

MADNESS IN MARRIAGE: EROTOMANIA AND MARITAL RAPE IN HE KNEW HE WAS RIGHT AND THE FORSYTE SAGA

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Abstract

This article challenges the view that the Victorian novel is based on an essentially female courtship plot leading to marriage by reassessing the assumption that it presents marriage as a healthy physical and psychological fulfilment of masculine desire. Drawing attention to the failed and masculine marriage plot, I argue that Anthony Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* (1869) and John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga* (1906-21) illustrate dangers of masculine desire and the pathologisation of jealousy. Both writers position themselves within hotly debated areas of nineteenth-century marital law, viewing their male protagonists through the eyes of a judge and jury. The use of psychological language to describe jealous monomania illustrates the influence of new forms of psychiatry upon fiction, and there is evidence of reciprocal contributions to that new discipline. Combining the analysis of Victorian marriage law reforms, treatises on insanity, and studies of marital violence, this article considers Trollope and Galsworthy's novels in a new light. Trollope's writing can be seen as a foundation for Galsworthy's more overt critique of Victorian marriage laws, such as the legality of marital rape, while masculine desperation for absolute control, increased rather than reduced by marriage, is presented as a cause of psychological disorders such as erotic monomania or erotomania.

The Failed Marriage Plot

Despite the proliferation of research on women in Victorian culture in recent years, an extensive re-evaluation of texts which subvert the traditional marriage plot has not yet taken place. Victorian studies has scarcely moved beyond Ian Watt's assertion in *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) that 'the great majority of novels written since *Pamela* have continued its basic pattern, and concentrated their main interest upon a courtship leading to marriage'.¹ A wedding in the closing pages of a novel closes off narrative possibilities as well as marking the successful result of courtship. D.A. Miller has argued that novels ending in happy marriages, like Jane Austen's, 'inhibit narrative productivity'. Emma and Mr Knightley's marriage, for instance, 'must end the novel [...] otherwise, it would not be a "perfect" union'.² This article builds on Kelly Hager's research on divorce, and argues that a trend towards the imperfect marriage and the failed-marriage plot gained force from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, three decades earlier than has previously been suggested.³ It also identifies fiction

¹ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), p. 154.

² D.A. Miller, *Narrative and Its Discontents* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 4.

³ See Kelly Hager, *Dickens and the Rise of Divorce: The Failed-Marriage Plot and the Novel Tradition* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).

which framed this primarily as a male rather than female plot, and argues that writers of these novels drew attention to difficulties surrounding male agency in the context of psychology and a crisis of masculinity within Victorian culture.

Depictions of men's borderline or absolutely monomaniacal desire to control the female body became increasingly explicit in literature towards the end of the nineteenth century. This desire culminates, in extremis, in the act of rape. Once depicted in Samuel Richardson in *Pamela* (1740), the possibility of rape festered just beneath the surface of early- and mid-nineteenth-century fiction, before emerging in more explicit narratives with characters such as Alec D'Urberville in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) and Soames Forsyte in the first novel of John Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga, The Man of Property* (1906).

In *The Woman in White* (1860) Wilkie Collins described the secret administration of Count Fosco's violence thus:

His management of the Countess (in public) is a sight to see. He bows to her, he habitually addresses her as 'my angel,' he carries her canaries to pay her little visits on his fingers [...] he kisses her hand [...] he presents her with sugar-plums [...] which he puts into her mouth playfully [...]. The rod of iron with which he rules her never appears in company – it is a private rod, and is always kept upstairs.⁴

This 'private rod' is concealed not only from women's acquaintance, but also largely from the readers of early- to mid-Victorian fiction. However, the increasing public emergence of this rod in literature towards the end of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century can be identified.

It is often argued that marital unhappiness and failure became a new theme for the novel at the dawn of modernism, with seminal texts such as *Mrs Dalloway* (1925). Emily Blair, for instance, argues for a different area of continuity from Victorian novelists to Woolf, and writes that '[i]n her modernist masterpieces Woolf's depiction of femininity resonates with the depictions of Gaskell and Oliphant as she simultaneously reinvents the novel and revises the marriage plot'.⁵ Mary Poovey places this narrative shift at the end of the preceding century, with the emergence of the novel that 'would take as its subject marital unhappiness as well as bliss' in Thomas Hardy's writing in the 1890s.⁶ This article, however, will argue that this shift may be observed still earlier, in fiction from the 1860s.

⁴ Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (Ware, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth, 1993), p. 174.

⁵ Emily Blair, *Virginia Woolf and the Nineteenth-Century Domestic Novel* (Albany, NY: State of New York Press, 1997), p. 9.

⁶ Mary Poovey, 'Recovering Ellen Pickering', *Yale Journal of Criticism*, 13 (2000), 437-52 (p. 448).

In *The Forsyte Saga* Galsworthy's shockingly frank contribution to covert debates about women's rights within marriage confronts the issue of marital rape. This contribution is a particularly complex and interesting one. As well as laying bare the brutalities of a marriage based on servitude and mastery, Galsworthy also exposes the tragedy of male madness driven by sexual desire: a consideration generally overshadowed by disgust. He writes in his novel *In Chancery* (the second novel in the trilogy, published in 1920): 'Was there anything, indeed, more tragic in the world than a man enslaved by his own possessive instinct, who couldn't see the sky for it, or even enter fully into what another person felt!'⁷ Here Galsworthy echoes Anthony Trollope's description of Louis Trevelyan, who had 'made himself wretched in every affair of life' by his own obstinacy.⁸ Writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Galsworthy was able to write about an act of marital rape that takes place in the 1880s (the decade in which the novel is set): an act which, I argue, underlies concerns about marriage and a wife's independence in earlier fiction.⁹

Despite its early date, Trollope's novel also goes against the grain of Victorian fiction on the subject of marriage, making a thorough examination of the state of 'monomania'. The marriage in *He Knew He Was Right* (1868-69) marks the beginning of Louis' jealous mania, rather than the end of it. Elsewhere, the depiction of monomaniacal sexual desire in mid-Victorian literature tends to end when a marriage takes place, in keeping with the broadly idealistic formulation of the marital state within the courtship plot. The marriage service defines that the institution is ordained firstly for the procreation of children, and secondly, 'for a remedy against sin, and to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry, and keep themselves undefiled'.¹⁰ In keeping with this message, Charles Dickens presents marriage as a cure for jealous monomania in *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-65). This article explores novels which run counter to this ideal. I argue that novels like *He Knew He Was Right* may be read as pioneering texts on the subject of marital disharmony, madness and male desire, laying the foundations for later writers such as Galsworthy to write more explicitly about the pathologisation of sexual desire, and its violent potential consequences, such as rape.

Following the feminist tradition, many critics read the failed-marriage plot as a woman's plot: 'a plot that concerns itself primarily with the matter of female agency:

⁷ John Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 514. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

⁸ Anthony Trollope, *He Knew He Was Right* (London: Penguin, 2004), p. 325. Further references are given after quotations in the text.

⁹ Just fifteen years before the publication of this section of the saga, Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* scandalised readers with its portrayal of the raped woman as a morally pure victim. Galsworthy's Irene is similarly innocent of all blame for the violence she experiences.

¹⁰ *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments, and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church* (London: Rivington, 1850), p. 399.

it tends to revolve around a wife leaving her husband, an act that was both illegal and unacceptable'.¹¹ However, I argue that novels such as *He Knew He Was Right* frame the failed-marriage plot primarily as a man's plot. The consideration of the failed-marriage plot as a woman's plot is predicated on the assumption that female agency is the only form to be restricted and problematised by nineteenth-century marriage. The valuable feminist project of the exposure of the difficulties surrounding female agency have overshadowed the exposure of the masculine. James Eli Adams has explained the critical shying away from masculinity studies, suggesting that '[e]xplicit and sustained articulation of this emphasis within literary and cultural studies [...] has been resisted by those concerned that dwelling on the complexities and burdens of masculine identity would serve to obscure, and thereby to reinforce, the brute realities of male domination against which feminist analyses were and are in the first place directed'.¹² By examining aspects of the failed-marriage in terms of pathologised male desire, which inherently increases female repression, this article begins to address the gender imbalance in studies of Victorian psychology. In doing so it aims to illuminate rather than obscure additional instances of male domination, while resisting the assumption that women were the only "victims" in socio-psychological terms.

Marital Rape, Domestic Violence and the Law

Lawrence Stone has identified a late eighteenth-century revival of Puritan religion in England, bringing with it a resurgence of an old ideal of marital relationships: one based on 'the enforcement of patriarchy and obedience and the idealisation of female submission'.¹³ However, this puritanical model of marriage underwent a thorough interrogation and revision during the course of the nineteenth century in the press, fiction and even Parliament. Current historical debates are reassessing the popularity and practicalities of the 'companionate marriage', suggesting that such relationships were both less normative and less homogenous in nature than has previously been thought.¹⁴ James Hammerton has observed that companionate marriage frequently led husbands to be more aggressively assertive, rather than less, as its name might

¹¹ Hager, *Dickens and the Rise of Divorce*, p. 8.

¹² James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 3.

¹³ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1972), p. 667.

¹⁴ 'Companionate marriages', most often to a friend or cousin, were based on friendship and mutual understanding rather than passionate love, and were often childless. Having been popularised in the seventeenth century, the practice continued, albeit less widely, into the nineteenth century. Marianne Dashwood and Colonel Brandon's marriage in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) is one particularly well-known example. Also see Wendy Jones, *Consensual Fictions: Women, Liberalism, and the English Novel* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

imply.¹⁵ John Tosh argues that nonetheless, ‘companionate marriage stood at the heart of the Victorian ideal of domesticity’ and that such marriage ‘was assumed to be voluntary, not arranged or imposed, and to be for love, whatever secondary motives might be involved’.¹⁶ I suggest that an additional assumption is implied: that voluntary agency continues after the marriage takes place. The texts examined in this article dispute such continuity. Trollope’s and Galsworthy’s novels interrogate the assumption that happy, companionate marriage is the principal relationship in Victorian culture, instead drawing portraits of failed marriages, in which marital discord leads to violence and madness.

Marital rape was perceived as a technically impossible concept during the nineteenth century. A husband’s enforcement of his conjugal rights was entirely legal, and as such could not constitute the illegal act of rape. A wife’s consent was not required in the Victorian period, based on eighteenth-century law.¹⁷ John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor denounced marital rape as the epitome of the sexual double standard and a key aspect of women’s legal subordination in *The Subjection of Women* (1869).¹⁸ In 1888 the case of *R v. Clarence* contested the husband’s exemption from rape laws as an extension of coverture, although no agreement was reached by the nine judges.¹⁹

Denial persisted deep into the Victorian period that domestic violence could possibly be commonplace in the middle and upper classes. While such abuse in the Victorian period was expected to be meted out by stereotypical, brutish, working-class men, codes of *gentlemanliness* as opposed to generic manliness, could not possibly entertain such an idea. During the second reading of the Aggravated Assaults Act Amendment Bill in 1860, John Walter, MP for Berkshire, insisted in the House of Commons that if people ‘looked to the revelations in the Divorce Court they might well fear that if the secrets of all households were known, these brutal

¹⁵ James Hammerton, *Cruelty and Companionship: Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life* (London: Routledge, 2001), chapters 3-4.

¹⁶ John Tosh, *A Man’s Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 27.

¹⁷ Sir Matthew Hale’s legal treatise of 1736 states that ‘the husband cannot be guilty of a rape committed by himself upon his lawful wife, for by their mutual matrimonial consent and contract the wife hath given up herself in this kind unto her husband, which she cannot retract’. Matthew Hale, *History of the Pleas to the Crown*, 2 vols. (London: E. Rider, 1800), I, p. 628. The London barrister John Archbold also asserted that ‘a husband also cannot be guilty of a rape upon his wife’. See John Archbold, *Archbold’s Summary of the Law Relating to Pleading and Evidence in Criminal Case* (New York: Banks, Gould & Co., 1846), p. 571.

¹⁸ See Marina Morales, ‘Rational Freedom in John Stuart Mill’s Feminism’, in *J. S. Mill’s Political Thought: A Bicentennial Reassessment*, ed. by Nadia Urbinati and Alex Zakaras (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 43-65 (p. 55).

¹⁹ Marital rape was eventually outlawed in England and Wales when the case of *R v. R* reached the House of Lords on appeal in 1991.

assaults upon women were by no means confined to the lower classes'.²⁰ At this stage the divorce courts had been open for just over two years. The enormous increase in the number of divorces following their creation put much information about failing domestic relations, and the violence that was often attached, in the public domain for the first time, through press reports and other media. The high number of instances of such abuse was being revealed across all classes, making the idea of an inherent distinction between the working-class brutishness and middle- and upper-class gentlemanliness increasingly difficult to uphold.

A woman's existence as part of her husband's legal entity, rather than her own, sustained her legal vulnerability to domestic violence in two vital ways. Firstly, men were legally responsible for their wives' behaviour to a large extent, and so their right to "correct" transgressive behaviour with violence seemed logical.²¹ Secondly, by the same logic, marital violence perpetrated against women did not legally constitute an assault since women were not classified as separate from their husbands. Thus a husband's battery of his wife could be framed as a form of self-harm, free from legal redress.²² Despite the successful passage of the Divorce Bill in 1857, the first law against matrimonial cruelty was not passed until two decades later.²³ An amendment to the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1878 made provision for women to divorce their husbands on the grounds of cruelty and to claim custody of their children. Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* entered the thick of a complex network of debates about Victorian marriage and child custody, which interrogated the assumptions on which cultural and legal gendered distinctions were based.

Trollope's dissection of the intricacies of jealousy and subsequent monomania in marriage subverts normative representations of the institution in Victorian fiction, and constitutes a challenging contribution to contemporary debates. *He Knew He Was Right* opens with the Trevelyans embarking on a perfect ideal of companionate

²⁰ *Hansard* (House of Commons), vol. 158, 2 May 1860.

²¹ Roderick Phillips has pointed out the ways in which the right to physically chastise wives was integral to the legal marital relationship: 'In part this right was justified in terms of the legal obligations borne by the husband to answer for his wife's actions; because he was thus personally responsible for her misdeeds, it was considered reasonable that he should have the right to control her behaviour and to repress her when necessary'. Roderick Phillips, *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 324-25.

²² Caroline Norton, a major figure in nineteenth-century marital and child custody reform, made a plea to the Queen: to address the root cause of women's entrapment in abusive marriages without legal redress was a crucial one. Without existing separately from their husbands in legal terms, attempts to limit this key ground for women seeking legal separation could only be extremely limited.

²³ Although the Act for the Better Prevention and Punishment of Aggravated Assaults upon Women and Children (1853) imposed limits on the level of force which could legally be used by husbands on their wives (beyond which a prison sentence up to six months could be given), domestic violence remained lawful, and was actively encouraged by some judges as a correction to a wife's unruly or disobedient behaviour.

marriage, but goes on to chart its complete destruction. Trollope highlights the contrast between a companionate marriage entered into entirely voluntarily, and the subsequent restraints placed on both female and male agency: the former destroyed by the attempt to preserve the latter, which is itself shattered by repression and psychiatric illness.

Monomania and Erotomania

Trollope's writing is deeply rooted in psychological theory from the nineteenth century, and influenced by various seminal works. In particular he appears to have been familiar with Jean-Étienne Esquirol's ideas, and specifically his coining of the term 'monomania', a newly-identified form of insanity.²⁴ Monomania was classified in the Victorian period as a form of insanity which only showed itself when the patient thought or spoke about one particular subject.²⁵ The patient typically began to show obsessive thought patterns and behaviour on this subject, developing an *idée fixe* until it overtook his or her mind entirely, allowing little room to think of anything else. In J.C. Prichard's influential study, *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind* (1837), he defined monomania as a form of insanity 'in which the understanding is partially disordered or under the influence of some particular illusion, referring to one subject, and involving one train of ideas, while the intellectual powers appear, when exercised on other subjects, to be in a great measure unimpaired'.²⁶ Although divorce could be granted on the grounds of insanity, including monomania, the courts and the public struggled to find satisfactory ways of determining the severity of such mental conditions. Given that doctors' views and motives varied so considerably, there was widespread concern at the amount of power they wielded in the courtroom, making the final judgment about the extent of insanity in each case.²⁷

²⁴ Jean-Étienne Esquirol, *Mental Maladies: A Treatise on Insanity* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845).

²⁵ The *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that by 1897 the term 'monomania' had become outdated as a medical term.

²⁶ James Cowles Prichard, *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), p. 16.

²⁷ An anonymous journalist in 1885 reasoned, 'Now inasmuch as it is the function of a mad doctor to detect insanity, and as a mad doctor, like other people, aims at professional distinction, mad doctors who are able, and therefore ambitious, will always be anxious to discover insanity where no insanity was discovered before; and, whatever provisions are made for the protection of the insane and those connected with them, we shall have to be on our guard against the professional pride of mad doctors. But perhaps it will be time enough to consider these questions when the subject of lunacy generally has been placed on a moderately safe and reasonable footing', *The Star* (14 March 1885), p. 4. The most famous Victorian use of the insanity defence was in the case of Daniel

Whereas moral insanity was understood to transform behaviour in most aspects of the patient's life, impairing their natural temperament and feelings on numerous subjects, the term 'monomania' was applied to a single obsession which impaired the rational faculties. Furthermore, whereas the morally insane tended to retain their intellectual faculties, despite the alteration of their temperament, monomaniacs tended to lose all reason on the subject of their obsession. Such an illness was inevitably a concern to the periodical- and fiction-reading public who, entangled as they were in a prescriptive set of normative social behaviours, were apt to consider any unusual preoccupation a symptom of monomania. These kinds of lunatics could, therefore, remain in the community, undetected until a particular subject was broached. Literary scholarship on the subject of monomania includes Sally Shuttleworth's *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996), which reads monomania alongside moral insanity as 'invisible insanity', tracing Esquirol's influence through the English phrenologist Andrew Combe, before examining monomania in *Villette*.²⁸ Shuttleworth's more recent study, *The Mind of the Child* (2010), includes a thought-provoking section exploring sexuality in the context of childhood experience and psychology.

The primary conceptualisation of erotic monomania or erotomania in the Victorian period also comes from Esquirol's *Mental Maladies, a Treatise on Insanity* (1845), in which his careful disambiguation clarifies the definition. Most crucially, erotomania does not describe the same state as nymphomania: 'In the latter, the evil originates in the organs of reproduction, whose irritation reacts upon the brain. In erotomania, the sentiment which characterises it, is in the head. The nymphomaniac, as well as the victim to satyriasis, is the subject of a physical disorder. Erotomania is to nymphomania and satyriasis, what the ardent affections of the heart, when chaste and honourable are, in comparison with frightful libertinism'.²⁹ These 'ardent affections', becoming too extreme, constitute a pathology, with the patient exhibiting monomaniacal symptoms on the subject of the object of his or her love. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, new definitions of erotomania described the more active, potentially violent, symptoms we see in Galsworthy's account. John Quackenbos, for instance, writing during the year following *A Man of Property*'s publication, writes that 'erotomania', literally 'raving love', may remain in the imagination, but may be 'grossly sensual', perverted and quite repulsive.³⁰

McNaughton (1843), who was acquitted of the murder of Edward Drummond whom he had shot, mistaking him for Robert Peel (then Prime Minister). For a discussion of the insanity defence in Trollope see David. D. Oberhelman, 'Trollope's Insanity Defense: Narrative Alienation in *He Knew He Was Right*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 35 (1995), 789-806.

²⁸ Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 51-52.

²⁹ Esquirol, *Mental Maladies*, p. 335.

³⁰ John Quackenbos, *Hypnotic Therapeutics in Theory and Practice* (London: Harper and Brothers, 1908), p. 201.

Louis Trevelyan: The Deterioration of a Companionate Marriage and Melancholic Erotomania

Trollope's *He Knew He Was Right* is perhaps the most extended and detailed portrait of male monomania in the Victorian canon. The novelist uses the term 'monomaniacal' to describe his protagonist (p. 796). Suspecting (incorrectly) that his wife is conducting an affair with Colonel Osborne (her aging godfather, an MP), Louis Trevelyan gradually becomes mad with jealousy. Trollope periodically makes connections between Trevelyan's mental health and his masculinity. The two are closely intertwined from the outset of the narration, and deteriorate simultaneously. In highlighting these connections, Trollope becomes part of the discourse within Victorian culture which associates manliness with good health, both physically and mentally, and which perceives weakness in the mind (as madness was understood) as weakness in masculinity.

Ian Watt's claim that 'the great majority of novels written since *Pamela* have continued its basic pattern, and concentrated their main interest upon a courtship leading to marriage' is challenged by this novel.³¹ Here Trollope goes against this trend, describing the courtship of the central couple in the first two pages, swiftly skipping to events two years after their marriage. The subject of jealousy as a forerunner of male madness had been explored previously in novels such as Charles Reade's *Griffith Gaunt* (1866). Ellen (Mrs Henry) Wood's sensation novel *St. Martin's Eve* (1866) also discussed the theme, although here the symptoms occurred in a female character. In an article entitled 'Madness in Novels', the *Spectator* reviewed Wood's novel, complaining that the seriousness of mental illness was belittled by its use as a dramatic plot device. The anonymous reviewer expressed his hope that a realist novelist would take up the subject to produce a more considered psychological study. Wood, meanwhile, merely 'wants to paint jealousy in its extreme forms, and she has not of course the power to create Othello, or the art to paint, as Thackeray or Trollope might have done, the morbid passion in its naturalistic nineteenth-century dress'.³²

P.D. Edwards has suggested that this review, together with Eliza Lynn Linton's *Sowing the Wind* from 1867, may have been Trollope's inspiration for writing *He Knew He Was Right*.³³ He, however, would produce a more realistic study of jealousy in marriage, portraying mental disintegration by drawing extensively on contemporary medical writings. Linton's novel reveals her ideological struggle as she became a radical antifeminist, expressing disgust at the 'deficient attitudes which

³¹ Watt, *Rise of the Novel*, p. 154.

³² *The Spectator* (3 Feb. 1866), p. 135.

³³ P.D. Edwards, *Anthony Trollope: His Art and Scope* (Hassock: Harvester Press, 1966), p. 115.

women have lately assumed, and their indifference to the wishes and remonstrances of men'.³⁴

Various more recent critics have blamed societal pressures for the Trevelyan's tragedy, such as R.C. Terry, who drew attention to 'the destructive powers of society' in the novel, such as 'gossip, spying, and false council'.³⁵ Certainly these destructive powers have a strong effect in exacerbating Trevelyan's jealousy and his sense of embarrassment. At her dinner party Lady Milborough's observation of Louis's 'black' face and mood, deteriorating as she speaks, does not stop her observing that Colonel Osborne is 'a snake in the grass', liking to go 'about and making mischief between men and their wives' (p. 31). Trollope notes that 'to be cautioned about his wife's conduct cannot be pleasant to any man'. His natural reaction of being 'intolerably bitter' (p. 31) becomes less ordinary, however, as Trollope continues the process of pathologising Trevelyan's anxiety. Like Othello's, Trevelyan's feelings of jealousy seem to make a mockery of his masculinity and status in society; his emotion is 'the green-eyed monster which doth mock/ The meat it feeds on'.³⁶ In common with Soames Forsyte, who I suggest may be read as his literary successor, Louis is unable to bear the idea that his marriage is the subject of drawing-room gossip. Towards the end of the novel Trollope goes to some length to clarify that he places the blame squarely on Trevelyan's shoulders. In the context of nineteenth-century ideals of marriage and theories of monomania, the novel focuses on the psychological degeneration caused by erotomania and its consequences in marriage. In this case it takes a melancholic, chaste form, as described by Esquirol, while later fiction such as *The Forsyte Saga* depicts it in more highly sexualised, violent terms.

By demonstrating the transition from sanity to insanity by means of familiar emotions, such as jealousy, Trollope increases a sense of familiarity with mental disintegration, as well as the vulnerability of the human mind, which is never safe from the threat of insanity, whether manifested as absolute mania or brief moments of madness. As Mary Elizabeth Braddon's narrator in *Lady Audley's Secret* (1861-62) enquires: 'Who has not been, or is not to be, mad in some lonely hour of life? Who is quite safe from the trembling of the balance?' The balance is a highly precise one: 'There is nothing so delicate, so fragile, as that invisible balance upon which the mind is always trembling'.³⁷ Trevelyan's state of mind is at the centre of the novel,

³⁴ Eliza Lynn Linton, *Modern Women and What is Said of Them* (New York: Redfield, 1868), pp. 91-92. Some contemporary reviewers of *He Knew He Was Right*, sharing Linton's sentiments, placed the blame entirely on Louis Trevelyan's wife, Emily. An anonymous reviewer in the *Spectator*, thought to be R.H. Hutton, blames Emily entirely, condemning Trevelyan's sympathy for her towards the novel's close. *Spectator* (12 June 1869), pp. 706-8.

³⁵ R.C. Terry, *Anthony Trollope: The Artist in Hiding* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman, 1977), p. 138.

³⁶ William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. by Michael Neill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), III. 3. 166-67.

³⁷ Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (London: Wordsworth, 1997), p. 321.

which, running to more than eight hundred pages, gives Trollope ample opportunity to make a thorough dissection. Trevelyan experiences mental deterioration, dating from the point at which he achieves a culturally idealised position: marriage to the woman he loves, complete with beauty, obedience, a respectable family and suitable connections in society. We are told that ‘when Louis Trevelyan was twenty-four years old, he had all the world before him where to choose’ (p. 41).³⁸ Like Emma Woodhouse, ‘handsome, clever, and rich’, Louis Trevelyan makes his first impression on the reader in the novel’s first sentence as an extremely fortunate young person, and ‘a very pearl among men’ (p. 9).³⁹ He bears no resemblance to the withered hermit, hiding from his wife at Casalunga, outside Siena, whom we pity a few months later, despite achieving what appears to Society to be a highly successful match.

In seclusion in Italy, and later on his death bed in Twickenham, Trevelyan shows symptoms of erotomania, as outlined by Esquirol. He bears out the French psychologist’s observation that sufferers ‘neglect, abandon and fly both their relatives and friends’, as well as that in the absence of the object of their love, ‘the look of this class of patients is dejected; their



‘Louis Trevelyan at Casalunga’, illustration by Marcus Stone for chapter 84 of Anthony Trollope’s *He Knew He Was Right*

³⁸ Trollope quotes from *Paradise Lost*.

³⁹ Jane Austen, *Emma* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 5.

complexion becomes pale; their features change; sleep and appetite are lost. They are thoughtful, greatly depressed in mind, agitate, irritable'.⁴⁰

Louis Trevelyan remains rational throughout the novel, except on the subject of his wife's alleged infidelity. After Colonel Osborne's first few visits, uncharacteristically, he experiences great difficulty in deciding whether to complain or apologise to his wife: 'Though he believed himself to be a man very firm of purpose, his mind had oscillated backwards and forwards [...] affected by some feeling which pervaded him in reference to this man, that all his energy was destroyed, and his powers of mind and body were paralysed. He could not, and would not, stand it' (p. 23). Even at this very early stage in the novel, Trevelyan struggles to attain the balanced, rational mode of thought that he knows he ought to have on the subject, and we see symptoms of pathological jealousy begin to emerge.

There is no doubt about the diagnosis of madness made in the novel: 'Now Trevelyan was, in truth, mad on the subject of his wife's alleged infidelity. He had abandoned everything that he valued in the world, and had made himself wretched in every affair of life, because he could not submit to acknowledge to himself the possibility of error on his own part. For that, in truth, was the condition of his mind' (p. 325). The doctor at Trevelyan's death bed observes that 'his patient's thoughts had been forced to dwell on one subject till they had become distorted, untrue, jaundiced, and perhaps mono-maniacal' (p. 796). Finally, Trollope announces, 'At last the maniac was dead, and in his last moments he had made such reparation as was in his power for the evil that he had done' (p. 820). From the opening of the novel we have been told that Trevelyan 'was wise in many things', but not all, and that 'as Lady Rowley was the first to find out, he liked to have his own way'. Problematically, 'Emily likes her way too' (p. 11), and so we are not surprised that although legally obliged to obey Louis's direct commands, she may not do so willingly.⁴¹ In the course of the marriage, however, Trevelyan struggles to keep his instincts for mastery in check in favour of a companionate marriage, but is unable to achieve an agreeable balance.

Christopher Herbert has argued against the existence of 'a monolithic system of "male superiority and command"', suggesting instead that Victorian marriage 'amalgamates two distinct principles almost impossible fully to reconcile in practice, if not perhaps in theory: on the one hand, the principle of male supremacy so deeply rooted in custom and law and, on the other, the great cult of Home'.⁴² Trevelyan's

⁴⁰ Esquirol, *Mental Maladies*, p. 336.

⁴¹ Her father, Sir Marmaduke, supports the traditional ideal of feminine obedience, deciding that "[a]t any rate, if there were anything amiss with Emily's temper, it would be well that she should find her master in such a man as Louis Trevelyan" (pp. 10-11).

⁴² The home was idealised by Ruskin and defined by Stone as the foundation for a companionate marriage. See Christopher Herbert, 'He Knew He Was Right, Mrs. Lynn Linton, and the Duplicities of Victorian Marriage', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 25 (1983), 448-69 (p. 451).

mastery becomes monomaniacal and despotic as his desperation to assert his rights as a husband increases. His actions quickly come to embody male command in tyranny, while his rhetoric, repeating that Emily has free will, and need only admit to flirtation and wrongdoing in order to live at her marital home, indicates his anxiety to return to a peaceful, companionate mode.

Trollope's letters reveal that during the writing of *He Knew He Was Right* he was in communication with a number of psychologists, collecting material for his fictional case study. Crucially though, there is evidence that this channel of influence was reciprocal in nature, with not only the public, but also doctors reading the novel as pseudo-authentic history of monomania. Thus, in turn, the novel influenced scientific writings. Trollope wrote to one physician, 'I am gratified by the attention which your scientific analysis shews that you have given to the character of the unfortunate man which I attempted to draw in my novel'.⁴³ This traffic of ideas in both directions between literary and scientific disciplines is particularly interesting since it demonstrates that novels were being read as realities in themselves, rather than a mere reflection of them. Elizabeth Langland has argued that novelists and novels 'do not simply reflect the contemporary ideology. Rather, by depicting a material reality filled with and interpreted through ideology, they also expose ideology'.⁴⁴ I suggest that Langland's argument about ideology may be applied to psychology, as part of a wider argument about Victorian pre-disciplinarity. Trollope's combination of the psychological and the literary makes the interdisciplinary study of *He Knew He Was Right* the most appropriate method for today's scholars.

Trollope's clear knowledge of contemporary psychological theory enabled him to detail a realistic scientific case study in his fiction. Trevelyan bears out the theory that monomania stemmed primarily from personal matters rather than heredity, expounded by doctors such as Forbes Winslow and J.G. Davey. Trevelyan is entirely consumed by an unhealthy desire to be vindicated, even by proving that his wife has been unfaithful. He continues down this self-destructive path until 'his happiness had been shipwrecked' (p. 326). We are told that he hopes 'with the hope of the insane man, who loves to feed his grievance, even though the grief should be his death' (p. 327). The heightened suspicion we see so clearly in Trevelyan was central to the new mid-Victorian conception of monomania as revealed by Davey.⁴⁵

⁴³ *Letters of Anthony Trollope*, ed. by N. John Hall, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983), II, p. 1011.

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Langland, 'Nobody's Angels: Domestic Ideology and Middle-Class Women in the Victorian Novel', *PMLA*, 107 (1992), 290-304 (p. 291).

⁴⁵ Trollope's detailed description of Trevelyan's physical decline also correlates closely with contemporary medical observations. Davey observed in 1855 that 'the vacillating countenance indicates the condition of the dismal mind; the eyes sunk in their hollow sockets, the muscles of the face sharp and rigid in their outlines, and the looks restless and vacant, proclaim the convulsive throes of the sufferer'. J.G. Davey, 'Lectures on Insanity, Delivered at the Bristol Medical School

Soames Forsyte: The Rights of Property and Violent Erotomania

The first novel of *The Forsyte Saga*, *The Man of Property*, set from 1886-87, centres on Soames Forsyte, the wealthy solicitor referred to in the title, and his marriage to the beautiful Irene Heron. I suggest that Soames may be read as a successor to Louis Trevelyan, exhibiting yet more overt symptoms of erotomania. The term remained in use in the intervening years before Galsworthy's writing, perhaps most notably in Oscar Wilde's letters during the 1890s. It also made regular appearances in newspapers during the 1920s. Galsworthy's preface to the 1922 edition of the complete saga cites 'possessive instincts', 'the tribal instinct' and 'sense of home and property' as his primary concerns. Soames is a collector of paintings; the possession of beauty pleases him, as does its value in monetary terms. With the addition of Irene to his collection, she becomes his most prized possession. To emphasise her identity as property, she is never present in Galsworthy's narrative except through the perception of other characters. Irene's enigmatic appeal as a 'passive goddess' (p. 21) inspires Soames's desire to possess her. Alongside her lack of fortune, this makes her prey to his predatory advances. Unlike Louis Trevelyan's, Soames Forsyte's suspicions about his wife's infidelity are correct. Irene begins an affair with her husband's cousin June's fiancé (also the architect her husband has commissioned to build their new home).⁴⁶ Following Irene's disclosure to her lover, Philip Bosinney, that Soames had raped her the previous night, he sets off in a rage. Apparently planning to seriously injure or even kill Soames, he is run over by a carriage in the fog on the way.

To the outside world, Soames appears to be an excellent husband. His maintenance of an exterior of perfect gentlemanliness is, as for Collins's Count Fosco and others, essential.⁴⁷ He attempts to sustain sexual repression in the long-term context of his cooling marital relations. He finally cracks, becoming violent, and eventually raping Irene in an attempt to assert his ownership of his wife's body. Having been written in the first few years of the twentieth century, *A Man of Property* follows key writings on repression by Richard von Krafft-Ebing (*Psychopathia Sexualis*, 1886) and Sigmund Freud (*The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 1901).⁴⁸ In an introduction to the former, Terence Sellers writes that

During the Summer Session of 1855: Lecture II', *The British Medical Journal* (20 July 1855), pp. 668-75 (p. 674).

⁴⁶ Notably, Soames will not permit her a separation, despite his pre-nuptial promise that Irene would be free to leave were the marriage to be unhappy.

⁴⁷ For example, Irene's father-in-law tells her, "I can't think what you're about. He's a very good husband!" Irene's answer, 'almost inaudible among the sounds of traffic', is simply, 'You are not married to him!'" (pp. 214-15).

⁴⁸ John Kucich's *Repression in Victorian Literature: Charlotte Brontë, George Eliot and Charles Dickens* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987) is the principal work on this subject, exploring the emotional values of repression, stressing the psychological potential of self-

‘[t]he sexual tragedies foisted upon a generation of women by urging these “therapeutically repressed cases” to marry can only be imagined’.⁴⁹ Galsworthy’s novel is one such imagining.

Personal violation by violence and rape had been veiled increasingly thinly in the fiction of preceding decades. The possibility of a violent sexual attack haunts the narrative of sensation fiction from the early 1860s. D.A. Miller has argued persuasively that rape can be figured as what Roland Barthes would call the ‘symbolic mode’ of *The Woman in White*. The vague fear of such an act is present during Anne and Walter’s first encounter at the beginning of the novel, and later ‘what Fosco finally accomplishes when he reads Marian’s *journal intime* – is virtual rape’.⁵⁰ Marian is

firmly abandoned by Walter’s erotic interest and forcibly seduced by Fosco’s [...] perhaps the most important fantasy feature of rape is the reaffirmation of the rapist’s unimpaired capacity to withdraw, the integrity of his body (if not his victim’s) recovered intact. (Fosco, we recall, returns to Marian the journal he has indelibly signed, and she, eventually, is stuck with it).⁵¹

Galsworthy’s later date enabled him to lay bare what had been implied in earlier fiction. Although Irene’s rape takes place outside the narrative, we cannot doubt what the ‘incident of the night before’ entailed (p. 253). The sight and sounds of Irene during the rape haunt Soames afterwards, with a searing clarity that was unthinkable for Victorian writers.

Once he suspects his wife’s infidelity, Soames’s anger bubbles beneath the surface of his composed exterior, barely contained, until finally it bursts out in attempts to break down a door, or the crushing of a teacup in his hand. The narrative makes repeated references to Soames’s hot blood, which rises with the heat of summer. Even in October, he sits at home, with ‘the weather kept as gloriously fine that year as though it were still high August. It was not pleasant to be disturbed; he

contradictions.

⁴⁹ Terence Sellers, Introduction to Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: The Case Histories* (London: Velvet, 1997), pp. 5-15 (p. 11).

⁵⁰ D.A. Miller, ‘*Cage aux folles*: Sensation and Gender in Wilkie Collins’s *The Woman in White*’, in *The Making of the Modern Body: Sexuality and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Catherine Gallagher and Thomas Laqueur (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 107-36 (p. 116).

⁵¹ D.A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), p. 181. The indelible imprint on the raped woman is described later by Hardy, who questions why Tess Durbeyfield should have been so doomed: ‘Why it was that upon this beautiful feminine tissues, sensitive as gossamer, and practically blank as snow yet, there should have been traced such a coarse pattern as it was doomed to receive’. Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 74.

desired too passionately to set his foot on Bosinney's neck' (p. 225). It is only once he has fully exercised his rights by raping his wife that the weather finally cools, with 'the fog of late November wrapping the town as in some monstrous blanket till the trees of the Square were barely visible from the dining-room window', mirroring the enshrouding of his marital relations, once the stuff of family gossip, in a thicker layer of secrecy (pp. 249-50).

Soames attempts, and for long periods succeeds, in keeping his violent sexual jealousy, and his consequent mania, repressed, and thus, private. The pressure of this heats the blood in his veins, as outwardly he maintains his characteristic 'lack of sentiment peculiarly Forsytean' (p. 77). Habitual reserve, avoiding displays of emotion became an increasingly entrenched aspect of codes of middle- and upper-class masculinity during the second half of the nineteenth century. Richard Sennett has termed this the 'discipline of silence'.⁵² By observing that such a central tenet of contemporary masculinity could conceal a violent mania, Galsworthy increases readers' sense of proximity to madness. Trollope, too, uses his representation of marital disharmony to increase our familiarity with the causes of monomania, but Galsworthy's more violent reformulation of this method is yet more disturbing. Even with his 'supercilious calm unbroken', those who know Soames well, such as his father, can see that he is 'violently angry' on hearing about his architect's over-expenditure. Bosinney exceeds his £12,000 limit on building expenses by £400, increasing Soames's desperation to control what he physically can: Irene.

All the rancour and hidden jealousy that had been burning against [Bosinney] for so long was now focussed in rage at this crowning piece of extravagance. The attitude of the confident and friendly husband was gone. To preserve property – his wife – he had assumed it, to preserve property of another kind he lost it now. (pp. 216-17)

Despite his own efforts to maintain a cool exterior, both in his business disagreement and his sexual rivalry with Bosinney, Soames repeatedly accuses his wife of coldness. His own blood boils until he can hide it no longer. One evening, 'unconsciously taking a china cup from the mantelpiece', he asks, "'Are you carrying on a flirtation with Bosinney?'" and she replies in the negative. Irene's serene appearance and ability to hide her passions from him increase Soames's infuriation at being unable to read her mind, and consequently his desperation to control her by forcing her body into submission rises: 'he never had known, never would know,

⁵² Sennett suggests that this discipline was enforced by mid-century urban decorum in England and France. Silence became a norm in response to the 'profound self-doubt' generated by the assumption that one's public presence could involuntarily disclose one's private character. See Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977). See also Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints*, pp. 183-228.

what she was thinking. The sight of her inscrutable face [...] soft and passive, but so unreadable, unknown, enraged him beyond measure’.

‘I believe you are made of stone’, he said, clenching his fingers so hard that he broke the fragile cup. The pieces fell into the grate. And Irene smiled.

‘You seem to forget’, she said, ‘that cup is not!’

Soames gripped her arm. ‘A good beating’, he said, ‘is the only thing that would bring you to your senses’, but turning on his heel, he left the room. (p. 218)

His wife’s lover seems to haunt Soames; ‘he was never free from the sense of his presence [...] Bosinney haunted the house. And every man’s shape that he saw in the dark evenings walking past, seemed that of him’ (p. 225). In the midst of this personal crisis, Soames’s proprietorial instincts do not desert him but rather intensify. More than ever, he sees his wife as an item of property, and himself as sole owner. Thus, in drawing Irene’s attention, Bosinney is a thief, and that information must remain under cover, ‘subterranean’, in fact (p. 225).

That night Soames finally decides to assert his marital rights by rape, representing, I suggest, the ultimate assertion of his property ownership. The act may be seen as a climax of what Krafft-Ebing refers to as ‘Hyperaesthesia’, a psychological condition which appears to fit Soames’s symptoms.⁵³ Thereafter he is wracked with guilt, further distorting the order of his mind in an uncontrollable madness. In the chapter entitled ‘Voyage into the Inferno’ Galsworthy opens with a striking and ironic statement: ‘The morning after a certain night on which Soames at last asserted his rights and acted like a man, he breakfasted alone’ (p. 249). This sudden aloneness continues through the narrative, having committed a legally permissible yet socially unspeakable act. Although at first this secrecy is reassuring (‘One thought comforted him: No one would know – it was not the sort of thing that she would speak about’, p. 250), his isolation with his own doubting and increasingly

⁵³ Krafft-Ebing gives the following definition: ‘Hyperaesthesia (increased desire, satyriasis). In this state there is an abnormally increased impressionability of the sexual impulse to organic, psychic and sensory stimuli (abnormally intense libido, lustfulness, lasciviousness). The stimulus may be central (nymphomania, satyriasis) or peripheral, functional or organic’. This condition is closely connected to Krafft-Ebing’s conception of sadism, which he describes thus: ‘It consists in this that the association of lust and cruelty, which is indicated in the physiological consciousness, becomes strongly marked on a psychically degenerated basis, and that this lustful impulse coupled with presentations of cruelty rises to the height of powerful affects [...]. The quality of sadistic acts is defined by the relative potency of the tainted individual. If potent, the impulse of the sadist is directed to coitus, coupled with preparatory, concomitant or consecutive maltreatment, even murder, of the consort “Lustmurder”, the latter occurring chiefly because sensual lust has not been satisfied with the consummated coitus’. Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: The Case Histories* (London: Velvet, 1997), p. 20.

insane thoughts gradually becomes intolerable. Having been certain of the rightness of his actions throughout his life, he is now plagued by doubt.

He ate steadily, but at times a sensation as though he could not swallow attacked him. Had he been right to yield to his overmastering hunger of the night before, and break down the resistance which he had suffered now too long from this woman who was his lawful and solemnly constituted helpmate? He was strangely haunted by the recollection of her face, from before which, to soothe her, he had tried to pull her hands – of her terrible smothered sobbing, the like of which he had never heard, and still seemed to hear; and he was still haunted by the odd, intolerable feeling of remorse and shame he had felt, as he stood looking at her by the flame of the single candle, before silently slinking away. (p. 250)

In the course of his commute to work, however, Soames's habitual Forsytean stubbornness briefly protects himself from the extremities of guilt:

The incident was not really of great moment; women made a fuss about it in books; but in the cool judgment of right-thinking men, of men of the world, or such as he recollected often received praised in the Divorce Court, he had but done his best to sustain the sanctity of marriage, to prevent her from abandoning her duty [...]. No, he did not regret it. (p. 251)

Once secure in his first-class compartment on the Underground from Sloane Square to the City, however, 'the smothered sobbing still haunted him'. He opens *The Times* to distract himself and becomes 'barricaded behind it', but is confronted by news of violent acts: 'three murders, five manslaughters, seven arsons, and as many as eleven – a surprisingly high number – rapes, in addition to many less conspicuous crimes' so that 'inseparable from his reading' rises up 'the memory of Irene's tear-stained face, and the sounds from her broken heart' (p. 251). The assertion of his marital rights is reconfigured by Soames's guilt-wracked mind as a violent crime, utterly incompatible with his perception of, and presentation of, himself as a man of property and, crucially, a gentleman.

Upon discovering that Irene has left him altogether, Soames's mind struggles to interpret the information. Bilson tells him "that Mrs Forsyte had left the house about noon, taking with her a trunk and bag", and leaving no message (p. 270). Standing in his hallway, suddenly cut off from his ordinary life, Soames wonders, 'Who the devil were all these people? He seemed to have forgotten all familiar things. The words "no message – a trunk, and a bag," played hide-and-seek in his brain' (p. 271). Although highly skilled in burying his emotions, Soames's body gives way to a startling reflex: he weeps, feeling his 'brain going round' while tears

‘forced themselves into his eyes’. Detecting the faint scent of Irene’s hair lotion, ‘the burning sickness of his jealousy seized him again. Struggling into his fur, he ran downstairs and out into the street [...]. His power of decision again failed’ (p. 271). Galsworthy deconstructs idealised male rational decisiveness and twists it with irony. Soames’s most decisive act was that in which he ‘asserted his rights and acted like a man’: an act of rape absolutely antithetical to ideals of both happy companionate marriage and gentlemanliness. It is also, of course, the act most destructive of his chances of bringing about what, above his desperate desire to possess the female body at any cost, is his openly displayed wish: a marriage in which Irene willingly and gladly submits to him, both in public and private.

Conclusion

Charles Kingsley describes the role of masculine bravery in *Westward Ho!* (1855) thus: ‘To be bold against the enemy is common to the brutes; but the prerogative of a man is to be bold against himself’.⁵⁴ This article has made an examination of what happens when the Victorian man is unable to sustain the level of repression required in order to be bold against himself both in terms of staving off his desires and postponing mental breakdown. The brute is internalised by monomaniacal jealousy and the gentleman breaks down, both as a cultural concept, and at the level of individual psychology. Jealousy takes over the male mind so that male desire is pathologised, and the threat of violent attack comes from within rather than beyond the domestic space. This deterioration of the gentlemanly into the monstrous within the most sacred of Victorian social institutions, marriage, was to have an enormous social effect. It was a key factor in prompting a radical re-evaluation of masculine identity towards the fin de siècle.

By identifying the failed marriage plot’s emergence in the 1860s, several decades earlier than previous studies have done, and by shifting from a female to a male perspective so that the plot’s focus on the man’s perspective is revealed, this article has exposed some of the difficulties of male agency, and their implications for normative masculinities. Most crucially, although law allowed husbands to force their wives into domestic and sexual submission, codes of middle- and upper-class gentlemanliness did not. How, then, could a husband prevail upon his independently-minded wife to willingly obey, without making matters unpleasant at home or in public? Trevelyan and Forsyte fail catastrophically in this task, becoming maniacal in the process. Within the context of sexual desire, fuelled by a pathologised jealousy, male agency asserts itself in Trollope and Galsworthy’s protagonists to represent a crisis of class and gender identities. Thus the two novels prompt a reconsideration of

⁵⁴ Charles Kingsley, *Westward Ho!* (London: Macmillan, 1855), p. 27.

the conventional model of Victorian gentlemen. The novels also demonstrate the effect of psychology both at the level of individual psychological crises and of a broader cultural crisis at the heart of Victorian society. Representations of marital breakdown, erotomania, domestic violence and marital rape are crucial aspects of the failure of idealised domesticity, and illustrate the more extensive heterogeneity of Victorian marriages. Such depictions mark a deep chasm in ideologies of domestic perfection, and present a strong opposition to the traditional perception of the Victorian novel's companionate marriage plot.

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