn of the century. Alice Markow questions whether Gissing's representation of this issue establishes him as "an advocate of women's rights or a critic and a provocateur" (58). Eventually he agrees with Fernando and John Goode, concluding that "Gissing is not seeking a redefinition of the female role in society but reclaiming a traditional one" (72). Other critics, such as Cotes and Linehan, have heralded Gissing as essentially feminist, because he promotes a similar goal to the Victorian feminists (education for women) despite a difference in methods and motives. Sloan suggests that The Odd Women provides a detailed record of the feminist movement and 'The Woman Question' (119): Mary Barfoot and Rhoda Nunn represent, he claims, different moderate and radical campaign figures, while the Madden sisters provide compelling evidence for the necessity of social change (124).

David also discusses Gissing's representations, noting that there is an oddness that pervades all of these women who are

disabled by social restraints. Alice and Virginia Madden seek solace in religion and alcohol to numb the embittering effects of their hopeless prospects. Their training allows no escape from the limitations of traditional options. Rhoda Nunn is fanatical in her feminist dogma, but cannot reconcile her own romantic desires and need for security with this doctrine. True to her name, she renounces desire and become "a nun in the service of her feminist order and wed to female emancipation rather than to Christ" (David, 126). Mary Barfoot is devoted to her school and politics, but more moderate in her sympathies. Monica Madden, the only one of the odd women to marry, does so to avoid the hardships and sacrifices she sees in the lives of these women.

David suggests that a medley of politics arises because "In his representation of feminism, Gissing affirms the encompassing power of a system that he sees as debilitating to all who are subject to it, and we must see *him*, as novelist, included in among that number" (127). In the replication and reformation of patriarchal conceptions, Gissing foregrounds his own complicity in them. His versions of women appear known rather than new. And added to this complicity is the position of the reader/critic, who is also subject to the power of this system and whose colonisations foreground their own inclusion.

This search for Gissing's totalising vision necessarily censors and erases conflicting impulses in the text. The diversity of critical readings perhaps results from this range of traditional and radical images of women which vie for survival and accommodation in The Odd Women. Gissing's women have been read as veiled biographies, historical documentations, or social critiques. In these

critical readings, Monica Widdowson has been named a fallen woman, but read as prostitute/wife (the distinction is blurred), as shop girl, and as an example of the new, old or odd woman. That which is ec-centric to these political definings/confinings of the text is erased in the overlay of other readings. Thus, the fallen woman is again taken to meet the needs of another; her text is overwritten as her body and space are overtaken.

Reading Monica as a fallen woman reads her as the site of converging discourses. It recognises the formation of Monica, as a fallen woman, as the intertextual and spatial tracing of other representations of this figure. Reading text and traces uncovers the stages of Monica's construction/destruction, and charts her progress through versions of the fallen woman. Monica initially experiences a moral fall when she prostitutes herself in marriage. A second planned fall takes place when Monica considers leaving Widdowson and becoming an adulteress. The subsequent social fall occurs when she is publicly accused of this and named fallen. Once she is publicly named fallen, her prescribed death is imminent.

Monica's first moral fall, or sin against her self, is suggested as the determinant of her subsequent, inevitable descent. When Monica first encounters Widdowson, she is concerned he may be a seducer or a rapist; in effect, he does become her downfall. Her first meeting with Widdowson is followed by news of Bella Royston, a classic fallen woman. Bella left the school to be the mistress of a married man, and now destitute and in despair, she asks to return. The news of Bella's fall gives immoral connotations to Monica's improper introduction to Widdowson. Monica continues

meeting with Widdowson, although the possibility of him as her 'beau' seems a idea initiated by the overheard gossip of the shop girls. Partly due to embarrassment regarding her own impropriety, and perhaps also due to an inclination to maintain Widdowson's escapist function, Monica takes pains to keep separate these two aspects of her life. She relieves the harsh reality of shop life by escaping into the romantic interludes that Widdowson offers. Throughout their unorthodox courting, Monica maintains a coy control, although it is Widdowson who proposes further meetings and ultimately marriage. She is aware of Widdowson's intentions and of her own desires and (mis)conduct in the affair. She is also aware that it is she, the woman, who would be seen as the transgressor and who would be punished. She says "we have gone against the ordinary rule, and people would make us suffer for it--or me, at all events", to which Widdowson replies in true chivalric fashion "your rules shall be mine" (75). Thus the responsibility for impropriety is intimated as resting with Monica.

Crucial to an appreciation of Monica's decision to marry is an understanding of the appallingly limited life options available to the single woman. Monica's eventual marriage can be seen as an alternative to the drudgery of shop life, the depression of her sisters' existence, and the harshness of Rhoda's convictions. Thus she marries "without love and without due consideration, motivated primarily by a desire to escape the poverty and inevitable ill-health of working in a shop" (Cotes, 10). In seeking a means of escape, Monica's actions, like Esther's, appear reactive rather than proactive. She has been driven from negation to negation and this new work at the school, "which is liberated and human, demands a kind of heroism which merely depresses her" (Goode, 152). Her

decision to accept Widdowson's proposal comes in a chapter entitled 'At Nature's Bidding':

As things went in the marriage war, she might esteem herself a most fortunate young woman. It seemed that he had really fallen in love with her; he might prove a devoted husband. She felt no love in return; but between the prospect of a marriage of esteem and that of no marriage at all there was little room for hesitation. (68)

Whereas Widdowson 'falls in love', Monica falls morally. In her decision to wed for financial ease and security, she fails to consider her personal honour. Trading wifely duties for financial security is a form of prostitution; it may be socially legitimated by a wedding band, but remains immoral in the context of the narrative.

This narrative condemnation is provided by Mildred Vesper, who Monica shares a room with. It is Mildred's reception of the decision to accept Widdowson's proposal that confirms the illicitness of Monica's behaviour. Monica narrates their courtship, but insists that she not have to face Mildred: "Don't turn around and snap at me; I want to tell you the truth whilst you can't see me" (111). In not 'facing' her, Monica makes herself a face-less fallen woman. Her lapse in judgement is a moral fall, and Mildred warns "you'll repent it bitterly some day--you'll repent" (111). Even Monica's light-hearted response "You give me up for lost" (112) reinforces her fallen status. Monica loses her maiden name of Madden, and is renamed a fallen woman in the act of prostituting herself to Widdowson.

Following this exchange with Mildred, Monica visits Virginia to tell her of the news. In an antithetic reaction, Virginia is delighted, but also drunk. The revelation of Virginia's own fall into vice further questions the aptness of her response. Confirming the context of a moral fall, in narrative chronology Monica's marriage directly precedes the newspaper report of Bella Royston's death:

A girl named Bella Royston had poisoned herself. She was living alone, without occupation, and . . . appeared to have gone through troubles which had so disturbed her mind that she could not make the effort required of her. She left a few lines addressed to her benefactress, just saying that she chose death rather than the struggle to recover her position. (126)

Monica is also unable to 'make the effort required of her', choosing marriage rather than the struggle of being an odd woman. Thus, Bella's recognition of her irreparable fall, her self-administered death, and the public naming of this shame, all seem a premonition of Monica's fate.

As in Egg's trilogy, the initial moral fall is juxtaposed with its implied inevitable outcome in a causal chain of consequences. Hence, Monica's immoral fall into marriage precipitates her next intentional fall. She envisages a sanctuary in the sanctity of marriage, but Widdowson's ideal of woman is based on the fictional saint/sinner dichotomy and is as stultifying as the life she has left. In order to relieve the tedious monotony of her marriage, Monica engages in escapist fiction-reading and fiction-making. Thus her escape from Widdowson's manacles is into another set of textual restraints that prescribe her fall. The reading of fiction, as with the French novel in Egg's trilogy, is implied as both precursor to and

product of a woman's fall. In this manner, Virginia's choice of fiction confirms her decline into alcoholism, despite her own denial of it: "To sit comfortably at home, the bottle beside her, and a novel on her lap, was an avoidance of the worst shame attaching to this vice" (302). Similarly, Bella's weakness, according to Rhoda, was that "All her spare time was given to novel-reading" (58). She is initially seduced by romantic fictions and, like Monica, and her sexual fall is then consummation of this earlier instance of 'giving herself' to and being 'taken over' by fiction-reading. The sexual connotations of these terms confirm the fall of the mind preceding that of the flesh. The corruption by fiction, or even fictional seduction, precedes the physical corruption by a man.

Monica's reading of fiction during her sojourn by the sea is then indication of her forthcoming intention to fall sexually: she took up one of the volumes that lay on the side-table in the sitting-room, novels left by former lodgers. Her choice was something or other with a yellow back. Widdowson, watching all her movements furtively, became aware of the pictured cover¹¹. (164)

Widdowson's image of a wife is a child who is to be nurtured and schooled, and thus he desires to protect Monica from temptation or contamination. His response demonstrates the seductive threat to female virtue that romantic fiction was considered to be.

¹¹'Yellow-back' novels were reputed to be a mildly salacious form of cheap fiction, often sold at railway bookstalls. Frequently they followed the downward path of the fallen woman or prostitute (Nead, 169). The vague and unspecific tone of this reference emphasises the type of fiction Monica is being drawn to. It also suggests Widdowson's, and Gissing's, contempt for this form of popular fiction.

In turning to fiction, Monica looks to again escape the limitations of her life. While she feels it a "dishonour to live with a man she could not love", Monica also recognises it as "A dishonour to which innumerable women submitted, a dishonour glorified by social precept, enforced under dread penalties" (202). Yet fiction-reading has offered her the image of a mythical male hero and rescuer, who is in contrast to the weak and tyrannical Widdowson. This fiction-reading seductively slips to fiction-making, as Monica sees in life these romantic images:

Before marriage, her love-ideal had been very vague, elusive . . . [now] She found a suggestion of him in books; and in actual life, already, perhaps something more than a suggestion. (202)

However, in writing her own romantic fiction, with its obligatory active male character, Monica also writes herself as the object of desire to be seduced. Unlike Hardy's Tess, who is forcibly raped, or Gaskell's Ruth who naively acquiesces, Monica intends to fall. Enacting this romantic fiction, she takes "another step in shameful descent" (245), when she finds an obliging shopkeeper to receive Cosgrove's illicit letters.

Falling into a romantic fiction, Monica is made "more hopelessly an outcast from the world of honourable women" (245). However, while she is relegated to the position of adulteress, the role into which Cosgrove is cast far exceeds the capabilities of his character. Monica's novelistic hopes of him as the heroic rescuer are sharply contrasted with the awkward realism of his situation:

He had not in him the stuff of vigorous rascality, still less the only other quality which can support a man in

such a situation as this--heroism of moral revolt. So he cut a very poor figure, and was dolefully aware of it. He talked, talked; trying to disguise his feebleness in tinsel phrases; and Monica still kept her eyes cast down. (234)

Inevitably, neither Widdowson nor Cosgrove is able to fulfil the knightly role in Monica's romantic fictions, as indeed the father before them failed.

Monica's recognition of herself, as a character in her own fiction, comes with the realisation that Cosgrove's failure is the failure to play out her constructed role for him. The letter he sends to her is a tired reproduction of the language of romance, and indeed the fiction of romance. This is confirmed by Gissing's ironic 'etceteras', which punctuate the letter, and Monica's response: "she took out the French-stamped envelope and tried to think that its contents interested her" (294). They read "as if extracted from some vapid novel" (295), and reiterate the symbol of the French novel, which is both cause and consequence of a woman's fall. The irony of Monica's position is that there is no final sexual consummation of this fall. Monica does not proceed with her intention to leave Widdowson because of her pregnancy. However, while never becoming an adulteress, it appears that the mere intention to fall renders a woman fallen. Fiction reading has seduced Monica to fall into her own fiction-making.

While both Monica and Bella's writing of their own romance fiction seems overtly associated with their reading of popular fiction, other characters also write and are seduced by fictions of romance. In writing roles for themselves and for others, they write the

character of the fallen woman. Notably, Widdowson's romantic ideal of marital bliss is constructed from the angel/whore dichotomy, and this prescribes Monica's fall. His preconceived roles and expectations of matrimony are as divorced from reality as the popular fiction that he despises.

Widdowson's initial obsession with Monica hinges on his perception of her as having been created for better than the life of a shop girl. He casts himself in the chivalric role of 'rescuer', who saves Monica from the physical and moral horrors of shop life. Even after the marriage, he regards the shop with abhorrence, considering it a form of prison. This sentimental gallantry is derived from narratives of the knight-saviour and the damsel in distress. Just as Monica writes the heroic-rescuer role for Cosgrove, so Widdowson uses the rescue of Monica from the shop in an attempt to write himself into a similar role.

Following their marriage, Widdowson attempts to keep Monica penned in his own [matrimonial] prison. The fictitious role that he writes for himself changes from rescuer-suitor to protector-husband:

In no woman on earth could he have put perfect confidence. He regarded them as born to perpetual pupilage. Not that their inclinations were necessarily wanton; they were simply incapable of attaining maturity, remaining throughout their life imperfect beings, at the mercy of craft, ever liable to be misled by childish misconceptions. Of course he was right; he himself represented the guardian male, the wife-proprietor, who from the dawn of civilisation has taken

abundant care that woman shall not outgrow her nonage. The bitterness of his situation lay in the fact that he had wedded a woman who irresistibly proved to him her claims as a human being. Reason and tradition contended in him, to a ceaseless torment. (196)

While these roles provide the facade of a stable masculine self, they also require the presence of a passive female character over whom he can exert authority. His construction of Monica as wife, no less than his construction of his self, is a fiction and a failure. When these projected characters either exceed or fall short of the characters he has authored, the failure of the fiction is construed as the failure of the woman.

At first, the role of listening wife is fulfilled by Monica, and the fiction of Widdowson's writing is not challenged. The subversion of his authority comes when Monica asserts an autonomy that defies the roles designated her by Widdowson. By refusing to act in his drama, she falls from the elevated heights of his romantic fiction. Following the subversion of his created fiction, Widdowson is left role-less and characterless; the acted part of protector-husband requires the dutiful wife as its complement. With Monica 'out of character', he has no other means of defining himself. Thus, his behaviour becomes erratic and extreme as he oscillates between tyranny and weakness. As Monica takes on an active (rather than passive) role, Widdowson's control is reduced to short outbursts of frenzied authoritarianism. These outbursts are so taxing to his constitution that he then falls asleep over his readings; this is perhaps a metaphorical indication of the failure to sustain his own fiction.

Yet this failure of his fictions is read by Widdowson as the fall of the woman. Similarly, when Tess of the D'Urbervilles does not fulfil Angel Clare's construction of her, the flaw is again seen to lie with the female, rather than with the fiction. Widdowson fails to question his frame that constructs women in these terms. When he visits a local bar, he reads onto a barmaid the innocent charm he now suspects his wife to have lost--or perhaps never to have had. In this context, his fantasies and fictionalising of the barmaid are both ludicrous and pathetic:

Would he not have been a much happier man if he had married a girl distinctly his inferior in mind and station? Provided she were sweet, lovable, docile--such a wife would have spared him all the misery he had known with Monica. (238)

Widdowson's romantic elevation of the barmaid to saintly, albeit intellectually limited, heights neglects the financial aspect of this encounter; the barmaid is employed to provide service to him. His musings about her, as "My ideal of the wife perfectly suited to me" (239), then equates this paid servile role with marital roles.

Widdowson's concept of a wife is revealed as a legally and socially sanctioned prostitute. Monica may have married into this role, but her stepping out of it implies her expulsion to the 'fallen' counterpart in this binary fiction of women. Widdowson's use of the saint/sinner dichotomy initially elevates Monica to its highest levels. When, necessarily, she disappoints this idealism, she must plummet, to the opposing role of sinner. These roles are idealised fictions, as much as the romantic ones of the novels Widdowson despises. Thus, Monica's fall is a prescribed fiction (re)written by Widdowson.

This fictional fall, and Monica's own fall into fiction confirm her fallen status. However, as she is technically still pure, Monica must be publicly named impure in order that a moral justice is satiated. Hence, the narrative seeks a socially engineered fall which will permit the public naming of Monica as fallen, and so justify the fulfilment of the sentence of death. The plot mechanics are provided by Widdowson, who seeks proof of his wife's fallen status. He has her followed and, misinterpreting her knock on Everard's door, is able to accuse her of what her intentions have been:

'Liar!' again burst from him. 'Day after day you have lied to me. Liar! Adulteress! . . . What is your word worth? The prostitute in the street is sooner to be believed. She has the honesty to say what she is, but you-- . . .'

(249)

While Widdowson perceives himself as the individual who has been sinned against¹², the transitivity of the narrative suggests a shift in agency. It is the discourse of sexual politics which 'bursts' from Widdowson as he gives voice to society's indictment of Monica. This publicly named fall is a mistaken one, but it is just in its allusion to her previous falls (prostitution and adultery). Monica's transgressions against order and morality are then named and given context. With these publicly voiced accusations, Monica falls socially.

¹²This reading of the failure of a marriage as the fall of the woman is echoed by many critics who lavish sympathy on Gissing for his unfortunate marriages. Described as the veteran of two unsuccessful marriages, one to a prostitute, the other to a shop girl (Lesser, 129), Gissing is venerated as the honourable survivor of this class and gender battle.

Although not disputing the impropriety of her actions or intentions, Monica repudiates these accusations stating "I am not guilty of what you believe" (250) and "I am not what you called me" (251). Monica may be innocent of the specific crime that Widdowson indicts, but she realises the guilt of her other implied falls. She constructs herself as a fallen woman, and faces the judgement that this construction prescribes:

Purpose is idle, the will impure; over the past hangs a shadow of remorse, and life that must yet be lived shows lurid, a steep pathway to the hopeless grave. Of this cup Monica drank deeply. . . . She saw herself as a wicked woman, in the eye of truth not less wicked than her husband declared her . . . Her soul trembled in its nakedness.

What redemption could there be for her? What path of spiritual health was discoverable? (306)

The metaphor of Monica drinking from the cup of despair echoes Virginia's fall into alcoholism and Bella's despairing poisoning. These echoes unite past and present in a moral chronology similar to Egg's triptych, and further Monica's generic construction as a fallen woman. As her life appears an inevitable decline before both her and the reader, Monica is taken over by the discourse of the fallen woman. In her naming of herself 'sinner', 'impenitent' and 'naked', her text resembles the fallen woman's confession. The reproduction of religious discourse in this anagorisis indicates her final descent into the sin of despair.

This self-naming as a fallen woman confirms the erroneous truth of the public accusations. Monica's descent begins with an initial moral fall into marriage. She then falls through her own

fictionalising and that of others; the mere intention to sexually fall has implied her as fallen. Finally, Monica is publicly named as a fallen woman. This named fall permits the social condemnation of her previous implied falls and justifies the sentence of death. This desire for justice is justification of society's desire for the death of the fallen woman.

3. In the Eye of the Reader: Rhoda's Unnaming

In exacting public payment for sexual crimes, society justifies its killing of the other murderer, and hence the reader enjoys a "voyeuristic participation in the theatre of penitence" (Kalikoff, 101). This participation implicates the reader in the "pornographic structure of representation" (Gubar, 729) that is characteristic of representations of the fallen woman. In the process of reading her presentation, the reader un-names and objectifies her, de-robing the fallen woman of identity. This is seen in the critical colonisations of Rhoda Nunn which take her as a representative of the Victorian New Woman and neglect her fallen status. Further, her erotic presentation for consumption by an assumed male audience, and her fall from political ideals, is an unacknowledged un-naming, in which she is taken by the reader as a fallen woman.

* * * *

Neglecting her symbolic fall, critical readings of Rhoda Nunn have reduced her to a representation of the Victorian New Woman, a brand of feminist emerging in the 1890's. Thus, Rhoda has not been named as fallen and, instead, the biographical details, historical accuracy and political nature of her as the New Woman have been fiercely debated.

This is seen in Fernando's reading of Rhoda, which is used to reveal the agony Gissing experienced in dealing with independent women in his personal and fictional worlds. As discussed earlier, Fernando argues that Gissing was deeply concerned about the limitations placed on women's lives, but also shackled by his own belief in their moral and intellectual inferiority. Thus, Fernando adds, Gissing was able to endorse Rhoda and the education of the New Woman above her current imbecility, but only in order to make her a more suitable companion to men, and so ease the plight of burdened husbands. Where Gissing encountered difficulties was in Rhoda's, and other feminists', more radical moves into independence of mind and body (celibacy), sexual anarchy and asceticism. These offered no relief for Gissing's own despair and 'sexual starvation'--a problem he frequently complained of (Fernando, 109).

While continuing to evaluate Gissing's feminism in terms of Rhoda's representation of the New Woman, Markow is less sympathetic towards Gissing's problems than is Fernando. She claims that Gissing's advocacy of feminist politics is purely nominal. Gissing begins, she suggests, with a sympathetic portrayal of Rhoda but ends with a parody of the Victorian radical feminist (65). Thus, his personal bias emerges to convincingly support the traditional 'womanly woman', who meets her wifely duties, and reject the independent type such as Rhoda. Markow uses this reading to argue that Gissing considered the Victorian New Woman had lost the virtue of her womanhood when she rejected male authority.

These readings of Fernando and Markow acknowledge Rhoda only as a representative of the New Woman. They then use this representation to reconstruct Gissing's biographical text and evaluate his feminism. Similarly, Rhoda is recognised only as the New Woman by those who debate the historical accuracy of The Odd Women; once again, other aspects of Rhoda are omitted. In this debate, Grylls claims the text is a "social disquisition" (167) and a faithful reflection of the feminist movement; he dismisses as 'historically ill-informed' those critics who find Mary Barfoot "unacceptably moderate" or Rhoda Nunn "unattractively extreme" (165). The truth of Gissing's fiction is painstakingly delineated by Grylls' references to historical records that 'verify' the radicalness of Rhoda's feminism--thus apparently invalidating any critiques of Gissing's representation. Grylls claims that, although there was no model for Rhoda or the school, Gissing provided an accurate portrait of a revolutionary new form of feminism in his creation of them. On the other hand, Sloan claims that Rhoda and the school are derived from Jessie Boucherett's secretarial school of the 1850's. Hence, Sloan argues "the anachronism of Gissing's portrait of the pioneering nature of Rhoda Nunn and Mary Barfoot at Great Portland Street in the 1880's" (120). In their meticulous historical documentation, at times both critics refer to the same source, only to proclaim widely different conclusions. Fictional creation or re-creation, these debates over Rhoda's historical authenticity confine her to a re-presentation of the Victorian New Woman.

Discussions of 'The Woman Question' have continued to confine Rhoda to this figure, and neglect other aspects of her representation. Commenting on the politics of the text, Carol

Pearson proposes that the compassion and theory of the New Woman are strengthened by Rhoda's experience. The tragedy, she claims, is that this New Woman is unable to find a male equal in "passion, intellect, character, or courage" (153). However, other critics read the asceticism of Rhoda's politics and the failure to sustain these ideals as condemnation of this new version of woman. Considering celibacy a necessary stage in the feminist struggle, Rhoda renounces sexual desire and exalts oddness. Hence she rejects from her category of 'odd' those women who succumb to desire and fall. She defines herself by a divisive distinction between odd and fallen women. According to her own construction, this status is threatened after Everard's proposal, and she then slips from odd into the opposing category. Thus she agonizes "in mute frenzy, the passions of her flesh torturing her" (283) when realising that she too is susceptible to her 'animal nature'. This process of realisation is, for Elaine Showalter, condemnation of the politics of the New Woman. Showalter describes Rhoda's process as a 'humbling', as Rhoda fails her own "uncompromisingly radical position" (31).

Despite this suggestion of a symbolic/political fall, Rhoda is not named as fallen in the text and nor do critical representations address her fallen status. She continues to be associated with the New, not the fallen, Woman. However, while not *named* as fallen, Rhoda is *read* as fallen. Although critics maintain that Rhoda is the Victorian New Woman, an "unfamiliar sexual type" (21), her representation and the process of reading her suggests aspects that are more familiar and known to the reader. The mode of presentation invites the reader to 'take' Rhoda as fallen woman; the form of this New Woman is then a re-forming of the fallen woman.

Reading Rhoda purely as the representation of the New Woman is the overwriting and attempted erasure of her (re)presentation as a fallen woman. Yet visible through this inscription of her as 'New' are traces of her form as 'fallen'.

Linehan discusses the paralleled portrayals of Monica and Rhoda, who both feel "that they have '*fallen*' through sexual temptation, by desire if not by act" (367). Rhoda's asceticism has led her to endeavour to triumph over sexual desire. Everard's attempted seduction of her is from these politics of celibacy, and hence she must triumph over the man who has re-presented to her the feelings she considered she had renounced. Linehan claims that, while the reader may sympathise with the 'shambles' of Monica's life, "he [sic] may well question how far to extend sympathy for Rhoda's sense of mortification over her 'fall'" (367). Linehan reads Rhoda's use of terms such as 'reascent' and 'redemption' as ironic, and Rhoda's perception of a fall as "the distorted vision of a fanatical ascetic . . . in whom we recognise a basic fear of men and sexuality" (367). Thus, Linehan does not name Rhoda as fallen. Instead, she condemns Rhoda's construction of herself, reading it merely as Rhoda's self-perception of a fall.

Given that Rhoda's perceived fall is from nun-hood and a spurning of the physically present male, to 'take' seriously her mortification over the failure to sustain these politics is hardly a comfortable position for Linehan's reader, whose construction and gaze is male. Linehan's recognition of Rhoda's 'basic' fear seems a dis-placement of response. Rhoda does not fear Everard, but the part of her that he (re)presents to herself--physical desire.

Perhaps Linehan's [male] reader fears what the New Woman's politics (re)present to him--sexual dependency.

Cotes continues this reduction of Rhoda to a representative of the New Woman. She confidently identifies Rhoda as "the chief protagonist of the novel . . . [and] clearly one of the breed" of New Women (3); in this process of identification, she censors other aspects of Rhoda's presentation. In continuing to read Rhoda's failing as a self-perceived one, Cotes condemns the severity of Rhoda's politics. She argues that Rhoda's defeat is "in falling victim to her own emotions . . . Because she has yielded to the needs of her own sexual nature, she fails to be a perfect New Woman in her own terms" (14). In selectively quoting Gissing's description of Rhoda, Cotes contorts the text to again present Rhoda as the Victorian New Woman:

At first view the countenance seemed masculine, its expression somewhat aggressive--eyes shrewdly observant and lips consciously impregnable. . . . Self-confidence, intellectual keenness, a bright humour, frank courage, were traits legible enough. . . (Cotes, 3)

Cotes' censored presentation is limited to this 'first view' of Rhoda. Her creature is an asexual portrait of the New Woman. Through censoring and erasing other aspects, Cotes reforms the selective image that critics have given Rhoda. Yet while critics do not present Rhoda as a fallen woman, and she is not named as such by the text, reading her presentation is the process of the reader taking her as a fallen woman. It is the critics, and especially Cotes', censored (re)presentation of Rhoda that seeks to erase this potent sexual invitation.

Re-placing Cotes' quotation within its originating context suggests a radically different presentation of Rhoda Nunn. Beyond this 'first view', the text continues:

At first view her countenance seemed somewhat masculine, its expression somewhat aggressive--eyes shrewdly observant and lips consciously impregnable. But the connoisseur delayed his verdict. It was a face that invited, that compelled, study. Self-confidence, intellectual keenness, a bright humour, frank courage, were traits legible enough; and when the lips parted to show their warmth, their fullness, when the eyelids drooped a little in meditation, one became aware of a suggestiveness directed not solely to the intellect, of something like an unfamiliar sexual type, remote from the voluptuous, but hinting a possibility of subtle feminine forces that might be released by circumstance. (20-21)

Though Gissing asserts her as an 'unfamiliar sexual type', his delineation of Rhoda is suggestive of a known figure. The erased aspects of the text, the omitted portions of Cotes' quotation, suggest a re-tracing of a known sexual type, the fallen woman.

Not only is Rhoda the unnamed fallen woman in the text and in critical representations, but the process of reading her representation becomes a second process of un-naming her. In an almost pornographic structure of representation, Rhoda is reduced to fragmented facial features which invite the reader to take her as a nameless, sexual object. Jeanne Fahnestock, in a study of the physiognomy of the Victorian heroine, suggests that these facial features provide "a system of meaning, a code for translating

descriptive terminology into aspects of personality" (1). Thus, they function as signifiers to readers and connoisseurs of women who share this code and can generate meaning.

While the description of Rhoda's eyes indicates an astute nature, it is the issue of her mouth and lips, the organs of "animal passion and propensity" (Walker, cited in Fahnstock, 341), that is pursued. A nun-like vow of celibacy has made her lips impregnable; the nominal association of Nunn indicates the conscious fortification against any seducer. However, the [male] connoisseur is invited, even compelled, to study further. Rhoda is revealed as pregnable to the text in a sexual unveiling of her features. Alongside the "traits legible enough", there is the suggestive promise of an erotic 'warmth' and 'fullness' when the lips open. The circumstance required to part and impregnate these lips is the presence of a connoisseur, a knowing male, who will further read, decode, and mark this face with meaning.

This connoisseur penetrates and partakes of Rhoda in the process of his reading; she is presented for [his] consumption, and the text languishes over the rewards for parting those lips and the sexual release promised by this opening. He is voyeur, and she is sexually taken by the male gaze of the reader. This process anticipates Everard, a man who has known women and whose presence precipitates Rhoda's symbolic fall. The physical description of Everard echoes that of Rhoda, emphasizing the compatibility of his own "full lips, deep-set eyes . . . and when he did not fix his look on anything in particular, his eyelids drooped" (77). The reader's introduction to Everard is also framed by Mary Barfoot's "moral censure" (77) of him. Rhoda supposes him "an

outrageous profligate" (86), emphasising his status as a "man of the world" (86) and identifying him as a connoisseur of woman; Everard is positioned as the reader within the frame of the text. In this early presentation, the knowing reader celebrates Everard's position, penetrating Rhoda's meaning. The reader is here the connoisseur who reads, writes and takes meaning.

This presentation of woman as object for the reader's consumption is discussed by Penny Boumelha; referring to Tess of the d'Urbervilles, she speaks of "the narrator's erotic fantasies of penetration and engulfment" (138). Angel Clare continually 'reads' Tess's lips, imposing and taking meaning in a form of linguistic violation. Tess's mouth, noted as "consistently the most privileged feature of her physical appearance" (Silverman, 6), is read as *embodying* the sexual woman. The face is read as signifier for the body, which is text to be taken in reading:

Clare had studied the curves of those lips so many times that he could reproduce them mentally with ease; and now, as they again confronted him, clothed with colour and life, they sent an aura over his flesh, a breeze through his nerves, which well nigh produced a qualm; and actually produced, by some mysterious physiological process, a prosaic sneeze. (209)

Angel Clare constructs and experiences release from his own reading (the sneeze suggests ejaculation), and the reader shares in this climax. In the objectification of women, the lips are not Tess's but instruments of Angel's, and hence the reader's, pleasure. Lips, or face, are taken as body to be clothed and unclothed by the voyeur, to be inscribed as text by the reader. As in the description of Rhoda and her lips, the feminine possessive pronoun is again

replaced by the definite article. Similarly, Egg's fallen woman is referred to only as the generic 'she'; this is not an anonymity but an un-naming.

Thus, Rhoda is un-named as her presentation de-forms her identity and her face is taken as the body of the fallen woman. This seems characteristic of representations of the fallen woman. Esther Barton, following her fall, is known as 'the Butterfly'; Monica, when accosted by Miss Eade (herself fallen), will not give her married name. Name and personal identity are stripped and replaced with the fallen body. In this process of un-naming, the fallen woman is presented as faceless. Rhoda's face is read as the body and text of the fallen woman. The fallen Monica is faceless when confessing to Mildred. Bella, the conventional fallen woman, is given no face in the text; it is only the actions of her body that receive reportage. In the discovery scene of 'Past and Present', the woman is facedown and faceless; again, it is her body that displays the fall.

In this replacement of face with body, and reading of body as text, the interpreting gaze "*constructs* its object through a process of colonisation, delimitation, configuration and inscription" (Silverman, 7). That is, the text invites the reader to penetrate the object of presentation. Thus, rather than appearing unfamiliar, Gissing's representation of Rhoda re-traces the tantalising image of the sexual woman, presented for male consumption.

René Magritte's 'Le Viol' is the reification of this process of un-naming and reader rape (Figure 4). In his portrait, the female face is replaced with the female body--both are grotesquely defaced

and disfigured as the voyeur reads face as body, and body as face. It is the recognition of both face and body, and their functioning as replacements for each other, that suggests their interchangeability. This overwriting is not a process of covering-up, but of deforming; it acts as a violent piece of graffiti that uses and abuses the object it inscribes.

The public and visual nature of this exposition places the voyeur within the frame of the oeuvre. It is his gaze that consummates her objectification. The conventional feminine hairstyle is parted to reveal this body/face--openly inviting the voyeur to enter her displayed female sexuality. This open invitation to the voyeur is in tantalising contrast to the self-enclosure of the female mouth. In "the articulation of the woman as genital organ" (Gubar, 722), this female face/body, and the faceless fallen woman, is made inarticulate. Her 'lips', clothed as they are in pubic hair, appear to lack opening. This covering over spares the voyeur "the horror provoked by the unmitigated sight of [a woman's] genital organs" (Kofman, 210) *and* renders the woman silent and silenced.

To read further this woman involves the forcible parting of hair and opening of lips--and the presentation of this woman invites just such an act. The neck that supports her is swollen and phallic. Her image is the head of the penis that rises erect from the base of the canvas to 'face' the voyeur. She is both closed and tantalising, open and inviting.

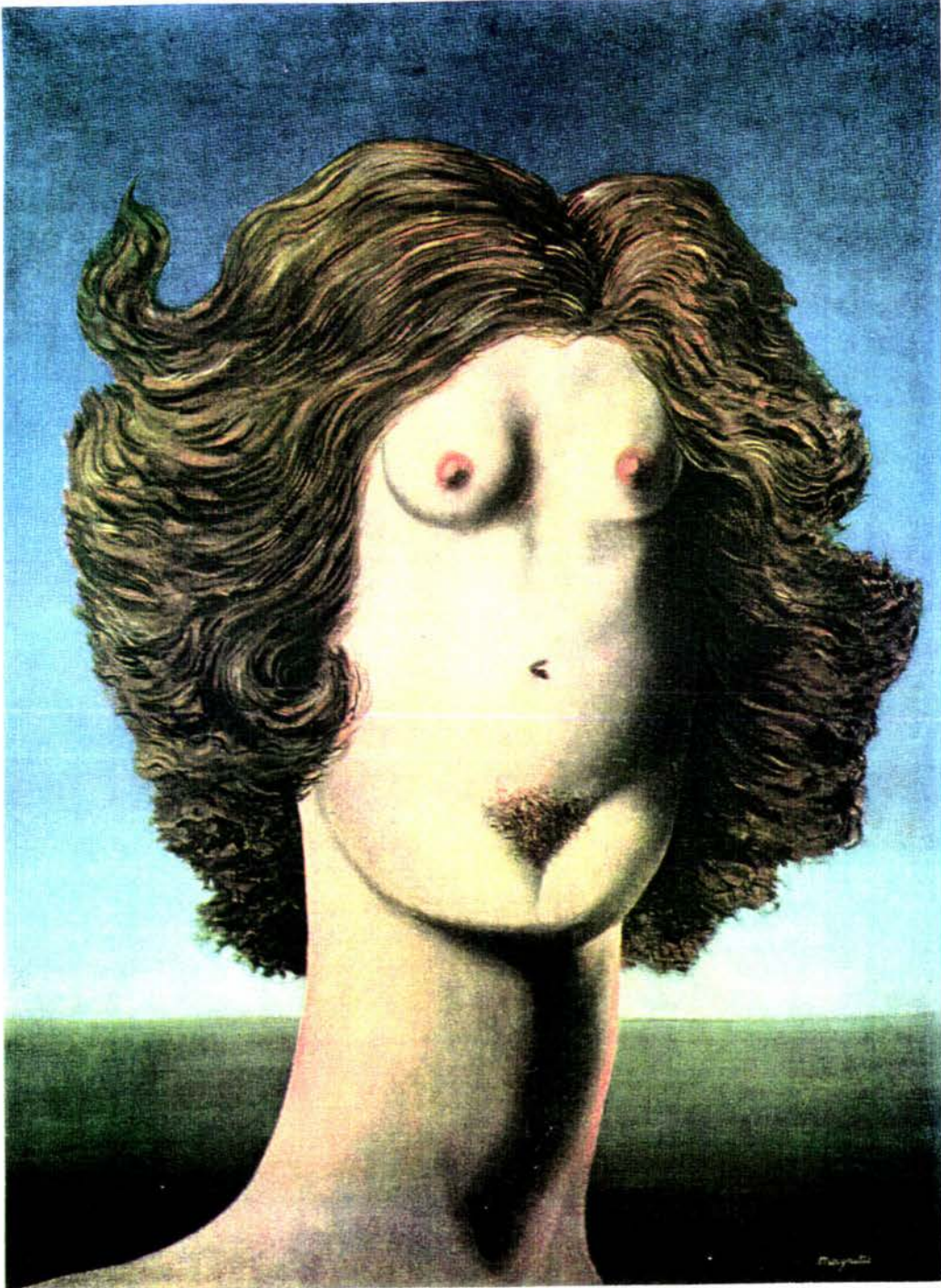


Figure 4: René Magritte, 'Le Viol', 1934 (Source: Jean, 180).

This reading of both body and face, and their deformed contexts, is the process of the reader defacing and un-naming the woman. While satirising conventional portraiture, 'Le Viol' is the graphic exposure of this process of reading and imposition of meaning. In a similar imposition of meaning, Rhoda has been colonised by critics as a representative of the Victorian New Woman, but left as the unnamed fallen woman of the text. However, the process of this textual representation has also un-named her and presented her to the reader as a pornographic object of delight. Completing this objectification, Rhoda constructs her own fiction in which she is the object of desire. She is also written as this figure by Everard, who acts as the reader within the frame of the text.

Initially, Rhoda delights in receiving a marriage proposal. Her overwhelming emotion is one of triumph at being read and written as the object of male desire, and yet refusing to occupy this objectified space: "She the object of a man's passion! And the thought was exultant" (148). She imagines scorning the swooning lover, refusing his offer, and thus maintaining her subjectivity. The refusal will "fortify her self-esteem, and enable her to go forward in the chosen path with firmer tread" (148). Thus, she perceives Everard as a challenge (to her politics and identity as a celibate) over which she must triumph.

Similarly, Everard perceives Rhoda as a challenge over which he must triumph. For him, the challenge perceived is to his manhood and identity as a connoisseur of women. He constructs himself as the romantic quester out to conquer and triumph, and

reads Rhoda's response as "more than ever a challenge to his manhood" (142). This challenge is not physical, in the manner of the quester who battles forces and may indeed lose his life. Instead, the threat Rhoda poses, or at least the threat Everard reads, is to the written status of his maleness. Yet these respective challenges are merely perversions of the conventional notions of female purity and predatory masculinity.

Rhoda *claims* that her interest in the fiction of love that Everard offers "would only be that of comedy" (148), not romance--she will not be seduced by his text. She desires the chase so that, at the moment of capture (consummation of the quest), she will refuse him and escape his objectification. However, while imagining herself scorning the romantic traditions, Rhoda also admits her longing for the experience and "all it had to yield of delight and contentment" (148).

Similarly, Everard initially approaches Rhoda with a scientific detachment and aloofness, but soon act and actuality become merged. He speaks of holding her hand as "a stage in progressive appreciation", and expresses a desire to "repeat the experiment" (142). In the manner of the tantalisingly self-enclosed 'Le Viol', Rhoda's celibate principles act as a provocative challenge. Everard considers Rhoda's 'type' to be "rather a temptation to a man of my kind" (94), and lapses into the eloquence of courtly discourse with a faint amusement at his own enactment of it. Recalling lines of poetry, he describes Rhoda in terms of the prescribed feminine ideal to which he wishes to confine her:

'Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Imprison her soft hand, and let her rave--' (142)

Following this aberration of thought, he quickly retrieves his composure and returns to his more rakish and cool appraisal.

In Everard's fiction, Rhoda is written as a woman to be taken, and so to fall. He admits that, while "delighting in her independence of mind, he still desired to see her in complete subjugation to him" (261). He must scribe her and reduce her to object that she may be conquered (in all senses of the word); only then can she be elevated to the penned prison of his ideal. This sequence reeks of past fictions and courtly love rituals. Rhoda and Everard lapse into the rewriting of old fictions, and the slippage that this dictates for women. In these fictions, Rhoda is pornographically presented as the object of desire who awaits a seducer to consummate her fall. While she writes herself as the object of a courtly quest, Everard reads and writes her in the mould of the haughty woman, and desires to unlock her passions.

Both characters are involved in a complex response of reading and (re)writing this tradition. If Everard succeeds in his quest then Rhoda will slip to the space of the fallen woman. Yet, as Everard reads Rhoda, in a curious reversal he is gradually seduced by the writing of his own fiction:

But she would not yield, was in no real danger from his love-making. Nay the danger was to his own peace. He felt that resistance would intensify the ardour of his wooing, and possibly end by making him a victim of genuine passion. (146)

Everard is gripped with tumultuous emotions and is aware that "passion is overmastering him" (181). He appears 'taken over' by the fiction and, in describing Rhoda as the scorning woman,

inscribes himself as the 'love-sick suitor'. In response to this loss of personal control, Everard exerts more force on Rhoda through language and physical presence. He describes how he "took possession of one of her hands" (180) in a now unconscious retracing of the poetry he first quoted. He conforms to the tradition of past fictions and, in doing so, his current fiction writes the fall of Rhoda.

When Everard and Rhoda meet by the sea, both have been seduced by their fictions. Everard differentiates himself from the literary character Quixote ("I am no Quixote, hoping to convert the world" [265]), but his succeeding words conceive of Rhoda and himself in terms of the lofty idealism of the romantic suitor: "He must be able to regard her as magnanimous, a woman who had proved herself worth living or dying for. And he must have the joy of subduing her to his will" (265). Rhoda has also been seduced by this fiction of romance. She retreats from the political ideal of a free union to the sanctuary of marriage--yielding to, and falling for, this convention with its prewritten form.

Both characters envisage themselves as conquerors, yet face the realisation of a slippage, or a fall, into the other role of conquered. Everard fails his own rakish image, and Rhoda fails her political ideal. Having exchanged a commitment, they recognise that their romance has become the enactment of a courtly fiction and hence "neither was content" (268). Everard considers himself a pawn, manipulated by women:

As usual the woman had her way. She played upon his senses, and made him her obedient slave. To prolong the conflict would have availed nothing; Rhoda,

doubtless, was in part actuated by the desire to conquer, and she knew her power over him. So it was a mere repetition of the old story--a marriage like any other. (268-9)

Rhoda experiences similar doubts and senses her yielding to have been a weakness. The marriage may be seen by others as a success, but she fears her desire for it represents a fall in Everard's eyes:

She had triumphed splendidly. In the world's eye this marriage of hers was far better than any she could reasonably have hoped, and her heart approved it with rapture. . . . But must not Everard's conception of her have suffered? In winning her had he obtained the woman of his desire? (269)

Having been the object of male desire, having been conquered in the process of her own conquering, having failed in her own precepts, Rhoda falls from her and Everard's constructed heights. She has repeated the fictions she first sought to avoid by succumbing to her own romantic reading and writing of them. Her fall parallels Monica's fall, and is also a re-writing of that of Amy Drake, the young girl reputed to have been seduced by Everard¹³. The naming of Everard as Monica's seducer confirms the duality of these women's falls. While Monica's sin was in marrying where love did not exist and thus prostituting herself, Rhoda's rejection of marriage when love does exist is also presented as a moral wrong.

¹³Everard's implied associations with women reinforce his actant function as seducer in The Odd Women. His enactment of this role completes the reader's earlier invitation to penetrate Rhoda's text.

She has prostituted herself to a cause and denied her own desire. She now persuades herself that "sexual love had become, and would ever be, to her an impure idea, a vice of blood" (281). Rhoda returns to the house and recognises the changes wrought in herself:

Her first sensation when she looked upon the white bed was one of disgust; she thought it would be impossible to use this room henceforth, and that she must ask Miss Barfoot to let her change to another. . . . In frenzy of detestation she cursed the man who had so disturbed and sullied the swift, pure stream of her life. (282-3)

Removed from the white purity of the ideals she once occupied, Rhoda is presented as fallen; her representation has adopted the traditional descriptors of the sexually fallen woman. While Everard restores his manhood through a conventional marriage to Miss Agnes Brissenden, Rhoda is left having failed and fallen in her own fictions and in those written around her.

Hence Rhoda, while never named as such in the text or by critics, is presented as a fallen woman. Implicit in this presentation is a pornographic process of un-naming her. She is written and taken as object by the reader and the reader's representative within the text. Thus her unnamed fall is also an un-naming.

II.

Falling
from
Discourse

4. Taking her Literally

The fallen woman's relationship to language is subversive. Her fall is read and written in symbolic discourse, but it also represents a fall from this system. In symbolic discourse, the devalued literal is associated with the feminine and the privileged figurative with the masculine. Thus, gender struggles are also enacted rhetorically. In their falls, Rhoda and Monica are displaced from this gendered system. Their fall in discourse is also a fall from discourse. Examining this displacement of the fallen woman involves first examining the position of women in symbolic discourse.

The acquisition of representational language marks the split between sign and referent; literal meaning is then always present elsewhere. Margaret Homans argues that the identification of women "with nature and matter in any traditional thematics of gender" (4) associates her in representation with the absent referent, which is the literal in the Lacanian myth of language acquisition. "Different valuations of the literal and figurative originate," she continues, "in the way our culture constructs masculinity and femininity" (5). Considering the problematic positioning of women writers, Homans reviews Jacques Lacan's myth of language and gender. In the time before entry to symbolic discourse, "no gap has opened up between signifier and signified" (6). This pre-oedipal stage (in the Freudian construction) is

interrupted by the intrusion of the phallus, and the child learns the 'Law of the Father', or symbolic discourse which is "the sign system that depends on difference and the absence of the referent" (70). In this system, the object of representation (the literal) always exists elsewhere and it is the illusion of this figurative representation that sustains a text. Figuration is then valued as the entrance to the symbolic order:

language is structured as the substitution for the (female) object of signifiers that both require the absence of the object and also permit its controlled return, something *like* the lost object. Figuration, then, and the definition of all language as figuration gain their hyperbolic cultural valuation from a specifically male standpoint because they allow the son, both as erotic being and as speaker, to flee from the mother as well as the lost referent with which she is primordially identified. Women must remain the literal in order to ground the figurative substitutions sons generate and privilege. (9)

Substitutes for the now forbidden mother are generated in this system of differences and absences. Although Lacan's narrative depends on the literal difference of organs, it is on the figurative level that meaning, signification and power are produced; to take something literally is to get it wrong and be oblivious to the higher order chain of signifieds. A figurative understanding is the correct intellectual stance. Further, the figurative is symbolically associated with the masculine and with a greater conceptual understanding--it recognises the arbitrary nature of representation. In contrast, the devalued literal is associated with the feminine, and does not distinguish between sign and referent.

The Odd Women, with its focus on language exchanges, represents gender within this dualist configuration and its accompanying valuations. Although the fallen woman's relationship to discourse shifts subsequent to her fall, she begins, like other women, associated with the literal. Mrs Poppleton is the grotesque illustration of women's exclusion from the masculine figurative and confinement to the literal. Figurative discourse is incomprehensible to her, and her literalism is presented as a form of dullness. She is condemned to a pathetic representation in Everard's narrative, with its implicit privileging of the figurative:

'Mrs Poppleton not only never made a joke, but couldn't understand what joking meant. Only the flattest literalism was intelligible to her; she could follow nothing but the very macadam of conversation--had no palate for anything but the suet-pudding of talk . . . Again and again I have heard [her husband]--what do you think?--laboriously explaining jests to her. . . . Why *would* he attempt the impossible? But the kind fellow couldn't disregard his wife's request. Shall I ever forget her "Oh--yes--I see"?--when obviously she saw nothing but the wall at which she sat staring.' (79-80)

Everard makes explicit this feminine exclusion, contrasting the mimicry of her figurative "I see" with the limitation of her literal vision. The attempt to include her in the figurative disrupts the existing order for the male to such an extent that her husband, not her, is driven mad by dint of trying to involve her. Thus, the privileging of the figurative is dialectically dependent on the literal, which exists as the initiating point for the figurative. Thus, this gendered system is reliant on the repression of the literal as the debased and absent object of representation.

The limitations of the feminine response are made more apparent in the training of women for clerical positions in The Odd Women. As clerks, women are further involved in mimicry. Their task is the literal replication of male speech and texts, without the incumbrance of comprehending meaning¹⁴. While the work of the clerk is an emasculating and degrading existence for the male, as Widdowson discovers, for women it is presented as the gratifying opportunity for financial independence. However, it is the opportunity to reproduce and copy male discourse; it creates no recognised space or expression for women. In this way, it continues the tradition of women and wives acting as proofreaders, typists and secretaries in such characters as Dorothea Brooke, of Eliot's Middlemarch. Women may not self-represent, and remain entrapped and diminished in the copying of 'man-made' textual constructs. Any feminine production of meaning or control over discourse is illusory.

Thus, while the lecture that Mary Barfoot delivers appears strident in its subject matter, it grapples with expression and meaning. Titled 'Woman as an Invader', it is a verbal response to a penned note from a male author, and is delivered to a female audience. Mary's use of the figurative image at first appears startling and revolutionary. Yet, rather than renouncing the social constructions of gender, Mary sets out to 'invade', to colonise for women, what has traditionally been the male domain. Where the

¹⁴Karen Chase examines the historical context of The Odd Women, considering the clerical ideal for women and the rhetorical implications of this development. She discusses the connection of the literalism of a clerk's labour with Rhoda's 'literal-minded imaginative response' (235).

male has invaded and dominated the female, Mary proposes a reversal and states "I don't care if we crowd out the men or not" (136). She uses figurative discourse, but in speaking it she is not freed from the literal association. Women, she says, must invade. However, this sexual metaphor implies women occupying a masculine role, and so repeats masculine imagery. Mary wishes to "do away with that common confusion of the words womanly and womanish" (135), but only by means of exchanging the dichotomised gender constructions. Her words are themselves subverted by the awkward gender reversal of the figurative image, and by their context (a spoken delivery to a female audience in response to a male query). Thus, while Mary recognises linguistic domination, she is limited to a replication of male expression in discourse.

Mary's spoken response to the written male letter is indicative of the struggle that takes place between these two forms. The written is privileged over the spoken. It is identified with the more highly valued figurative and hence associated with the masculine, while the spoken literal is associated with the feminine. Male characters engage in written communication--most of which is directed to women and is about women. The written status bestows a sense of permanence to its [figurative] representations by the metaphorical fixing, or penning, of its subject matter. The written objectifies its object and so becomes a powerful medium for control. Thus, Rhoda's features are described as "legible" (21), Widdowson at one stage vows not to molest Monica "not even by writing" (300), and Everard scribes his love in a fashion that Rhoda prohibits when face to face. The valued written form gives

authority to expression and assumes a control over the receiver, the woman.

Dr. Madden, the first male introduced in the text, is emasculated by his slippage to the spoken. He is so incapacitated that he may only sign a transcribed copy: "But the sufferer's respite only permitted him to dictate and sign a brief will; this duty performed, Dr. Madden closed his lips forever" (6). The account of the death of this fallen patriarch is sardonic and perfunctory. Further, death is described as the closing of [feminine] lips rather than the more masculine image of his eyes, or gaze. His impotence is intimated through this 'lip-service' that displays his confinement to the verbal and exclusion from the written--the implications of which are demonstrated in subsequent pages as his inability to protect and provide for his daughters is revealed. This association of the patriarch with the spoken implies a feminisation.

Widdowson is also feminised by his relationship to language and association with the literal replication of texts. When Monica begins to exceed the character that Widdowson has written for her, his apologies and entreaties are penned to her in the figurative discourse of romance. However, these penned entreaties and wild declarations of love are a parody of the Petrarchan tradition. Although written and associated with the valued figurative form, the contents are a feminine imitation of the original; they replicate traditions without producing meaning. Widdowson, who once worked as an anonymous clerk, becomes engaged in a repeated reproduction of texts and letters that diminishes his authority and masculine status. In response, Monica merely glances at these letters and dismisses them--refusing to partake in the written

tradition that keeps a woman penned, and subverting Widdowson's fictions by denying them a reception. The texts are not even reproduced for the reader, further emasculating Widdowson, revealing the preposterous nature of these penned proclamations. However, they continue the association of the privileged written form as a male activity.

Yet, while the feminine literal is demeaned, the text does contain strong and overt criticism of the figurative romancing done by novelists. Rhoda issues a call for fiction to represent the "actual world" (58). This quest to represent the 'actual' seeks a return to the literal and a closing of the gap, existing in figurative representation, between signifier and signified. The existence of the literal both makes possible and endangers the figurative structures of literature. While engaged in the repression of the literal, the text seeks the literal by endeavouring to represent realism and bring into contact sign and referent. The object of this quest, what is desired, is both absent and unattainable. For a subject to complete its quest and attain the object of its desire implies a symbolic death, as the separation of the subject and the object of desire, the dualism by which both are constructed, is closed.

Thus the text both seeks and represses the literal; it is the paradox of fiction seeking to represent the actual. Everard, the text's most potent male character, enacts a similar quest. In pursuing Rhoda, Everard pursues the literal. To obtain her, and thus attain the object of his desire through completion of the quest, would be the destruction of the dualism and his subject position. The male self is constructed by the denigration of the objectified

other, and hence Everard would negate his subjectivity by a joining with the other. His quest is to trap, then conquer and subsequently exalt Rhoda, the feminine literal, to his figurative construction.

Everard's pursuit of the literal is then to give it a figurative representation, and hence maintain its repression. The text's early introduction to Rhoda, as a young woman, confirms her association with the devalued literal. This early Rhoda seems oblivious to distinctions between saying and meaning, sign and referent, and anticipates Mrs Poppleton's appearance:

[Mother] was not well enough to leave the house to-day; but, said Rhoda, the invalid preferred being left alone at such times.

'Are you sure she prefers it?' Alice ventured to ask. The girl gave her a look of surprise.

'Why should mother say what she doesn't mean?'

It was uttered with an ingenuousness which threw some light on Rhoda's character. (5)

Rhoda demonstrates the feminine exclusion from the masculine mode of figurative discourse. In exchanges with Everard, Rhoda again takes the primary literal interpretation. When he asks for a flower from her travels, she appears ignorant of the sexual and figurative connotations and, in a clerk-like response, replies punctiliously that she will "make a note of it" (265). He uses the figurative language of romance and its symbols, and she holds resolutely to the literal interpretation and referent.

Everard and Rhoda are pitted against each other by modes of communication. Everard writes to and poeticises Rhoda while

her response is limited to the spoken literal. When Everard proposes a free union, "she believed him entirely serious" (265). Although the text describes this as her 'idealism', the ironic tone implies it is a naivete that "enabled her to take him literally" (265). Rhoda and Everard's struggle through courtship is a struggle of words. Everard presses for an answer: "The one word of assent would have satisfied him" (265). Rhoda cannot give it as she fears "an ignominious failure of purpose after her word was given" (265). Yet for Everard, purpose was never present in his words.

Following Mary's letter, which implicates Everard in Monica's fall, Rhoda agonizes over what it 'means'. Everard refuses to be cross-examined, stating "As soon as you refuse to accept my word it's folly to ask further questions" (274). He reverses the accusations and challenges Rhoda to value his spoken word over Mary's written suspicions: "If I charged you with dishonour you would only have your word to offer in reply. So it is with me. And my word is bluntly rejected" (275). This claim to a gentlemanly word of honour offers no comfort to Rhoda who grapples with meaning and intention--neither of which seem clear in Mary's letter, or Everard's word. Having been consistently defined as the literal character, Rhoda now struggles to fix the meaning of words.

When Everard's purpose seems unclear, and "Appearances are strongly against [him]" (275), Rhoda is confronted by the shifting and duplicitous nature of signs. The struggle of these two characters is fought through words and meanings. Everard retells the story of Amy Drake, maintaining to Rhoda "That story has predisposed you to believe the worst things of me. If I hold you by force, you shall hear every word of it" (275). He describes the

nature of Amy Drake, but stops short of naming her: "They thought her a helpless innocent; she was a--I'll spare you the word" (275). Finally, he challenges Rhoda "Will you accept my word?" (276). When he announces to Rhoda that the union he had hoped for is no longer possible, "The words fell upon her heart like a crushing weight" (277). His words have trapped her, while their meaning and intention continue to elude her. In their final meeting, Rhoda struggles to match Everard's words with his intentions and to seal the rift between saying and meaning. Thus she adheres more strongly to the literal, in attempting to evade Everard's male entrapment of her.

In her resistance to this proliferation of meanings and hence resolute cling to the duplication of Everard's words, Rhoda attempts to escape male duplicity. When Everard proposes a legal form of marriage, Rhoda desires that he repeat exactly his earlier proposition (which was for a free union). Everard considers the literal repetition unnecessary; he repeats his intention, which has always been to legally marry Rhoda:

'I repeat what I said then: Rhoda, will you marry me?'

She looked fixedly at him.

'You didn't say that then.'

'What do the words matter?'

'That was not what you said.'

He watched the agitation of her features, until his gaze seemed to compel her to move. She stepped towards the fireplace, and moved a little screen that stood too near the fender.

'Why do you want me to repeat exactly what I said?' Everard asked, rising and following her. (325-6)

In the manner of the clerk, Rhoda has taken his words as literal translation of intention and wishes to copy them, to hear them repeated. Rhoda has taken him literally (that is, at his word), while Everard's play reveals the *différance* of meaning that eludes her. Jacques Derrida argues that the condition of meaning is the iterability of the sign, but that this is not bound to the sincerity (or seriousness) of the speaker (94). Derrida deconstructs J.L. Austin's premises of speech-act philosophy which seem immersed in the same beliefs that Rhoda displays. Austin wishes to "exclude from 'serious' consideration any instance of speech-act usage which manifestly fails to meet the requirement of meaning what it says" (Norris, 31). When Everard reveals himself to have been 'not quite serious', he challenges "the place of intentionality in the possibility of meaning" (Kamuf, 80). Rhoda's desire to quote Everard is in order to literally replicate the meaning and fix Everard in his intentions.

Yet in this request, Rhoda displays further the limitations of her literal association. It is the nature of the sign that it can always be cited and never be enclosed by context. Thus, while the literal Rhoda wishes to cite in order to replicate and fix meaning, Everard demonstrates the duplicitous nature of the sign which "can engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion" (Derrida, 97). His words have never been indicator of his intentions, and Rhoda's limitations have enabled her to take only the literal meaning.

The courtly and rhetorical struggle of this scene is also enacted metaphorically. In reaction to Everard's (and the reader's) penetrating gaze, Rhoda adjusts the 'little screen' that conceals and

closes off the feminised hole of the fireplace. The fire screen functions as a visible hymen, to veil the cavernous (and construed as carnivorous) fireplace opening. In moving the screen, Rhoda re-erects the membrane between the sexes, the hymen that stands between them. This movement is a territorial assertion, attempting to re-place the screen as barrier to the accomplishment of Everard's desire. The screen resembles the hymen in Derrida's description:

the hymen as a protective screen, jewel case of
virginity, virginal wall, most subtle and invisible veil,
which, in front of the hysteron, holds itself between the
inside and outside of the woman, therefore between
desire and accomplishment.

(Derrida, cited in Spivak, 175)

Rhoda's restatement of Everard's utterance is similarly placed as literal defense, or screen, against his shifting meaning. Rhoda is not, as Chase maintains, a "literal heroine" (236) whose repetition of words finally becomes an act of assault against Everard, the antagonist who first spoke them. Instead, the metaphorical enactment of this linguistic play indicates that Rhoda's mimicry functions as shielding screen (not assault) against the figurative invasion of the male.

Rhoda and Everard cannot find a language to speak which does not replicate this system of domination, or a union which does not repeat these oppressions. Their courtly sparring takes the form of a linguistic struggle for dominance of meaning; his irony challenges and is challenged by her literalism. They struggle through courtship to speak the same language (263). But this is not possible while Rhoda retains her womanly status. Her

constructed gender implies the relegation to the devalued literal and exclusion from the higher figurative system of generating meaning.

However, following her symbolic fall, Rhoda finds herself displaced from discourse. In the final scene of the text, it is apparent that she occupies a new position:

‘We flourish like the green bay tree. We shall have to take larger premises. By-the-bye, you must read the paper we are going to publish; the first number will be out in a month, though the name isn’t quite decided upon yet.’ (336)

Instead of the literal character who duplicates texts, as fallen woman Rhoda produces meaning. The paper to be published and the image of the green bay tree indicate a shift to the masculine realm of written and figurative discourse. Further, Rhoda speaks it in a strongly female identified scene. She carries Monica’s daughter in her arms, and the focus is on the future of these women. The implication is not that Rhoda is adopting a male mode, but that there has been a displacement from the gendered divisions of discourse. As a fallen woman, Rhoda is no longer confined to the spoken literal, but exists outside these masculine and feminine constructions. She accesses both the figurative and the literal, the spoken and the written.

From this exterior position, she exerts a control over discourse by producing and reproducing meaning in the publication of the paper. Yet this paper currently has no name, suggesting an openness and feminine resistance to male inscription. Its production is also outside the figurative representation of the text, and perhaps of symbolic discourse. It, and the space that Rhoda

now occupies, are not merely unnamed in symbolic discourse, but are unnameable; they exist outside the dualist gender divisions of language. This fallen woman has been displaced to a space unspeakable in dominant discourse.

Monica's fall is similarly a fall from symbolic discourse. Following her public naming, Monica takes a vow of silence and is also silenced by the text, which deprives her words of signification. She will not explain her conduct to Widdowson or to her sisters, or speak to clear herself of the suspicion of adultery. Although aware that the child will be mis-read as further sign of infidelity, she also realises that her own spoken denial will be insufficient to clear herself. Monica breaks her vow of silence only to speak to Rhoda, her dual. These two women share the connection of Barfoot who is actant in the narrative of each of their falls. Monica visits and speaks to Rhoda of her situation, and, as she leaves, they touch and murmur words, then part in silence. This murmuring and silent parting seems indicator of their joint displacement from discourse.

They embraced and kissed each other, Monica,
when she had withdrawn her hot lips, again murmuring
words of gratitude. Then in silence they went together
to the house-door, and in silence parted. (318)

Monica's 'hot lips' echo the warmth intimated by the parting of Rhoda's lips. Yet this scene is a mutual parting, and the echoes of the connoisseur's desire for penetration are discordant. The bond between these women appears an unspoken one, with only murmurs that do not form words in the text. In contrast to Rhoda's spatial defense of 'her opening' when faced by Everard, here the women go together to the house-door. Their falls have united them and displaced them in symbolic discourse.

While Monica chooses silence, she also has a silence imposed upon her. The letter she writes to Widdowson, intending to establish the paternity of her child, receives only a cursory reading. He cannot relinquish his "long cherished suspicion of Barfoot" (333), and so even the male text of Cosgrove's letter, which she encloses, is robbed of the "power over human lives" (295) that she intends. Its context, which is an enclosure within a female narrative, places it beyond Widdowson's comprehension. This feminine envelopment of a text stands in contrast to the masculine imagery of invasion. It is the female experience of enclosure rather than the masculine one of penetration, and Widdowson cannot find or define the 'meaning' in this female expression. Thus, he dismisses the letter and silences Monica:

Monica's statement he neither believed nor disbelieved; he simply could not make up his mind about it. She had lied to him so resolutely before; was she not capable of elaborate falsehood to save her reputation and protect her child? (333)

Although Widdowson sits with her at the end, "he did not look upon his wife's face" (334); Monica is defaced in symbolic discourse. In addition, her final words are heard as 'delirium'--sounds that do not make sense. Monica is silenced by the severance of her words from signification, and she too falls from discourse. Monica joins a tradition of women whose words are heard as "somewhat mad from the standpoint of reason, inaudible for whoever listens to them with ready-made grids, with a fully elaborated code in hand" (Irigaray, 29). Her sounds are relegated to the noise of babble and unintelligible murmurs, and, as prophesied by her name, Monica is "madden[ed]" in symbolic discourse by her fall from the literal to the space of the fallen woman. This is a space imposed on her by the

text's inability to reproduce her sounds and the denial of their signification, and it is a space taken up by her in the silence she maintains and the unspoken bond she shares with Rhoda.

Monica is further removed from the signification and discourse of the text by a literal absence in the final chapter. Titled 'A New Beginning', events revolve around the birth of Monica's child and Monica's death. Only reports of Monica's condition and a brief excerpt from her letter to Widdowson, penned two months earlier, are given. She is removed from the text, but her presence is registered by the symbol of the child (a daughter) who is read as product of her fall. Like Bella Royston, Monica functions as an absent presence. Once fallen, she exists outside the representation of the text, but marks the text with reminders of her existence.

The text closes with the unspoken union of Rhoda, Monica and the child, which is a triadic image in opposition to the dualist struggles for dominance:

Whilst Miss Madden went into the house to prepare hospitalities, Rhoda, still nursing, sat down on a garden bench. She gazed intently at those diminutive features, which were quite placid and relaxing in soft drowsiness. The dark, bright eye was Monica's. And as the baby sank into sleep, Rhoda's vision grew dim; a sigh made her lips quiver, and once more she murmured, 'Poor little child!' (336)

These murmurs echo those exchanged by Rhoda and Monica. The mirrored responses between Rhoda and the child indicate a bonding between this fallen woman, who is surrogate mother, and

the child of a fall. The mimicking of movements and the continuation of Monica through this daughter, are signs of a mothering bond, and the cryptic connection suggests an-other mode, a different language.

The fallen woman falls in discourse, and from discourse; she is taken from the literal and displaced to a place unspeakable. This displacement associates the fallen woman with the semiotic space.

5. The Semiotic Issue

Julia Kristeva uses the term 'semiotic' to indicate the symbiotic bond that exists between mother and child, and the residues of this energy that remain repressed. In her usage, the semiotic precedes entry to Lacan's symbolic, and so is beyond the representation of that system. Because of this difficulty of giving symbolic representation to the semiotic, Kristeva admits that the notion of the semiotic is "only a theoretical supposition justified by the need for description" (Stanton, 163). As the semiotic predates the symbolic and the acquisition of subjectivity, she ascribes it to a space, and locates this space using the Greek term 'chora'. This chora is "receptacle, unnameable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to naming, to the one, to the father, and consequently maternally connoted" (Grosz, 44). This notion of the semiotic must be opposed to the symbolic order:

The semiotic and the chora are explicitly maternal and feminine in Kristeva's account, while the symbolic is paternal, bound up with the concepts of the symbolic father and the castrated mother. It is the order of naming (naming is possible only on the subject's assumption of the father's Proper Name), reference, meaning, enunciation, and denotation. It harnesses and regulates the semiotic, providing energy and pleasure for the symbolic to sublimate and rechannel. For Kristeva, it is strictly impossible to calculate the

contributions of the semiotic to the symbolic, which, because it predates the symbolic, is unrepresentable, being absorbed but unacknowledged by the symbolic. (Grosz, 49)

The interaction of these two orders is a confrontational dialectic. The dominance of the symbolic must be maintained through the submersion of the semiotic. Points of crisis occur because, while the semiotic remains inherent in the symbolic, it also goes beyond it and threatens its position (Stanton, 163). The repressed semiotic at times intervenes into the order of the symbolic, thereby achieving a form of representation. These points of rupture, that mark certain texts, are heard as murmurs and sounds beyond representation, and as lacking signification in symbolic terms.

The fallen woman's displacement from the symbolic associates her with this repressed semiotic. Her fall is a fall from discourse. In The Odd Women, Monica becomes silent and is silenced. For Rhoda, her fall is also a slippage from the gender divisions of discourse, and at the close of the text she speaks from a new position. This fall from discourse disrupts the symbolic order, marking it with murmurs of the semiotic. This has been seen in Monica and Bella's function as absent presences, and in Monica's letter to Widdowson which, with its feminine context of enclosure, cannot be defined by him. Similarly, Monica's final words are heard as delirium and, in Mary Barton, Esther speaks 'wildly' before she dies (465). This process of disruption continues with Rhoda who takes over mothering Monica's child, and the paper she is to publish which cannot be named in the text. Thus, the

symbolic order is disturbed by the fallen woman's displacement from the literal, and this disturbance is heard as murmurings of the semiotic.

If the fallen woman is associated with the semiotic, then her child bears a subversive relationship to symbolic language. The child is stigmatized by its illegitimacy, which is a lack of a father's name. In Lacanian terms, *le Nom du Père* (the Name of the Father) is the symbolic Father's Law. The illegitimate child lacks this Law which would provide entry to the symbolic order. Thus the fallen woman and her child rupture the symbolic, and the narrative treatment of them reflects the attempted repression of their disruptive presence.

This is seen in Egg's traditional narrative 'Past and Present', which severs the image of the fallen woman and her child from that of her orphaned daughters. These two groupings are irrevocably separated by the centrepiece, the discovery of the woman's fall, that stands between them. The child of the fall, the semiotic issue, is in opposition to the other figures; they are daughters of the patriarchy conceived within marriage. The masculine pronoun that has identified them as 'his' children, confirms them as under *le Nom du Père*, that is, under the constraints and domination of the symbolic order. Although the child from the fall has died, the image of the disconsolate daughters, in 'Prayer', demonstrates they are still subject to the disorder it has created. The fallen woman, in her bonding with this child, indicates her own displacement from the symbolic order. The dead child in her arms, that suggests infanticide, is the attempted repression of the semiotic by the erasure of its product--the child. This repression of the semiotic

child is to be followed by the silencing of the fallen woman whose self-inflicted drowning is imminent. Thus the symbolic responds to sever the mother-child semiotic bond, and to restore the dominant order.

This process of restoration is repeated in Mary Barton. Initially, the illegitimate child Esther Barton bears is given a form of legitimacy by the presence of its father. It is when he leaves that Esther, and her child, suffer the consequences of her fall. With the father now absent, the child has only her maternal legacy and is returned to the semiotic space. The narrative must repress this potential expression of the semiotic. Consequently, the child, who lacks a father and is therefore unable to enter the symbolic, is taken ill and dies. Esther's association with the semiotic is apparent on her deathbed when, drawn back to the memory of the maternal bond with her child, she reaches for the locket that hangs "concealed in her bosom" (465). Holding this locket containing her child's hair, she dies. Esther and her child's deaths may be read in the context of the restoration of order through the repression of figures whose mark is the semiotic.

Although the symbolic is also disturbed in The Odd Women, the repression of the semiotic seems almost beyond the representation of the text. While Monica and Bella, the publicly named fallen woman, are successfully silenced, other disturbances remain. Widdowson refuses to acknowledge paternity of Monica's child. Having been denied the defining name of a father, this child, though legitimate, is read as the product of a fall. It has only the maternal language of sighs and murmurs and, like Rhoda's paper, is nameless and unable to be represented in the text. Further, the

physical likeness of the child to its mother ("The dark bright eye was Monica's" [336]) is affirmation of its matrilinear descent. While the narrative seeks to silence the murmurs of the semiotic with the death of its fallen mother, the child survives. Perhaps because it does not lack a father, but instead is denied one, the death of the child cannot be justified in the narrative and so it remains as cryptic confirmation of the repressed space of the semiotic.

This female child of Monica's, who has no father's name, is to be reared by women. She is a daughter of the semiotic, and is to be nursed by Alice, Virginia and Rhoda--women who are themselves odd or displaced from dominant discourse. Rhoda, as a fallen woman and the dual of Monica, connects with this child; heard through their mirrored movements and responses is the continuation of the murmuring of the semiotic that took place between Monica and Rhoda. It is the failure of the symbolic text to contain and limit these sounds, to silence their subversion, that makes this final image of Rhoda and the child emblematic for the semiotic and problematic for the symbolic. This child, the issue of the semiotic, is both hope and harness of women. The semiotic space, and the opportunity for female expression that it offers, must eventually be repressed by symbolic discourse. Rhoda's final murmur "Poor little child" (336) is perhaps indicative of the child's fate: she must be silenced, through death or entry to the symbolic, for order to be restored.

In Gaskell's Ruth, narrative contortions are required to promote this process of restoration of the symbolic. Following her fall, Ruth is about to commit suicide in a dark mountain pool when she is found by Thurston Benson, a minister. This male rescuer is

a representative of God's Word and, in taking her back to his home, he provides Ruth with fatherly protection and its associated access to the symbolic. Initially Benson's sister, Faith, considers that Ruth's child will be the "badge of her shame!" (119). That is, it will function as the symbol of Ruth's fall, as do the children in other fallen woman narratives. However, Benson argues that this "little innocent babe . . . may be God's messenger to lead her back to Him" (119). Thus the child, as another male rescuer, can restore Ruth to the Father's Word and the symbolic order. To protect the child, and enable Ruth's rescue, Benson and his sister provide a story of respectability that permits Ruth to pass as Mrs Denbigh--a widow, not a fallen woman. Ruth's illegitimate male child is thus given a mythical father which allows him to be named, Leonard Denbigh, and to enter the symbolic order.

When Ruth's seducer Henry Bellingham reappears as Mr Donne, Ruth is publicly named fallen and the semiotic is reawoken; this threatens to again disturb the symbolic order. Following an epidemic in the town, and having nursed her seducer back to health, Ruth succumbs to illness herself. On her deathbed, her madness seems the reemergence of the semiotic:

There she lay in the attic room in which her baby had been born, her watch over him kept, her confession to him made; and now she was stretched on the bed in utter helplessness, softly gazing at vacancy with her open, unconscious eyes, from which all the depth of their meaning had fled, and all they told was of a sweet, childlike insanity within. (448)

However, at the moment of her death, Ruth raises herself and speaks: "I see the Light coming" (448). Thus, the final image of

her death is a symbolic unification with God. The threat of the semiotic that she expressed has been silenced by the restoration of a higher order and Father's word.

Further, Ruth's saintly death and union with God provides a spiritual paternity for Leonard. God, as the 'legitimized spiritual Father', supplants Donne as the 'illegitimate physical father'. This affirms Benson's early construction of Leonard as a 'child of God'. Benson's refusal of Donne's offer to financially provide for the child, juxtaposes spiritual and physical fathers:

'I thank God, 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.' (454)

At the close of the text, Leonard is found by Davis and Bradshaw mourning at his mother's graveside. Davis, who is also illegitimate, is the surgeon to whom Leonard is apprenticed and acts as a paternal figure. He is accompanied by Bradshaw, a strong patriarchal figure in the text, who leads Leonard away from the grave and home to Benson. The presence of these surrogate fathers, and of the spiritual father, acts to protect Leonard from his maternal inheritance of the semiotic. This ensures his survival in the symbolic.

The narrative treatment of the fallen woman and her child is the process of restoring the dominant order of the symbolic. The fallen woman's displacement from the literal is a fall from the symbolic, which associates her with the forbidden semiotic. Her presence threatens to rupture the prevailing order and she and

the semiotic must be silenced. Thus the fallen woman's placement in discourse is a displacement that necessitates repression.

Conclusion:

The Order of the Symbolic

The inevitable repression of the fallen woman suggests a greater signification than the demise of a mere individual. The fallen woman is a wayward figure in the symbolic system, and that system requires her repression. This is then written into the order of the symbolic--including her exclusion in its very structure, and enacting the confrontational dialectic of the semiotic and the symbolic. While inherent in the symbolic, the fallen woman goes beyond this system and always threatens to disrupt it with the mark of the semiotic.

The consequences of a woman's fall are then a narrative convenience that expels the figure who has no name or place in the symbolic order. The text, produced in the symbolic, is unable to conceive of an order outside the mode of its own production. This necessitates the silencing of the semiotic, and the space of the fallen woman. Any redemption or tenderness shown (as in the case of Ruth or Esther) is conditional on her inevitable death and the assurance of the restoration of order.

The recognition that the form of the fallen woman is a male construction suggests male desire is the repression of the female expression of the semiotic, and is also the destruction of its representations. The fallen woman's murder of the Other disturbs the existing order and gives expression to the semiotic. This necessitates the subsequent murder of the figure who represents disruption. In discursive terms, her silencing is the repression of the mark of the semiotic.

This process of silencing and restoration of order must be justified in the narrative. With the public naming of the woman as 'fallen', her death may be named 'justice'. The public desire for this justice is thus the justification of the desire for the restoration of the symbolic, and consequent repression of the semiotic.

The association of the fallen woman with the semiotic is confirmed by the process of reading her, which unnames her. As she is read, her face is taken as body and inscribed as text. The reader takes pleasure from her unnamings and the activation of the semiotic, assured of its inevitable silencing. The pleasure taken from her representation is thus the pleasure taken from her sexuality and from her mortality--that is, from the disruption and restoration of order.

These successive readings and writings form the site of the fallen woman. Each overlay consists of her placement in discourse, her displacement to the semiotic, and the inevitable replacement of the symbolic order. This thesis has explored that process of placement and displacement, referring to selected images and readings of fallen women. Traces of the semiotic and

the displacement of the fallen woman may perhaps be found in other texts, such as David Copperfield or Tess of the d'Urbervilles. This thesis has sought to provide a means to reconsider the site of the fallen woman, and the overlay it presents is an invitation to continue this process.

Works Cited

- Auerbach, Nina. "The Rise of the Fallen Woman." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 35.1 (1980): 29-52.
- Barreca, Regina. "Introduction: Coming and Going in Victorian Literature." Sex and Death in Victorian Literature. Ed. Barreca. London: MacMillan, 1990. 1-8.
- Basch, Françoise. Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel. Trans. Anthony Rudolf. New York: Schocken, 1974.
- Boumelha, Penny. "The Narrator in Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles." Issues in Contemporary Critical Thought. Ed. Peter Barry. London: MacMillan, 1987. 138-43.
- Chase, Karen. "The Literal Heroine: A Study of George Gissing's The Odd Women." Criticism 26.3 (1984): 231-44.
- Cotes, Alison. "New Women and Odd Women." The Gissing Newsletter 14.2 (1978): 1-20.
- David, Deirdre. "Ideologies of Patriarchy, Feminism, and Fiction in The Odd Women." Feminist Studies 10.1 (1984): 117-39.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds. Ed. Peggy Kamuf. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. 82-111.
- Eakin, David B. "Gissing and the Feminist Critics." The Gissing Newsletter 15.4 (1978): 16-19.
- Eakin, David B. "Gissing and Women: A Response" The Gissing Newsletter 15.3 (1978): 14-19.
- Edelstein, T. J. "Augustus Egg's Triptych: A Narrative of Victorian Adultery." The Burlington Magazine 75.961 (1983): 202-10.
- Fahnestock, Jeanne. "The Heroine of Irregular Features: Physiognomy and Conventions of Heroine Description." Victorian Studies 24.3 (1981): 325-50.
- Fernando, Lloyd. "New Woman" in the Late Victorian Novel. London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1977.

- Fryckstedt, Monica Correa. "Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton and Ruth: A Challenge to Christian England." Diss. Upsala U, 1982. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis Studia Anglistica Upsaliensia 43 (1982): 120-208.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. Mary Barton. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985.
- Gissing, George. The Odd Women. London: Norton, 1977.
- Goode, John. George Gissing: Ideology and Fiction. London: Vision, 1978.
- Grylls, David. The Paradox of Gissing. London: Allen and Unwin, 1986.
- Gubar, Susan. "Representing Pornography: Feminism, Criticism, and Depictions of Female Violation." Critical Inquiry 13.4 (1987): 712-41.
- Hardy, Thomas. Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981.
- Hartsock, Nancy. "Foucault on Power: A Theory for Women?" Feminism/Postmodernism. Ed. Linda J. Nicholson. London: Routledge, 1990. 157-75.
- Homans, Margaret. Bearing the Word. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1986.
- Irigaray, Luce. This Sex Which is Not One. Trans. Catherine Porter and Carolyn Burke. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1985.
- Jameson, Fredric. The Political Unconscious. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1981.
- Jean, Marcel. Histoire de la Peinture Surréaliste. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1959.
- Kalikoff, Beth. "Victorian Sexual Confessions." Victorian Institute Journal 18 (1990): 99-112.
- Kamuf, Peggy, ed. A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds. New York: Columbia UP, 1991.
- Kofman, Sarah. "The Narcissistic Woman: Freud and Girard." French Feminist Thought: A Reader. Ed. Toril Moi. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987. 210-226.
- Kristeva, Julia. "The System and the Speaking Subject." Twentieth-Century Literary Theory. London: MacMillan, 1988.

- Lansbury, Carol. Elizabeth Gaskell. Boston: Twayne, 1984.
- Lesser, Wendy. "Even-Handed Oddness: George Gissing's The Odd Women." Hudson Review 37.2 (1984): 209-20.
- Linehan, Katherine Bailey. "The Odd Women: Gissing's Imaginative Approach to Feminism." Modern Language Quarterly 40 (1979): 358-75.
- Maglin, Nina Bauer. "Fictional Feminists in The Bostonians and The Odd Women." Images of Women in Fiction: Feminist Perspectives. Ed. Susan Koppelman Cornillon. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green U Popular P, 1972. 216-36.
- Markow, Alice B. "George Gissing: Advocate or Provocateur of the Women's Movement?" English Literature in Transition 25.2 (1982): 58-73.
- Memmi, Albert. The Colonizer and the Colonized. Boston: Beacon, 1967.
- Merquior, J. G. Foucault. London: Fontana, 1985.
- Nead, Lynda. Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain. New York: Basil Blackwell, 1988.
- Nochlin, Linda. "Lost and *Found*: Once More the Fallen Woman." Eds. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard. Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany. New York: Harper and Row, 1982. 220-245.
- Norris, Christopher. The Deconstructive Turn: Essays in the Rhetoric of Philosophy. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Pearson, Carol. The Female Hero in American and British Literature. New York: Bowker, 1981.
- Piper, David, ed. The Genius of British Painting. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975.
- Sarup, Madan. An Introductory Guide to Post-Structuralism and Postmodernism. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988.
- Sellers, Susan. Language and Sexual Difference. London: MacMillan, 1991.

- Showalter, Elaine. Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle. London: Bloomsbury, 1991.
- Silverman, Kaja. "History, Figuration and Female Subjectivity in Tess of the d'Urbervilles." Novel 18.1 (1984): 5-28.
- Sloan, John. George Gissing: The Cultural Challenge. New York: St. Martins, 1989.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Displacement and the Discourse of Women." Displacement: Derrida and After Ed. Mark Krupnik. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1983. 169-95.
- Stanton, Domna C. "Difference on Trial: A Critique of the Maternal Metaphor in Cixous, Irigaray, and Kristeva." The Thinking Muse: Feminism and Modern French Philosophy Eds. Jeffner Allen and Iris Marion Young. Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1989.
- Stoneman, Patsy. Elizabeth Gaskell. Sussex: Harvester Press, 1987.
- Valverde, Mariana. "The Love of Finery: Fashion and the Fallen Woman in Nineteenth Century Social Discourse." Victorian Studies 32.2 (1989): 169-88.
- Vicinus, Martha. "Sexuality and Power: A Review of Current Work in the History of Sexuality." Feminist Studies 8.1 (1982): 133-56.