HOUSEHOLD INTIMACY AND BEING UNMARRIED: FAMILY PLURALISM IN THE NOVELS OF ANTHONY TROLLOPE

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ABSTRACT

Many critics rightfully claim that the marriage market and an inquiry into its innermost workings are at the heart of Anthony Trollope's novels, but this Article argues that his novels also depict—on the periphery or sometimes just hiding in plain sight—a set of curiously nonmarital households. These households vary in form, but include widows and widowers living on their own, mothers and daughters living collectively, and male cousins sharing space and the work of daily living. Critics have debated whether Trollope was simply a realistic social historian—chronicling families as he found them— or whether he constructively used literary license to make broader points. On the first reading, Trollope presents a vast ecosystem of family pluralism, a terrain in which multiple kinds of families existed outside of the marital framework. Leaning more into literary imagination, it is possible to suggest that Trollope uses his range of household sketches to facilitate an exploration of how households

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and families can operate outside of the sexual and financial economies of marriage. In this context, his nonmarital households offer a rich composite portrait of how "functional" families operate, how the strength of intimacy flourishes outside of romantic relationships, and the challenges of maintaining a household outside of the marital norm. This Article offers a study of Trollope's nonmarital families, with extended analysis of five novels in particular, *The Bertrams, Rachel Ray, The Small House at Allington, Ralph the Heir,* and *Mr. Scarborough's Family*. In so doing, the Article presses on the question of Trollope's approach by exploring how he engages in both undertakings: to capture the range of domestic households both in small villages and the heart of Mayfair, and also to imaginatively explore the family as a site of affective possibility, multiple intimacies, and nonmarital ordering.

INTRODUCTION

While many critics rightfully claim that the marriage market and an inquiry into its innermost workings are at the heart of Anthony Trollope's novels,[1] his novels also depict—on the periphery or sometimes just hiding in plain sight—a set of curiously nonmarital households. These households vary in form, but include widows and widowers living on their own, mothers and daughters living collectively, and male cousins sharing space as well as the work of daily living. They include vertical, intergenerational households, as well as horizontal relationships between the generationally alike: siblings, close friends, or cousins choosing to live together. The thread connecting these households is that they are not embedded in the workings of the marriage market, and marriage is neither the sole aim of these characters nor even, sometimes, a distant desire. These intimate, nonmarital households provide vivid counterexamples to Trollope's frequent prescription that a woman's best "right" and "career" was marriage, and that marriage was the ultimate goal for both men and women.[2]

1. *See, e.g.*, ROBERT M. POLHEMUS, THE CHANGING WORLD OF ANTHONY TROLLOPE 228 (2022) (stating that Trolllope "dramatized the marriage-market theme *ad nauseum*") or DEBORAH DENENOLZ MORSE, REFORMING TROLLOPE: RACE, GENDER, AND ENGLISHNESS IN THE NOVELS OF ANTHONY TROLLOPE 91 (2013) (observing that "Trollope is passionately interested in examining the meretricious in English culture….In particular, he depicts the marriage market as truly sordid…").

2. *See* Linda C. McClain, *A "Woman's Best Right"—To a Husband or the Ballot?: Political and Household Governance in Anthony Trollope's Palliser Novels*, 100 B.U. L. REV. 1861, 1868 (2020)

In response to this panoply of households, Trollope's contemporary reviewers found little fault in the renderings and wrote that Trollope "[did] the family life of England to perfection," with neither "exaggeration" nor "false comedy."[3] Reviewers praised his "sketches of ordinary domestic experiences," with material that "every inhabitant of a country town can match from the occurrences of his daily life, or from the treasures of local gossip."[4] From this perspective of contemporary critics and reviewers, Trollope rendered visible the shifting realities and norms related to family formation, household management, and collective living that were taking shape in Victorian England. Alternately, as Trollope scholar Margaret Marwick has suggested, while Trollope did not write "social history tracts," the make-up of his "fictional communities"—with a wide range of nonmarital households and families alongside the two-parent marital family "norm"—roughly tracks mid-Victorian censuses, but with "some telling differences," including overrepresenting certain nonmarital families.[5] From this perspective, Trollope exercised authorial discretion and demonstrated his literary craft of world-making through the creation of a rich range of families.

Critics have, accordingly, debated whether Trollope was reflective or revelatory. In either case, these characters living outside of traditional marriage relationships are a generative subject for analysis, worthwhile to observe as they form their own intense attachments, queering the conventional family model in a variety of ways. Our article presses on this question, not by taking a stance that artificially limits Trollope and his novelistic skill to one position or the other, but by exploring how he engages in both undertakings: to capture the range of domestic households both in small villages and the heart of Mayfair, and also to imaginatively explore the family as a site of affective possibility, multiple intimacies, and nonmarital ordering.

(discussing this theory expressed in Trollope's fiction and in a chapter of his nonfiction book, ANTHONY TROLLOPE, *The Rights of Women*, *in* NORTH AMERICA 266 (St. Martin's Press, 1986) (1862)).

3. *See Unsigned Notice*, 14 SATURDAY REV. 444 (1862) (reviewing *Orley Farm*)*, reprinted in* ANTHONY TROLLOPE: THE CRITICAL HERITAGE 143, 144 (Donald Smalley ed., paperback ed. 2013)) [hereinafter "THE CRITICAL HERITAGE"].

4. *Rachel Ray: A Novel*, 1887 ATHENAEUM, 492 (1863) [hereinafter *Rachel Ray,* ATHENAEUM].

5. MARGARET MARKWICK, NEW MEN IN TROLLOPE'S NOVELS: REWRITING THE VICTORIAN MALE 142-44 (2018) (concluding that Trollope's novels had as many single-parent as two-parent households, even though the former were actually only 1 in 5 households, and that he had a preoccupation with single-father households).

In this first case, conceived as a dedicated social chronicler, Trollope recorded a vast ecosystem of family pluralism, a terrain in which multiple kinds of families existed outside of the marital framework. Trollope's rich and intricate variety of households signals the actual diversity in patterns of family and intimate life—not just as a construct of contemporary culture, but as a steadfast and historical component of household ordering. In particular, Trollope's universe of unmarried couples and nonmarital households directs attention to several specific facets of the contemporary landscape. Because cohabitation was "rare" in 19th century England, out of alignment with the Victorian moral order,[6] stable cohabitation between romantic partners did not form a category of analysis for Trollope. He therefore centers non-romantic, nonmarital families, using them to provide counterpoints to the marital households. In addition, Trollope's sketches tell a story of both men and women choosing to live single. Sometimes in Trollope's novels, singlehood is reflective of the realities of spousal loss; but other times, and particularly for women, singlehood is reflective of shifting property and inheritance norms that allowed women to sustain themselves outside of marriage. Finally, Trollope's novels also accurately chronicle the importance and prevalence of households composed not only of parents and adult children but also households constituted of extended families and collateral relations.

Moving from reflective to generative, Trollope takes some of these basic household iterations and expands on them, modifies them, or otherwise creatively configures them in order to underscore a number of points. First, Trollope draws out moral lessons about partnership and the qualities that render a marriage or any other intimate relationship successful.[7] His nonmarital households provide yet one more venue for the examination of the virtues of compromise, gentle disagreement, and strategic communication. Second, through detailed household descriptions, these nonmarital families offer a rich composite portrait of how "functional" families operate, how the strength of intimacy flourishes outside of romantic relationships, and the challenges of maintaining a household outside of the

6. For a discussion of the extent of romantic different-sex cohabitation in England at the time, see REBECCA PROBERT, THE CHANGING LEGAL REGULATION OF COHABITATION: FROM FORNICATION TO FAMILY, 1600-2010, at 54 (2012).

7. On Trollope's view that novelists taught moral lessons (including about love), see McClain, *supra* note 2, at 1882-84.

marital norm. These nonmarital and intimate arrangements that eschew the romantic and sexual model of coupling are, from a modern perspective, queered in one way or another, whether it be through their purely non-normative configurations or through deep expressions of love and connection that are homosocial and/or anti-heterodox. Further, while these "queer characters" are not as prominent as the "major players" in Trollope's numerous courtship plots, they are, as Kate Flint remarks, "nonetheless a presence" and "part of a social continuum."[8] In this imaginative context, Trollope uses his range of household sketches to facilitate an exploration of how households and families can operate outside of the heterosexual and financial economies of marriage.

The article offers a study of Trollope's nonmarital families, with extended analysis of five novels in particular, *The Bertrams*, *Rachel Ray*, *The Small House at Allington*, *Ralph the Heir,* and *Mr. Scarborough's Family*. These novels, spanning Trollope's long writing career, demonstrate the depth and range of nonmarital families in the Trollope universe and offer an extended look into how Trollope maps out this variation in families, comparing and contrasting one to another. In Part I, we briefly note one form of nonmarital relationship that is comparatively absent in this mapping: what we would today call stable nonmarital cohabitation. In our analysis in Part II, we consider the ways in which Trollope's novels are reflective of certain historical patterns and practices relating to household formation and functioning.[9] We also attend to the ways in which Trollope manipulated and amplified social realities in order to teach certain moral and practical lessons about partnership and imagine certain household possibilities pertaining to both the emotional and financial economies of nonmarital households.

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8. Kate Flint, *Queer Trollope*, *in* THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ANTHONY TROLLOPE 99, 101 (Carolyn Devers & Lisa Niles eds. 2011).

9. *An explanatory note to readers about the use of honorifics and titles in these novels*: Following British convention about abbreviation, in his novels, Trollope generally did not put a period after an honorific or titles, for example, Mr Bertram, Mrs Prime, Dr Crofts, and so forth, instead of the more familiar, U.S. usage, Mr. Bertram, Mrs. Prime, Dr. Crofts. Some editions of his novels similarly omit periods; others include them. To avoid puzzling readers, we use honorifics with a period unless we are directly quoting from text. *See* UNIV. OF NEV., RENO UNIV. WRITING & SPEAKING CTR., BRIT. VS. AMER. ENG. – ABBREVIATIONS, https://www.unr.edu/writing-speaking-center/student-resources/writing-speaking-resources/british-american-english#:~:text=Abbreviations,written%20without%20periods%20after%20them (last visited Apr. 18, 2023).

I. MISSING HOUSEHOLDS: STABLE NONMARITAL COHABITATION

Before beginning an inventory of the rich range of nonmarital households in Trollope's novels, we should explain that one form of nonmarital relationship is, however, almost entirely absent from Trollope's comparative mapping: stable partners in romantic, nonmarital relationships. That is not surprising, given the comparative rarity of such relationships in the Victorian era, and the contemporary social and legal environment.[10] To be sure, some of Trollope's novels refer to men who have a passion for opera singers or who have "mistresses" that they maintain in a separate house or secluded "establishment."[11] However, as Markwick observes, "[f]or a *young* man to keep a mistress is an indicator of a more serious flaw,"[12] usually signaling he is unworthy of the heroine's heart. A good example is George Vavasor, who, in *Can You Forgive Her?,* maintains a sexual relationship outside of marriage but "very closely hidden from the world's eye," in a space, which the narrator remarks, "shall be nameless" and has also set up a former mistress in business.[13] In the same novel, the prospect of ruining a brilliant social position is one reason that the aristocratic Lady Glencora, who is initially unhappily married to Plantagenet Palliser, cannot bring herself to run away with her first love, the feckless Burgo Fitzgerald. As Rebecca Probert observes, Glencora's thoughts that "she 'would become what she did not dare to name even herself'" capture society's "reluctance to name" these relationships."[14] One exception, a novel with actual nonmarital cohabitation, is *John Caldigate*, but, notably, the cohabitation is not depicted and takes place in a mining town in Australia, where British norms exist in a liminal state in the "rougher" colonial world.[15] Finally, reflecting a concern of the era, several Trollope novels have plots about the

10. PROBERT, *supra* note 6. In the "Preface" to *The Vicar of Bullhampton,* Trollope explained that he aimed to "create sympathy" for Carrie Brattle, a young woman who had "fallen," and to bring her back "at last from degradation at least to decency." ANTHONY TROLLOPE, THE VICAR OF BULLHAMPTON xix (David Skilton ed., The Trollope Society 1997) (1870) ("Preface").

11. MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 124.

12. *Id.* at 123.

13. *Id.* at 124.

14. PROBERT, *supra* note 6, at 54.

15. *See* ANTHONY TROLLOPE, JOHN CALDIGATE 100 (David Skilton ed., The Trollope Society 1995) (1879).

validity of marriages, where a prior spouse proves not to be dead.[16] In this way, Trollope from the outset mirrors contemporary laws and social norms regulating sexuality outside of marriage, particularly for the social classes that populate his world.[17]

Outside of the romance narrative, then, Trollope delves into the richness and variety of these household orderings. Trollope's characteristic approach is to map out the workings of his nonmarital families just as he maps out those of the marital households, in order to make comparisons and draw out insight as to the workings of household ordering governance, and economies. By so doing, Trollope often compares multiple forms of nonmarital households, detailing variety in type, difference in organization, and underlying correspondences. Moreover, this type of mapping and comparison draws out the affective comparisons and underscores the depth of the emotional ties and exchange between Trollope's unmarried—but partnered—characters.

II. A LOOK INTO TROLLOPE'S UNIVERSE OF NONMARITAL FAMILIES

Without fail in Trollope's novels, there is at least one variation of a nonmarital family, whether it is unwed sisters living together or a widower and his daughter choosing to build their household and daily lives together.

16. For example, in *Dr Wortle's School*, Trollope shows sympathy for a couple cohabiting outside of formal marriage because of accidental bigamy. ANTHONY TROLLOPE, DR. WORTLE'S SCHOOL (Humphrey Milford ed., Oxford University Press 1928) (1881). Some critics argue that the novel was an "homage and apologia" for the "unsanctioned union" of his close friends G.H. Lewes (who could not divorce his wife) and George Eliot. DENENOLZ MORSE, *supra* note 1, at 134 (quoting Gordon Ray).

17. *See* PROBERT, *supra* note 6, at 52-55. While some scholars have argued that nonmarital cohabitation was "common" among the Victorian poor, Rebecca Probert challenges this assumption in light of the availability of newer, online databases of censuses and marriage records. *Id.* Probert points out that "the deceptively simple term 'cohabitation' might simply indicate that a couple were having sex, rather than that they were living under the same roof." *Id.* at 6. Records also indicate, Probert notes, that "the majority of unwed mothers were not living together with a partner." Rebecca Probert*, 'From Fornicators to Family: Cohabitants and the Law, 1600-2010,* University of Warwick: Inaugural Lecture (Feb. 9, 2011), Legal Studies Research Paper No. 2011-9, at 11, available at https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1869932. For example, in the 1851 census for "the Hertfordshire town of Great Berkhamsted—covering around 3000 individuals—there were single mothers in the workhouses, single mothers living alone with their children and some single mothers living with other family members—but no examples of couples living together unmarried with a child or children." *Id*. at 11 Notably, it is "usually possible to find a record" of marriage for couples "living together and claiming to be husband and wife." *Id.*

Indeed, sometimes there are more of these households at the center of his plots than their marital counterparts. These nonmarital families live alongside the multiplicity of marital families in Trollope's novels, including households with marriageable daughters who are seeking to make their way and succeed on the marriage market, or sons who—if they lack the prospect of sufficient family wealth or a remunerative career—must also succeed in that market. Unmarried, accordingly, takes a great number of forms and faces.

A. The Bertrams: Remaining Single but Not Solitary, or the Benefits of Inheritance

Based on the primary plot, *The Bertrams*[18] is more tragedy than comedy and is a biting indictment of marriage without love, made for financial gain. Its central marriage plot features a tragic, beautiful young woman, Caroline Waddington. Initially following her heart in becoming engaged to her cousin, George Bertram, Caroline later makes a disastrous, mercenary marriage to George's friend, Henry Harcourt, who (in effect) purchases her dazzling beauty without obtaining her heart. Lacking economic independence, Caroline views a brilliant marriage as the only proper sphere for her ambition—her only chance for a "career," "work," and being of "use" to anyone.[19] By novel's end, Harcourt has committed suicide in the face of marital, economic, and social ruin; Caroline returns to George, and they settle into a quiet, childless marriage.[20] Despite the tragic register of this central plot, Trollope offers great comic relief through Miss Todd and, to a lesser degree, through Miss Baker, two single women who we discuss in the following sections.

18. *See generally* ANTHONY TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS (Geoffrey Harvey, ed. Oxford Univ. Press, 1991) (1859) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS].
19. *Id.* at 376.
20. *Id*. at 568-575, 578-581.

i. The "Rosy" Miss Todd: Avoiding Marriage for Household Independence

Trollope introduces Miss Todd when she, Miss Baker (Caroline's aunt), and Caroline meet George and his father, Sir Lionel Bertram, while all five are traveling in Egypt and Jerusalem.[21] In this chapter, "Miss Todd's Picnic," she appears as "a maiden lady, fat, fair, and perhaps almost forty: a jolly jovial lady, intent on seeing the world and indifferent to many of its prejudices and formal restraints."[22] Trollope presents Miss Todd—said to be modeled on the world-travelling feminist writer Frances Power Cobbe—sympathetically and even admiringly.[23] Highly self-aware, she is "somewhat ashamed" of the "magnitude" of her picnic expedition, noting the absurdity of eating among tombs; however, the narrator credits the "blood of the Todds," since "the Todds were a people not easily frightened and she was not going to disgrace her lineage."[24]

The memorable character of Miss Todd—"rosy," "worldly" and emphatically living outside of the marriage market[25]—has a full life both at home in Littlebath and abroad and actively resists marriage both to maintain household control and, quite simply, because marriage has never interested her. However, her household is not "solitary;" it often expands to include a friend or some of her many nieces and nephews, for whose education she pays as she selectively takes on some parent-like obligations without sharing a household with children. When talking to Sir Lionel, Miss Todd states: "Oh, as for solitude, I'm not much of a Robinson Crusoe [. . .] But, Lord bless you, Sir Lionel, people never leave me in solitude. I'm never alone. My sister Patty has fifteen children. I could have half of them to live with me if I liked it."[26]

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21. Trollope began writing *The Bertrams* in April 1858, during a twelve-week trip on Post Office duties, preceded by a "ten-day holiday in the Holy Land." *See* Margaret Markwick, *Out of the Closet: Homoerotics in Trollope's Novels, in* THE POLITICS OF GENDER IN ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S NOVELS: NEW READINGS FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY 61, 68 (Margaret Markwick et al. eds., 2009).

22. TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS, *supra* note 18, at 93.

23. *See* Flint, *supra* note 8, at 103 (noting that Cobbe made a similar trip and camped alone in the desert). By comparison, Trollope presents a critical portrait of a younger, unmarried female traveler in the short story, "An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids." ANTHONY TROLLOPE, *An Unprotected Female at the Pyramids, in* TALES OF ALL COUNTRIES 235 (London, Chapman & Hall 1861).

24. TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS, *supra* note 16, at 100-01.

25. *Id.* at 401 ("worldly"), 578 ("rosy").

26. *Id.* at 399 ("Sir Lionel Goes to His Wooing").

Miss Todd and Miss Baker, another Littlebath resident, are good friends. However Miss Todd has an economic independence that Miss Baker lacks.[27] And it is precisely because Miss Todd has the greater fortune that Sir Lionel, a character whose charisma makes him popular during his visit to Littlebath, decides to make his first opportunistic marriage proposal to Miss Todd. The proposal scene is comical—at Sir Lionel's expense. However, it also reveals his vision of masculine power and control in marriage and Miss Todd's competing vision of resisting such control. He resolves to "throw himself, his heart, and his future at the feet of Miss Todd," but the narrator adds: "if there accepted, he would struggle with every muscle of his manhood which was yet within him for that supremacy in purse and power which of law and of right belonged to the man."[28] In the late 1850s, prior to the Married Women's Property Acts, Sir Lionel no doubt assumed that Miss Todd's financial wealth would pass to him on marriage, unless she reserved that "supremacy" of purse through making a financial settlement to keep the money out of his hands.[29] Miss Todd is skeptically silent when Sir Lionel asserts that "we both live very much after the same fashion;" she knows that claim is untrue, given the "almost miraculous" sources of information "ladies such as Miss Todd" have in a place like Littlebath.[30]

In response to the proposal, Miss Todd declares, "I don't want to marry."[31] Rejecting the ideal of marital unity with husbandly rule, Miss Todd declares: "Miss Todd I am, and Miss Todd I mean to remain. To tell the truth plainly, I like to be number one in my own house. Lady Bertram, I am quite sure, will be a fortunate and happy woman; but then, she'll be number two, I take it. Eh, Sir Lionel?"[32] Sir Lionel offers no denial.[33] Instead, his encounter with Miss Todd and her laughter effectively unmans

27. George, able to earn a modest income, expresses indifference to any inheritance, even when his uncle tries to salvage George's broken engagement to Caroline with ever more generous financial offers. *Id*. at 310-14.

28. *Id*. at 393.

29. For another depiction of such struggle over the purse, see discussion *infra* Part II.B. (discussing Mrs. Prime in *Rachel Ray*).

30. TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS, *supra* note 18, at 398-99.

31. *Id.* at 399.

32. *Id.* at 400.

33. *Id*.

him; uncharacteristically, he takes to his bed.[34] When he finally brings himself to propose next to Miss Baker, he can only do so by letter.[35]

Far from criticizing Miss Todd's rejection of Sir Lionel's proposal, the narrator praises her power of discernment. Her "worldly" knowledge gives her insight to deal with "a great many old male rips"[36] at Littlebath, like Sir Lionel. Familiar with the idea that marriage was the best way for an "old rip" like Sir Lionel to "mend his manner," she declined to "trust herself" to such a rip.[37] Instead, Miss Todd recommends this reform project to Miss Baker, advising that marriage would do a man of Sir Lionel's "sort" much good "if his wife knows how to manage him."[38]

ii. Miss Baker: Vulnerability to the World's "Dicta" about Unmarried Women

A contrasting portrait to Miss Todd's financial independence and blissful marriage resistance comes in the character of her friend Miss Baker, Caroline's middle-aged aunt, who raised her in Littlebath since Caroline was orphaned.[39] Like Caroline, Miss Baker lives subject to the whims and economic control of the family patriarch, Mr. George Bertram Sr. (Sir Lionel's older brother), with whom she and Caroline sometimes reside. Accordingly, even as Miss Todd resists marriage, Trollope sympathetically recognizes the pressure that women like Miss Baker experience to marry.

Once Sir Lionel turns his attentions to Miss Baker, having Miss Todd's refusal, Miss Baker ponders whether it is her mission to "reclaim"[40] (through marriage) Sir Lionel (a man in debt and of questionable respectability). Trollope observes that the "social system to which they belong" teaches such women to "regret the forlornness of their condition" because an unmarried lady "past forty" has "missed her bit in life."[41] As Miss Baker considers the pleasure of walking into a room "as a married

34. *Id*. at 406-07.
35. *Id.* at 407-08.
36. TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS, *supra* note 18, at 401.
37. Nor had "old female rips" bested Miss Todd: her encounters with them at Littlebath had not "degraded" her. *Id.* at 401.
38. *Id.* at 406.
39. *Id.* at 69-70.
40. *Id.* at 409.
41. *Id.* at 408-09.

woman," the narrator explains that the "world's dictum was strong at Littlebath" and influenced "this dear lady."[42] Notably, the narrator identifies women as the source of this dictum—by marrying, Miss Baker could "quit herself of that disgrace, which injustice and prejudice, and the folly of her own sex rather than that of the other, had so cruelly allowed to her present position."[43]

Miss Baker envisions her "destiny" as either keeping house for Sir Lionel or her uncle, and would prefer the former.[44] However, her uncle forecloses that choice because of her financial dependency upon him. Insulting her, asking whether she does not know "that he's a swindler, a reprobate, a penniless adventurer," he compels Miss Baker to write a letter to Sir Lionel making clear that that if she marries him, she will never get "a penny" from her uncle.[45] Thus, she is left to a single life, housekeeping for Mr. Bertram when not in Littlebath, with much less *joie de vivre* than Miss Todd. Upon her uncle's death, her reward is a bequest of "five hundred pounds a year for life" and "the use of the house at Hadley if she chose to occupy it."[46] That level of financial security, however, is not enough to tempt Sir Lionel to renew his proposal. Miss Baker remains single, but less contentedly so than Miss Todd.

iii. The "Still Rosy" Life of Miss Todd Without Marriage

The Bertrams concludes with a vivid picture of the full, varied, and sociable life that Miss Todd continues to live without marriage:

> Of the rosy Miss Todd, there is nothing to be said but this, that she is still Miss Todd, and still rosy. Whether she be now at Littlebath, or Baden, or Dieppe, or Harrogate, at New York, Jerusalem, or Frazer's River, matters but little. Where she was last year, there she is not now. Where she is now, there she will not be next year. But she still increases the circle of her dearly-loved friends; and go where she will, she, at any rate, does more good to others

42. TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS, *supra* note 18, at 409.
43. *Id.* (emphasis added).
44. *Id.* at 390-91.
45. *Id.* at 412.
46. *Id*. at 562.

> than others do to her. And so we will make our last bow before her feet.[47]

When Trollope brings Miss Todd and Miss Baker back in a later novel, *Miss Mackenzie*, also set in Littlebath, Miss Todd reiterates her lifelong disinterest in marriage: "I'm so fond of my own money and my own independence, that I've never had a fancy that way—not since I was a girl."[48] Older and not able to travel as much as she used to, Miss Todd observes that "we single women" sometimes "have to be solitary" or "sad."[49] Even so, her social power and the pleasure that she still finds in her "single, busily social life"[50] stands as a bold counterexample to Trollope's declaration, elsewhere in the novel, that "a woman's life is not perfect or whole till she has added herself to a husband."[51]

In terms of her literary legacy, contemporaneous reviews of *The Bertrams* failed to mention Miss Todd. One reviewer reductively observed that "the females [other than the two young heroines] comprise a wonderful assemblage of old tabbies at Littlebath, who delight in card-playing and scandal."[52] Another review complained that, "There is a stronger touch of vulgarity, too, than seems either natural or necessary about the elderly ladies of the Littlebath Society."[53] However, some present-day reviewers are more attentive to how Trollope's "old maids," like Miss Todd, model women who are "forthright in their avowals of independence, and yet who manage to sustain good friends and a respected place in their communities."[54] They perceive (as Caroline Waddington did) that Miss Todd "gloried in being an old maid."[55] If Miss Todd is absent in other present-day analyses of "independent" women in Trollope's novels and of how they often subvert his gendered prescriptions for women's best life, that may be because Miss Todd is not a young woman caught up in the marriage plot.

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47. *Id*. at 578.
48. ANTHONY TROLLOPE, MISS MACKENZIE 141 (David Skilton, ed., The Trollope Society 1997) (1885) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, MISS MACKENZIE].
49. *Id*. at 142.
50. Flint, *supra* note 8, at 103.
51. TROLLOPE, MISS MACKENZIE, *supra* note 48, at 111.
52. *Id*. at 95.
53. *Mr. Anthony Trollope's Novels*, 299 EDINBURGH REV. 455, 470 (1877).
54. Flint, *supra* note 8, at 103.
55. TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS, *supra* note 18, at 366.

iv. Single Women and Their Fortunes

Miss Todd is clearly a single woman in possession of an ample fortune, left to her (the reader learns in *Miss Mackenzie)* by an uncle who was a merchant in Liverpool.[56] That fortune is ample enough to fund her travel around the globe to see the sights that she read about as a child,[57] ample to subsidize her home in Littlebath, where she wields her social power, and ample to provide infusions of resources to her family, particularly her nephews and nieces. Miss Todd values both adventure and her ability to order her personal relationships; she will not suffer the loss of those capabilities through marriage.

In one sense, she is a type: the heiress who had inherited family money and is using it to enable both singlehood and the freedom that came with being unmarried, especially for women. Trollope's universe is not lacking in other examples of such women—whether their fortune comes from a father or a first husband—and these women reflect both the new money that was circulating in society as well as the fact that women were inheriting fortunes, both big and small, just like men were. Trollope characters like Miss Dunstable, Madame Max Goesler, Miss Todd, Mrs. Prime (discussed in section B) and Miss Thoroughbung (discussed in section E) all are women who manage their property, with an eye to preserving it from male capture.[58]

In a more literary sense, Miss Todd exemplifies the opportunities available to unmarried women—and even some married women—who manage to take control of their own assets. The peaceable and productive operation of these female-centered and nonmarital households runs counter to the marriage plot, providing a range of counterexamples to Trollope's stated theory that a woman's best "right" and "career" was marriage and that marriage was the ultimate goal for both men and women.[59] Furthermore, "[a]ttending to the [unmarried woman] in her single state instead of always seeing her as a potential bride means considering financial decisions [. . .] that do not easily fit into the frameworks of marriage or other

56. TROLLOPE, MISS MACKENZIE, *supra* note 48, at 109.
57. TROLLOPE, THE BERTRAMS, *supra* note 18, at 107-08.
58. Further, although some of these women do eventually marry, they do so without losing their personal and economic independence.
59. *See* McClain, *supra* note 2, at 1868.

sexual economies."[60] Inherited resources allow these women to build their own kinship connections, the chosen families they desire, and in so doing demonstrate not only how Trollope's "novels endow [. . .] women with a startling degree of financial control"[61] but also how women use that financial control to support their individual notions of family and friendship. For example, Miss Todd travels, enjoys adventure, and is free to arrange her days as she pleases. More saliently, however, is that she is able to arrange her relationships as she pleases as well. She has a companionate relationship with Miss Baker, spends time with her nieces and nephews, and enjoys a wide circle of friends both at home and abroad. She is also, importantly, generous in these relationships with both her time and resources—a Trollopian virtue for men and women alike.

B. Rachel Ray: Resisting (Conventional) Marriage for the Power of Property

On one reading, *Rachel Ray*[62] is one of the "most idyllic of Trollope's novels," setting a conventional love and marriage plot concerning the obstacles encountered by Rachel Ray, a young woman of nearly twenty, and Luke Rowan, an aspiring brewer who seeks to marry her, amidst the "pastoral beauty" of Baslehurst, a small provincial community.[63] While Rachel Ray is the novel's eponymous heroine, it is her older, widowed sister, Mrs. Dorothea Prime, who provides a fascinating study of a woman with ambition and the desire to remain single. Mrs. Prime not only rules her all-female household but also resists reentering the marriage market because she prefers to translate her economic capital into social capital offered by philanthropic activity. Accordingly—on account of Mrs. Prime and other married women who exercise power in ways that challenge patriarchal ideals of governance—Jane Nardin aptly includes *Rachel Ray* as among those Trollope novels that "subvert the ideal," since "women in this novel

60. Jill Rappoport, *Greed, Generosity, and other Problems with Unmarried Women's Property*, 58 VICTORIAN STUD. 636, 645 (2016).

61. *Id*. at 637.

62. ANTHONY TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY (P.D. Edwards, ed., Oxford University Press 2008) (1863) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY].

63. P.D. Edwards, *Introduction to* ANTHONY TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY xxii (P.D. Edwards ed., Oxford University Press 2008) (1863).

are fond of power—not indirect power to influence men, but direct power to shape the world according to their own desires."[64]

i. The Ray Household: Marriage as Metaphor for Dependency

As the novel opens, Rachel's sister, the widowed Mrs. Prime, is the locus of family governance in the household formed by the two sisters and their mother, the widowed Mrs. Ray. Trollope, however, describes the relationship between Mrs. Ray and Mrs. Prime as a marriage. Mrs. Ray is the type of woman who "cannot grow alone as standard trees;—for whom the support and warmth of some wall, some paling, some post, is absolutely necessary;—who, in their growth, will bend and incline themselves toward some such prop for their life . . . "[65] Mrs. Ray had a "clinging" marriage with her husband, a clergyman, whom she married at eighteen and who formed "her natural prop." Widowed at age twenty-eight, she "immediately married herself to her eldest child," Dorothea, who took after Mrs. Ray's late husband in being "stern, sober, and steady." The mother-daughter marriage was interrupted briefly when Dorothea became Mrs. Prime. Widowed just one year later, Mrs. Prime has ruled Mrs. Ray as a hard "taskmaster" for nine years.[66] A husband-wife/man-woman binary is not necessary for household governance in Trollope: a stern daughter will do.

Mrs. Ray's two daughters, Dorothea and Rachel, offer two necessary, but contrasting, forms of household relationship: "She had one [daughter] whom she feared and obeyed, seeing that a master was necessary to her; but she had another whom she loved and caressed, and I may declare, that some such object for her tenderness was as necessary to her as the master."[67] Contrasting with Mrs. Prime's religious asceticism and scorn of pleasures is the mother's affectionate companionship with Rachel, with whom she could laugh, talk and "form little wicked whispered schemes behind the tyrant's back."[68] Such is the division of household power when Mrs. Prime ponders the costs of entering a new household formed by remarriage.

64. JANE NARDIN, HE KNEW SHE WAS RIGHT: THE INDEPENDENT WOMAN IN THE NOVELS OF ANTHONY TROLLOPE 118 (1989).
65. TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY, *supra* note 62, at 1.
66. *Id*. at 3.
67. *Id*. at 9.
68. *Id*. at 10.

ii. Fear of Losing Economic and Social Capital, or the "Rights and Wrongs" of Married Women

Outside of her home, Mrs. Prime exercises power over people because of her "uncontrolled possession of two hundred a year" left her by her deceased husband: she is the "permanent president" of a Dorcas Society in Baslehurst,[69] a lay religious group devoted to making and mending clothes to distribute to the needy.[70] Mrs. Prime takes pleasure in spending her money to run the Society as she chooses, spurring the narrator to comment: "I fear that Mrs. Prime liked to be more powerful at these charitable meetings than her sister labourers in the same vineyard, and that she achieved this power by the means of her money."[71] The narrator ventures to remark that while "such a one as Mrs. Prime is often necessary," we "all have our own pet temptations, and I think that Mrs. Prime's temptation was a love of power."[72] Her masculine ambition, as well as her earthly temptation was "to superintend the gifts, not only of herself but of others; to be great among the poor, and esteemed as a personage in her district."[73]

This love of power and economic independence is put to the test when Mrs. Prime receives and eventually declines a marriage proposal from the dissenting minister who she reveres, Mr. Prong. Given that the first Married Women's Property Act was not enacted for another decade or two after Trollope wrote *Rachel Ray,* Mrs. Prime faces the reality that, without taking some measures to protect her financial independence, control of her money will pass to her husband. Mr. Prong claims his motives in proposing are "pure" and "disinterested," even while recognizing that "[p]eople will say that I am marrying you for,—for your money, in short."[74] After reporting that he has no "private means of his own"—only his professional income of 130 pounds per year—he remarks: "Money is but dross. Who feels that

69. *Id*. at 7. Dorcas Societies "originated in the non-conformist churches, probably in the late eighteenth century, and spread to the 'low-church', Evangelical wing of the Church of England in the early nineteenth century, becoming for a while, along with Sunday or 'Sabbath-day' Schools, one of the institutions that most sharply distinguished the low church from the old 'high-and-dry' church." *Id*. at 405-06 explanatory n.7.

70. *Id.* at 7.

71. TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY, *supra* note 62, at 7.

72. *Id.* at 7-8.

73. *Id.* at 119.

74. *Id*. at 118.

more strongly than you do?"[75] The narrator, however, reveals in an aside that Mr. Prong actually "valued" money "very highly"—perhaps even as much as Mrs. Prime, who "delighted in the sight of the bit of paper which conveyed to her the possession of her periodical wealth," and whose ambition was "to be mistress of her money."[76]

While Mr. Prong initially states that Mrs. Prime may make "any arrangements" she chooses "as to settlements,"[77] Mrs. Prime remains ambivalent. Concerns over her money continue against the backdrop of marital law: "[t]hen unconsciously, she began to reflect on the rights of a married woman with regard to money,—and also the wrongs. She was not sure as to the law, and asked herself whether it would not be possible for her to consult an attorney."[78] Ultimately, Mrs. Prime places a lower value on remarriage than on her economic independence as a widow and the social power it brings. Eventually, she uses a quarrel with Mr. Prong concerning the bearing of theology on a Parliamentary election at Baselhurst as an excuse to break off their engagement.[79] To Mr. Prong, the quarrel reveals that her character and "temper" are inconsistent with his marital prerogative to be "her lord and master,—as was intended when marriage was made a holy ordinance," as well as a "loving, careful husband."[80]

More crucially for Mrs. Prime, Mr. Prong's desire for "mastery" extends to her money, over which she seeks an unwomanly control: "Mrs. Prime had promised to be his wife, but she had burdened her promise with certain pecuniary conditions which were distasteful to him,—which were much opposed to that absolute headship and perfect mastery, which, as he thought, should belong to the husband as husband."[81] He had not succeeded in bringing "his Dorothea round to a more womanly way of thinking" about these "pecuniary conditions," despite having "the old law as coming from the Scriptures" on his side and calling her proposed pecuniary arrangement "sinful."[82] Thus, while he recognizes her "indignation" over their election

75. *Id*. at 119
76. *Id.*
77. TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY, *supra* note 62, at 119.
78. *Id*. at 123.
79. *Id*. at 323-24. Mrs Prime argues that "under no circumstances should a Christian vote for a Jew," but Mr. Prong disagrees. *Id.* In a later chapter, Trollope appears to critique religious anti-Semitism. *Id*. at 332.
80. *Id*. at 326.
81. *Id*.
82. *Id*. at 327.

quarrel as a "cloak for her pecuniary obstinacy," he would rather "remain single in his work" than "abate one jot" of his financial "demand" and husbandly "privileges."[83] After the quarrel, Mrs. Prime "formed a resolve,—which no eloquence from Mr. Prong could ever overcome,—that she would remain a widow for the rest of her days."[84] And the narrator does not condemn her choice as wrong. The concluding chapter reports: "Mrs. Prime is still Mrs. Prime; and will, I think, remain so, although Mr. Prong is occasionally seen to call at the cottage."[85]

Mrs. Prime's household woes are not, however, over. At home, Mrs. Ray asserts herself against her tyrannical older daughter with respect to managing Rachel, and Mrs. Prime moves out because of her disapproval.[86] This lessens Mrs. Ray's fear of her and her tyranny: "no visitor to a house can hold such dominion there as may be held by a domestic tyrant, present at all meals, and claiming an ascendancy in all conversations."[87] When Mrs. Prime seeks to move back into the cottage, Mrs. Ray recalibrates the power equilibrium; Mrs. Prime must admit that she was "mistaken" in her views about Rachel's conduct and must no longer subject Rachel to "black looks."[88] Mrs. Prime accedes. Moreover, she avoided remarriage precisely to avoid submitting herself and her money to a husband, but reasons that marriage will properly remove Rachel from sisterly (and maternal) household rule to husbandly rule.[89] With Rachel moving to form a new marital household, the reconfigured mother-elder daughter household is poised to transform into a more egalitarian household, now that Mrs. Ray has asserted herself and Mrs. Prime has agreed to be more tolerant and treat Mrs. Ray more as a partner.

iii. The Independent Widow as a Recognizable (and Subversive) Type?

Contemporaneous reviewers stressed the accuracy of *Rachel Ray*'s "sketches of ordinary domestic experiences," with its "incidents … every inhabitant of a country town can match from the occurrences of his daily

83. TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY, *supra* note 62, at 326-27.
84. *Id*. at 328.
85. *Id*. at 402.
86. *Id*. at 82.
87. *Id*. at 304.
88. *Id*. at 338.
89. TROLLOPE, RACHEL RAY, *supra* note 62, at 393.

life, or from the treasures of local gossip."[90] The novel also confirmed that "knowledge of women is Mr. Trollope's specialty."[91] Even so, did Trollope's contemporaries view Mrs. Prime's desire for power and her avoidance of remarriage to keep both her money and this power as recognizable? Evidently, yes. The *Saturday Review* noted "something comic in the love-making which Mr. Prong offers to Rachel Ray's domineering sister, Mrs. Prime, and in the battles between them on the great point whether the lady is to have all her money settled on herself." The writer found the courtship believable and realistic: "We have no doubt that if a man of this sort were trying to marry a widow with a little fortune, and if he were anxious to have her money under his control, he could talk as Mr. Prong talks, and clothe his purpose under a mass of verbiage about 'greater usefulness in the vineyard,' and so forth."[92]

Another review found an all too recognizable flawed type in Mrs. Prime's conversion of her widow's portion into social capital and power in the Dorcas Society: "[w]ho has not seen Mrs. Prime—zealous in good works to her inferiors, but very sparing of kind deeds and charitable thoughts to her equals? Who has not seen her buy servility with the wealth allotted to her by a turn of one of Fortune's smallest wheels?" Also recognizable was her insistence on not having her will or opinions opposed and on being "thoroughly convinced of [her] own moral excellence;" however, the reviewer added, "thank Heaven, [such persons] are less numerous than the unobtrusive workers, whose goodness does more than merely neutralize the influence of their strong-minded associates."[93] Trollope's portrayal of the pleasure Mrs. Prime takes in the founding and running of a Dorcas Society chapter may reflect his own interest in sisters, not only in contrasting pairs of literal sisters, but also in religious sisterhoods or sororities.[94] Such sisterhoods were "the ecclesiastical alternative to secular feminism," and, some have argued, "'the first phases of the drive for the emancipation of women.'"[95]

90. *Rachel Ray*, ATHENAEUM, *supra* note 4.
91. *Id*. at 492, 493.
92. *Rachel Ray,* 16 SATURDAY REV. 554, 555 (1863).
93. *Rachel Ray*, ATHENAEUM, *supra* note 4, at 493.
94. JILL F. DUREY, TROLLOPE AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND 121 (2002).
95. *Id*. (quoting A.M. ALLCHIN, THE SILENT REBELLION: ANGLICAN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES 1845-1900 (1958)).

Layered on top of these recognizable characteristics of a particular type of woman, however, Nardin and other modern Trollope scholars also view characters like Mrs. Prime as subverting the Victorian ideal of husbandly authority and wifely submission.[96] In *Rachel Ray*, as Mrs. Prime deftly avoids remarriage and his assertion of husbandly rights, Mr. Prong is mostly a comical figure. This comical treatment of thwarted husbandly rule contrasts with those married men in Trollope's later novels who insist on their God-given and legal marital rights and eventually go mad with their frustrated desires for marital control and with jealousy.[97] In the character of Mrs. Prime, *Rachel Ray* offers present-day readers a striking picture of how the once-married might resist marriage for more satisfying forms of affiliation, both intimate and philanthropic. Moreover, Trollope creatively stretches the concept of "marriage" to capture an initially unhealthy relationship of tyrant/dependent, which evolves to a more harmonious and equal union between two widows sharing a household together. Just one year later, Trollope would offer an even richer portrait of such a household in one of his most beloved novels, *The Small House at Allington*.

C. The Small House at Allington: A Meditation on Singlehood

One of Trollope's most popular books, *The Small House at Allington,* part of Trollope's Barsetshire series, offers a striking variety of nonmarital households with characters "who have not achieved a happy marriage, or indeed any other kind of marriage."[98] Contemporary reviewers praised its realism, describing the book as an "admirable representation of our modern social world,"[99] and heralding Trollope's "command of what we may call the moral 'hooks and eyes' of life."[100] Reviewers also found pleasure in the

96. *See* NARDIN, *supra* note 64, at 120, 127.

97. *See, e.g.,* ANTHONY TROLLOPE, HE KNEW HE WAS RIGHT (John Sutherland ed., Oxford University Press 1963) (1869) (the character Louise Trevelyan); and ANTHONY TROLLOPE, PHINEAS FINN (Simon Dentith ed., Oxford University Press new ed. 2011) (1868) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, PHINEAS FINN] (the character Robert Kennedy); ANTHONY TROLLOPE PHINEAS REDUX *(*John Bowed ed., Oxford University Press new ed. 2011) (1873) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, PHINEAS REDUX] (the character Robert Kennedy).

98. Dinah Birch, *Introduction* to ANTHONY TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE AT ALLINGTON xii (Dinah Birch, ed., Oxford University Press 2015) (1864) ("The novel has never lost its place among the most widely read of Trollope's books.").

99. *Unsigned review,* 37 SPECTATOR 421 (1864)*, reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note 2, at 197.

100. *Id.* at 198.

novel's characters, who were characterized as "all living, human beings,"[101] including Lily Dale—the central character—whose romantic path in the novel is to fall in love, be disappointed, and transform with quite remarkable intention into an "old maid." In so doing, Lily sheds light on both the problems and possibilities inherent in remaining unmarried and the novel takes up this motif, repeating the main chords of her theme in the romantic histories of the other characters.

i. Lily and Mrs. Dale's Mother-Daughter Household "Partnership": A Widow and a Self-Declared "O.M."

Lily Dale, among the most loved of Trollope's characters,[102] is a protagonist who set a certain standard for Trollope heroines and to whom critics often compared the young women in his later novels.[103] In the novel, Lily falls quickly and passionately in love with Adolphus Crosbie as the novel opens, but he soon jilts her for an opportunistic, quickly disastrous marriage to the aristocratic Alexandrina De Courcy. Unlucky in love and marriage, Lily resolutely refuses to marry after this rejection, despite continual proposals from Johnny Eames, a childhood friend who adores her.[104] Ultimately, in *The Last Chronicle of Barset*, Lily's story continues as she continues to reject Johnny, and also refuses even to hear the renewed marital interest—and profession of love—from the chastened, widowed Crosbie.[105] Indeed, in a chapter entitled, "Lily Dale Writes Two Words in Her Book," Lily tells Johnny that, to ensure that she will never depart from her intention never to marry, she will write in her book that day, "Lillian Dale, Old Maid."[106] She adorns the words with a scroll, an Italian motto, and even a heading, "As arranged by Fate for L.D."[107] Accordingly, when

101. *See, e.g., Unsigned Review,* 1900 ATHENAEUM 437 (1864), *reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note 2, at 194.

102. ANTHONY TROLLOPE, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND OTHER WRITINGS 113 (Nicholas Shrimpton ed., Oxford University Press 2014) (1883) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY].

103. *See, e.g., Unsigned Notice,* 51 SATURDAY REV. 756 (1881), *reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note 2, at 484 (excerpting unsigned review in *Saturday review* observing critically that Ayala, in *Ayala's Angel*, is "no Lily Dale or Grace Crawley").

104. TROLLOPE, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *supra* note 98, at 113.

105. ANTHONY TROLLOPE, THE LAST CHRONICLE OF BARSET 188-198 (Helen Small, ed., Oxford University Press, 2015) (1867) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, THE LAST CHRONICLE].

106. *Id.* at 299, 303.

107. *Id.* at 381.

her mother expresses the view that "a girl who is going to be married has the best of it," Lily counters, "[a]nd I think that a girl who isn't going to be married has the best of it,—that's all."[108] The narrator concludes Lily's story by asking the reader to believe that Lily was in earnest to remain single and expressing his opinion that "she will live and die as Lily Dale."[109]

Instead of constructing her life around and through the marital bond, Lily views the primary intimate bond in her life as being with her mother. Mrs. Dale was widowed early in her marriage. The continued widowhood of Mrs. Dale must, to some extent, be regarded as a choice of nonmarriage; widowed fifteen years when the novels begins, she is forty and still, for the purposes of the marriage market, "very pretty."[110] Lily likewise refers to herself as a widow, given how passionately she loved Crosbie, regarding him as her husband even though they never reached the altar.[111] In this way, Lily sets up a relationship of equivalence between her and her mother—as opposed to a hierarchical relationship more typical of parent and child—and highlights her desire that her relationship with her mother no longer be that of mother and daughter, but a household partnership. She tells her mother: "I mean to have a will of my own, too, mamma; and a way also, if it be possible . . . .I shall consider it a partnership; and I shan't do what I'm told any longer."[112] In addition, to describe the closeness of their life together, Trollope uses imagery he more typically uses to describe conjugal love (including Lily's former view of Crosbie): "her mother was the only human divinity now worthy of adoration."[113]

Dinah Birch has observed that, in Lily's brooding over her lost love and her determination to remain single, Trollope is exploring "disturbed conditions of mind in which an obsession threatens to tip into mental illness;" Trollope may intend to imply that Lily exhibits "erotomania," often "thought to be characteristic of women's psychological vulnerabilities in

108. *Id.* at 674.
109. *Id.* at 675.
110. ANTHONY TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE AT ALLINGTON 22-23 (Dinah Birch ed., Oxford University Press 2015) (1864) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE]. *See* MARKWICK, *supra* note 4, at 142-43 (observing that widowers tended "to re-marry more frequently than widows," and that "90 percent of widows re-marrying were under 45 years of age").
111. TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE, *supra* note 110, at 519-20 ("She had declared [to her mother] that she also was widowed.")
112. *Id.* at 276.
113. TROLLOPE, THE LAST CHRONICLE, *supra* note 105, at 189.

mid-century Victorian England."[114] However, Trollope believed that Lily's hold on readers' hearts was precisely *because* she "could not get over her troubles" and marry.[115] As Birch further observes, Trollope resists "the conventions of his own courtship narrative" and in the novel, "a generation who has not been able to find happiness in marriage makes it their business to give the stories of Lily and Johnny a different ending."[116] In addition, *The Small House* also offers a more hereditary, less gendered rationale: Lily is a Dale. She is therefore similar to her uncle, Christopher Dale, who experienced "unrequited love" and had been "unable to transfer his heart to another."[117]

ii. Living Apart Together: The Extended Family of the Great and Small Houses

The complement to the Small House, where Lily lives with Mrs. Dale, is the Great House, occupied by Mrs. Dale's brother-in-law, the Squire Christopher Dale, who—like Lily—had an early disappointment in love and thereafter never married. Childless, he has allowed Mrs. Dale and her daughters to live rent-free at the Small House, affording his nieces the "considerable social advantages of living at Allington."[118] There is frequent travel back and forth between the two homes, with various forms of intimate and economic exchange. And these exchanges between the two houses put on display the growing pains of intimacy, entanglement, and understanding in familial and household relationships. This intimacy can also lead to misunderstandings by outsiders about obligations flowing from such relationships: when he proposes to Lily, Crosbie mistakenly assumes that Squire Dale would treat his niece as a "daughter" and provide financially for her upon marriage.[119] The Squire's retort that he "does not consider it to

114. Birch, *supra* note 98, at xxii-xxiii.

115. TROLLOPE, AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY, *supra* note 102 at 113 (claiming that he (Trollope) did not share his readers' "enthusiasm" for Lily, and calling her "somewhat of a female prig.").

116. Birch, *supra* note 98, at xxiv.

117. TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE, *supra* note 110, at 7-8. Birch, *supra* note 94, at xiii ("[t]he romantic history of Christopher Dale prefigures that of his niece," giving a "family context for Lily's resolve" to remain single).

118. TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE, *supra* note 110, at 19.

119. *Id.* at 67.

be" his "duty" to give his niece "a fortune on her marriage" begins Crosbie's regrets over his proposal.[120]

At first, the Squire and Mrs. Dale respect, but do not love, each other; each experiences the other as being "cold."[121] The Squire is "generous and affectionate" to his nieces and, in her darker moments, Mrs. Dale sometimes wonders if it would be better "if she were out of the way" so that his nieces would "in all respects have stood before the world as his adopted children."[122] Primarily, the Squire and Mrs. Dale differ over the marriage of Bell, Lily's sister. The Squire's foremost wish is to marry his nephew and eventual male heir, Bernard, to Bell, his "chief favorite among the Dales," as a way of uniting the families and securing Bell's future as "the future mistress of the Great House."[123] Mrs. Dale is not opposed, but also will not pressure Bell, who is in love with a penniless doctor, Dr. Crofts. The Squire persists so intently on the match that a rupture leads to Mrs. Dale's decision to leave the Small House. In the end, however, Mrs. Dale and the Squire come to a new equilibrium and a new understanding of each other: he realizes she has not felt "pleasant" in his house and she realizes that he has difficulty showing his love but nevertheless wishes their relationship to be more "kindly."[124] They kiss for the first time, signaling a new beginning.[125] To cement this new understanding between the houses and demonstrate his affection in material terms, the Squire tells Mrs. Dale that he is giving each niece £3,000 immediately.[126]

By novel's end, the narrator predicts that "life at Allington, both at the Great House and at the Small, would soon become pleasanter than it used to be in former days."[127] And rather than a marital merger between two individuals, the book ends with a merger between two nonmarital households—with even a dowry of sorts included—marking a different kind

120. *Id.* at 67-68. Lily generously offers to release Crosbie from his proposal when she realizes that he made it thinking she "had some fortune." *Id.* at 133. However, in the moment, Crosbie is so "awed by her great love," that he can't take her at her word and take back his proposal even though he knows it will be financial "ruin." *Id.* at 134-35.

121. *Id.* at 27.

122. *Id.*

123. *Id.* at 19.

124. TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE, *supra* note 110, at 521.

125. *Id.*

126. *Id.* at 522-23. This prompts Lily to ask how soon she "shall have a new pair of Balmoral boots." *Id*. at 523. The Squire has given gifts to the residents of the Small House before. As noted above, Crosbie mistakes the extent of the Squire's sense of financial obligation toward Lily. *Id*. at 67.

127. *Id.* at 545.

of coupling and the beginning of a new phase of intimacy between the households.

iii. A Happy Sibling Household: Lord De Guest and Julia De Guest

Finally, Trollope entwines the lives of the Dales with another nonconjugal household, that of an earl, Lord De Guest, and his "maiden sister" Julia. The life stories of the Earl and Squire Dale are notably parallel: each "had loved, … been disappointed, and … had remained single through life."[128] While the Earl observes that they have each adjusted in their own ways and "our lives have not been desolate,"[129] the Squire, however, is by nature melancholy. Trollope's reviewers praised the characters of both the Squire and the Earl, finding Lord De Guest, the "true farming nobleman," to be "sketched with perfect knowledge,"[130] with no mention that this portrait of an Earl living with his sister would be marginal or mistaken. Speaking of brothers and sisters at the end of the eighteenth century, one scholar has remarked: "Sisters, equally with their brothers, were keepers of the family honor, bearers of the family name, reproducers of the natal family's social identity, traditions, stories, characteristics, lineage. Particularly if they lived nearby, brothers were bound to protect and preserve their sisters to the extent that they valued the blood that ran in their veins."[131]

The relationship between these two siblings, however, goes beyond protection and evidences shared interests and an easy compatibility. The Earl shares the family home, Guestwick House, with Lady Julia, who lives "in maiden blessedness," as its "mistress." Far from lamenting her unmarried state, she views her "high position" as one "destiny had called upon her to fill."[132] She speaks of the "duty" one has to family and community, whether single or married, and has nothing but contempt for her sister who eloped with a suitor against their parents' wishes. Trollope, as narrator, is not necessarily kind to Lady Julia, describing her as a "tedious, dull, virtuous old woman," giving herself "infinite credit" for

128. *Id*. at 298.
129. *Id.*
130. *Unsigned Review,* 37 SPECTATOR 421 (1864)*, reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note 2, at 201.
131. RUTH PERRY, NOVEL RELATIONS 109 (2004).
132. TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE, *supra* note 110, at 110.

remaining in the home of her youth, and taking pride in her position with certain "little pompous ways."[133] However, he undercuts this severe description through developing plot points in which both brother and sister are kind and generous, caring for those around them. Lady Julie, for example, confronts Crosbie over his plan to jilt Lily for a daughter of a noble family, asserting her right as the friend and neighbor of a young lady with no father or brother.[134]

Moreover, both brother and sister develop relationships outside of their household that are intimate, supportive, and familial. After a comic scene, in which Johnny Eames rescues Lord De Guest from one of his prize bulls, Johnny becomes a favorite of Lord De Guest and his sister, akin to a beloved relation. Lord De Guest expands social capital to advance his career as a clerk; both brother and sister seek to advance his futile courtship of Lily, and Lord De Guest ultimately advances Johnny's social status greatly by leaving him a few thousand pounds in his will. [135] Even after the Earl's death, Johnny—taking on the role of son again—continues to visit and correspond with Lady Julia, who retains an interest in his life and career. In turn, Julia even entrusts him to make inquiries on her behalf about settling her brother's estate.[136] All of this generosity shows how resources may flow from a household as a result of "great affection" even though the beneficiary was "in no way" a relative.[137]

iv. Singlehood, Lost Love, and New Opportunity

In drawing portraits of all these nonmarital households, Trollope centers the nonmarital, the parental, the family built on non-romantic, non-sexual family relationships which are nevertheless both durable and intimate. In centering unmarried women, Trollope may have been reflecting contemporary concerns about the social problem of "surplus" women. Almost ten years before the book's publication, the issue of female poverty

133. *Id.*
134. *Id.* at 200-02.
135. TROLLOPE, THE LAST CHRONICLE, *supra* note 105, at 120.
136. *Id.* at 124. As she writes to Johnny: "How is a woman to live if she doesn't know how much she has got to spend?" *Id*. at 125.
137. *Id.* at 120. This generosity is consequential for Johnny, given that he is the son of a poor widow with limited income and an unmarried daughter at home. TROLLOPE, THE SMALL HOUSE, *supra* note 110, at 32-33.

was thrust into the public spotlight when the 1851 Census of Great Britain determined that there were approximately 400,000 women for whom marriage was an impossibility, data that "took on the aura of news and gave rise to much speculation concerning implications for the future."[138] The varied debates over "surplus" women pointed to the larger social predicament—that the fortunes of women were generally tied to family and marriage. As Flint observes, at a time when such statistics prompted articles such as "Why Are Women Redundant?" and "What Shall We Do With Our Old Maids?," "to remain single was not necessarily an active choice."[139]

However, Lily Dale illustrates that "for some it was."[140] Flint suggests that Lily's own "determination not to enter into a matrimonial compromise" is also a "spirited act of defiance" by Trollope, in not giving readers the expected "happy ending."[141] As part of the larger "woman question,"[142] the threat of hundreds of thousands of women living alone and outside of marriage raised the specter of how these women were to survive. The single women in *Small House* are not threatened with financial precarity in the ways that gave rise to concern over the "surplus women" question; nevertheless, the myriad single women in the novel may gesture to this phenomenon and more broadly to the question of what an unmarried woman was to do with her time and to secure her livelihood. Further, even as Trollope's novels offer examples of marriage "gone terribly wrong" to caution female readers against marrying out of "panic," Lily Dale and other marriage resisters—such as the delightfully irascible Priscilla Stanbury in *He Knew He Was Right*—offer instructive counterexamples.[143] Single men, predictably, did not raise any such concerns but the single men in *Small House* may be reflective of the fact that many men did live alone, either by choice or as widowers.[144]

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138. Judith Worsnop, *A Reevaluation of "the Problem of Surplus Women" in 19th-Century England: The Case of the 1851 Census,* 13 WOMEN'S STUD. INT'L F. 21, 22 (1990).

139. Flint, *supra* note 7, at 104.

140. *Id*.

141. *Id*.

142. *See* McClain, *supra* note 1, at 1873-76, 1887-1890 (discussing Trollope's attention to the "woman question" in his novels).

143. Flint, *supra* note 8, at 102-03.

144. *See* MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 142-143 (noting twice as many widows as widowers in 1861 census). Notably, as *Last Chronicle* ends, the narrator reports that Johnny Eames is—and is "likely to remain"—a bachelor, even as he continues his close relationship with Lady Julia. TROLLOPE, LAST CHRONICLE, *supra* note 113, at 725.

Nevertheless, the presence of so many single characters who have lost loves, either through disappointment in the marriage market or the death of a spouse, reflects more than a mirroring of certain facets of contemporary demographics. This pervasive sense of loss—as one scholar points out, "[n]early all the characters have a history of unrequited love"[145]—expresses an essential Trollope theme, the notion of the "broken pastoral" and nostalgia for a mythic past. Each character suffers some variation of disappointment attached to the dream of the perfect romantic union, and each character must navigate the transformation of youthful longing into something different and more modern as they collectively "look for greater complexity in their lives"[146] after admitting the naivete of their first desires.

This loss is not, however, all melancholic. The joy of the novel comes in the narratives of replacement that abound as each character seeks and finds new connections and new intimacies among splintered hopes. In this post-pastoral world, the familial and household relationships that develop and deepen are a testament to the strength, utility, and intimacy of relationships outside of marriage, relationships that are sustaining in psychological, emotional, and financial terms. Moreover, they appear more sustaining than the several marital relationships in the novel.[147] These nonmarital relationships, between siblings, parents and children, cousins, and friends possess a marital tint in the sense that they are dedicated and long-term relationships, built over time and forged through both reliance and mutual respect, as well as obligation. They differ, however, from marital relationships in that they are grounded in psychological acuity, modern realism, and the desire to reshape the family in pragmatic rather than idealistic ways. Accordingly, Trollope uses his single characters, abundant in the novel, to not only depict modern realities of singlehood, but also to meditate on the possibilities inherent in remaining single and seeking

145. Deborah Denenholz Morse, *"Nothing will make me distrust you": The Pastoral Transformed in Anthony Trollope's The Small House at Allington* (1864), *in* VICTORIAN TRANSFORMATIONS: GENRE, NATIONALISM AND DESIRE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE 51 (Bianca Tredennick ed., 2011).

146. *Id*. at 46.

147. The several problematic marital homes include: the dysfunctional DeCourcy household; the unhappy, disastrous marriage between Adolphus Crosbie and one of the DeCourcy daughters (Lady Alexandrina); and the tumultuous marital relationship of two occupants of the boardinghouse where Johnny initially lives (Mr. and Mrs. Lupex). Johnny becomes romantically entangled with Amelia Roper, whose mother, the widowed Mrs. Roper, runs the boardinghouse.

intimacy outside of the traditional marital bond, with all its possibility for disappointment.

D. Ralph the Heir: Legitimacy and Family Formation

If *Small House* provides an entry into Trollope's world of singleness and the ways in which families of single people form, *Ralph the Heir* is an inquiry into "the slipperiness of the legal boundary between legitimate and illegitimate"[148] with respect both to birth status and family formation and, as an extension, the queer potentiality of households. In *Ralph the Heir*,[149] a novel written at the height of Trollope's career, Trollope presents a nonmarital household of two adult daughters (Patience and Clarissa) who, while nominally living with their father, live mostly on their own because their widowed father eschews the duties of the family home. The father, Sir Thomas Underwood, would rather spend his time at his office—which he considers his home—in a different kind of nonmarital household with his trusted and longstanding clerk, Joseph Stemm. These two households exist in quite apparent contradistinction, undermining conventions around the separate lives of work and home and upending normative understandings about a father's role within the home as well as the proper affective sphere for the father. Trollope highlights the particularities of these households and family arrangements, then, by contrasting them with the household composed of Squire Neville and his "natural" (nonmarital) son, Ralph. This Ralph is regularly contrasted favorably with a second Ralph— Ralph Newton, the eponymous "Ralph the Heir,"—the legal heir to Squire Neville's property (and a former ward of Sir Thomas).[150] Neville is an intensely present father and the relationship between Neville and his son is everything that the relationship between Sir Thomas and his daughters is not.[151] In this way, hewing to an essential Trollopian theme, the novel is an inquiry into the "vexed question" of "what constitutes a proper marriage and

148. Jenny Bourne Taylor, *Bastards to the Time: Legitimacy as Legal Fiction in Trollope's Novels of the 1870s*, *in* THE POLITICS OF GENDER IN ANTHONY TROLLOPE'S NOVELS, *supra* note 21, at 45.

149. ANTHONY TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR (Geoffrey Cumberlege ed., Oxford University Press, 1951) (1871) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR].

150. *Id.* at 15.

151. *See* MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 145, 163 (describing the Neville father-son relationship as an example of "the "warm loving feeling which flows freely between two men").

thus legally sanctioned offspring, and what it means, more generally, to be a socially authorized member of a family or community."[152]

i. Sororal Households: Marriage Isn't Everyone's Destiny

At the novel's start, Sir Thomas Underwood has all but abandoned the family home, Popham Villa, only infrequently paying visits to his two adult daughters Patience and Clarissa, aged twenty-three and twenty-one. Trollope divides masculine and feminine qualities between these aptly-named sisters: Patience, the older sister, although a "lady," lacks "feminine loveliness" and instead resembles her father, including in the "sense of intelligence" conveyed by her eyes. Trollope stresses Patience's intellectual capabilities, including knowing languages, reading, cleverness, understanding clearly "the difference between right and wrong," and her religiosity. Patience's qualities suit her for managing the household and finances: "[S]he would make the servants love her and yet obey her, and could always dress on her allowance without owing a shilling." By comparison, Clarissa "was obeyed by no one," owed money to "her boot-maker and milliner," and could not understand Dante. Nevertheless, the romantically-named Clarissa is a "beauty," and attractive to a range of men.[153] In this way, the sisters repeat conventional novelistic tropes of sisterhood in which each is a foil for the other.[154]

The outlier in this household of sisters is Mary Bonner, the orphaned cousin who joins the sisters from Jamaica after her widowed father's death. She combines the differently gendered qualities of the two sisters, having stunning beauty, commanding presence, strong intelligence and keen insight into character. In Jamaica, by necessity due to lack of paternal oversight, she had to fend for herself as a teenager in her father's household, where all manner of military men and romantic offers were present. By holding herself aloof, she was "unpopular" and spoken of as a "proud, cold, meaningless minx."[155] Left virtually penniless by her father, Mary clearheadedly views her choices about her future life as obtaining paid

152. Taylor, *supra* note 148.
153. TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR, *supra* note 149, at Vol. 1, 20-22.
154. Perry, *supra* note 131, at 117.
155. TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR, *supra* note 149, at 48-50.

employment as a governess, becoming dependent on her uncle's charity, or using the natural gift of her beauty as an asset on the marriage market.[156]

While the sisters regret their father's absence, they are used to a daily household routine in which he is absent. Patience, a "marvel among young women" (in her father's eyes) for her "prudence, conduct, and proper feeling,"[157] is used to making daily decisions, consulting him only when necessary. Sir Thomas initially fears that Mary's arrival may compel him to change his way of living and assume the "duty of father in regard to her."[158] But despite her commanding presence and his conviction that he "would not dare to neglect her,"[159] the pull of his usual routine is too strong: Mary simply joins her cousins in their all-female household, graced by Sir Thomas' weekly or bi-weekly visits from London.

The only time Sir Thomas experiences a sense of regret about failed duty is when he contemplates the marriages of his daughters. At one point, he realizes that he always assumed and expected that his daughters would marry (freeing him to live entirely in London) and that one of his neglected paternal duties has been attending to their marital success. Patience, however, lives a happy life without marriage. Although the narrator suggests that her lack of beauty places marriage out of reach, she never actually expresses a desire to marry, viewing Clarissa as her intimate partner and "only mate." [160] On the other hand, Clarissa, a romantic, desires to marry. She has turned down one insufficiently exciting suitor, the clergyman Gregory Newton, while falling in love with his more exciting, but reckless brother, Ralph Newton (the heir), who often visits Popham Villa. Clarissa never benefits from paternal intervention or guidance in marriage matters and is left to her own to determine the best suitor and the best strategy, unlike in other households in *Ralph the Heir* in which fathers take strong positions on the marriage of their children.[161] That contemporary reviewers praised the character of Sir Thomas—with his intellectual gifts, his awareness of his "shortcomings in deserting his daughters [for his chambers] so much," and his "fruitless reproaches of conscience"—as

156. *Id*.
157. *Id*. at 16.
158. *Id*. at 47.
159. *Id.*
160. *Id.* at 344-45.
161. For example, Mr. Neefit.

among Trollope's "finest and best,"[162] not only confirmed Sir Thomas' act of desertion but highlighted his frustrated attempts to fulfill the role of father, mentor, and guide for the three young women in his nominal household.

Ultimately, it is with Mary Bonner that Sir Thomas finally takes on some duties as father, uncle, and guardian. Sir Thomas provides counsel when Mary receives a proposal from Ralph Neville, the son (not Ralph the heir), stating that he looks upon "marriage as the happiest lot for all women," and that her marriage to Ralph would be a happy one.[163] He refers to his duty as her guardian and nearest relative when he feels obliged to speak well of Ralph's good character (despite his nonmarital birth), honorable proposal letter, and (at this point in the novel) good financial prospects.

ii. The Intimacy of Office as Alternative Home

Preferable for Sir Thomas to staying at home, and enjoying the domestic delights of Popham Villa, is the prospect of being in his office and spending time with his long-time friend and clerk. Despite the fact that Sir Thomas has "all but abandoned his practice at the Bar," he continues to live most of his life at his "large and commodious" chambers in the Southampton Buildings in London. Sir Thomas has rationalized neglecting his paternal duty and his infrequent visits to the Villa on the fiction that his chambers are more conducive to writing his long-planned but never begun biography of Francis Bacon.[164] Accordingly, Sir Thomas spends his days "breakfasting there, reading there, writing there, and sleeping there."[165] And Joseph Stemm, his clerk, is there with him, protecting Sir Thomas from interruptions and supporting his work. Stemm, the narrator tells us, "passed his entire time, from half-past eight in the morning till ten at night, waiting

162. *Unsigned notice*, 44 SPECTATOR 450 (1871), *reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note 2, at 348.

163. TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR, *supra* note 149, at 46.

164. *Id*. at 136-40. Trollope's poignant sketch of Underwood who, in moments of stress, would "fly at his papers," to "copy some passage from a dusty book," *id.* at 139-40, but never actually sets pen to paper to write the book brings to mind George Eliot's subsequent portrait, in *Middlemarch,* of Edward Casaubon's planned magisterial, "Key to All Mythologies," with which his eager young bride Dorothea initially hopes to be of help. *See* GEORGE ELIOT, MIDDLEMARCH (1872).

165. TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR, *supra* note 149, at 6.

upon his employer in various capacities with a sedulous personal attention to which he had probably not intended to devote himself" when he first took up "the duties of clerk to a practicing Chancery barrister."[166]

Sir Thomas and Stemm have grown up together in a professional sense as well as a personal one, and they have also "grown old" together. Sir Thomas has forsaken his family time and responsibilities to spend the days in his office, coexisting peaceably with Stemm. Similarly, Stemm prefers the intimacy of these office days to familial duties, like visiting his nieces, and is unhappy when he is given time "off" work.[167] Like a "work wife"[168] or an actual spouse, Stemm frets continually over Sir Thomas, keeping unwanted visitors away, scolding him while taking his part "against all the world," attending to his comfort, consoling him on various matters of concern, and worrying about effects on Sir Thomas of campaigning for a possible political comeback.[169]

The embodiment of a reimagined domesticity, in a variety of ways, the relationship between the two men is quite clearly beyond that of professionals or casual friends. Sir Thomas and Stemm are intimates in the most profound ways: "Stemm had but one friend in the world, and Sir Thomas was that friend. I have already said that Sir Thomas had no friend; but perhaps he felt more of that true intimacy, which friendship produces, with Stemm than with any other human being."[170] They are, indeed, such intimate companions that "separation" is unimaginable. They are married in all the meaningful ways—they experience together all of the small details that compose a shared life, they work together and offer advice and counsel, and they co-create a home-like space. Reviewers at the time—referring to Underwood as "living to himself in chambers" and observing Sir Thomas's failure to "become intimate even with his own daughters, much less with any male friends"[171]—failed to mark this intimacy between Underwood and

166. *Id.* at 7.
167. *Id.* at 276.
168. *See* Laura Rosenbury, *Work Wives*, 36 HARV. J. L. & GENDER 345 (2013).
169. *See, e.g.,* TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR, *supra* note 149, at 120-21.
170. *Id.* at 7.
171. *Unsigned Notice*, 44 SPECTATOR 450 (1871), *reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note 2, at 348. One review praises "Sir Thomas Underwood and his clerk Stemm" as "creations of which any writer of fiction might be proud," but does not comment on their relationship. *Unsigned Notice,* TIMES (London), Apr. 17, 1871, at 6, *reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note 2, at 351. We disagree with the critic who wrote that, "as usual with Mr. Trollope, his women are not equal to his men." *Unsigned Notice*, 44 SPECTATOR 450 (1871*), reprinted in* THE CRITICAL HERITAGE, *supra* note

Stemm. Perhaps this was because the intimacy and friendship that they offer as a couple was too far from the contemporary frame of reference. Alone together in the old and dusty law office, Sir Thomas and Stemm queer the image of the traditional marital household just as they offer a jarring contrast to the female-centered household at Popham Villa.

iii. Another Nonmarital Household: Father and Son

In contrast to the absent patriarch model operating at Popham Villa, the novel offers a strong counterexample in the loving, nonmarital household of Squire Neville and his natural son Ralph. Ralph's mother died before his father could marry her; the Squire's most fervent wish is to remove the disadvantages of Ralph's birth by securing Ralph as his heir (thereby displacing Ralph Newton, who is indeed heir to the estate). The Squire's devotion to his son, and hope that his son could succeed him, is so strong that it has prevented him from remarrying after Ralph's mother's death and having any more children who might inherit. As Markwick describes this nurturant relationship, the Squire "incorporates these feminized skills" of being warm, loving, and supportive "into the model of manliness that shapes his parenting of his illegitimate son."[172]

Tragically, on the verge of buying out Ralph the heir's interest in the estate so that he could leave the estate—and not simply his unentailed money—to Ralph his son, the buoyant Squire dies in a hunting accident. At his father's death, the son grieves not only because his father's most fervent plan to secure for him wealth and station has come to naught: "he had also lost that which is of all things the most valuable and most impossible to replace,—a friend whose love was perfect."[173] Trollope daringly has Ralph compare this father-son intimacy to a romantic relationship: not only had no father "ever been better to a son than his father had been to him," but "no lover ever worshipped a mistress more thoroughly than his father had idolized him. There had never been love to beat it, never solicitude more perfect and devoted."[174]

2, at 350. The critic exempted from this criticism Polly Neefit. *Id.*

172. MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 145.

173. TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR, *supra* note 149 at 63.

174. *Id.*

This portrait of Squire Neville's parenthood and paternity, along with the contrasting portrait of Sir Thomas, illustrates Trollope's "significant interest or preoccupation with men as single parents."[175] Nevertheless, in these two strikingly different portraits, Trollope underscores the differences in quality and type of relationship that can exists between parent and child.

iv. A Reconfigured Nonmarital Household

By novel's end—after the upending of several households through both death and marriage—a final nonmarital household configuration emerges amongst the happy endings of several other new marital households. After the death of Squire Neville, Mary Bonner accepts a marriage proposal from the now dispossessed Ralph the son; and Clarissa finally accepts the renewed marriage proposal from Gregory, Ralph's cousin and close friend. Patience is the only unwed female remaining at Popham Villa, and Sir Thomas realizes—at her mention—that he can no longer evade his duty and leave her entirely alone.[176] Upon the exit of Clarissa and Mary from the home, Sir Thomas finally agrees to give up his chambers and orders his books packed and shipped to Popham Villa. Notably, however, Sir Thomas does not abandon his office family but rather combines his two households. Sir Thomas invites Stemm to come to Popham Villa with him as long as he doesn't "scold the maids."[177] Sir Thomas, in this way, retains his intimacy with Stemm while gaining a second chance at parenting (and grandparenting) as Clarissa and Mary and their spouses promise to visit the Villa.[178] Three households are undone and redone, disrupted and remade. After these disruptions, a strong nonmarital household remains, reconfigured to include Stemm and allow Sir Thomas to act both as parent and partner.

Like the end of *Small House*, then, when the two households come together in a kind a marriage or coupling, *Ralph the Heir* ends with a similar

175. MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 144. Trollope, Markwick observes, not only has proportionally more single-parent households in his novels than in the society of his time, but more single-father households than single-mother households. *Id.*

176. TROLLOPE, RALPH THE HEIR, *supra* note 149, at 350-53.

177. *Id.* at 353.

178. Fan fiction might imagine Patience taking in hand the Bacon biography, as she continues to manage the household, enjoying some modicum of companionship with her father and Stemm if they leave the library.

reconfiguration as Sir Thomas and his devoted clerk Stemm move into the family home together, reconfiguring the family form and redefining the parental unit. In terms of Trollope's depicting social circumstances and trends, the novel presents a certain awareness of the depth of intimacy between men. Trollope presents the reader with portraits of male friendship that demonstrate the "shortcomings of the 'manly' creed" and put forth a "masculinity for a modern society."[179]

In this way, the closeness between Sir Thomas and Stemm resembles that between Squire Thomas Platter Spooner of Spoon Hall and his cousin Edward (Ned) Spooner, in *Phineas Redux,* who form and enjoy a nonconjugal, intimate household.[180] While the Squire devotes himself to hunting, Ned makes the estate thrive. The household may have formed initially for economic reasons—Ned could not afford to marry and had "no particular income of his own"[181]—but by now, Ned is "a very attached friend" with whom the Squire consults on all important matters over their nightly bottle of port.[182] And, despite the fact that, at age forty, Squire Spooner (unsuccessfully) courts and proposes to a young woman, Adelaide Palliser, he assures Ned that, if he succeeds, he would allow no woman to drive Ned out of the house.[183] By *Phineas Redux*'s concluding chapter, the narrator reports that Squire Spooner "is still a bachelor, living with his cousin, Ned, and that none of the neighbors expect to see a lady at Spoon Hall."[184]

By contrast to this cousinly closeness, the relationship between Sir Thomas and Stemm treads the line between "homosocial and homoerotic relationships"[185] by offering the reader a couple defined by intimacy, longevity, and exclusivity. As Markwick observes, with respect to Trollope's novels written between 1850 and 1880, "Trollope shows us homoerotic behavior taking place within the range of sexuality of those we would otherwise describe as heterosexual." Accordingly, through Trollope's "coded observations on the behavior of men, we can also detect

179. MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 100.
180. TROLLOPE, PHINEAS REDUX, *supra* note 97, at 205.
181. *Id.* at 205.
182. *Id*. at 206.
183. *Id*.
184. *Id.* at 567.
185. MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 96.

Trollope's commenting on homoerotic behavior."[186] Flint similarly observes the "homosociality" in Trollope's fiction: men "enter into deep and affectionate friendships with one another, the depth of the feelings perceived by Trollope—who at the same time recognizes their inexpressibility."[187] And while Trollope's portrait of Sir Thomas and Stemm is not one of obvious, "intense homoerotic attraction," as in the case of some of Trollope's younger heroes,[188] it is a portrait of a mutually supportive relationship with emotional depth and psychological sophistication despite existing outside of marriage and outside of the enforced conventions of heterosexuality. Looking and acting like an old, married couple, Sir Thomas and Stemm defy masculine and heterosexual expectation. Trollope's ability to weave these themes "into texts that superficially conform to traditional values [. . .] seamlessly, almost invisibly, with no apparent disruption to the surface of convention, is remarkable."[189]

In addition to any social comment or demographic reflection Trollope might be making through his depiction of Sir Thomas and Stemm's intimacy, Trollope also demonstrates his literary sophistication by using the relationship as one more point of connection in his larger inquiry about legitimacy, conventionality, and belonging. While the obvious storyline about legitimacy—as indicated in the title—is the one centered around the two Ralphs, questions about legitimate forms of family and what bonds create a legitimate family abound in the novel. There is Sir Thomas, torn between his two families—the "legitimate" one at home with his daughters and the other at work with Stemm. There is Squire Neville, torn between his love for his nonmarital, "illegitimate" son and the legitimate inheritance rights of his heir, a dilemma made all the more acute since the reader is "led to understand that the illegitimate Ralph would be a better landlord than the ne'er-do-well legitimate one."[190] Then there are the sisters and their cousin, torn between a range of conflicting desires and trying to manifest the best results for their futures outside of social expectation. In all these story lines,

186. *Id.* at 95.
187. Flint, *supra* note 8, at 105.
188. *Id.* at 106-07 (describing the relationship between Owen Fitzgerald and Patrick Desmond in *Castle Richmond*).
189. MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 100.
190. Juliet McMaster, *Trollope's Country Estates*, *in* TROLLOPE CENTENARY ESSAYS 70, 79 (John Halpern ed., 1982).

there is an open question about whether social legitimacy brings satisfaction and prosperity. By the end of the novel, it is somewhat clear that the illegitimate may sometimes be the better option: legitimacy does not always attach to personal merit, does not always lead to romantic satisfaction, and does not always produce the best results whether it be for a family or for an estate.

E. Mr. Scarborough's Family (1883): Freedom and Private Ordering

Returning to refrains and themes about legitimacy, inheritance, and the proper shape of the family, *Mr. Scarborough's Family,* Trollope's last completed three-volume novel,[191] focused on a father's right to circumvent the tradition of primogeniture by raising doubts about the timing of his marriage and therefore the legitimacy of his first-born son in order to satisfy his own desires and leave his estate to his second son. This thematic thread of individual freedom, the freedom to choose a life and a legacy, also appears in several secondary plot lines that bear on the ability of the characters to choose living arrangements that, while potentially unconventional, satisfy their own desires. The novel presents a wealth of examples of people—all like the title character—who take matters into their own hands when it comes to arranging their lives and livelihoods. Miss Thoroughbung and Dolly Gray, who receive marriage proposals, prefer to remain in the unconventional households in which they live. Miss Thoroughbung initially accepts a marriage proposal from Mr. Prosper, but the bargain fails when she insists on certain financial terms as well as on bringing her long-time companion, Miss Tickle, to the marital household. Dolly Gray prefers the companionship of her father, her soul mate, and her role as a third partner in his law firm to a fate of marrying her father's law firm partner, Mr. Barry. In addition, Mr. Prosper (who proposes to Miss Thoroughbung) ultimately prefers to be a confirmed bachelor, living according to his own devices and desires.

191. Richard Mullen, *Introduction to* ANTHONY TROLLOPE, MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY ix (David Skilton ed., The Trollope Society 1998) (1883) [hereinafter TROLLOPE, MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY].

i. Valuing Female Companionship More than Marriage (to a Man): Miss Thoroughbung and Miss Tickle

Paralleling the plot involving Mr. Scarborough and his plan to leave his estate to his preferred heir, Mr. Prosper, a secondary character, was initially content to allow his nephew Harry Annesley to inherit. But, after Harry disappoints him with his unseemly behavior, Mr. Prosper decides to find a wife and produce an heir. Mr. Prosper settles on Miss Matilda Thoroughbung, connected to his family because one of his nieces is to marry Miss Thoroughbung's nephew, "the young Buntingford brewer."[192] The source of the Thoroughbung wealth is the family's brewery business and, because she is in a different social class than Mr. Prosper, her relatives view her as "fool enough for anything" and assume she will eagerly accept Mr. Prosper's proposal. Harry, however, previews a problem with the proposed match when he asks, "Is Uncle Prosper to marry Miss Tickle also?"[193]

The narrator is kind, generally, to Miss Thoroughbung. By comparison to Mr. Prosper, who looks old for his age, Miss Thoroughbung is "fat, fair, and forty to the letter, and she had a just measure of her own good looks, of which she was not unconscious."[194] And, luckily for Miss Thoroughbung, she has "twenty-five thousand pounds of her own" (evidently from brewery profits[195]), which have freed her from the need to marry for money—or at all.[196] In this way, she resembles several other Trollope characters, including Miss Todd in *The Bertrams* (discussed above) and Aspasia Fitzgibbon, from *Phineas Finn*, who is an "old maid," over forty, into whose hand a "wonderful windfall," a "considerable fortune" of twenty-five thousand pounds, fell "unexpectedly." The only member of her family with money at her command, Aspasia lives by herself in a small house on a small

192. *Id.* at 153.
193. *Id.* at 173.
194. *Id.* at 197.
195. Mr. Prosper's servant, Matthew, disparagingly refers to her as that "froth of a beer barrel." *Id.* at 205.
196. *Id.* at 173. The source of her wealth is not explicitly mentioned, but we infer it is from the family business. The narrator mentions reports that her consciousness of possessing "twenty-five thousand pounds" had "stood in the way of her search after a husband," since she "looked too high" for a husband, given her family's background in trade. *Id.* at 197. However, the narrator also invites skepticism of these reports, since "report always does deal unkindly with unmarried young women who have ceased to be girls." *Id.*

street in Mayfair, and "walked about sturdily by herself, and spoke her mind about everything."[197]

On account of this wealth, it is unclear—as some of Trollope's contemporary reviewers observed[198]—whether Miss Thoroughbung was ever serious about the match. Nevertheless, Trollope's several detailed scenes of the ultimately unsuccessful marriage negotiations make vividly clear that she cares intensely about two things: protecting her money and retaining her life with Miss Tickle. Miss Tickle is Miss Thoroughbung's longtime paid companion, and their adult relationship goes beyond one of employment, carrying over into the realm of warm friendship and personal enjoyment. Giving Mr. Prosper a glimpse into their household dynamics and intimacy, Miss Thoroughbung horrifies him when she mentions that she and Miss Tickle were discussing him over a meal of champagne and "despatched crabs." ("Despatched crabs for supper! He always went to bed at ten, and had a tumbler of barley-water brought to him . . . with just a squeeze of lemon-juice.")[199]

Accordingly, when Mr. Prosper states he is laying at her feet "my hand, my heart, and the lands of Buston," she responds that she must consider her own financial situation: "I think it is nine hundred and seventy-two pounds six shillings and eightpence. Of course, when there is so much money it would have to be tied up somehow."[200] Rejecting the financial and social practices of the day, Miss Thoroughbung insists that "the principals" to the marriage must understand each other, for "young women are always robbed when their money is left altogether to the gentlemen"—"the fathers and the brothers, and the uncles and the lawyers," who "intend to do right after the custom of their fathers and uncles."[201] Moreover, Miss Thoroughbung states that she must control her own money to continue her current lifestyle of ponies, champagne, and despatched crab with Miss Tickle. As Miss Thoroughbung remarks: "I shouldn't mind paying for my own maid, and the champagne, and my clothes, of course, and the fishmonger's bill. There would be Miss Tickle, too. You said you would like Miss Tickle. I should

197. TROLLOPE, PHINEAS FINN *supra* note 97, at 35.

198. *See, e.g., Mr. Scarborough's Family*, 55 SATURDAY REV. 642, 643 (1883) (as she "seemed to have been equally fond of fun and flirtation, we are left in considerable doubt from the first as to how far she had ever been serious").

199. TROLLOPE, MR SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY, *supra* note 191, at 205, 339-40.

200. *Id.* at 201.

201. *Id.* at 202.

have to pay for her." [202] Miss Tickle is, from the beginning, a deal-breaker for Miss Thoroughbung and part of the marital bargaining, a household fixture not to be discarded in the proposed union.[203] Indeed, Miss Thoroughbung is willing to forego marriage if Mr. Prosper continues his "cruel" objection to Miss Tickle joining their household, depriving her of "the friend of [her] youth."[204] Further, Miss Thoroughbung proposes to spend one month each year in London and to go with Miss Tickle, since the two women had a long habit of "a few weeks in London about the exhibition time."[205]

Mr. Prosper's conviction that Miss Thoroughbung is not "fit" to be his wife grows throughout the negotiations, particularly when she demands: "Say that I shall have Jemima Tickle!" The attachment between the women is such that Miss Thoroughbung brings allies into the bargaining. A letter, for example, from Miss Thoroughbung's lawyers emphasizes her intense attachment: "our client is anxious to know specifically that she is to be allowed to bring Miss Tickle with her, when she removes to Buston Hall. Her happiness depends greatly on the company of Miss Tickle, to which she has been used now for many years." During one conversation, witnessed by Mr. Prospers' brother-in-law who is the rector, Miss Thoroughbung enlists the rector's help: "I'm sure the rector will agree with me that old friends like me and Miss Tickle ought not to be separated." At this, Mr. Prosper makes an uncharacteristic exclamation: "Damn Miss Tickle!"—before "piteously" apologizing for his outburst.[206]

Unsurprisingly, negotiations between Mr. Prosper and Miss Thoroughbung ultimately break down over financial terms as well as Miss Thoroughbung's insistence that Miss Tickle be part of their marital household. As Miss Thoroughbung tells Miss Tickle: "I'm not going to throw you over, and of course you'd be just nowhere if I did. I shan't break

202. *Id.* at 202-03.

203. *Id.* Perhaps Miss Thoroughbung's insistence on the importance of "women's rights" alludes to the most recent, and more expansive version of the Married Women's Property Act, adopted in 1882. *Id.* at 202. With Miss Thoroughbung taking charge of the marital negotiations in such a way, Trollope inverts the gendered roles of courtship. *Id.* at 203. She also takes the lead in kissing the intended groom such that Mr. Prosper, alone in his home, ponders how he felt about the kiss, which "should have come from him." *Id.* at 203-04.

204. *Id.* at 343.

205. *Id.*

206. *Id.* at 372.

my heart for Mr. Prosper."[207] As for Mr. Prosper, he cannot perceive why a marital household should include such a companion, asking himself, "what need could there by to a married woman of a Miss Tickle?"[208] Mr. Prosper cannot fathom this "female marriage,"[209] a relationship of deep intimacy whether sexual or not. And Mr. Prosper has no desire to be a part of this imagined threesome in his own household, a queer iteration of the marital family. He cannot comprehend that which Miss Thoroughbung understands quite well: intimate relationships come in various forms and with a range of people, and the best household might be the one built according to personal design rather than social convention.

By novel's end, Miss Thoroughbung and Miss Tickle continue with their happy household. There is, however, change for Mr. Prosper. After abandoning his marriage plan (to the relief of Matthew, his head servant, and the other servants),[210] he invites Harry, his heir, and Florence, Harry's intended, to live with him at Buston Hall. Mr. Prosper then occupies himself, making a "great fuss," with redecorating and refurnishing the household. Mr. Prosper's great relief at escaping marriage to Miss Thoroughbung is palpable, as is his joy at remaining single.[211] Taking over the role of future patriarch and progenitor, Harry quips, "Mr. Prosper has made over the marrying business to me, and I mean to go through it like a man."[212] Nevertheless, Mr. Prosper, Harry, and Florence are all, by the novel's end, ensconced in a plural family household, a threesome. This trio

207. TROLLOPE , MR SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY, *supra* note 191, at 392.

208. *Id*. at 205.

209. For this term, s*ee* Sharon Marcus, *Contracting Female Marriage in Anthony Trollope's Can You Forgive Her?*, 60 NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE 291 (2005). Perhaps this relationship hints at an intimate same-sex relationship, since Trollope was on friendly terms with women such as Frances Power Cobbe, Rhoda Broughton, and Emily Faithfull, who were in in such relationships. *Id.* at 293. Perhaps Trollope deliberately uses suggestive language to imply such a relationship (like "having" Miss Tickle or even the physical connotations of her absurd name).

210. Matthew offers Mr. Prosper a kind of companionship, but they clearly have a formal master/servant relationship rather than a companionate relationship like the Misses T. Matthew and the other servants had felt "rebellion" at the prospect of Miss Thoroughbung as future mistress of Buston, since they had all been preparing for Henry as the heir. TROLLOPE, MR SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY, *supra* note 191, at 204-05.

211. *Id.* at 506 ("Mr. Prosper had become comparatively light in heart since the duty of providing a wife for Buston and a future mother for Buston heirs had been taken off his shoulders and thrown upon those of his nephew. The more he looked back upon the days of his own courtship the more did his own deliverance appear to him to be almost the work of Heaven.").

212. *Id*. at 508.

differs significantly, however, from the one envisioned by Miss Thoroughbung.

ii. Valuing a Father-Daughter Household and Law Practice over Marriage: Dolly Grey

Another portrait of a middle-aged woman who contently shares a nonmarital household with an intimate partner is Miss Dorothy Grey ("Dolly only to her father"). In this case, the household companion and partner is her father (and Mr. Scarborough's beleaguered attorney), Mr. Grey. By comparison to the picture of pleasurable meals, pony rides, and travel enjoyed by Miss Thoroughbung and Miss Tickle, Trollope shows Dolly delighting in serving as her father's confidante and the "conscience" of his law firm, an (unofficial) third partner in the enterprise. Dolly is his "only daughter and his one close domestic associate."[213]

At "about thirty years of age" (although believed by friends and acquaintances to be ten to twenty years older), Dolly has been without her mother for "fifteen or sixteen years." And, perhaps on account of this missing feminine influence, Dolly is not conventionally feminine: she travels freely on the omnibus, gardens energetically, and moves vigorously ("she had the full use of all her limbs, and was never ashamed of using them").[214] She is indifferent, moreover, to people's views about her, including people's misconception of her age. This is because, the narrator tells us: "Of youth, as a means of getting lovers, she entertained a profound contempt;" she expected no lover and "would not at all have known what to do with one had he come."[215]

Dolly's father is "the only man for whom she had ever felt the slightest regard,"[216] and the special pleasure of her life is her daily and nightly time with him. Because he was "a man who could not possibly be induced to leave his business behind him at his office," Mr. Grey made his legal work "the chief subject of conversation when he was at home" and told Dolly "all the secrets" of his clients while seeking her advice. Their consultations often

213. *Id*. at 118.
214. *Id*. at 119-120.
215. *Id.* at 119.
216. TROLLOPE, MR SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY, *supra* note 191, at 119.

continue into the night. In these bedside conversations, Dolly shows considerable ethical and legal acumen:

> He would even call Dolly into his bedroom late at night, . . . to discuss with her some point of legal strategy… Dolly would come in her dressing-gown, and sitting on his bed would discuss the matter with him as advocate against the devil. Sometimes she would be convinced; more frequently she would hold her own. But the opinions which were discussed in that way, and the strength of argumentation which was used on either side, would have surprised the clients, and the partner, and the clerks, and the eloquent barrister who was occasionally employed to support this side or the other. The eloquent barrister, or it might be the client himself, startled sometimes at the amount of enthusiasm which Mr. Grey would throw into his argument, would little dream that the very words had come from the young lady in her dressing-gown.[217]

Such discussions, whether held "on the lawn, or in the dining-room armchairs, or during the silent hours of the night," were "the very salt" of Dolly's life.[218] Decades before the United Kingdom abolished barriers to women entering into the legal profession,[219] Dolly views herself as "the Conscience of the firm" (with her father being "the Reason," and his partner, Mr. Barry, being "the Devil").[220] Their relationship escapes the conventional parent-child relationship as it moves away from the hierarchical and the authoritarian. In this sense, the concept of "wifely" comes to mind with respect to Dolly in her role as repository to her father's secrets. However, Dolly is not wifely in any of the conventional gendered ways. Trollopian husbands regularly cherish being able to tell their secrets to the "wife of their bosom," but Mr. Grey's strong trust in her advice

217. *Id.* at 123. Given Trollope's dim view of most paid employment by women (other than that of writer, his mother's profession), this is a striking tribute to Dolly's keen legal ability and reasoning.

218. *Id.*

219. *See* The Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act of 1919, 10 Geo. 5c. 71, §§9, 10 (UK).

220. TROLLOPE, MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY, *supra* note 191, at 123. This father-daughter professional collaboration seems unique among Trollope's novels; present-day readers can't help wishing—anachronistically—that Dolly could officially join and succeed her father as a law partner.

indicates he seeks more than a confidante or someone to simply tell him what he wants to hear.

This peaceful and satisfactory arrangement is called into question, however, by a proposition of marriage from Mr. Barry, the law firm partner. Her father encourages Dolly to consider the proposal, since "nothing" is more common than a young man marrying "an old partner's daughter." Dolly's retort calls this into question: "It's not put into the partnership deed!"[221] Quite dramatically, Dolly reflects that "death would be preferable" to joining her life with that of Mr. Barry. As she observes: "I should come to hate him with a miserable hatred. And then I should hate myself for having done him so great an evil." She claims that her father is the only man "with whom she could live," even though "in course of nature" he would die first and she might have "to endure for thirty [years] more."[222]

Notably, Dolly frames the possibility of marriage to Mr. Barry—or to anyone—as an infidelity and act of unfaithfulness against her father, to whom she considers herself tied for life. When Mr. Grey asks if it would not be better for Dolly if she married, her answer is that she would only marry her father because he is the only one from "among [her] circle of acquaintances" with whom she wishes to share "habits of the closest intimacy."[223] Comparing her prospective life with Mr. Barry to her life with her father, she says:

> What should I say to him when he went forth in the morning? How should I welcome him when he came back at night? What should be our breakfast, and what would be our dinner? Think what are yours and mine—all the little solicitudes; all the free abuse; all the certainty of an affection which has grown through so many years; all the absolute assurance on the part of each that the one does really know the inner soul of the other.[224]

Incredulous that her father can propose such a match, Dolly asks him: "[Do] you think that I am a person likely to be able to transfer myself suddenly to the first man that comes my way?" At her most dramatic, Dolly

221. TROLLOPE, MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY, *supra* note 191, at 255.
222. *Id.*
223. *Id.* at 259.
224. *Id.* at 259.

envisions that if she left her father and went to live with Mr. Barry, pouring his tea and keeping his house, "[h]e'd come to kiss me when he went away, and I—should plunge a knife into him [. . .]. Or into myself, which would be more likely. Fancy that man calling me Dolly."[225] Dolly communicates this morbid fantasy or preference to Mr. Barry when she refuses him for the second time, telling him that "solitude would be preferable"—even death would be preferable—to marrying him.[226]

Dolly, then, remains in her own household, with her father, living together in a peaceable, companionate, nonconjugal but spousal-like relationship. Her implacable resistance to marriage prevails and she is saved from the violence of her imaginings. Whether this resistance is a desire for retained autonomy, an aversion to a sexual relationship with an unappealing (or any) partner, or truly nothing more than a preference for her father's company, Dolly's wish for the continuance of her nonmarital household takes hold. Another permanent parent-child household remains undisturbed.[227]

* * *

Once again, in terms of tracking existing and developing social realities, Trollope hits several familiar themes in the novel. In depicting a number of single women, Trollope alludes to the cares and concerns of unmarried women and their financial precarity in the absence of either marriage or an inheritance from a father. He returns to two other themes as well—the homosocial or homoerotic, this time with a female couple, and the single-parent household, in particular the father-daughter household.

Miss Thoroughbung and Miss Tickle provide a bright spot of comic relief, particularly as Miss Thoroughbung begins to toy with Mr. Prosper as it becomes increasingly clear that the match is not meant to be. Their relationship is also, however, another intriguing example of a same-sex

225. *Id.*

226. *Id.* at 409.

227. Notably, Robert Tracy seems to miss the satisfaction that Dolly finds in this household. He instead comments on her serious "isolation" because of her "fastidiousness that makes her almost unable to live," pointing to her rejection of Mr. Barry's suit. ROBERT TRACY, TROLLOPE'S LATER NOVELS 308-09 (1978). The blissful partnership of the Misses T receives no mention, perhaps because it is at odds with his focus on isolation and obsession as the novel's themes. TROLLOPE, MR. SCARBOROUGH'S FAMILY, *supra* note 191, at 295.

couple who demonstrates all the characteristics of a heterosexual couple in a long-term marriage. Sharon Marcus, in her work on female friendship in the novel between 1830-1880, writes that "relationships between women were a constitutive element of Victorian gender and sexuality" and furthermore that these female relationships shed light on how "marriage as an institution was mutating [. . .] [a]s social thinkers registered that marriage could accommodate variations such as divorce and same-sex unions."[228] These changes in social thinking about marriage were tied to legal reforms of the time, primarily relating to married women's property and the availability of divorce. The shifts were also, however, related to what had become the predominant idea of marriage: the companionate ideal, which Marcus argues was, by the 1830s, the "standard for measuring alliances in all classes."[229] The ideal of companionate marriage, as opposed to marriage as property exchange or marriage as a vehicle for reproduction, blurred the boundaries between friendship and marriage and meant that friendships like the one between Miss Thoroughbung and Miss Tickle—whether sexual or not—were a foil for marriage, resembling it in the most important particulars.

Similar to the relationship between Sir Thomas and Stemm, there is no overt sexuality, particularly since, as Marcus observes, "the lesbian was not a distinct social type" at the time.[230] The women are, however, demonstrative of the "lesbian" potential inherent in all relationships between and among women "if we take 'lesbian' to connote deviance, gender inversion, a refusal to objectify women, or a rejection of the institution of marriage."[231] Miss Thoroughbung undoubtedly embodies these characteristics and reflects certain reformist ideas around male-female marriage as she refuses to marry, embodies masculine roles in the doomed courtship, and ultimately claims the priority of her female friendship with Miss Tickle. In this way, this female couple somewhat resembles the Miss Todd-Miss Baker coupling in *The Bertrams*. The closeness of these two women, though never explicitly sexualized, is so evident that when a suitor asks whether Miss Mackenzie does not want someone to love "with a

228. SHARON MARCUS, BETWEEN WOMEN 4-5 (2007).
229. *Id*. at 6.
230. *Id.* (as opposed to "male sodomy [which] was a public and private obsession").
231. *Id*. at 2.

perfect love," she resists the idea that marriage is the only source of such love, pointing out that Miss Todd loves Miss Baker.[232]

The second mode of social reflection is the single-parent household constituted by Dolly and her father. Like Sir Thomas, Mr. Grey is a single parent, a widower, charged with the upbringing of a daughter. According to Markwick's data, one in five families in Trollope's time were single-parent families, often with men heading the household because of high rates of maternal mortality but also on account of accidents and infectious diseases.[233] Within the universe of Trollope families, Markwick suggests a similar abundance of single-parent households, and further remarks that "Trollope perceives widowers to be more precarious in their parenting than women similarly bereft."[234] This assessment of Sir Thomas would ring true, preferring as he did his life at the office with Stemm and abdicating most paternal responsibility until the end of the novel. The relationship between Dolly and her father is quite different and clearly a mutually enriching one. The reasons for their difference may lie not in demographics, however, but in the different analytic takes in each novel on the subject of family formation.

While *Ralph the Heir* interrogates the meaning and the limits of legitimacy, *Mr. Scarborough's Family*—a novel whose main plotline likewise hinges on the legitimacy of a estate heir—centers the question of personal freedom and the ability to engage in private ordering. The focus, therefore, is not on what defines legitimacy (in multiple senses) but rather on the right of each character to exercise decision-making power and pursue individual satisfaction. Mr. Scarborough manipulates legal frameworks of inheritance to suit his own wishes, Miss Thoroughbung bargains for her own entertainment with Mr. Prosper and ultimately chooses her household happiness with Miss Tickle, and Dolly Grey quite dramatically chooses her family home instead of a marital home. In the plots with Miss Thoroughbung and Dolly, the characters adamantly choose to live in a nonmarital arrangement and to maintain households that operate outside of the marital economy. In both cases, the women choose the companionate

232. TROLLOPE, MISS MACKENZIE, *supra* note 48, at 120. Flint observes that Mary Lloyd was the "lifelong partner" of Frances Power Cobbe, on whom Trollope may have based Miss Todd. Flint, *supra* note 8, at 103.

233. MARKWICK, *supra* note 5, at 142.

234. *Id.* at 144-45.

over the conventional and place their personal desires over social acceptability or even, in the case of Dolly, financial security. In so doing, both women choose relationships that are fulfilling and joyous. The life that Miss Thoroughbung and Miss Tickle lead together is filled with London trips, theater outings, daily rides, and of course mountains of dressed crab and champagne. Dolly's life with her father is not only emotionally but also intellectually satisfying, as she takes part in legal discussions and acts as a third partner in the firm. Private ordering, then, is a boon for women who are able to avail themselves of the privilege and support themselves financially outside of marriage, and private ordering allows the women in the novel to achieve the companionate ideal of marriage but outside of its bailiwick.

CONCLUSION

Within Trollope's universe of characters, there is a sometimes surprising amount of nonmarital householding. These unexpected forms of family design demonstrate both Trollope's sense of how people really lived as well as how Trollope thought households should run. In terms of reflecting how people really lived, Trollope sheds light on the numerous ways in which people lived outside of or adjacent to marriage. He uncovers the vast variety in and possibilities for family formation by bringing the reader into homes populated by a large number of single men and women, varying in their reasons for being unmarried. In these country estates and London homes, Trollope brings into focus the very real relationships of his time which, because they were not defined by marriage but rather by familial or friendly affection, were hiding in plain sight.

On the one hand, some single characters curate meaningful lives with family members, such as parents or siblings, and friendly neighbors. For the most part, these are women who choose not to marry or remarry, and find pleasure in controlling their own lives as well as, in some cases, their own finances and fortunes. Predictably, the women who most enjoy being single are generally well-resourced, such that they are not dependent on marital economies to survive in the world. There are also men who remain single, and they likewise must decide how to shape their daily lives and with whom to build sustaining relationships. On the other hand, some single characters live in marital-like relationships that are not recognized as such because

they involve same-sex couples. These queer couples—couples who upend conventional domesticity and sometimes also hint at either homosocial or homosexual intimacy—reveal Trollope's recognition of and attention to same-sex friendship as well as intimacy, sexual registers that were very much of the moment in spite of, or rather because of, the legal prohibitions of the time. In this way, as Naomi Cahn writes elsewhere in this volume, the term "single" has "multiple meanings" and does not connote a singular or uniform experience.[235] Accordingly, the complex category of single reflects the varied lived experiences of both men and women living outside of marriage at the time.

In addition to broadening our understanding of family pluralism historically, the nonmarital families that Trollope sketches also broaden our understanding of nonmarital households imaginatively. As Trollope writes the network of intimate relationships that exist outside of marriage, often comparing and contrasting them to the marital relationships that form the critical center of most novels, he uses each variation to teach lessons about the benefits of compromise, the happiness of homes built around mutual esteem and respect, and the utility of functional families. Compelled by the question of what makes relationships legitimate—and whether or not the imprimatur of either social standing or legal legitimacy really matters—Trollope strongly suggests through his nonmarital relationships and households that formalism in family matters is not always aligned with the best outcomes for those involved. Unconventional relationships, just like unexpected marriage matches, sometimes yield good results by providing fresh perspectives, unexpected infusions of resources, and loving support. Ultimately, then, Trollope as both chronicler and creator took pains to shed light on, as one of his later titles named it, "the way we live now" and to affirm that essential qualities of successful households were often tied to personal understandings and sympathies and not to formal, legal ties.

235. Naomi R. Cahn, *Singlehood,* 72 WASH. U. J.L. & POL'Y 1, 6 (2023).