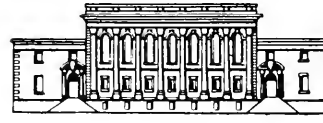

Sweet Briar College

# The Puritans: A View of Marriage and Divorce in Seventeenth-century England

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"I pledge...."

Wallis in Lawrence

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# Introduction

The Reformation in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is significant not only for the religious changes it brought about, but also because it had a wide impact on social conditions. The change from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism is often portrayed as a political manoeuvre on the part of Henry VIII, but it is striking that it was first inspired by his own personal marital situation. Henry hoped that if he divorced Katherine of Aragon and married Anne Boleyn, she would give him a male heir. The political Reformation effected by Parliament gave Henry his divorce and the Anglican settlement of 1559 under Elizabeth I confirmed England's break with Rome. Although from Henry and Elizabeth's point of view turning Protestant was politically expedient, there were many people who valued the new faith because it was an opportunity to effect a reformation both in religious practice and social relationships. One such group was the Puritans. Their influence was felt in both political and social spheres: an extremely Protestant approach often threatened the political stability of the Anglican settlement, and in the long run, they attempted to reform the structure and mores of society. One aspect of their move towards social reform is their concern with family relationships. Their attitude to marriage, emphasizing a hierarchical relationship based on conjugal love can be seen as a significant part of this wider "reformation of manners."[1]

One of the problems in establishing a specifically Puritan point of view on the conduct of marriage is first determining how to characterize the Puritans. Who were the Puritans? Much historical research has centered on the efforts made by Puritan clergy and Puritans in Parliament to effect reforms in the religious, social and legal spheres. As a result, we have a picture of the Puritans as crusaders for reform, espousing a radical Protestantism based on a close reading of the Bible. We also have the impression that Puritans were kill-joys, whose determined efforts to suppress drinking and swearing, not to mention Sunday recreation and dancing, influenced the conduct of their personal relationships. It is important, however, to recognize that the Puritans were not a homogenous group of people, all in support of the same ideals of religious and social reform. Basil Hall points out that

> Briefly, the word Puritan suffers from inflation. When it can be applied to those who, however vaguely, may be called calvinistic and to those who strongly opposed calvinistic theology; to those who refused to be content with the terms of the Elizabethan Settlement of Religion and with the Jacobean and Caroline interpretations of it although they stayed in the Church of England, and nevertheless to those who fled to Holland or New England; to those who walked alone in search for truth like Milton or Cromwell--when the word means all these then it ceases to define.[2]

Hall finds these definitions of Puritans unacceptable because it does not sufficiently recognize their deep religious commitment. He proposes that between 1570 and 1640, approximately the time period under consideration in this paper, that

> Puritan is the regular word for those clergymen and laymen of the established Church of England whose attitude ranged from the tolerably conformable to the downright obstreperous, and to those who sought to presbyterianise that Church from within.[3]

For the purposes of this paper, I think there will be less confusion if we confine ourselves to this definition of Puritan, acknowledging its intense religious significance.[4]

Thus, at the risk of over-simplification, and with a view to considering the Puritan attitude to marriage rather than religion, one could perhaps consider the Puritans as extreme Protestants. Their attempt to make the Anglican Settlement even more Protestant has characterized them as radicals, but when we look at attempts to reform marriage, we realize that it was part of their efforts to take the religious reformation down to the very basis of the structure of society. Those Puritans who believed in the "reformation of manners" were found at all levels in society. For our purposes, it is significant that on the whole, they were a fairly literate group, leaving us information about their personal lives in sermons, pamphlets, letters, diaries, and autobiographies.

The following analysis is an attempt to describe the Puritan attitude to marriage and divorce based on an examination of the literary evidence. Puritan divines wrote numerous conduct books describing the ideal marriage. The popularity of these works indicates that the Puritans advocated an attractive approach to marriage, making us curious as to the extent to which marriages between Puritans, or those exposed to Puritanism, reflected the ideals portrayed in the conduct books. Thus, Chapter II examines Puritan diaries and letters which throw some light on the practice of marriage,

reflecting to some degree the theory of marriage described in Chapter I. Since no analysis of the Puritan attitude to marriage and divorce is complete without a close look at the work of John Milton, Chapter III analyzes his Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce (1643, 1644), one of four treatises he wrote on divorce. Milton's position on divorce sheds some light on his theoretical approach to marriage. This takes us in the concluding chapter to his characterization of the practice of marriage and "wedded Love" in Paradise Lost. We find that Milton's views on marriage and divorce are slightly different from those of his Puritan contemporaries, illustrating the diversity among Puritans. Thus, there can be no "typical" Puritan approach to marriage and divorce. The emphasis on love and hierarchy in marriage seems to be one of the main features of the Puritan attitude to the institution of marriage. Furthermore, the increased emphasis on mutuality in marriage can be seen as a distinguishing feature of Puritan marriages.

## Chapter I

## A Theory of Marriage

The proliferation of guide books on marriage and family life in post-Reformation England has hitherto been considered a manifestation of a distinctly Puritan interest in the subject. Authored chiefly by Puritan divines, one is tempted to use these literary sources as evidence of marital relations between Puritans. One must remember, however, that the conduct books were widely read as a guide to one's own life. As guides, they are not meant to reflect personal experience. Rather, these books tell us that Puritans were very interested in an ideal of married life. Evidence from Church records and folk customs illustrates, however, that there was "an apparently impervious unchangeability in basic attitudes to marriage and family life over the centuries."[1] Still, to the student of Puritanism, these books are of interest because they can tell us very specifically what made up an ideal Puritan marriage. An analysis of some of the more popular conduct books will reveal a complete "theory" about the Puritan art of love and marriage which can then be compared to the empirical evidence of particular Puritan marriages. One may then determine whether there was a specific Puritan marriage ethic.

Before analyzing the conduct books themselves, it is appropriate to consider the role of these texts in sixteenth and seventeenth-century society. Kathleen Davies comments that traditional interpretations of the family books have emphasized their prescriptive function: "for the

first time marriage was to be based on mutual respect and love, with the partners sharing a more equal responsibility for the spiritual and worldly advancement of their household."[2] Levin Schücking, for example, has determined that the concept of "mutual support" and "spiritual accord" precluded the possibility of the woman's subjection in marriages between Puritans.[3] Davies, however, proposes that the conduct books described "the best form of bourgeois marriage as they (the authors) knew it."[4] The prescriptive tone of the conduct books is evidence of the growing concern for the quality of family life, and it is possible that the authors took "the best form of bourgeois marriage" as their ideal. Marriage based on Christian ideals had long been promoted by leaders of the Catholic and Protestant churches; however, one could argue that the Puritans, who were particularly interested in reforming private and public life, saw family life as an area where there could be much improvement.

The preoccupation with reforming personal relationships indicated by the Puritan conduct book can perhaps be associated with a Puritan interest in a "reformation of manners."[5] Davies has observed that "Most works, whether pre-Reformation, Protestant or Puritan, deal "... with much the same questions: the end and purpose of marriage, the ideal form of domestic life...." The purpose of these works is to express a conventional view of "practical piety" based on the Pauline epistles.[6] The fact that Puritans were particularly interested in this kind of domestic reform is attributed by Christopher Hill to the "spiritualization of the household." He considers the household the lowest unit in Puritan society where the father brought the discipline of the church right into his own home.[7] In Hill's view, the devolution of authority resulted in the husband becoming the

master of the house, a "little church, a little state."[8]

The authority given to the father to direct the spiritual life of the household would clearly result in a well defined concept of male superiority and female subjection. However, the patriarchal role of her husband did not mean that the married woman was always tyrannized in her own home. Lawrence Stone tells us that the ideal woman at this time "was weak, submissive, charitable, virtuous and modest"[9], but he also identifies the root of the companionate marriage of the eighteenth century in seventeenth-century Puritan marriage doctrines. Stone thinks that the emphasis placed on companionship by Puritan preachers "had its effect in equalizing relationships between husband and wife."[10] An analysis of conduct books written between 1591 and 1642 will reveal the extent to which the concept of mutuality rather than equality was advocated by Puritan leaders within a well defined hierarchy.

The domestic books under consideration, though written over a period of fifty years, do not show much evolution of thought on matters such as the ends of marriage, or the respective duties of husband and wife. As a body of literature, these works are in remarkable agreement for they are based on the Biblical teachings on marriage. Constant reference is made to the creation of Eve as Adam's "help-meet" in Genesis, and to his authority over her after the fall. Similarly, the Pauline injunction in Ephesians that women should be subject to their husbands is very important in understanding the Puritan portrayal of the husband-wife relationship. Although there are subtle differences in the interpretation of these

principles, without exception, all the conduct books assert that the relationship between husband and wife is analogous to that between Christ and his Church. In A Preparative to Mariage (1591), Henrie Smith tells us that in making the right choice of marriage partner, ~~that~~ the Holy Ghost "gives these two rules, Godlines and Fitnes: Godlines, because our Spouse must be like Christ's spouse, that is, graced with gifts and imbrodered with vertues, ...For the mariage of man and woman, is resembled of the Apostle to the Mariage of Christ and the Church."[11] As Christ is the head of the Church, so in marriage, the man who bears the closest resemblance to Christ, takes Christ's place. The woman, in the manner of the Church, is thus considered inferior to her husband.

The importance of this basic assumption in the Puritan conception of marriage cannot be emphasized enough. It is the root of the theory of male domination, and colors every aspect of the relationship which has hitherto been presented by historians as one which emphasized mutuality and love. However, before we examine the exact nature of female inferiority in these conduct books, we recall that Henrie Smith mentioned "Fitnes" as a second rule in choosing a spouse. An analysis of the concept of "Fitnes" will pave the way for a clearer understanding of "Godlines" in these relationships.

Within the Puritan world view, the wife has a position of honor because she is her husband's "help-meet." Taken from the Genesis story of Eve's relationship with Adam, according to this definition, the wife is "meet" with her husband because she was created from his rib to be his life's partner. However, because her position is a helping one, she cannot take the initiative in their marriage. According to Henrie Smith,

"a wife is called a Yoke fellow to shewe that she should helpe her Husband to beare his yoke, that his griefe must bee her griefe...Beside a Helper, she is called a Comforter too, and therefore the man is bid to reioyce in his wife..."[12] In relation to the wife's status, the authors stress the husband's responsibilities as husband, father, and religious leader of the family: "hee must bee a greater helpe to her, and doe more good, by how much his place is better."[13] The hierarchical implications of this interpretation of the "help-meet" relationship cannot be ignored, but the Puritan authors emphasized the suitability of marriage partners for each other as much as the hierarchy of man and wife. In Matrimoniall Honovr (1642), Daniel Rogers states that to preserve the honor of the married state the parties concerned must be "apt" for each other. This is where the idea of "Godlines" enters the foundation on which marriages were built, for, to "marry aptly in the Lord," one is required "to joyne all circumstances of equality and suitablenesse to religion." Furthermore, "it must be mutuall and equall, not one to the other onely."[14] It would seem that the Puritan divines were advocating that there should be some concept of "equality" between prospective marriage partners.

One must realize that this notion of marriage based on "circumstances of equality" has no bearing on the relationship between husband and wife after the marriage takes place. Rather, as William Gouge tells us in Of Domesticall Duties (1622), the equality of the marriage partners before marriage is defined in terms of "age", "estate", "condition", and "piety."[15] It is advisable that the man and woman be of comparable age, with the man

being a little older. Similarly, if they are of equal economic status, it will not be thought that the wife is her husband's "maid-servant".[16] Rogers states what he means by marrying "aptly" by explaining the social unacceptability of those "that despise the rule of equall matches." He demands:

> Now what comes of these unequals, that widowes of estates must marry their housekeepers, and gentlemen their cookmaids...What is this, save to become the scornes of Countrey? Is it not due penance for violating the sacred condition of equality?17

The conception of "equality" is important in matters of religious commitment, economic status and age. There is no indication here that these assumptions should create an equalizing influence in the husband-wife relationship after marriage.

The conception of "equality" in these ideal marriages is profoundly influenced by the notion of "Godlines" inherent in them. Naturally, there can be no true conception of equality after marriage if the man is "as God's immediate officer, and the King in his family: the woman as the Deputie subordinate, and associate to him, but not altogether equall."[18] Still, undoubtedly, there were instances when this notion of equality before marriage was misunderstood to mean equality afterwards. In his treatise, Gouge pays some attention to "a fond conceit, that husband and wife are equall." He sees the main reason for this misunderstanding of the condition of equality "to be that small inequalitie which is betwixt the husband and wife: for of all degrees wherein there is any disparitie ...there is least disparitie betwixt man and wife." However,

> Though there seeme to be never so little disparitie, yet God having so expresly appointed subiection, it ought to be acknowledged: and though husband and wife may mutually serve one another through love: yet the Apostle suffereth not a woman to rule over the man.19

Thus, we see that practical piety, based on the Bible, was the basis of the inequality that characterized the relations between husband and wife.

The rhetoric of authority does not, in the eyes of the Puritan authors, prevent the possibility of a happy relationship. Gouge is convinced that "fellowship" is possible between two people of unequal status, for a married couple have equality in some things, particularly in the "power of one another's bodies: for the wife (as the husband) is therein both a servant, and a mistresse, a servant to yield her body, a mistresse to have the power over his."[20] Henrie Smith believed that "the wife should meete and fit with the husband...so man and wife should be like, because they are a paire of friends."[21] Although it is difficult to imagine any real fellowship between unequals, the Puritans did not see this as a contradiction because one of the first duties of marriage was conjugal love.

In the ideal marriage described by the Puritan authors, conjugal love is one basis for mutuality between husband and wife. When Gouge sums up the respective duties of husband and wife, to show the room for mutuality in the relationship, he states, "Love as sugar to sweeten the duties of authoritie which appertaine to an husband. Feare as salt to season the duties of subjection which appertaine to a wife."[22] Because marriage was based on love, husbands should be careful not to abuse their authority: "no dutie on the husband's part can be rightly performed except it be seasoned with love" for, "without love [marriage] will soone turne into

tyrannie."[23] Thus, despite the emphasis on male superiority, one can see that there was some room for an equalizing influence, or rather mutuality, in the emphasis on conjugal love as one of the "mutuall duties" in marriage.

Our understanding of mutuality in Puritan marriages is based on the lists of "mutuall duties" found in the conduct books. In evaluating the importance of conjugal love as one of the mutual duties in marriage, one must remember that the authors make the distinction between the "common duties" of marriage, and the "ends" or purposes of that relationship. Considering the godly nature of these marriages, common consent in religion was almost universally held to be the first duty. Rogers listed the joint duties of married couples to be Religion, Conjugal love, Chastity and Consent, representative, I think, of similar lists in other guidebooks. Ideally, the spiritual element of a good marriage was considered more valuable than its physical aspects. This is demonstrated in Snawsel's A Looking Glass when Abigail illustrates the distinctions between a "loving" husband and a "good" husband. Considered "a Puritane" by her friends,[24] she desires a "good husband I meane a religious husband, which should be my partner and helpe, not onely in bodily and worldly things, but especially in spiritual and heavenely..." She grieves that her husband "will not be partner of the good with me."[25] We perceive that "Godlines" was the theoretical basis for a marriage, and it was also promoted as the most important means of maintaining the mutuality that

characterized it. However, Gouge thinks that mutual love is a prerequisite for a successful marriage because "Mutuall love and good liking of each other is as glue"[26], and Rogers considers conjugal love to be "the second mutuall duty of the Married." He describes conjugal love thus:

> I meane not onely Christian love, a grace of God's spirit ...nor yet a carnall and sudden flash of affection, corruptly inflamed by concupiscence...but a sweete compounde of both, religion and nature...27

Since conjugal love was such an important part of the Puritan ideal of marriage, it is in order to briefly examine its nature. From an examination of the conduct books and the marriage of John and Margeret Winthrop, Roland Frye argues that in addition to the "personal and spiritual companionability in marriage" between Puritans, there was also the "concomittant emphasis which was placed upon the sexual relations of marriage."[28] In analyzing the conduct books, Schücking finds that "the cool realism of the Puritans recognized marriage as being essentially a sharing of spiritual sensual experience." As a result, he sees in these marriage manuals "a complete lack of inhibition in its readiness to theorize on the erotic side of marriage."[29] However, in my examination of the conduct books I hava found no specific discussions of the nature of sexual relations in marriage. Nor do the conduct books indicate that romantic love was a part of mutual conjugal love, unlike the current literary genre which was promoting a concept of romantic notions in marriage.[30] Thus, one may characterize the Puritan concept of conjugal love as one which was more companionate than passionate. The empahsis on a deep reciprocity of feeling was as much due to spiritual companionability as it was to a recognition of the physical

aspects of the relationship as will be demonstrated in their stand on divorce.

One realizes that the Puritans, for all their godliness and emphasis on the mutuality of marital relations, were very aware of human limitations. The emphasis on matrimonial love is an important indication of the fact that they realized that a strongly hierarchical marriage was, indeed, very vulnerable. The notion of hierarchy was so deeply ingrained in social and religious thought of the time that the subjection of the woman was considered the source of conjugal love. Puritans were not oblivious to the fact that this was a hard doctrine to stomach. Commenting on the position of women, Rogers states that God allows each woman "to be her owne Refuser, and to chuse for herselfe (if she can) such a man, as she can yield subjection unto, for the excellence of God's image which she beholdes in him."[31] However unpalatable a doctrine this proved to be, Rogers also held that "subjection is the true Mother of love, Sister of content, root of all other Matrimoniall Service..."[32]

The fact that the source of conjugal love was found in the woman's inferiority did not mean that marriage put her in a humiliating position. A woman's subjection consists of "a convincement of spirit...as causeth, both a falling downe of heart in humility to God and her husband; and in her conversation to acknowledge and practice all such reverence, as becometh her head"[33], but her subjection did not provide her husband with unlimited powers over his wife. Davies tells us that "Wife-beating was a recurrent theme, condemned in theory but often approved in practice." She goes on to state that except for Gouge and Smith, she finds no expression of any

"lessening of violent behaviour as described in the marriage manuals."[34] However, I find that the majority of the conduct books assert that the husband had no right to beat his wife, a practice not uncommon at the time. Perkins holds that a husband may correct his spouse only if he sees her at fault: "But he may not chastise her either with stripes or stroks. The reason is plaine; wives are their husbands mates; and they two be one flesh."[35] The authors were able to take this stand because there was no Biblical precedent advocating wife-beating. They also saw in the analogy of the marriage relationship to that of Christ and his Church, limitations in the power of the husband over his wife:

> As Christ doth entirely love his Church, so hee may also chastise the same, because hee is not onely the husband, but also absolute Lord and King of his Church: so is not the husband absolute over his wife.[36]

Snawsel held that Christ corrected his Church in love, "but never was it heard, that ever any man did beat his wife in love."[37] Because the husband was in a position of authority, according to the Puritan authors, he must be patient and have respect for his wife: "as long as she is your wife, you are bound to give honour to her as to the weaker vessell."[38]

Although the Puritans did place limitations on the husband's power over his wife, the hierarchy of man and wife was so rigid that on differences of opinion on general matters or matters of conscience, the wife must acknowledge her husband's authority. According to Gouge, the general teaching on the subjection of women asserted that even if an "impious swearer, and blasphemer, be maried to a wise, sober, religious Matron," she must consider him her superior for "Though an husband in regard of

euill qualities may carrie the Image of the deuill, yet in regard of his place and office he beareth the Image of God." Even if both husband and wife were guilty of the same fault, Gouge thought that the husband had every right to reprimand her. Noting the lack of agreement by Puritans on this issue, Gouge asserted that if the husband neglected to do so, "he, maketh himself guilty of a double fault, one of committing the sinne himselfe, the other of suffering his wife to lie therein: whereas if he repoued his wife, he might thereby reclaime both her and himselfe."[39] Regardless of the wife's perception of her husband's eligibility to reprimand her, she was expected to accept his word.

In matters of conscience, however, the Puritan teaching on the extent of the wife's obedience took a slightly different twist. Whately states simply that it is the husband's duty that he "compel not his wife by his authority to attempt things vnlawfull." He should not "vrge her either to displease God, or her conscience."[40] William Gouge evidently perceived that the conflicting wishes of God, her husband and her own conscience may prove more complicated to a woman who knew she was expected to be subject to her husband. If the demands of God were contrary to the wishes of her husband, the wife "may and ought to doe it without, or against his consent."[41] Still, she was cautioned to be sure that it was God's will directing her, and to "vse all good meanes she can to gaine her husbands consent, before she doe, even that which is commanded against consent. Thus shall she testifie her subiection both to God and her husband."[42] Gouge did not think that this would, in any way, diminish the wife's good relationship with her husband, for this was the only instance in which she would be contradicting him. The Puritan woman "may doe nothing against God's will; but

many things must she doe against her owne will if her husband require her."[43]

Within the Puritan world view, the demands and limitations placed on the Puritan wife were a proper recognition of the inferiority of her creation, and an acknowledgement of the importance of her role in her husband's life. But clearly, here is a case of unresolved conflict; the Puritan authors could not establish the supremacy of the wife's conscience at the risk of suggesting that in matters of grave importance she had an autonomy of her own. Davies believes that no attempt was made to resolve this conflict. While this is true, I think the Puritan writers did not foresee that there would be much disagreement between husband and wife on matters of conscience. According to the ideal conception of marriage, a man and wife would be compatible first and foremost on matters of piety and religious belief. They were expected to grow in faith together. As a result, if there was any conflict in matters of conscience, it would be the result of the wife's attempt to gain ascendancy over her husband. It would appear that to guard against such instances of"frowardness" that the Puritan teaching on matters of conscience was deliberately vague. While the wife was given the supremacy of conscience there was still a need to guard against potential infringements on the superiority of her husband.

Our analysis has shown that in terms of the "mutuall duties" in marriage that the Puritan woman was extremely responsible for the happiness of her marriage. In her subjection to her husband was found the basis of their love. In examining the "ends" of marriage, we find that the woman is given even greater importance. To the Puritan authors, conjugal love

which enhanced mutuality was not an "end" of marriage. While they saw mutual comfort and fellowship as one of the primary purposes of marriage, they did not think that this should be an end in itself. In a brief statement, Whately disposes of "Propagation and chastity, the two chiefe ends of marriage."[44] Gouge, Perkins and Smith are in agreement that marriage is for procreation "that the world might be increased",[45] secondly that "it might be a soueraigne meanes to avoid fornication, and consequently to subdue and slake the burning lusts of the flesh",[46] and thirdly, to "Avoid the inconuenience of solitariness."[47] Given the importance of mutuality in these relationships, it is striking that the authors assert the procreative end of marriage before the benefit of mutual comfort. Historians have hitherto stressed that to the Puritans, the bearing of children was not the sole reason for getting married because they emphasized that marriage should primarily be a mutual and loving relationship.[48] However, from the conduct books it seems the Puritans felt quite strongly that children were the natural and necessary result of marriage. They continually stressed that marriage must be fulfilling in and of itself, but it acquired an even greater dignity when its procreative responsibilities were taken seriously. Thus, we see the importance given to the Puritan wife who would carry out the primary end of marriage.

The procreative end of marriage is not a particularly Puritan marriage doctrine, for as Kathleen Davies points out, it had been stressed before by Catholic and Protestant writers of domestic books.[49] In order to discover a particularly Puritan point of view, we must turn to the second teaching, that of the chastity of marriage. Preserving the chastity of

the relationship was a personal "end" in marriage. Gouge held that it was a common duty expected of each partner, in addition to being an "end" in the relationship.[50] Following the Pauline teaching, Henrie Smith asserted that "if he have not the gift of continencie, he is bound to marrie."[51] Thus, marriage was a remedy for fornication. Based on this understanding of the ends of marriage, the Puritans advocated divorce to preserve the "end" of chastity in marriage. Smith takes the most uncompromising view of the situation saying, "if Marriage should turne to Fornication ...then Marriage were not for the honour of man...Therefore now ye have heard how Divorcement is appoynted for a remedie of Fornication."[52]

To fully appreciate just how unconventional and radical an attitude the Puritans took towards divorce, it is necessary to briefly outline common practice in divorce proceedings at this time. In its teachings on divorce, the Church of England was no different from the Catholic Church. The only cause for divorce was if before carnalis copula one of the married partners turned heretic and would not recant. There was a whole host of "impediments" to both prevent and anul marriages. Separation, not divorce, was allowed only if one party was adulterous. Because marriage was considered a sacrament, there was no right of remarriage.[53] Now Puritans, in discussing the honorable character of marriage made it very clear that they considered marriage a civil matter. Even Rogers who makes no mention of divorce in his tract[54] states that marriage is honorable for its "sacredness"; "I meane not hereby spiritualnesse: for I know its a ciuill ordinance; and, although for the better witnesse, our Marriages are finisht in Churches, yet marriage properly is no Sacrament."[55] As a result, when the Puritan authors with one accord advocated divorce for adultery, with permission

for the innocent party to remarry, they were breaking new ground. Their stand seemed all the more radical because they acknowledged the equal right of husband and wife to divorce.

The source of Puritan thought on adultery and divorce can be traced to the work of Luther and divorce practices in Germany. Based on these precedents, Reformatio Legum Ecclesiasticarum, a document drawn up under Henry VIII, abolished separation for "impediments", and established actual divorce. It permitted remarriage for the innocent party if divorce was for desertion or adultery, and placed husband and wife on an equal level in divorce proceedings.[56] The terms of this document were never adopted by law, however, and apparently, the malpractices in the church courts regarding divorce procedures continued despite attempts to regularize the situation.[57]

Although there had been some precedent in England for the Puritan position on divorce, the Puritans knew that they were taking a radical stand. Perkins states that the "the Church of Rome erreth two contrarie waies. First, in that it maketh mariage to be a Sacrament, and so euerie action of it, to be of the owne nature good. Secondly,...they prohibite mariage of certaine parties...they thinke this secret comming together of man and wife to be filthines...For whereas it opposeth marriage and chastitie; it plainly determineth that in marriage there is no chastitie."[58] The attempt to reform the principles and practices of divorce was one of many concerns to Puritan leaders to achieve a reformation of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.[59]

When we turn to the conduct books themselves, we find that Gouge dismisses the issue of divorce without ceremony and with little discussion:

"The vice contrarie to matrimoniall chastitie is Adulterie, one of the most capitall vices in that estate: a vice whereby way is made for Diuorce."[60] Perkins discusses the issue more extensively, demonstrating causes for divorce, and the status of husband and wife in divorce proceedings. He allows divorce for desertion, malicious dealing, long absences, and, of course, adultery.[61] He holds that "After the diuorcement is made, it shal be lawful for the harmlesse partie, not hauing the gift of continencie, vpon leave obtained of the Church, and the Christian Magistrate, to marrie againe."[62] However, Snawsel, realizing that the right of remarriage is not possible by law, and that divorce was advocated only too frequently for matrimonial disharmony, asks his readers to "consider with yourselfe how frivolous a thing it is for a woman to be diuorced from her husband, sith so many inconueniences follow of it." He considers that divorce should be advocated only for reasons of adultery, for living alone divorced would be worse than being a widow: "for those may marry againe, but so could not you, but must live rather like an harlot that is separated for adultery."[63] Divorce was a remedy for fornication in marriage, and as such, should not be abused. As Smith expresses it, divorce was "not instituted for the carnall, but for the chast, least they should bee tied to a plague while they live."[64]

Keeping in mind the deeply ingrained belief in male domination in Puritan marriages, it is ironical to find that in divorce proceedings, Puritans believed that husband and wife had equal rights. Gouge explains the respective statuses of the couple in adultery thus:

> Though the ancient Romans and Canonists have aggravated the womans fault in this kinde faire above the mans, and

> given the man more priviledges then the woman, yet I see not how that difference in the sinne can stand with the tenour of Gods word.65

Historically, the sin of adultery has been seen as the woman's fault, and we find this bias in the discussions of adultery in the conduct books.[66] Nevertheless, Gouge considers that in "regard of the breach of wedlocke, and transgression against God, the sinne of either partie is alike.... Accordingly the punishment which by God's law was to be inflicted on Adulterers is the same, whether the man or the woman be the delinquent".[67] It is clear that in divorce proceedings and in the retribution for the sins of marriage, that Puritans believed in the equality of the married partners.

The Puritan position on divorce is more evidence of the fact that they were aware of the limitations of the strict hierarchy that they thought should properly characterize marriage. Gouge's stand on divorce is consistent with his belief in male superiority because he believes that the husband, in his position of authority has a greater responsibility than the woman to uphold matrimonial chastity. William Perkins illustrates the seeming contradictions inherent in this point of view thus:

> ...in requiring of a divorce, there is an equall right and power in both parties, so as the woman may require it as well as the man; and he as wel as she. The reason is, because they are equally bound to each other, and have also the same interest in one anothers bodie; prouided alwaies, that the man is to maintaine his superioritie, and the woman to observe that modestie which beseemeth her towards the man.68

Perkins statement illustrates the irony of the woman's position very clearly. She is inferior to her husband in all matters except adultery, for in the

interest in "one anothers bodie", they each have equal right.[69] Even in such matters, namely the right to sexual satisfaction, in spite of her equal rights, the woman must maintain an appropriate modesty.

The position of the wife in the Puritan's stand on divorce is the clearest indication we have that there was some basis of equality in Puritan marriages. We know that mutuality was an important aspect of the relationship, making for an equalizing influence in marriage. However, equality, per se, was seldom advocated in the conduct books. In all matters, even in some matters of conscience, the woman must acknowledge her husband's authority as that of God. However, she could sue for divorce and expect to be treated on the same basis as her husband. This is, I think, the only instance when theoretically, the woman's situation is given as much consideration as her husband's, illustrating the Puritan's sensitivity to the vulnerability of the woman's status in a strongly hierarchical relationship. However, despite the Puritan's theoretical stand that adultery was a crime applicable to both husband and wife, this understanding was not evident in the Act of 1650 which made adultery a public crime. Promoted by Puritans in Parliament, the Act of 1650 followed the teachings of the Old Testament in defining adultery as the adultery of the married woman. The Act of 1650 seems to embody a double standard, but, as Keith Thomas states, "it did not allow injured husbands to sue for damages and it did not necessarily imply an unequal conception of the marriage relationship." In terms of social stability, it was the married woman and her lover who made adultery a "'notorious theft' and thereby a threat to the whole system of property relations."[70] Keeping in mind the social context in which the Act of 1650 was conceived, during the ten years in which this

law was in existence, we see that despite the recommendations of the conduct books, legally, Puritans maintained that adultery was the fault of the woman. While not oblivious to the disadvantages of the wife's position, in divorce, where theoretically, there was some equality between husband and wife, the Puritans were unable to translate their stand into practice.

On the basis of our understanding of the Puritan conduct books, what are we to make of the emphasis on mutuality, the equalizing aspects of the relationship, and its strong hierarchical basis? The Puritan marriage doctrines propounded by the domestic books are not, by and large, very revolutionary. The recurring theme of male superiority was not an unfamiliar one. The belief that marital relations should be governed by the understanding that in relation to his wife, the husband was like Christ at the head of his Church legitimized the doctrine of male domination. The role of the husband and father as the "priest" of his family established him in an almost sacrosanct position. However, as we have seen, in his dealings with his wife, he was always cautioned to use his authority wisely.

While the "help" aspect of the wife's position as "help-meet" is easily understood, the "meet" aspects call for further attention. In the wife's subjection, we are led to believe, lay the basis for the harmony of the relationship. Thoroughly convinced of her subjection to her husband, she served him and God best. Theoretically the only instance where she could assert her equality was in divorce proceedings. From the conduct books, it appears that the authors did not perceive any inconsistencies in their portrayal of the relations of husband and wife. However, our

analysis of this marriage manual has shown that there were some important "contradictions" in the theoretical conception of these marriages which undermined the hierarchical basis of these relationships. The supremacy of the wife's conscience is a very important element in proposing that there was a greater degree of equality than one would expect from a relationship in which hierarchy was so explicitly stated. In a similar context, the theoretical stand on divorce states that in sexual matters the partners were equal. In both these instances, however, despite her equality, the wife should never forget she was subject to her husband. Considered in relation to the main purpose of marriage, that of procreation, the importance of the supremacy of the wife's conscience and her relative status in sexual matters seems reduced. However, the existence of these assertions of equality within the theoretical conception of marriage tells us that while the Puritans appreciated the need for a hierarchical relationship, they also understood that both husband and wife must have the right to a chaste relationship.

To the Puritan authors, in the eyes of God, men and women were "equal", even if the man was the favored creature. Since they based their theory of marriage upon Biblical teachings, they did not anticipate any dissatisfaction from their readers. It is also possible that the recommendations of the writers of the conduct books did indeed describe current marital practice quite closely. As a result, the many readers of these books were not being told anything significantly different from what they already knew. The next chapter will examine the practical aspects of Puritan marriages to determine to what extent these marriage doctrines held sway. In this way, we may determine the fate of Daniel Roger's "sacred condition of equality."[71]

## Chapter II

## The Practice of Mutuality

An analysis of marriage practice usually centers around the study of ritual, or local records such as parish registers and legal documents such as wills. In order to examine the nature of the relationship between a husband and his wife, however, one has to look beyond statistical records to sources of a more personal nature. Thus, letters written between husband and wife, autobiographies, and diaries become our sources in examining marriage relationships between English Puritans from the 1560s to 1700. The existence of these personal written records is not surprising when we realize that the Puritans were an extraordinarily literate group of people for their time. There are several problems in using this kind of evidence to establish the nature of marital relations between husband and wife. Firstly, one should note that it is not possible to concretely establish a "typical" Puritan marriage, for the evidence we have is heavily weighted in favor of Puritan divines and the upper-gentry. Secondly, one cannot determine the extent to which the married Puritan laity or clergy modelled their married lives on the ideals depicted in the conduct books. Thirdly, we have no way of knowing to what extent the particular marriages under discussion here are representative of the majority of marriages between Puritans. Nevertheless, these sources do provide us with a range of various types of Puritan marriages. Before proceeding to an examination of the relationships de-

scribed by these personal records, we are justified in briefly considering the nature of these sources.

One of the main reasons for keeping a diary was "The desire to examine one's soul and to attempt to correct subsequent behavior in accordance with God's directions."[1] Although this reason was seldom explicitly stated by divines who kept diaries, the wealth of reference to God's blessings and mercies in the diaries kept by divines like Richard Rogers, Henry Newcome and Ralph Josselin indicates that the diary was a "mechanism for ridding the conscience of guilt."[2] Newcome wrote his autobiography from his diaries, and he notes in 1646 that at the age of nineteen, that he "was induced to begin a diary...how strangely I took pains to set down my sins every day, and usually still the same, I have oft reflected upon."[3] Puritan divines were not alone in keeping diaries of this nature. Lady Margeret Hoby, a Puritan noblewoman of very strict religious upbringing, kept a diary almost totally devoted to her spiritual growth and the examination of her conscience. As a result, the amount of information one can derive from these diaries about the writer's marriage is usually very sketchy. Still, by comparing Josselin's diary with Newcome's autobiography, one can gain some insight into the married life of a Puritan divine, while the little evidence from Richard Roger's diary will shed some additional light on the motives for marriage.

Like diaries and autobiographies, collections of letters are valuable sources in determining the nature of personal relationships. The Hastings letters reveal a little more evidence on marriages of Puritans outside the ministry. The Knyvett letters and the Verney correspondence are particularly useful because they demonstrate the role women could play in their husband's affairs during a time of need such as the Civil War (1642-1648).

The Verney and Hastings letters show evidence of strong Puritan beliefs, whereas Sir Thomas Knyvett, though exposed to Puritanism at Emmanuel College, wrote letters of a remarkably secular nature to his wife, Katherine. Knyvett's correspondence reveals that he was "somewhat bewildered by the niceties of theological discussion and the clamours for religious changes." His attitude to the changes in religious teaching and practice at the time are illustrated in a letter to John Buxton in 1640: "And now reformation goes on again as hot as toast...I go to church now to learn the old way to heaven."[4] Thus, in some ways, the relationship presented by the Knyvett correspondence stands as a point of comparison and contrast to the other overtly "Puritan" lay marriages under consideration.

## I

Turning now to the diary of Ralph Josselin, his modern editor, Alan MacFarlane notes that although there is much information on the husband-wife relationship, "Josselin's wife remains a shadowy figure." Still, MacFarlane holds that "the husband-wife bond was the most important in Josselin's life", and that their marriage can be "classified sociologically as a 'joint-role-relationship' and described as an emotional success."[5] The truth of this evaluation is borne out by the many references and allusions to Jane Constable, but the diary is chiefly an extensive record of Josselin's work as a Minister, the texts he preached upon, his relations with his parishioners and his personal health. There are many periods in the diary when his wife and children are never mentioned. However, it seems that in ~~over~~ 43 years of marriage between 1640 and 1683, that Ralph and Jane grew so accustomed to their relationship that their companionship

became something they took for granted.

To all appearances, Josselin interpreted his wife's role in accordance with the Biblical teaching that the wife should be her husband's "help-meet". We see this in a detailed entry showing his deep concern for her state of health:

> The Lord was good and merciful to me in my wife, who was better and cheerfullier and free from paines than formerly;...the Lord...deliver her from the same, and make her to mee dayly a meete helpe..."[6]

On another occasion, after a period of sickness, Josselin notes, "God good in this season to us, my wife went abroad to church with mee for the which mercy I gave him heartie thanks."[7] Ralph's view of the relationship is that his wife should be devoted to him; certainly, he defines her existence in relation to his own life.

Josselin's basis for considering Jane Constable as suitable "meet helpe" is his love for her. In describing his courtship, he states that his eye was "fixed in love upon a Mayde; and hers upon me: who afterwards proved my wife."[8] However monotonous the relationship may have become in later years, their regard for each other was the most enduring aspect of their marriage, developing into one of mutual companionship. The close proximity in which the Josselins lived and worked was probably one reason for the mutuality evident in their marriage. They may have shared some tasks around the house and farm, for Ralph mentions his wife's assistance in pulling down a tree,[9] but in general, Ralph was not involved in the affairs of the house, nor his wife in the business of the Ministry. Still, considering that Ralph worked from his home, there must have been some overlap. We note that Jane agreed with Ralph's advice regarding their

daughter Elizabeth's marriage,[10] but that he did not always agree with her opinions: at the very end of his life when he was sick and being treated for it, Ralph writes petulantly, "I tooke my physicke...my wife apprehends it doth mee no good, but I cannot bee fully of that minde."[11] It is possible that Ralph had the upper hand in the marriage, in spite of all evidence of mutuality, but we cannot determine this with any degree of certainty.

The fact that the marriage was based on strong mutual regard is demonstrated by Ralph's feelings at their occasional separations. In the early years of their marriage, on returning from his regiment Ralph finds that "aboundance of love made my wife grieve, for which I must the more respect and love her."[12] Twenty-five years later he notes, "my wife sad at the thoughts of my journey", and he prays that "when [he] returne it shalbee to her comfort in the increase of [his] love and tenderness."[13] On the few occasions when Jane leaves Ralph to visit her children in London, he records "my mind full of roving thoughts, in my wife's absence."[14] Their individual reactions illustrate the degree to which they relied on each other's companionship. Even in the 39th year of their marriage, Ralph evidences delight in his wife: "My deare wife came into my chamber to mee last night God preserve her, a blessing and comfort unto us all."[15] There can be no doubt here that this strong mutuality was based on their love for each other.

Josselin's love for his wife, clearly seen in his feelings during her absence and his real concern for her travails as the mother of his children does not preclude the fact that there was some discord in their marriage. Ralph was too honest a diarist to ignore the moments of frustration, but

he seldom indicated the reason for the disharmony in his marriage. Suffering from a lame leg, he complains, "I am sensible I beare my infirmities about me, but my wife taxes mee for great impatience ...I feare there is a provoking carelesnes in her etc. and impatience too much."[16] Towards the end of his life, references to dissatisfaction become more numerous: at the age of 66, he mentions in connection with a bad week of floods and a bad maket for corn that his "family troubles continue, especially a froward wife."[17] In his last year of keeping a diary, he complains of "A bitter morning from my wife, twice I mett with it already."[18] Old age and failing health probably had much to do with Josselin's intolerance of his wife. However, since he seldom seems to understand the cause of his wife's frustration, we are curious about their level of communication at these times. Despite the lack of concord evident at the end of their married life, one would not hesitate to describe it as a happy marriage since there is no mention of prolonged disagreements which went unresolved.

Clearly, Josselin saw Jane as an invaluable part of his life, both because she was the mother of his children and made his comfort her concern, and because he loved her. We can only guess at the degree of mutuality in their marriage because we only have Ralph's side of the picture. Although the diary presents Jane largely as being useful to Ralph in administering to his needs, we begin to realize the degree of <u>his</u> appreciation, regardless of her usefulness, when he expresses a conflict between his duty to his job and to her: "almost at night my dearest Jane went out of church very ill, her lookes manifested it, it had troubled mee more, but that I considered I was in God's service, it was not fitt for me to lay out my passions of

feare or love".[19] We see here the conflict between Josselin, Minister of the Faith and Josselin, the anxious husband. In one of his sermons, Josselin was moved to pay a tribute to his wife which epitomizes his view of her as lover, wife and help-mate:

> here I was wont to see my dear Wife; here to enjoy her delightsome imbraces; her counsel, spiritual Discourses, furtherance, encouragement in the wages of God, I was wont to finde her an help to ease me of the burthen and trouble of household-affairs, whose countenance welcomed me home with joy, and the delight in whom eased me from many sorrows...20

Given the fact that this sermon was read in public which may account for the fulsomeness of tone, Josselin's sincerity cannot be doubted. We may conclude from this tribute that his relationship with his wife went far beyond a proper concern for her health and as the mother of his children.

The autobiography of Henry Newcome provides us with another view of a Puritan Minister's married life. An autobiography tends to be more synthetical than a diary, and although Newcome wrote his from his diary, it is only too possible that in writing in retrospect that he was selective about what he included in it. In contrast with Josselin, it is much more difficult to get a clear picture of Newcome's marriage for his autobiography is less extensive, and he seldom expresses his feelings for his wife, Elizabeth Mainwareinge. However, if we learn less about Newcome's marriage than about Josselin's we can learn specifically about Newcome's attitude to marriage as an institution through his observations of other people's marriages.

Newcome, it is presumed, married for love like Ralph Josselin. His decision to get married was made quickly, and the autobiography does not show evidence of a long courtship: "I was rash and inconsiderate in this change of condition...but...for the matters of greatest concernment, I found a ready compliance in her to further me therein all that she could..."[21] Newcome does not mention financial considerations, illustrating, perhaps, that his marriage did not result in his improved economic status. The autobiography states that they were married in 1648, and, judging by the date of Newcome's will - 1695 - the Newcomes were married for at least 47 years. Although love, as the basis of this relationship is less apparent than in the Josselin's marriage, like Josselin, Newcome sees his wife as one who will further his own work as a Minister by taking on her duties as wife and mother.

The only grounds we have for suspecting that Newcome had real regard for his wife is in his concern for her health. Josselin made it a point to record his wife's health, but this was not the only indication that he cared about her. When Newcome mentions his wife's ill-health, he shows his concern for her well-being, but he also sees it in the light of a personal trial sent by God: "I was sent for to my wife, who was suddenly fallen ill, by an unwonted fit in her head, which amazed and startled me and was some of the physic which God saw I needed."[22] Thus, he uses his wife's illnesses to reflect on his own spiritual growth: "But to keep me in order, my wife was ill this night and the next morning..."[23]

This trait in Newcome's attitude to his wife is a manifestation of the reflective mood of his autobiography. There are other instances such as at childbirth when he allows Elizabeth's difficulties to be purely her

own.[24] Still, when seen through the eyes of her husband, Elizabeth takes on her own identity only as the mother of their children:

> Upon some illness of my wife, we took the custom of praying twice a day together, she and I...and so I did henceforward, till having more children after some time, that my wife's rising and leisure was uncertain to join with me, and so that in the morning was omitted.25

Like Josselin, Newcome, too, was aware of his wife's difficulties as a mother. At the birth of their son Peter, he records that "His [Peter's] mother was hardly put to it to nurse him..."[26] However, Newcome, more so than Josselin seems to appreciate his wife chiefly as the mother of his children and in relation to his spiritual growth.

Making due allowance for the individual differences in the marriages of Puritan divines, it is appropriate at this point to consider Richard Roger's motives for getting married as a point of comparison and contrast with Josselin and Newcome. Rogers devotes his diary almost exclusively to spiritual reflections. However, in the rare instances when he mentions his marriage, he sees the comfort his wife affords him in, yes, spiritual terms, but he is also conscious of the physical comforts of his marriage:

> that I may live with more Christian fruit and comfort in mar[riage], and taking all helpe, one by an other, both for mutual comfort now and for hereafter...thus to take that good in it...without straugh[ess] and contr[ariness], with amiableness...27

What is remarkable about Roger's testimony is that he specifically mentions the mutuality of feeling that he expects from his wife. The emphasis on "mutual comfort" shows us that he expects to help his wife in her life's

work as much as he depends on her to aid his own.

While we sensed this mutuality to some extent in the companionship evidenced in Josselin's marriage, it seems strangely absent in Newcome's case. Newcome gives us very little indication of his feelings for his wife beyond her role as the mother of his children and a jar to his conscience of his own sinfulness. As a result, when this order is upset, the discord in their marriage takes on an unprecedented enormity.

In comparison with the Josselins, the Newcomes experienced many more instances of disharmony, and, as far as we can tell, their problems do not seem to have blown over as quickly as the Josselins'. After six months of marriage, Newcome's sole entry reads, "My wife and I had a sad falling out for nothing", and in May that year, a conflict which yet again "arose out of nothing, ...grew to that height as never any grief reached upon us yet."[28] Four years later, in 1652, the couple had a dispute over who had greater say in household affairs:

> These four years have I now lived with her, and do not know how to humour her. When she is angry, I do aggravate passion by saying anything... When she is patient, peace is so sweet to me that I dare not speak lest I should lose it...Either two servants do the work, or she shall have three, or let all lie; for I shall declare my dissent from her taking any pains.[29]

Although we have no way of knowing the full context of this quarrel, it seems that Newcome, perhaps out of concern for his wife's well-being, wanted to have a greater say in household affairs than Elizabeth was ready to allow him. She seems to have stood up for herself, much to her husband's discomfort. Newcome found a lack of domestic harmony very unsettling for on another occasion he states, "This was a great pressure to me, and I thought

I should be fit for nothing this day..."[30] It seems that although the Newcomes demonstrated less mutuality and affection in their marriage, Henry, at least, cared enough about their marital relations to desire a harmonious relationship.

If Newcome was aware of the occasional instability of his own marriage, as mentioned above,[31] he had a good idea of what the institution of marriage should not be like. In his observations of other people's marriages, we see that he was conscious of the ideal of mutuality in a marriage, even if his own, as far as we can tell, showed little evidence of this. He analyzes the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Wrigley thus:

> a knowing man [and] his wife, an eminent Christian: and yet they could not hit it to live quietly and comfortably together, but lived in perpetual secret unkindness.[32]

Here is perhaps a clue to Newcome's thinking on his own marriage: despite the many conflicts in his marriage, they were open, and showed no evidence of "secret unkindness." In the Wrigley's case, however, Newcome finds that God condemns them for their "want of mutual forbearance".[33] Newcome's attitude to the Wrigley's affairs, and his concern over his own disharmonious ones show that he considered marital concord as a Christian value in and of itself.

The greater degree of discord, the lack of obvious mutuality, and the poverty of references of Newcome's appreciation of Elizabeth does not mean that they had a poor relationship. In 1649, a year after their marriage, Newcome records in his diary, "We spent this morning very idly, in throwing water one at another. [In the margin is this remark] -- What a strange toy and vanity!"[34] illustrating that they did enjoy some leisure together. They

also enjoyed socializing together as a couple.[35] Nevertheless, the basis of their relations can be inferred from a remark made in the diary in conjunction with their first major conflict.[36] Reflecting on the incident, Newcome says in disillusionment, "I must confess I think all women to be thus weak...A lamentable weak creature."[37] Newcome's thinking does not make him any different from the Puritan divines who described marriage in the conduct books based on the inferior creation of the woman. However, it seems that Newcome had so little an opinion of women that it harmed his relations with his wife. Clearly, he understood the importance of a true mutuality and sense of reciprocity in marriage, but the repeated "distemper" of his wife, and, no doubt, his own, illustrates that they were probably less compatible than the Josselins, thereby lessening the degree of mutuality in their marriage.

## II

The evidence we have on lay Puritan marriages is confined to those of the landed class. However, they express to a greater or lesser extent the values of mutuality and love in marriage which were demonstrated in the lives of the Newcomes and the Josselins. Sir Francis Hastings leaves us a brief record of his relationship with his wife in a letter written to his brother, Sir Edmund Hastings, and in an epitaph to his dead wife. Both these sources are dated 1596, and are the outcome of a marriage which lasted 29 years. Sir Francis' view of his wife presents her as the epitome of a holy Puritan woman who lived up to the ideals of her religious persuasion

and expectations of her noble birth. She had a "feare of God...grafted in her by grace", and "God's gospell pure with haste she did embrace". Thus, she was "To husband true, to kindred she was kinde,/And to all friends did beare a loving minde."[38] As a woman who apparently worked untiringly for the poor, and a wise and kind mistress of her household, we see that Sir Francis had much respect for her as both his wife and a fine religious woman.

The scanty evidence we have of the Hastings' marriage points to the importance of spiritual growth in marriage. Although Josselin's diary did not illustrate this to any great extent, we saw how Newcome used the trials of his wife as one means of monitoring his own spiritual growth.[39] We have a hint of this dimension to the Hastings' relationship when Sir Francis writes to Sir Edmund saying, "Suche and so greate was her love to me in the feare of God,...she showed herself a righte helper to me indeed."[40] In keeping with the ideal "help-meet", Lady Magdalen promoted her husband's spiritual development, and in this way, made an excellent wife. It is, however, less clear whether Sir Francis ever ceased idealizing Lady Magdalen's good qualities. As a young widow, she pleased herself and married Sir Francis who was beneath her in economic status.[41] This indicates that Lady Magdalen probably married for love, and, according to her husband, there was no matrimonial discord: "Hee liveth not that ever went betweene/These twoe, to move a place, or to intreate".[42] Sir Francis' repeated emphasis on how much benefit the marriage afforded him both in spiritual and material concerns does not tell us whether Lady Magdalen felt the same way. We can only infer that the lack of marital disharmony indicated mutual satisfaction.

Since we only have Sir Francis' view of the Hastings' marriage, we

have to consider what kind of person Lady Magdalen was. As a noble woman, it is possible that she identifies quite closely with Lady Margeret Hoby, a strong Puritan, who kept a lengthy diary during her third marriage. The editor of Lady Margeret's diary notes that "The diary reveals nothing about personal relationships."[43] To an extent, this is very true since Lady Margeret, like the Puritan divines, seems to have used her diary as a means of spiritual reflection and to keep a record of her daily activities.

Although Lady Margeret's diary is not a record of her personal relationships, it does, nevertheless, reveal that she spent a fair amount of time with her husband, Thomas Posthumous Hoby. They were married for 37 years between 1596 and 1633, Mr. Hoby having been a determined but unsuccessful suitor for her hand at the instance of her second marriage, only to be successful at her third. Lady Margeret never hints at her feelings or her thoughts about her marriage, but a typical day included a fair amount of time spent with Mr. Hoby. She usually kept "Mr. Hoby compenie tell almost diner time: then I...went to church with Mr. Hoby."[44] She almost always accompanied him to at least one service a day, ate one or even two meals with him, and occasionally "walked and conferred of diuers thinges with Mr. Hoby."[45] When he left her on business, whe would write to him in his absence, having recorded it as part of the days activities: "I praied, dined, tooke my leave of Mr. Hoby, and so went againe about the house tell 5."[46] His return was a matter to be thankful for, but it was no occasion for an overflow of emotion: "Mr. Hoby came from London havinge ended all his busines there, I praise God."[47]

Lady Margeret's diary reveals that her husband was part of her daily routine, and as such, apparently a valued part of it. Although on her part there is little indication of the mutuality in the relationship, Mr.

Hoby's epitaph on her tombstone reveals that from his point of view, they lived in "mutuuall entire affection to both their extraordinary comforts." He also considered her the perfect Puritan woman in both "publike and private callings."[48] Despite the conventional tone of this epitaph, we must suppose Mr. Hoby to be sincere. He gives every evidence of being satisfied with their relationship, and apparently did not resent the time his wife spent performing her religious calling. Since spiritual growth was her main preoccupation as revealed in the diary, we must also infer that Lady Margeret found in her husband one who would support her in her religious interests. Thus the Hastings and Hoby marriages are representative of one kind of Puritan upper-class marriage, namely those in which the importance of spiritual growth was very well articulated. These two marriages demonstrate a type of mutuality based on love, but more importantly, the spiritual growth of the partners concerned seems to have been the main impetus for the success of the relationship.

## III

Two upper-class marriages of a different caliber are represented by the Knyvett and Verney letters. Here we do not see the same emphasis on spiritual growth demonstrated in the marriages of the Hastings and the Hobys. Nor do we see the kind of mutuality seen in the Josselin marriage; here, husband-wife relations are based on conjugal love, but differ from the other marriages under discussion by the practical importance of the wife's role. By necessity, Mary Blacknall and Katherine Burgh have an

active role in their husband's affairs for they are responsible for winning back sequestered lands. One wonders what implications the active role of the wife has for the hierarchy on which these marriages were based. An examination of these two marriages will also demonstrate the extent to which conjugal love was based in the inferiority of the wife to her husband.

Thomas Knyvett, a country squire, was married in 1620 at the age of 22 to Katherine Burgh. The evidence we have of their 26 year-old relationship is derived from a collection of letters which he wrote to her during the entirety of their marriage. These letters give us no clue about their courtship, but since Katherine did not bring hope of any immediate aggrandizement to Knyvett's worldly possessions, we are led to believe that their's was a marriage contracted upon mutual attraction and love. Although we never hear Katherine's view of the matter, the extremely loving tone of Thomas' correspondence supports this assumption. In his second letter to Katherine, written a year after marriage in 1621, Thomas declares his love as he was frequently wont to throughout his married life: "I protest to God I love nothing but onely thee, and so rest assuered."[49]

The letters reveal that the matrimonial relationship was the most important relationship in Knyvett's life. His love for Katherine was made known in many ways: he often mentioned that he missed her company. Writing in 1635, he begins, "Swette/Harte, I nowe begin to thinke myselfe in London. But so thinke on it, as I wish myselfe hartely at home againe at little Thorpe in thy pretty little armes",[50] and he often admitted his need for her, stating "I was never made to live alone."[51] Knyvett was interested in his wife's appearance, and although they had six children, his letters

show his concern for Katherine rather than the children. Knyvett does not elaborate on any theoretical assumptions that he may have had about his wife.[52] He considers it "an inestimable Juell to have a discreet Wife," although he later chides her indiscretion which may have set back their efforts to get back his lands.[53] As the correspondence during the time of Knyvett's imprisonment reveals, theirs was a marriage based certainly on strong mutual attachment and trust.

Knyvett was well known for his sympathy for Charles I, but his involvement in the Lowestoft uprising of March 1643 resulted in his imprisonment, and an order of sequestration was placed on his lands. As a result, the management of the Knyvett lands fell upon Katherine and her bailiff. Even before their separation, in 1642[3], Knyvett had entrusted minor financial affairs to his wife: in 1632 he wrote, "Deer harte have a care of thy Affaiers at home And I will doe the like abroade, ...I praye examine yo coachman what oates he spends weekly nowe I am gone...If any will not doe I obaye thy commands, turne them away. I will stand to it."[54] Clearly, Knyvett had long had confidence in his wife's ability to deputise for him in his absence.

The freedom of action that Knyvett gave his wife was born of necessity, but it was still very unusual for the time. On March 23, 1642, he wrote, "Good sweet hart, with the healpe of Will: Harrison, manage our poor affaiers...I dare not yet write such directions as I would in my owne business."[55] He depended completely on her judgement and ability to prevent local sequestration officers from taking over the land until a decision had been made about the order, and to enforce the payment of rents to him rather than the sequestrators.[56] In 1644, regarding her dealings with the

tenants, Knyvett wrote, "And to tell thee true, I doe not knowe what to Advise in this case, only use them kindly I make thy bargaine for the present as well as thou canst".[57] What advice he does offer in managing the land, he gives in the nature of a suggestion rather than an order: "I cannot tell what to advise concerning our farmes...For vs to stock' any ground ther wilbe danger...I think' we must plowe and sowe all our ground, for corne is like to be the best commodity".[58] Judging from the style in which these suggestions were made, it is most likely that Katherine wrote to him asking for his advice. It is equally clear, however, that the final decision rested with her.

In the Knyvett marriage we have a rare glimpse of a relationship based on trust and confidence as well as deep affection. Knyvett makes no effort to play the part of the superior husband, for he obviously had too great a respect for Katherine's abilities to see it warranted. She fulfilled his expectations excellently, for commenting on her efforts to make contact with those who could get his Petition to Parliament heard, he writes thus: "the last of the towe [letters] was most cordiall. You have gone an excellent good way, And if those worthy friends make good ther promise, I doubt not but I shall come off very well."[59] As we saw in the letters previous to the Lowestoft incident, this working rapport between the couple had been a phenomenon of their marriage from the first, and was not purely the result of Knyvett's dependence on her during his imprisonment.

What discord there was in this marriage is inaccurately represented by the correspondence, for the source of the problem was more often than not Knyvett's deep feeling for Katherine: "I am out of patience that yo' letters have fayld me this weeke".[60] Towards the end of his imprisonment

he grew a little impatient with the way she managed his affairs: "For the horss you speak of...I wonder yet let him goe in the wood at all, having the Parke to put him in".[61] These few incidents do not, however, obscure the fact that Knyvett depended on his wife to a marked degree. Their marriage shows a strong basis of conjugal love, but at times it seems to take on an exaggerated aspect, making it seem almost romantic in its depth of feeling. The unusually high degree of mutual understanding and dependence was perhaps born of necessity, but as we saw in the letters written before the sequestration, the Knyvett's relationship had always been characterized by a deep sense of mutuality.

The Knyvett marriage illustrates many of the characteristics of a Puritan marriage. Foremost among these are a sense of mutuality based on conjugal love. In spite of the license Thomas gave his wife Katherine, there is no indication here that the hierarchy in the relationship was ever in any question. However, we recall that the Knyvetts were not Puritans, even though they had certainly been exposed to Puritan influences.[62] While this tells us that the Puritan marriage ethic was probably one practised by many who were non-Puritans, it offers us an opportunity to compare a non-Puritan upperclass marriage with a Puritan marriage of similar social background. Like the Knyvetts, Ralph Verney and Mary Blacknall were separated between 1646 and 1648 while Mary worked in England during Ralph's exile in France to have their lands released. Their case is one very similar to the Knyvetts, offering the wife an unusual opportunity to demonstrate her ability. On the basis of a comparison of these two marriages, we will be better equipped, I think, to generalize on the nature of upperclass Puritan marriage.

Ralph Verney was married in 1626 to Mary Blacknall, an orphan and an heiress aged 13, when he was only 16 years old. Financial considerations were very much a part of this arranged marriage, although these were not concluded until after the marriage.[63] Ralph and Mary Verney were left to "grow" into their marriage; she returned to her relations for the first two years, and he left for Oxford at the age of 17. By 1631, however, five years after their marriage, Ralph assumed regular marital relations with Mary.[64] Their lives were characterized by a deep belief in Puritan religious doctrines; by the time the Verneys were separated in 1646 during Ralph's exile, it appears that there was a certain degree of mutuality between the two that had developed out of long association, even if it had not been rooted initially in love.

In 1643, Ralph was exiled in France and Parliament placed an order of sequestration on his lands because he refused to sign the 'Solemn League and Covenant' of 1643. He leaves us no comprehensive statement on his view of his wife, but when it was proposed that Mary should return to England in 1646 to secure the estate, Sir Ralph comments, "I know it is not hard for a wife to dissemble but there is like to be no need of that".[65] Later, in a letter to Lord Devonshire, Sir Ralph remarked that "'women were not the worse solicitors, their sex entitles them to many privileges.'"[66] Sir Ralph, it seems, was aware of his wife's usefulness to achieve his own ends. Despite his rather conventional, if cynical view, he did have confidence in her ability to secure his interests. Thomas Knyvett, who appeared to have a more sincere regard for his wife, also made the same proposal to Katherine: "all the friends that I speake with are absolute of opinion that yo' solicitation would prevaile farr beyond mine...Therefore,

good sweet hart, come up to my assistance assoone as you can."[67] Knyvett, too, was ready to use the advantage of his wife's sex in his own interest, but he was ready to let Katherine manage his affairs as she saw best. Sir Ralph, on the other hand, gave his wife the most minute instructions on what to do on every issue, be it getting in contact with a person of influence or domestic matters.

For example, when Mary returns to Claydon, he instructs her to "putt up all the small things (I meane such as will take noe hurt by moathes, rust, or such like) into some roome by themselves and bringe the key away with you".[68] Occasionally, Mary resented her husband's demand that she be as meticulous as he was, for when he wrote demanding why she had not written in answer to "all those severall perticulars", she wrote back, "truly I am confydent tis by chance if I miss answering of every perticuler".[69] When left to herself, Mary was quite as meticulous and particular as her husband, as evidenced by the instructions she issued to her henchman Roades to have her baby son brought up to London.

> The nurse sayeth her husband hath a very easy-going horse, and she thinks itt will be best for him to carry the child before him upon pillows... When you come there, you will quickly find which will be the best way to carry itt; pray provide for both wayes, and bring a footman to goe by itt. If her husband doth carry the child, she cannott ride behind him soe you must provide a horse for her...if he carries the child before him itt must be tied about him with a garter...70

There is no doubt about Mary's capabilities; she dealt with Sir Ralph's impatience with tolerance, but she tended to depend on his advice because, since her early youth, there had been no cause for her to rely on her own judgement.

This did not mean that Mary did not know her own mind. To pay his

debts, Sir Ralph considered selling her land and renting Claydon, but left the final decision to her: "Unless you conceive this way best for yourself and children, do not give way unto it, as your refusall will bee as welcome to mee as your consent." Mary wrote back telling him of the disadvantages of selling land during a slump in the market. However, her habit of deferring to her husband's judgement was such that she states depreciatingly. "Tis onely because you bide me doe itt, that I trouble you with my silly advise, for I am sure thy owne judgement is much better, and what leades thee toe will please me."[71]

We see that Mary was convinced of her husband's superiority, a stance which he had always taken, and which she felt no reason to question. Their interchange on this matter reveals a mutuality and an easy companionability as is also demonstrated in their lively debate on how to name their son born during Sir Ralph's exile.[72] Unlike the Knyvett marriage, however, the Verney relationship was not one based on any assumption of equality, evident to a certain extent in the Knyvett letters. In her analysis of the Verney marriage Miriam Slater points out that it was one "which ultimately grew into one of devotion and love."[73] Sir Ralph, according to Slater, "loved his wife, but she was not the chief focus of his life, nor his greatest concern."[74] Mary, however, was "in a position to offer the selfless devotion which came closer to the romantic ideal", because she accepted that Ralph's "primary responsibility [w]as the conservation of his patrimony." Slater concludes that Mary was able to do this because she accepted this "order of priorities," and also because she loved him.[75]

Still, it is not clear why Sir Ralph was the focus of Mary's life, and why the reverse was not true for himself. Certainly, he was quick to feel

"the griefe of our fatall separation",[76] and she, when the prospect of their reunion grew closer said, "I beginn to have a huge content within me to think how sudenly I shall be with thee".[77] Not withstanding this mutuality, however, as Slater points out, the belief in the legitimacy of the double standard in the behaviour of the husband was fairly widespread. In contradiction to the teaching of the conduct books, Sir Ralph, a strong Puritan, did have sexual relations with female servants, and his devotion to his wife's happiness did not change his habits.

Considering Sir Ralph's attitude to Mary, she was not the chief focus of his life because he saw her simply in sexual terms, in terms of a woman who would govern his household affairs and make his life physically comfortable. During his exile, while in a depressed state of mind, Sir Ralph proposed taking an extensive journey through Europe, a very dangerous proposition during that time. Mary, however, could not understand his desire to break up the family even further and seek comfort away from them. She states:

> Itt is not the being intrusted with your estate can give me the least satisfaction...I cannott be any longer from you, therefore I am resollved to stand or fall with you...78

Her lack of understanding and sympathy for Sir Ralph is understandable, but, as illustrated by this incident, Sir Ralph's behaviour indicates that his fondness for his wife was chiefly physical. He did not anticipate that she could offer him any mental or even spiritual consolation.

If one is doubtful whether Mary had any real notion of her husband's way of thinking, apart from his concern for her physical well-being, we

wonder how much he really understood her. When writing to his sister Margeret Elmes after Mary's death in 1650, he states,

> I may justly say she was inferior to very few... Yet such was her goodnesse that when I was most Peevish she would be most Patient, and ...her forbearence studied nothing more than sweet compliance.79

Sir Ralph obviously understood Mary's ideal qualities as a wife, but how much did he know of her real desires or motivations? Their real, if brief misunderstanding of the motives of his porposed journey show that, despite the outward appearances of conjugal harmony, ~~that~~ there was some lack of understanding, even if there was an expression of mutuality in their marriage.

In terms of expressions of mutuality based on a type of conjugal love, the "happy" marriage of the Verneys' is comparable to that of the Josselins'. Clearly, the Verney and Josselin marriages exemplify the kind of mutual rapport within a well-defined hierarchy advocated by the conduct books. In contrast, the Newcome relationship articulated the tensions within the hierarchy of their marriage far more clearly than the mutuality and concord one would have expected. Although the Josselins' marriage is a fair reflection of the ideals of Puritan marriage, we are also aware that like Mrs. Newcome, Mrs. Josselin was not always an exemplum of the submissive wife. In spite of the theoretical emphasis on mutuality and love, which the Josselins and the Newcomes no doubt were aware of, there were tensions resulting from the hierarchical order in marriage. The Knyvett marriage is

a typical in this respect, for although the degree of mutuality evidenced in this marriage is in keeping with the conduct books, it made for a type of equality that denied the hierarchical basis of the marriage.

The range of marriages examined here illustrates that it is unprofitable to generalize on the degree of mutuality, hierarchy or conjugal love in "Puritan" marriages, based on social status or on clerical or lay grounds. Rather, what becomes increasingly apparent is that marriages which subscribed even slightly to the Puritan theory of marriage were remarkably fulfilled ones. Equality was not a concern in the conduct books, nor was it demonstrated in marriage itself. The emphasis on mutuality, based on love was a characteristic of these relationships, but naturally, this was apparent in each marriage in differing degrees. Sometimes the circumstances in which the marriage took place - whether it was an arranged or love marriage - or the events in it (such as the unprecedented role for women during the Civil War) played a part in the way husband-wife relations were resolved. The role of spiritual mutuality in Puritan marriages had underlying significance. But in contrast to the teachings of the conduct books, as seen in the lay and clerical marriages described here, spiritual mutuality was seldom the main objective of marriage. Based on the practical evidence of Puritan marriage, we must conclude that mutuality within a clearly defined hierarchy was the distinguishing feature of these relationships. In addition, the ideal of matrimonial happiness based on conjugal love, was intrinsic to the happy resolution of these marriages.

## Chapter III

## A View of Divorce

A study of the attitude of Puritans to marriage and divorce would be incomplete without an analysis of the views of John Milton. Considered one of the foremost "Puritan" writers of the mid-seventeenth century, his Doctrine and Dicipline of Divorce (DDD) (1643,1644) is a significant work because it illustrates the extent to which someone of an extreme Protestant persuasion could take the "new" views of love and mutuality in marriage. Milton has long been considered a "Puritan", but recent scholarship has indicated that his interests coincide much more closely with those of the more radical Protestant sects.[1] Still, his views on divorce expressed in the divorce tracts, and his depiction of the relationship between Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost illustrate that like all "Puritans", he took a keen interest in the marital relationship, and the problems that could arise in marriage. Of all his works, Milton's statements on divorce bear the closest resemblance to the theoretical discussions of marriage in the Puritan conduct books. This chapter is an attempt to balance the views of Puritans divines discussed in Chapter I with those of Milton, as found in the DDD. This tract also illustrates some of Milton's preconceived notions about the relationship between man and wife, elaborated to a much greater extent in Paradise Lost, and analysed in detail in Chapter IV. What becomes clear in analyzing this divorce tract is that radical Protestants such as Milton had significantly different views about marriage and divorce from the Puritans who were themselves considered extremists.

Milton's views on divorce are useful to this study not merely because they show us that like some Puritans he was in favor of divorce, but because they indirectly inform us about his conception of marriage. The previous two chapters illustrated that both in the theoretical conception and the practice of marriage, the wife's subjection to her husband was taken for granted. Even though the husband was the master of the relationship, we saw that those Puritan divines who advocated divorce such as William Perkins, favored equal rights for both husband and wife in divorce. In theory, although marriage was hierarchical, the Puritans advocated that in remedying the sins of marriage such as adultery and desertion, both parties should be on an equal footing. Puritans who favored mutuality in the relationship made it clear that there should be no discrimination against the woman if the relationship had to be dissolved through divorce. To what extent do Milton's views of the respective statuses of men and women in divorce compare to those of the Puritan divines? And are the bases on which he advocates divorce the same as writers like Snawsel and Perkins? In answering these questions we will be able to establish some preliminary picture of Milton's attitude to marriage in addition to his view on divorce. It will also give us an opportunity to see to what extent he identifies with other Puritans of the day.

A formal definition of Milton's stand on marriage can be found in Tetrachordon: "Marriage is a divine institution joyning man and woman in a love fitly dispos'd to the helps and comforts of domestic life." As John Halkett comments, "The distinctive feature of Milton's argument is that love and its effects ('the helps and comforts of domestic life') constitute 'the formal cause it self of mariage.' God is the efficient cause, but 'love born of fitness,' the love which creates domestic peace, is the

formal cause."[2] In the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce (DDD), we are told that marriage was instituted by God for mutual society and not, primarily, to propagate the human race.

> . . . in the first ordaining of marriage, [God] taught us to what end he did it, in words expresly implying the apt and cheerfull conversation of man with woman, to comfort and refresh him against the evill of solitary life, not mentioning the purpose of generation till afterwards, as being but a secondary end in dignity, though not in necessitie. . .[3]

The importance of marriage, according to Milton, rests on the "apt and cheerfull conversation of man with woman." There is no mention here of the need to have children, or of hierarchy between man and woman in the relationship. One would assume that the kind of mutuality intended by Milton in this instance was based on a certain conception of equality between man and wife. Here, Milton is not concerned with the status of the marriage partners; rather, he wants to emphasize that marriage is important because men and women need each others' company, irrespective of sexual satisfaction or the bearing of children. The goal of marriage, he reiterates, is "a meet and happy conversation. . .the chiefest and the noblest end of marriage; for we find here no expression so necessarily implying carnall knowledge, as this prevention and lonelinesse to the mind and spirit of man."[4] In Milton's view, there is a dimension to marriage that transcends the physical. Therefore, man and wife must be mentally and spiritually compatible in order to ensure the success of their marriage.

This notion of the compatibility of the marriage partners was widely accepted by Puritan divines with regard to religious commitment. In Chapter I we noted the importance placed by the divines on man and wife promoting each other's relationship with God. The first duty of marriage was common

consent in religious matters.[5] The basis of this mutuality was a certain "equality" of marriage partners; this was not an equality after marriage, but rather a "meet-ness" of social status and piety to ensure marital success.[6] Puritan conduct books make the distinction between the "duties" and "ends" of marriage,[7] and, in considering these "ends", we established that the procreative purpose of marriage was almost always asserted before that of companionship.[8] Thus, according to Puritan clergy, the first duty was a kind of spiritual and mental association, but the purpose of marriage was first procreation, and then mutual companionship. Puritans did not see this as a contradiction in terms; clearly, mutual companionship was given its place, but in keeping with the Biblical injunction to "multiply and fill the earth", procreation was the main reason for getting married.

John Milton was not, however, the first advocate of the importance of mutual society and companionship. It has been pointed out that Thomas Gataker in Marriage Duties (1620) acknowledged the importance of marriage for its own sake, irrespective of procreative responsibilities.[9] However, even Gataker sees that husband and wife have a special responsibility to each other in order to best perform their duties as parents, and to their dependents. Marriage is important firstly "because this societie. . . is the first that ever was in the world."[10] As the "heads of houses, if they desire to have things go wel in the family. . . they have a speciall care of those duties that God hath enjoyned them in regard of each other." Thus, they must be "carefull of mutuall duties betwixt themselves, of concord and agreement the one with the other, of love and fidelitie. . ."[11] Although Gataker does not emphasize this aspect as much as Milton does, we see here an appreciation of the importance of good relations between husband and wife for its own sake. However, Milton, in discussing the duties of a

married couple does not concern himself with their responsibilities to society. In view of this, we might be able to consider Milton the first major Puritan writer to take the marital relationship out of its social context, and consider the relationship as an independent entity.

It is this highly specialized view of marriage (in terms of the norms of seventeenth-century society) that allows Milton to discuss divorce as a remedy for incompatibility in a marriage. If marriage is to be considered primarily as a "meet and happy conversation", the parties involved must be temperamentally compatible. Thus, any "indisposition, unfitnes, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable" is just cause for divorce.[12] Milton emphasizes that if husband and wife are not mentally suited, this is due to their very natures, and cannot be changed. Such impediments are "ever likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugall society, which are solace and peace,. . .a greater reason of divorce than naturall frigidity, especially if there be no children and that there be mutuall consent."[13] The desire for divorce for incompatibility must be acknowledged by both parties; marriage celebrates companionship, and this, in Milton's view is a more important reason for divorce than other causes such as adultery, dessertion or frigidity. It seems that Milton is advocating divorce at will, but in fact, he is most interested in preserving the image of marriage as a chaste and fulfilling relationship:

> . . .he I say who therefore seeks to part, is one who highly honours the married life, and would not stain it: and the reasons which now move him to divorce, are equall to the best of those that could first warrant him to marry.[14]

In advocating incompatibility as a reason for divorce, Milton was far ahead of his time; not till the twentieth century was imcompatibility acknowledged

as just cause for divorce in British law.

Milton's stand on divorce cannot be considered a specifically Puritan doctrine, for the Puritans advocated divorce primarily for adultery.[15] The Puritans in favor of divorce, with remarriage for the innocent party were breaking new ground, since the Church of England was not generally in favor of divorce.[16] However, Milton believed that in advocating divorce primarily for adultery, Puritans had put the carnal aspects of marriage above spiritual and mental association, the "solace and peace" which were the chief ends of marriage. In DDD, Milton acknowledges that the three ends of marriage according to other Puritan writers are "Godly society, next civill, and thirdly that of the marriage-bed."[17] Criticising these authors, Milton asserts that "he who affirms adultery to be the highest breach, affirms the bed to be the highest [end] of mariage. . ."[18] Realizing that his own view would not be too popular, in the 1644 edition of DDD, Milton reinforced his argument by stating that mistakes do occur when people get married: ". . .that every woman is meet for every man, none [are] so absurd as to affirm."[19] In comparison with contemporary Puritan thought on marriage, Milton appears to be an extremist. Clearly, he thought that Puritans did not take their arguments for divorce far enough when they limited their advocacy of divorce chiefly to adultery.

Like other Puritan writers on divorce, Milton uses the Bible as the basis for his argument on divorce. In justifying his reasons for divorce, he was compelled to reconcile the Mosaic precedent allowing divorce for incompatibility with Christ's teaching that one who married a divorced person committed adultery. In the 1644 edition of DDD, Milton interpreted the "uncleaness" mentioned in Leviticus as due cause for divorce to mean

an uncleaness of body and mind which hindered the proper workings of marriage: he demands, ". . . what greater nakednes or unfitnes of mind then that which hinders ever the solace and peacefull society of the married couple, and what hinders that more than the unfitnes and defectivenes of an unconjugal mind."[20] As for Christ's injunction that he "who marries the divorc't, commits adultery, it is to be understood if he had any plot in the divorce."[21] Ernest Sirluck points out that Milton interprets Christ's teachings on divorce to be addressed solely to the Pharisees: this is the "point of greatest weakness. . .To accomodate Christ to Moses Milton had to interpret him as speaking, not to mankind, but to a very particular group."[22] As a result, the second edition of DDD and the three subsequent versions of the divorce tracts, i.e., The Judgement of Martin Bucer concerning Divorce(1644), Tetrachordon(1645) and Colasterion (1645), attempt to make more concrete Milton's arguments in favor of divorce for incompatibility. For example, in the 1644 edition of DDD, Milton holds that to deny divorce for incompatibility is to frustrate the role of charity and mercy in a Christian's life: "No place in Heav'n or Earth, except Hell, where charity may not enter: yet mariage the Ordinance of our solace and contentment, the remedy of our lonelinesse will not admit now either of charity or mercy to come in and mediate or pacifie the fiercenes of this gentle Ordinance. . ."[23] Despite the changes, the basic arguments laid out in the 1643 edition of the DDD do not undergo any significant revisions: "if man be Lord of the Sabbath, . . .can he be lesse than Lord of marriage in such important causes as these?"[24]

Milton's chief dissimilarity from other Puritan writers is in advocating divorce for incompatibility rather than for adultery alone; in recommending divorce with the option to remarry[25] for both partners, he deviates

from the commonly held Puritan perspective that remarriage is for the innocent party. He considers "the liberty of second choice" to be in "some cases. . .most purely necessary, as who so blockish to deny, then is this also as needfull. Thus. . .divorce is not a matter of Law but of Charity."[26] Remarriage is not one of Milton's main concerns in the DDD, but we can infer from the value he places on marriage as a remedy for loneliness that he assumed that those who got divorced would, in time, get married again.

Another dissimilarity between Milton and his Puritan contemporaries is that he favored the practice of self-divorce. A tradition inherited from the Familists, self-divorce by mutual consent before a congregation had been a practice of sectarians such as the Ranters, Muggletonians and Quakers. We may infer from this that Milton was strongly influenced by extremist Protestant groups in his stand on divorce.[27] As demonstrated in Chapter I, the whole question of how divorce was effected depended on whether marriage was regarded as a sacrament.[28] Like the authors of the conduct books, Milton did not consider marriage to be a sacrament: ~~In~~ DDD, ~~he terms marriage "that mystery of joy and union"~~.[29] ~~and~~ in The Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church(1659) he states, "As for marriages, that ministers should meddle with them, as not sanctified or legitimate, without their celebration, I find no ground in scripture either of precept or example. . .being of itself a civil ordinance. . ."[30] If marriage as an institution has no sacramental character to it, then, according to Milton, divorce is in the hands of the master of the family: "the power of arbitrement of divorce" was given to "the master of the family, into whose hands God and the law of all Nations had put it, and Christ so left (it)..."[31] The assumption here is that neither the Church nor civil

law can have any hold on those who wish to dissolve their marriages. Milton does not dispense totally with the role of the minister or with the regulating influences of civil law: divorce, should, in "the ancient manner be observ'd in presence of the Minister...",[32] and while "Law can to no rational purpose forbid divorce, it can only take care that the conditions of divorce be not injurious."[33] The Church and civil law have a legitimate role in self-divorce procedures in that they can regulate the conditions and terms of divorce; however, they should play no part in granting or refusing a dissolution. Milton's precedent for self-divorce is that it is in keeping with ancient practice, for "...neither from Moses nor from Christ hath the Magistrate any authority to proceed against it. But what? Shall then the disposal of that power return again to the maister of the family? Wherefore not? Since God there put it, and the presumptuous canon thence bereft it."[34]

The authority of the husband to bring about his own divorce is in keeping with the patriarchal role defined for him by the writers of the conduct books. In Chapter I we saw how the husband had fairly absolute control over his wife, but was expected to temper his authority over her with love.[35] In being the "priest" of the family, the husband takes on a paterfamilias status, and as such has a great deal of authority and power.[36] Nevertheless, the Puritan authors of the conduct books show no evidence of being in favor of self-divorce, even if they do acknowledge the patriarchal and powerful role of the husband. As Powell has noted, in advocating self-divorce, Milton shows a closer identification with the more radical Protestant sectarians, rather than the more "conservative" Puritan authors of the conduct books.[37]

In spite of the points of dissimilarity with other Puritan literary

treatments of divorce, Milton's DDD, like the conduct books, is addressed to both men and women, but is clearly biased in favor of men. The title of the divorce tract emphasizes that divorce is "restored to the good of both sexes,"[38] but in the rest of the tract, Milton does not specifically mention the position of the wife in a divorce suit. One can only assume that Milton meant that both men and women had equal rights in divorce. On the other hand, William Perkins made it quite clear that in the prosecution of adultery, man and wife were on the same footing, even while asserting that women should not forget their inferiority.[39] There is some reason to believe that Milton's thinking on the respective status and benefits for men and women in divorce underwent a kind of metamorphosis as he developed his arguments. In the first edition of DDD, Milton held that "if divorce were granted...not for men, but to release afflicted wives, certainly it is not only a dispensation, but a most mercifull Law..."[40] By 1644, however, he was of the opinion that

> to say, divorce was granted for relief of wives, rather than of husbands, is but weakly conjectur'd....Who can be ignorant that woman was created for man, and not man for woman; and that a husband may be injur'd as insufferably in mariage as a wife....So that to say divorce wes granted for woman rather then man, was but fondly invented.[41]

The additions to the second edition show Milton prejudiced in favor of the benefits of divorce. However, if we consider the tract as a product of an overwhelmingly male-dominated society, one can see how in terms of the seventeenth century, the bias in favor of the husband's comfort would have enhanced the appeal of Milton's views. For instance, if Milton had advocated self-divorce as the prerogative of the wife as well as the husband, in the eyes of his audience, his tract would probably have lost all credi-

bility. As a result, a feature of the second edition is "that the absolute and final hindering of divorce cannot belong to any civil or earthly power, against the will and consent of both parties, or of the husband alone..."[42]

The difference in the first and second edition of DDD illustrates that Milton intended both men and women to benefit from divorce; however, it appears that he tilted his argument in favor of the male point of view to enhance its appeal. Clearly, Milton knew his audience; in 1643 he was writing to get the attention of the members of the Westminister Assembly which had been called by Parliament for advice on ecclesiastical reform. Hence, the title of this edition indicated that it was "Seasonable to be now thought on in the Reformation intended." The 1644 edition was specifically addressed "To the Parlament of England, with the Assembly."[43] Divorce, apparently, was one of many other reforms that were up for consideration at this time. With this audience in mind, it is not surprising that the DDD is biased in favor of the rights of men. If the Puritan conduct books seem more sympathetic to the predicament of women in divorce, we must remember that they were addressed to a wider audience.

Milton's apparent lack of sympathy for women in DDD does not mean that he was totally insensitive to the problems of their position in a relationship which articulated their inferiority so clearly. We must look to Eve's situation in Paradise Lost for further clarification on Milton's stand on the position of women. In DDD, it seems that Milton was only too aware of his audience to specifically promote divorce as being equally beneficial to both men and women.

Chilton Powell, in putting Milton's divorce writings in the context of

similar Puritan tracts written during the same period, believes that "Except in insisting upon divorce for incompatibility of temper, to apply the modern phrase, Milton does not go beyond the views of the more radical Puritan writers in any respect."[44] We have seen that in advocating divorce primarily for incompatibility in addition to adultery and desertion, Milton was extending the Puritan point of view that divorce was the remedy for the sins of marriage. However, in contrast to other Puritan writers, Milton is placing a much greater emphasis on the role of love and mutuality in marriage based on compatible temperaments rather than on common goals such as furthering one's relations with God, or the bearing of children.

What makes Milton's views so distinctive from those of his Puritan contemporaries is that Milton is concerned with marriage only as it applies to the man and woman concerned. Puritan authors had certainly given the emotional issues in marriage and divorce a lot of attention, but their efforts were limited, it would seem, by emphasizing the relevance of good marital relations in the creation of a godly society.[45] Richard Baxter states this view in the broader context of the role of the family in society: his advice to ministers in 1655 is, "You are like to see no general reformation till you procure family reformation."[46] In such a context, one can see the importance of the marriage relationship to Puritans in general, and how radical a stand Milton was taking when he considers marriage for its own sake. In advocating divorce for incompatibility, Milton is very alive to the capacity for human fallibility in the most intimate of personal relationships. His attitude also shows his sensitivity to the need for a true intellectual and spiritual reciprocity in a marriage, deeming that marriage "argues the chief society...to be in the soul rather than in the body..."[47] Divorce for incompatibility would, in Milton's eyes, facilitate happier

marriages; he was not concerned with its implications for social stability, nor was he primarily concerned, as were the Puritan divines, with preserving the chastity of marriage.

From the picture of marriage and divorce presented in DDD, Milton's Puritanism seems to be more radical than that of the authors of the conduct books. Like them, Milton was sensitive to issues of love, mutuality, hierarchy and compatibility, but in advocating self-divorce for men, and in considering marriage completely outside its social context he breaks significantly with his Puritan contemporaries. Thus, although Milton's stand on marriage and divorce draws on the Puritan theory of marriage and divorce, we must also recognize the extent of his individuality. Sectarianism seems to have influenced his views as strongly as Puritanism. Milton's stand on marriage is presented more fully in the relationship between Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, discussed at length in Chapter IV. We may then, by comparison with the sentiments of Puritan autobiographers and diarists on marriage,[48] determine to what extent Milton's views on marriage coincided with the commonly practised Puritan marriage ethic.

## Chapter IV

## Wedded Love

The fall of man is possibly the single most important event in Milton's Paradise Lost. Adam and Eve lost their first home forever, discovered the uncertainty of the future and were threatened with death as a result of their disobedience to God. The fall from grace stands as a pivot in the epic, dramatically pointing out the immense advantages Adam and Eve had had before the fall, and their misery afterwards. Not least among the new troubles faced by Adam and Eve is the deterioration of their relationship after the fall. They find that they are now critical and mistrusting of each other. The change in their relationship after the fall highlights their changed circumstances; the fact that their relationship endures in spite of the trials it faces is an indication of the continuing importance of marriage in the divine plan for mankind.

In view of the structuring of the epic, an analysis of the marriage relations between Adam and Eve must fall into two parts, namely before and after their fall from grace. This gives us an opportunity to analyse the marriage depicted at its most perfect, followed by a more human portrayal of marriage as we know it. As Milton portrays it, the marriage of Adam and Eve, both before and after the fall is a celebration of "wedded Love." The importance of compatibility and love in marriage is demonstrated in their marriage after the fall. The fact that their marriage is based on love and a clear acknowledgement that Adam must be

superior to Eve places this relationship in the tradition of Puritan marriages discussed in Chapter I and II. Milton illustrates some of the problems inherent in the hierarchical ranking of men and women in marriage, for the fall from grace is a result of an attempt to alter this hierarchy. However, irrespective of the problems that might arise in marriage, we see that Milton believes that it is a good and necessary part of life. Thus, an analysis of conjugal love and marriage in Paradise Lost must first begin with an examination of the extent to which Milton perceived marriage to be part of God's plan for mankind.

Ironically, Milton presents us with our first view of unfallen Adam and Eve through the eyes of Satan who has already fallen from grace. To Satan, these creatures shone with a perfection and divinity that he had once enjoyed. The emphasis on the perfect composition of Adam and Eve is our first indication they enjoyed a sanctity as a result of God's favor before the fall, a sanctity which could never be regained after the fall. They are introduced to Milton's readers as a couple:

> Two of far nobler shape erect and tall,
> Godlike erect, with native Honor clad
> In naked Majesty seem'd Lords of all,
> And worthy seem'd, for in thir looks Divine
> The image of thir glorious Maker shone,
> Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure,
> Severe, but in true filial freedom plac't;[1]

Adam and Eve, despite their physical perfections and resemblance to God, are created in "filial freedom" to God. They are inferior to God, and thus owe him respect and honor, but, being created human rather than

animal, they are also free. They have free will to conduct their lives as their reason and choice dictate. From the rest of the epic we know that the tension between the filial duty Adam and Eve owe to God and uxoriousness leads to their downfall. At this point in the story, however, the fact that they are a model couple is emphasized:

> So pass'd they naked on, nor shunn'd the sight
> Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill:
> So hand in hand they pass'd...
> (IV, 319-321)

Milton stresses their unity as a happy couple by noting that their hands were linked.[2] We will see how the tenor of the relationship is characterized by references to their hands. As Adam and Eve are imbued with a kind of divinity where they have no shame in the sight of God or each other, so their marriage is characterized by a kind of affectionate, shining perfection. The fact that they are first introduced to us as a hand-linked couple indicates that their marriage, before the fall, is an important part of the divine plan.

The importance of their relationship in the eyes of God is first indicated by Eve who tells Adam that she was created from him for his own benefit: "...those for whom/And from whom I was form'd flesh of thy flesh./ And without whom am to no end..." (IV. 440-442) Eve was created on purpose by God to give Adam companionship; however, what Milton seems to be emphasizing here is that Eve was specifically created to be compatible with Adam. The basis of their relationship, as a result, is their love, born of their compatibility. Her existence in the created world becomes especially meaningful because she was physically created from Adam; thus, their relationship is first characterized not by a meeting of two minds,

but by

> ...conjugal attraction unreprov'd,
> And meek surrender, half imbracing lean'd
> On our first Father, half her swelling Breast
> Naked met his under the flowing Gold
> Of her loose tresses hid: hee in delight
> Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms
> Smil'd with superior Love...
> (IV. 493-499)

The seal of approval placed on this emphasis on the physical character of the relationship is particularly apparent. Milton is pointing out that a vital part of the first marriage was "conjugal attraction unreprov'd." Thus marriage based on this criterion is intrinsic to the divine plan. We shall see that after the fall from grace the institution of marriage becomes vital for survival in a fallen world.

The importance of compatibility as the basis of "conjugal attraction" arises from the fact that Eve was created to be Adam's companion. We must remember, however, that their initial compatibility is furthered by the love they have for each other. The recognition of unreproved conjugal attraction in their relationship is by no means lust. The beauty of their love is here contrasted with Satan's realization that in hell, there is no parallel to their relationship. In hell, there is "...neither joy nor love, but fierce desire." (IV,509) The physical aspects of the relationship are important precisely because Adam and Eve love each other. This love, hailed by Milton as "wedded Love" (IV, 750) is "Founded in Reason, Loyal, Just, and Pure," (IV, 755) in which "...all the charities/of Father, Son and Brother first were known." (IV, 756-757) The fact that love, according to Milton, is founded in reason does not mean that the physical aspects of love are in anyway denied. To Milton, married love has a

tremendously tactile element to it. The portrayal of the physical side of the relationship is punctuated by repeated references to their hands, symbolizing mutual consent and love: "Thus talking hand in hand alone they pass'd/On to thir blissful Bower;..." (IV, 689-690) The importance of the mutuality of their emotions is first indicated when they give thanks to God and praise his creation before they fulfil the nuptial rites:

> Maker Omnipotent...
> ... we in our appointed work imploy'd
> Have finisht happy in our mutual help
> And mutual love, the Crown of all our bliss
> Ordain'd by thee,...
> (IV, 725-729)

Thus, before the fall, Adam and Eve approach the sexual act in love and wholehearted mutual acceptance: "...nor turn'd .../Adam from his fair Spouse, nor Eve the Rites/Mysterious of connubial Love refus'd"(IV, 741--743)

Milton acclaims the importance of sexual fulfilment in marriage as part of God's plan for mankind. He argues that God has ordered mankind to propagate itself; thus, those who are critical of the role of "connubial Love" in marriage are defying God's orders stated in the Bible to "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (Gen. i, 28).[3] Rather, from Milton's point of view, "Hail wedded Love, mysterious Law, true source/ Of human offspring, sole propriety/In Paradise of all things common else." (IV. 750-752)

This declaration in favor of conjugal love identifies John Milton with his Puritan contemporaries who acknowledged the importance of love in marriage in the conduct books,[4] and demonstrated its importance in their

lives.[5] In Paradise Lost, there is a clear recognition that there is no particular virtue in sexual abstinence.[6] The institution of marriage gives sexual fulfillment a sanctity because it is ordained by God. The purpose of sexual satisfaction in marriage, according to Milton and in common with Puritan divines, is the bearing of children. However, to Milton, the very fact of sexual relations in marriage has an importance and sanctity of its own: "What ever Hypocrites austerely talk/Of purity and place and innocence,/Defaming as impure what God declares/Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all." (IV. 744-747) From this analysis we see that Milton recognizes the importance of sexual satisfaction for its own sake, even if it is not always directed at the bearing of children. His words seems to imply that the purity of the sexual act in marriage stands in and of itself. Clearly, marriage without sexual satisfaction is not a part of God's plan for mankind.

If the institution of marriage is an intrinsic part of the divine plan, it is ironic that the personal demands made by the wife on the husband within marriage first led to Adam's fall from grace. In order to fully comprehend how marriage can be both a means of fulfilling God's plan and the setting in which the betrayal of this plan takes place, it is necessary to consider in some detail the nature of the relationship between Adam and Eve.

As discussed in Chapters I and II, Puritan marriages, both in their conception and practice are characterized by the subjection of the wife to the husband. Puritan divines reiterated this at great length in the

domestic books, and we observed in the marriage relations between educated Puritans that the inferiority of the wife to her husband was openly recognized. The portrayal of this hierarchy in marriage is likewise an intrinsic part of Milton's depiction of the marriage relations between Adam and Eve, and it is the attempt to overturn this hierarchy that leads to the fall of mankind. Similarly, the restoration and recognition of the superiority of Adam over Eve paves the way for the reordering of human affairs after the fall.

If we go back to the instance in which we are introduced to Adam and Eve, we observe that Milton loses no time in establishing how Adam and Eve stand in relation to each other. We recall that they were both placed in "filial freedom" with regard to God, but this is the only common ground they share as a couple. Milton clearly perceives that men and women have well defined duties to each other and separate roles in the world in which they live. Thus, he tells us that there is

> ...true authority in men; though both
> Not equal, as thir sex not equal seem'd;
> For contemplation hee and valor form'd,
> For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
> Hee for God only, shee for God in him:
> (IV. 295-299)

Milton here addresses the question of the status of the married partners. To him, there can be no question of equality in marriage because the male and female sexes are created in different ways, precluding any equality between them.

According to Milton's portrayal, Adam was created the thinker, and a person of action who will defend them both if necessary. Eve, on the other hand, is the perfect complement to Adam. As we later find out, Eve is as mentally capable as Adam. In Book VIII, she chooses to leave

Adam to talk to Raphael,

> Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
> Delighted, or not capable her ear
> Of what was high; such pleasure she reserv'd,
> [For] Adam..., she sole Auditress
> (VIII, 48-51)

Despite Eve's intelligence, Adam is expected to make any decisions that affect them both. Her "softness" and "attractive Grace" are contrasted with Adam's "valor." They stand as individuals in their own right, but they are also one unit, brought together by their marriage.

The hierarchy in Adam and Eve's marriage is symbolized by the relative lengths of their hair. The use of hair-length does not mean that the hierarchy in their relationship was limited to appearances alone; rather, appearance was one way of illustrating the respective statuses of each partner. Based on St. Paul's injunction in 1 Cor. XI: 7,5 that a man should not cover his head since he is created in God's image, Adam's "Absolute rule" is indicated by his short hair. St. Paul also states that "the woman is the glory of the man ...[her] long hair...is given her for a covering."[7] Thus, Eve's inferiority to Adam is suggested by her waist-length

> ...unadorned golden tresses...
> Dishevell'd, but in wanton ringlets wav'd
> As the Vine curls her tendrils, which impli'd
> Subjection, but requir'd with gentle sway
> (IV, 305-308)

One of the ambiguities of our first meeting with Eve is trying to assess how much she wholeheartedly believes that she must be subject to Adam. The portrayal of the curling of her hair which both implies her sub-

missiveness and her ability to "requir...with gentle sway" tells us that Eve has a determination all her own. She may not have quite the same intellectual capacity of Adam, but she does have the potential for self-determination. On first meeting Adam, Eve makes a point of showing him that she knows that he is her superior; although she is also part of him:

> Part of my Soul I seek thee, and thee claim
> My other half: with that thy gentle hand
> Seiz'd mine, I yielded, and from that time see
> How beauty is excell'd by manly grace
> And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.
> (IV, 487-491)

We note here how Eve has yielded her will to Adam, acknowledging that her physical beauty is inferior to his wisdom. She knows that she is created unequal to Adam, and should acknowledge his superiority. Since, however, she makes a point of yielding her will to Adam's, we wonder how convinced and accepting she is of this state of affairs. Here she has made the choice to subjugate herself to Adam's will, but having free will of her own, we have no guarantee that this will continue to be the case.

The hierarchy between Adam and Eve is based on the difference in the way they were created and, more importantly, in the way they were expected to regard their maker. Milton's pronouncement, "Hee for God only, shee for God in him" (IV, 299) is an accurate characterization of the relationship between them and their individual relationships with God. A statement about the nature of authority in an unfallen world, here, Adam is required to acknowledge his inferiority to God alone. Clearly, Eve must recognize the authority of God in the person of her husband. It is Milton's belief, along with the Puritan writers of the conduct books,

and as seen in the lives of Puritan married women such as Lady Hastings and Lady Margeret Hoby, a woman's duty to her husband is her duty to God.[8] As a result, any disobedience to her husband's will implies her disobedience to divine will. In Milton's eyes, Adam is worthy of Eve's obedience because he has been created in the image of God; before the fall, Adam displays a remarkable wisdom and sensitivity to the conjugal relationship. Thus, to Eve, Adam's actions at all times must be representative of God's will.

Milton is not insensitive to the dangers inherent in this hierarchy. The deliberate fashion in which he portrays the movement of the hands of the couple throughout their marriage is an indication to the reader that he realized that if this hierarchy was threatened, the marriage would be put under strain. When Eve makes up her mind that she will part company with Adam and divide their labors in the garden, she leaves

> With thy [Adam's] permission then, and thus forewarn'd
> Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
> Touch'd only, that our trial, when least sought,
> May find us both perhaps far less prepar'd,
> . . .
> Thus saying, from her Husband's hand her hand
> Soft she withdrew, ...(IX, 378-381
> 385-386)

Although Adam believes that "...our joint hand/Will keep from Wilderness with ease..." (IX, 245-246), he advises her to "Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (IX, 372). Adam is sensitive to Eve's demand, "And what is Faith, Love, Virtue unassay'd/Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?" (IX, 335-336)[9] Although he knows that "...Trial will arise unsought" (IX, 366), his behavior illustrates that he is aware that in his position he could take advantage of Eve. He had every right to demand her obedience,

but he maintains his superiority by giving her his permission. As a result, Eve, in breaking their unity, effectively symbolized by the parting of their hands, does not overthrow the hierarchy of the relationship. She is later tempted to do so, but here, the status quo of the marriage is preserved, for, in obeying her husband, she is indeed obeying God's will.

The sensitivity that Adam display towards Eve's needs illustrates its importance, in Milton's view, in the institution of marriage. To be sure, the immediate cause for the fall of mankind, according to Milton, was Eve's weakness of character, to "...be as Gods,/Knowing both Good and Evil as they know" (IX, 708-709). She decides to share this knowledge with her spouse after a brief struggle as to whether she should keep this knowledge to herself and thus achieve superiority over him. The vulnerability of the hierarchy in their marriage is seen in her dilemma:

> ...But to Adam in what sort
> Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
> As yet my change, and give him to partake
> Full happiness with mee, or rather not,
> But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power
> Without Copartner?...
> (IX, 816-821)

Having partaken of the apple, at this point Eve has fallen from grace. Is this condition, she questions her inferiority to Adam, however well she may understand the reason for it and why she must be reconciled to it. Her reason for wanting to have greater knowledge than Adam is

> ... to add what wants
> In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love,
> And render me more equal, and perhaps,
> A thing not undesirable, sometime
> Superior: for inferior who is free?
> (IX, 821-825)

In raising the question of freedom, clearly, the Eve who speaks here is inspired by evil rather than good. By implying that inferiority precludes freedom, she echoes Satan's argument in Book V, 792-3 that authority cannot be exerted over those who live in equality. She is now dissatisfied with Adam's authority over her because she knows, like Satan, that Adam's superiority curtails her freedom. However, we see that Eve's desire for equality, or even a mental superiority afforded by greater knowledge are secondary to an instinctive, selfish wish to increase Adam's love for her. Nevertheless, we realize the importance of conjugal love to Eve, for it is this that makes her share her new knowledge with Adam so that they could both share any adverse consequences such as punishment by God through death:

> ...Confirm'd then I resolve,
> Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe:
> So dear I love him, that with him all deaths
> I could endure, without him live no life.
> (IX, 830-833)

Although these noble words point to the reciprocity between Adam and Eve, we realize that Eve is, in fact, ordaining Adam's death as well as her own.

Eve's reliance on her marriage-partner to help mitigate the retribution coming to her tells us that in Milton's eyes, it was this relationship that would be sorely tested, yet triumph in adversity. As a result, although Eve was directly responsible for the fall of mankind, ironically, it is the marriage of Adam and Eve that was, in a larger sense, the reason why Adam fell. If we see Eve as only one part of Adam (keeping in mind the way she was created), when her sin extends to Adam through their marriage, their collective sin then becomes that of all mankind.

The fall of Adam is symbolic of the fall of all mankind. In personal terms, it is, as Eve calls it, a "...glorious trial of exceeding Love" (IX, 961). Adam decides to throw his lot in with her's because he feels "The Bond of Nature draw me to my own/My own in thee, for what thou art is mine" (IX, 956-957). We recall here that the angel Abdiel in Book VI told Satan that "God and Nature bid the same" (VI, 176). As a result, when Milton portrays Adam agreeing to share Eve's fate because he is drawn to that part in her which is part of himself, it seems that Adam had no other choice - this was the will of God and Nature. The pathos of Adam's position in undeniable, for he was driven by the law of Nature to Eve's support: "..I feel/The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,/Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State/Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe." (IX, 914-916) However, there is also some implication here of Adam's selfishness, since he is drawn to himself in Eve. Thus, it is not surprising that when he eats of the tree of knowledge, Adam gives into base appetite rather than love founded in reason: "...he scrupl'd not to eat/Against his better knowledge, not deceiv'd,/But fondly overcome with Female charm." (IX, 997-999).

We know that the fall of mankind has occurred when the love of Adam and Eve, depicted in Book IV with a kind of reverence and sanctity, turns to lust. Significantly, Milton chooses to portray the fall in the way he characterizes the relationship, making it all the more clear that the sin of Eve acquired an unprecedented magnitude because it led to that of Adam through their marriage: "Carnal desire inflaming, hee on Eve/Began to cast lascivious Eyes, she him/As wantonly repaid; in Lust they burn" (IX, 1013-1015). They find that in acquiring the knowledge of good and evil, they realize only too well what has happened to their marriage:

...Since our Eyes
Op'n'd we find indeed, and find we know
Both Good and Evil, Good lost, and Evil got,
Bad fruit of knowledge, if this be to know,
Which leaves us naked thus, of Honor void,
Of Innocence, of Faith, of Purity,
Our wonted Ornaments now soil'd and stain'd,
And in our Faces evident the signs
Of foul concupiscence...
(IX, 1070-1078)

The marriage has now acquired a new dimension, that of insatiable sexual appetite and discord, contrary as Adam and Eve well know, to the calm serenity of "wedded Love" that had earlier been their mutual joy.

At the time of the fall, in terms of Puritan thinking on marriage, it is clear that the marriage of Adam and Eve has been misused. Rather than an opportunity in which to grow in the knowledge of each other, and thus in the knowledge of God, it has become a relationship solely concerned with the desires of the parties concerned. The emotions engendered through marriage have become the means by which Adam and Eve draw away from God; they have exercised their "freedom", forgetting that it should be "filial freedom", and in doing so, have brought a distinctly human or mortal dimension to their relationship. Before the fall, their marriage was imbued with such a sanctity and perfection that their married life became a type of spirituality to Adam and Eve. In Book IV we find that Adam and Eve awaken and give praise to God: "So pray'd they innocent, and to thir thoughts/Firm peace recover'd soon and wonted calm./On to thir morning's rural work they haste" (V, 209-211) Here they are content and pleased with each other, and the work they have to do in the Garden of Eden. However, after the fall, all the virtues that had characterized the relationship give way to

> ...high Passions, Anger, Hate,
> Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord
> . . . .
> For Understanding rul'd not, and the Will
> Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
> To sensual Appetite...
> (IX, 1123-24, 27-29)

The fact that after the fall this marriage demonstrates a human rather than spiritual quality increases our sympathy for the plight of Adam and Eve. We find that the failure of the relationship was due to a momentary temptation to overturn the well defined hierarchy in marriage. There is a direct correspondence here with the thinking of Puritan divines who asserted that the husband must always be careful to assert his superiority.[10] Due to Adam's negligence, Eve, in the tradition of Puritan thinking on marriage, can demand of Adam, "As good have grown there still a lifeless Rib./Being as I am, why didst not thou the Head/Command me absolutely not to go./Going into such danger as thou said'st?"(IX, 1154-57)

The key phrase in Eve's reproach to Adam is her assertion "Being as I am"; she can plead the excuse of being created inferior to Adam. However, Adam chooses to counter her stand by appealing to her love for him:

> Is this the Love, is this the recompense
> Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, express't
> Immutable when thou wert lost, not I
> Who might have liv'd and joy'd immortal bliss,
> Yet willingly chose rather Death with thee:
> And am I now upbraided, as the cause
> Of thy transgressing?...
> (IX, 1163-69)

We recall here that she decided to use the security afforded by her marriage to divide her burden with Adam precisely because their relation-

ship was based on their mutual love. Thus, Adam can rightly demand more loyalty from Eve, since he has fallen in with her wishes.

The tragedy of the plight of Adam and Eve is that in terms of a Puritan's point of view, they are both right. Adam can rightly expect more of Eve's love for him, while she can argue that he failed in not asserting his superiority. Adam's fault in giving into Eve and betraying their hierarchical relationship is also pointed out by Christ, the "Sovran Presence," (X, 146) who comes to judge the couple. Adam explained his actions by saying that "Her doing seem'd to justify the deed" (X, 142). Christ retaliates,

> Was shee thy God, that her thou didst obey
> Before his voice, or was shee made thy guide,
> Superior, or but equal, that to her
> Thou didst resign thy Manhood, and the Place
> Wherein God set thee above her made of thee,
> And for thee...
> . . .
> ...Adorned
> She was indeed, and lovely to attract
> Thy Love, not thy Subjection, and her Gifts
> Were such as under Government well seem'd,
> Unseemly to bear rule, which was thy part
> (X, 145-155)

We see that both Adam and Eve have contributed to the betrayal of their marriage, Eve, by affecting superiority, and Adam by not sufficiently exerting his. Until the hierarchy of male superiority and female subjection is re-established, there can be no hope for their marriage.

The last three books of Paradise Lost are devoted in large part to the rehabilitation of marriage relations between Adam and Eve. Although

the story at this point is also concerned with the judgement of Adam and Eve, and Michael's instructions to Adam about the future, Milton continues to emphasize the role of marriage in a fallen world. This is finally brought home to us in the concluding lines of the epic:

> The World was all before them, where to choose
> Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide:
> They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took thir solitary way.
> (XII, 646-649)

Introduced to us as a hand-linked couple, we note once again, the symbol of their unity as they leave Paradise arm in arm. They have been able to reach this point of amicable relations because Eve has reconciled herself to Adam's superiority.

Considering the fairly low opinion we have of Eve after the fall, it is striking that it is she, not Adam, who first suggests that they use their love for each other to rescue themselves from their current predicament. While Adam, in Book X laments his fall from grace at great length:

> ...Fair Patrimony
> That I must leave ye, Sons; O were I able
> To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!
> So disinherited how would ye bless
> Me now your Curse! Ah, why should all mankind
> For one man's fault thus guiltless be condemn'd,
> If guiltless?
> (X, 818-824)

Eve, now fully realizing the extent of her fault, begins the restoration of their relationship by suggesting "While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps./Between us two let there be peace, both joining,/As join'd in injuries..."(X, 924-926). There can be no future for Adam and Eve until they restore the harmony in the marriage. Thus, it is Eve's duty to repent

and acknowledge her humility to Adam. She thereby reestablishes that hierarchy which had earlier characterized their marriage. Recalling the injunction in Book IV, "He for God only, she for God in him"(IV, 299), now Eve acknowledges that "...both have sinn'd, but thou/Against God only, I against God and thee" (X, 930-931).

Thus, Eve has paved the way for Adam to take the initiative as husband, and as leader to find a way in which to face the future. As soon as Adam hears Eve's apology, his attitude changes from one of blame to that of love:

> ...soon his heart relented
> Towards her, his life so late and sole delight,
> Now at his feet submissive in distress
> Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
> . . .
> As one disarm'd, his anger all he lost,
> And thus with peaceful words uprais'd her soon.
> (X, 940-943, 945-946)

We note here that the transition from blame to a mutual support in a fallen world is a gradual one. While Eve is clearly responsible for pointing the way out of their predicament, it is Adam who proposes

> But rise, let us no more contend, nor blame
> Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere, but strive
> In offices of Love, how we may light'n
> Each other's burden in our share of woe.
> (X, 957-960)

The love on which their relationship was first based has survived the fall, and will be the chief building-block of their new life in a fallen world. As a unit, they have no need to fear facing the future alone. As the angel Michael tells Eve, "Thy going is not lonely, with thee goes/Thy Husband, him to follow thou art bound;/Where he abides, think there thy native soil."

(XI, 290-292)

The restoration and recognition of the superiority of Adam and the subjection of Eve is extremely important before they leave the Garden of Eden. Within the world view of Puritan authorities, conjugal love by itself could not be the only basis for a successful relationship. Fortunately for Adam and Eve, they have the possibility of an inward paradise:

> ...only add
> Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith
> Add virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
> . . .
> ...then wilt thou not be loath
> To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
> A paradise within thee, happier far.
> (XII, 581-583, 584-587)

Thus, they may create from their personal resources their own happiness, by leading virtuous lives. Assured of the possibility of providing for their own happiness, they are ready to leave Eden when, for the last time in Paradise Eve acknowledges her subjection to her husband:

> ...now lead on;
> In mee is no delay; with thee to go
> Is to stay here; without thee here to stay,
> Is to go hence unwilling...
> (XII, 614-617)

In Milton's eyes, there could be no support or companionship in a marriage that did not clearly articulate the hierarchy of husband and wife. Eve yielded her will to Adam only after much consideration.[11] Indeed, the relationship was marred because she perceived an opportunity to achieve some degree of equality. After the fall we see Eve accept her inferiority much more readily. She is now convinced that her complete subjection to Adam is vital to the success of their marriage, whereas earlier, she had been

aware of it, but less accepting of what it demanded of her. In Milton's view, marriage can survive and serve its purpose only if both partners are convinced of the implications of the hierarchy in marriage for their own relationship.

Our analysis of the marriage of Adam and Eve has shown that conjugal love was the main basis of their relationship; the Puritan authors of the conduct books too had stressed that love was one of the first duties of a married couple.[12] To determine the extent to which the kind of love discussed by Milton and the conduct books was distinctively Puritan in character, it is useful to compare and contrast it with the neoplatonic theory of love current during this time.

The concept of neoplatonic love first gained attention when Ficino wrote De Amore (1481). The ideal of neoplatonic love spread with the publication of Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier (1528), and by Milton's day, neoplatonism had influenced writers like John Donne, Sir Philip Sidney and Edmund Spenser. The neoplatonic love theory was rooted in the medieval courtly love tradition. One idealized a woman one did not intend to marry, for the tradition of courtly love was essentially deeply emotional though it denied sexual fulfillment. Within the purview of neoplatonism, one finds the courtly lover begin by loving some one else, and in so doing, he furthers his relationship with God. Thus, neoplatonism separates an ideal love from the physical aspects of love. The dichotomy between ideal love based on reason, and physical love based on sexual appetite was very clearly defined; for the whole purpose in loving someone else was to further

one's notion of a perfect form or ideal of love. While carnal desire was generally not denied, the idea of sexual fulfillment in marriage, and the bearing of children were completely alien to the neoplatonic love theory.[13]

In considering the relationship between Milton's portrayal of love in marriage and the neoplatonic theory of love, we have to remember that Paradise Lost depicts marriage in a perfect world and in a fallen world. As a result, the marriage before the fall is an ideal relationship compared to that after the fall. This was clearly illustrated when we discussed how Milton shows us the magnitude of Adam and Eve's error in indulging in a new lust in their relationship after the fall. However, in terms of the neoplatonic love theory, we see that the idealized marriage of Adam and Eve, though based on love founded in reason,[14] is one that exalts the physical aspects of love within marriage.

Although in Milton's world view, matrimonial love is unlike neoplatonic love because it includes sexual fulfillment in marriage, he does describe this love in neoplatonic terms. In Book VIII, Adam tells the Creator how he understands a man's relationship with his wife: "...they shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soul." (VIII, 499) Here we have an indication that Milton has gone beyond the traditional Biblical teaching that a man and wife "shall be one flesh" (Gen ii, 24).[15] Milton has, in Platonic fashion, replaced "one flesh" with a tripartite division. "One Heart" refers to the instinctive aspect of the relationship, and "one Soul" to the rational part of marriage.[16] The distinction between the instinctive and the rational aspects of marriage is further elaborated when Raphael informs Adam of the role of reason in his (Adam's) emotions for Eve:

> What higher in society thou find'st
> Attractive, human, rational, love still;
> In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
> Wherein true Love consists not; Love refines
> The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
> In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
> By which to heav'nly Love thou may'st ascend,
> Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
> Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found.
> (VIII, 586-596)

In the neoplatonic tradition, here Raphael makes the distinction between sacred love based on reason, and profane love rooted in passion. Rational love leads one to a closer appreciation of God's love for mankind, but, in indulging in passionate love alone, one sinks to the level of beasts who know only the carnal aspects of love.[17] The scale to which Raphael refers is the neoplatonic ladder of love.[18] Thus, Adam can measure the rational quality of his love by this standard, and in doing so, he will also gain in his knowledge of heavenly love. A relationship based on the criteria of neoplatonic love makes for perfect matrimonial harmony. As Adam calls it, marriage is a "Union of Mind, or in us both one Soul;/ Harmony to behold the wedded pair/More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear." (VIII, 604-606)

To Milton, the basis of conjugal love seem to be clearly neoplatonic. However, Milton breaks very significantly with the neoplatonic love theory of love in the emphasis on "wedded Love." Marriage and sexual fulfillment are two aspects of a relationship that are often denied their place in ideal neoplatonic relationships, because it was considered that these would distract one from one's devotion to God. By contrast, Milton presents the marriage of Adam and Eve in their unfallen condition in a situation that keeps them very close to God. Their devotion to each other

in mental and physical terms indeed promoted their relationship with God:

> Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
> Thir Orisons, each Morning duly paid
> In various style, for neither various style
> Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
> Thir Maker, in fit strains pronounct or sung
> Unmeditated...
> (V, 144-149)

19

However, as we have noted elsewhere, it was the tensions inherent in marriage that brought about the downfall of mankind, and loss of God's favor. Thus marriage is presented as one of the reasons why mankind's relationship with God was ruined. After the fall, Adam and Eve face the task of restoring there relationship with God as close as possible to the ideal of perfection that they had previously known. They face this task, not as neoplatonic lovers, but as a married couple. The mutual support of their marriage will give them the confidence and strength to do this. Milton specifically portrays Adam and Eve facing life after the fall as a married couple because he believes, in contrast to the neoplatonists, that a good marriage relationship, in God's eyes, furthers one's relations with Him. Through the knowledge of the beauty and perfection of conjugal love, in Paradise Lost, Milton is convinced that a successful marriage, even in a fallen world will bring one closer to God.

Milton's view of conjugal love bears some resemblance to the neoplatonic love theory, but in placing this love within the context of marriage, he breaks with the neoplatonic tradition. Even the ideal relationship he depicts before the fall would, in the eyes of a neoplatonist, would have been

ruined by the emphasis on marriage and sexual satisfaction in marriage. While Milton is so radically different in his views on love in marriage from the neoplatonist, he identifies much more closely with the Puritan theory of conjugal love based on a close reading of the scriptures. Milton's portrayal of matrimonial love, particularly in the emphasis on marriage rather than an idealized love and sexual denial is closer to St. Paul's injunction in Ephesians, "if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn" (Eph. 6,9), than the neoplatonist's view of love. Milton does, however, take a more positive stand on marriage than St. Paul, for he emphasizes marriage for love and companionship rather than marriage to rectify the sins of the flesh.

Although the emphasis on love in marriage brings Milton closer to Puritans of his day than the neoplatonists, the fact that neoplatonism is the basis of his understanding of wedded love illustrates that Milton deviated significantly from the Puritan theory of love as well. We find that Milton's portrayal of matrimonial love was influenced by sixteenth-century intellectual trends other than Puritanism and Neoplatonism. For instance, in a definition of the relative status of husband and wife, we see how humanism has influenced the traditional Biblical view of the woman's creation: Raphael tells Adam that Eve was created in "thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self" (VIII, 450). Although this accords well with the Biblical definition of the relationship, "other self" is a classical term - alter ego - for a close friend. Clearly, Milton thinks that man and wife should be friends. We recall that in the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce (1643,1644), Milton advocates divorce based on the assumption that a woman was made for man for "his help and solace and

delight."[20]

The role of friendship or "solace," meaning comfort in marriage was occasionally asserted by the Puritan divines,[21] but Milton influenced by humanism, gives it considerably more attention. Adam, realizing that he was created superior to Eve, questions God as to the possibility of real companionship or friendship:

> Among unequals what society
> Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
> Which must be mutual...
> . . .
> ...Of fellowship I speak
> Such as I seek, fit to participate
> All rational delight, wherein the brute
> Cannot be human consort;...
> (VIII, 383-385, 389-391)

We note here that Adam is concerned about the quality of the companionship or friendship in his marriage. He wants his marriage relations to be characterized by "rational delight," distinguishing it from the instinctive pleasure that animals take in one another. In answer to Adam's question about the possibility of fellowship in an unequal relationship, God tells Adam that Eve, by virtue of her creation as his "other self" is fitted to be his friend, in spite of the hierarchy of their relationship.[22] To Milton, friendship was clearly within the scope of a hierarchical relationship.

The celebration of "wedded Love" in Paradise Lost is clearly inspired by intellectual trends such as Neoplatonism and humanism in addition to the Puritan theory of love. As an advocate of matrimonial love and hierarchy in marriage, Milton shows himself to be a close follower of the

Puritan theory of love and marriage as depicted in the conduct books. While he also identifies with them in his belief in the mutuality of the relationship, he breaks with them in promoting companionship rather than the bearing of children as the chief purpose of marriage. The portrayal of the marriage Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost shows Milton's concern for the institution of marriage in and of itself, with little or no concern for its social context. In Paradise, there was no other human society which would have provided a social framework for Adam and Eve's relationship. However, this concern for marriage for itself, regardless of its social context was also seen in Milton's divorce tract;[23] in a work like Paradise Lost, such a depiction of marriage takes on an added importance for it emphasizes the role of marriage in the divine plan for mankind.

As a result, we must view the glorification of "wedded Love" in Paradise Lost to be an essentially Christian view of marriage, even if its portrayal was influenced by neoplatonism and humanism as well as the Puritan conception of love and marriage. The celebration of married love in Paradise Lost does not, however, sanction marriage as an institution in which an insatiable sexual appetite is best accomodated. The role of sex in marriage is undeniably important to Milton, but it is to be infinitely respected since the partners in marriage have chosen each other based on their mutual compatibility and love.

## Conclusion

The diversity of sources we have used to describe the Puritan attitude to marriage has presented us with three distinct perspectives. Firstly, the conduct books on marriage provide us with a Puritan theory of marriage and divorce. Realizing that the Puritan authors made the distinction between the "ends" and "duties" of marriage, we observed that conjugal love was considered the first mutual duty of marriage. Clearly, this was a relationship which articulated the superiority of the husband over the wife. Implicit in this theory of love in marriage was the emphasis on mutuality within the relationship. Apparently, the Puritans saw no contradiction in advocating mutuality within a hierarchical relationship. Our second perspective on the Puritan attitude to marriage was provided by the practical evidence of marriages between Puritans. In diaries and letters representative of the married lives of educated Puritans, we found that the theoretical emphasis on mutuality based on conjugal love was indeed a distinctive characteristic of Puritan marriages. This aspect was most evident in the Knyvett marriage, and in the relationship between Ralph Josselin and Jane Constable.

Given the emphasis on hierarchy in the conduct books, we found little evidence that this was an oppressive aspect of Puritan marriages. The conduct books emphasize that the authority of the husband should not be asserted to such an extent that the wife was subjected to tyranny in her marriage. Thus, the consideration with which Puritan married women were

treated, accurately reflected the teachings of the conduct books. For her part, the Puritan woman understood that she was created inferior to her husband; as a result, she was his partner but not his equal. The emphasis on the "help" aspect of the "help-meet" relationship is very well represented by the marriage of Ralph Verney and Mary Blacknall, and the Knyvett relationship. Here, there were opportunities in which the wife could be useful to her husband outside the affairs of the household, in his absence. Although relatively few Puritan women had such an opportunity to demonstrate their potential, we saw that the women who had these opportunities made no attempt to usurp their husband's authority. However, the tensions which resulted from being subject to one's husband were demonstrated in the behaviour of Jane Constable and Elizabeth Mainwareine who were not always submissive to their husbands. Clearly, all these marriages were characterized by a marked degree of mutuality, in spite of occasional discord because a wife was "froward". Thus it seems that mutuality was the most enduring characteristic of these relationships. While the source of this mutuality, based on the teaching of the conduct books, was in the subjection of the wife, we must realize that mutuality and love within the hierarchy of these relationships characteristically made for fulfilling marriages.

Our third perspective is that provided by the main Puritan literary figure, John Milton. Although Milton differed significantly from his Puritan contemporaries in his stand on divorce and the emphasis on companionship in marriage, we must consider his views as part of a wider Puritan perspective, using the term "Puritan" in its broadest sense. His portrayal of the relationship between Adam and Eve before the Fall corresponds fairly closely with the ideal depiction of the relationship in the conduct books. The conduct books are guides to marriages in a fallen

world, and one observes that the hierarchy emphasized by Milton in the relationship before the Fall is a safeguard against bad marital relations. Milton tells us that marriage before the Fall was perfect when Adam and Eve observed the limitations on their freedom imposed by their hierarchical relationship. As a result, their marriage after the Fall is one which has tested the limits of a hierarchical relationship. Eve recognizes that there will be no marriage, or a future for herself and Adam unless she recognizes the importance of her subjection to his will. Their marriage had first been characterized by conjugal love. This suffered a set-back once they knew that they had fallen from grace. However, we see it re-instated when they realize the capacity for happiness within themselves, and Eve acknowledges her inferiority to Adam before they leave Paradise. Their marriage is their most valuable asset at this point, and it is important to recognize that this was salvaged only because love and mutual acceptance were reborn through an understanding and reinstatement of the hierarchy between them.

Aside from the predication of Puritan marriage relations on love and hierarchy, our discussion of divorce demonstrates two further aspects of the Puritan marriage that are not clearly evident from the relationships themselves. Firstly, Milton emphasizes that companionship is the main purpose of marriage; thus, without mutual compatibility, there can be no happiness in the relationship. He does not think that adultery should be the main reason for divorce as advocated by his Puritan contemporaries. Rather, from Milton's point of view, since companionship is the purpose of marriage, the main reason for divorce should be incompatibility. The over riding importance of "solace and contentment" as the end of marriage must be seen as specifically Miltonic rather than typically Puritan, for

we recall that the Puritans subordinated companionship to the procreative end of marriage. The importance of companionship was demonstrated in the Adam and Eve relationship after the Fall, and clearly, Ralph Josselin and Jane Constable depended on each other's companionship in their old age after their children had left home. To Milton, companionship in marriage depended on mutual compatibility, a sentiment echoed to a limited degree in the conduct books that people who married should be "apt" for each other in the Lord's sight.

The discussion of divorce in the conduct books illustrated that the Puritans believed that men and women had equal right to divorce for adultery. In comparison to Milton, the Puritan divines took a slightly different view of divorce, for they based their advocacy of divorce on the belief that both partners had equal right to each other's bodies. The appreciation of the role of sexual fulfillment in marriage for both men and women implied by this approach tells us that the Puritans gave the physical or carnal aspects of marriage their due place. The fact that they were in favor of divorce for a violation of these rights illustrates that they considered a marriage without the right to sexual satisfaction to be no marriage at all. Furthermore, in advocating remarriage for the innocent party after divorce, the Puritans were acknowledging that those who had had the rough end of marriage deserved to have one in which they would have their given rights to sexual fulfillment. Thus, our analysis of the Puritan attitude to divorce indicates an appreciation of the importance of companionship based on compatibility, and an acknowledgement of the right to sexual satisfaction to both parties in marriage.

The issue of the respective roles of husband and wife in divorce for adultery, and the apparently unresolved conflict of the freedom of the

wife's conscience is indicative of a larger issue in the way Puritans viewed hierarchy in marriage. While they are clearly in favor of female subjection, they find that there are some instances where the woman is on an equal footing with her husband. However, they are very quick to temper their stand, saying that she must maintain her subjection. In short, the Puritan writers do no follow their own logic in asserting some instances of equality within a hierarchical framework, for they always hasten to qualify their stand. Even Milton succumbs to this trend; in the first edition of DDD, he held that divorce was for the benefit of both sexes. Yet, in the second edition, he changes his mind, emphasizing that divorce for incompatibility should not be instituted for the benefit of women.

While failing to take the stand on hierarchy in marriage to its logical conclusion, we also saw that mutuality was greatly emphasized by the marriage manuals, and was practised to a large extent. Why did the Puritans emphasize mutuality within a hierarchical framework? The answer is not clear from the conduct books, nor does the empirical evidence give us any help on this matter. If the Puritans followed their logic that generally the woman must be subject, but in some situations, namely divorce and the freedom of conscience the equality of men and women was unquestionable, then there would be less need to emphasize that mutuality must be part of marriage. As it is, from this picture of marriage, it seems that the Puritans were putting a new emphasis on mutuality within the old framework of hierarchy. While they appreciated the limitations of hierarchy, as seen in their stand on wife-beating, they seem to have made no attempt to take the exceptions to their stand on hierarchy to a logical conclusion.

To the Puritans, there was no contradiction in asserting mutuality

within a hierarchical marriage. Given the role of love and hierarchy in these marriages, we must also conclude that marriages between Puritans were godly relationships. Although spiritual mutuality was considered very important by the writers of the conduct books, Adam and Eve's marriage and those depicted in the Puritan diaries and letters illustrate that this was not always consciously articulated in marriage. Rather, we see this concern for spiritual mutuality translated into an understanding that good relations between husband and wife made for a good relationship with God. Mutual happiness based on love and respect promoted a godliness in the marriage which furthered one another's journey towards God. This, however, was the larger purpose of marriage; the Puritans, it seemed, never lost sight of the immediate issues of the relationship, and with a view to their larger concern, promoted a concept of mutuality in marriage based on love and hierarchy.

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4 Milton, DDD, p. 246.

5 See Chapter I, p. 12.

6 See Chapter I, pp. 9-10.

7 See Chapter I, p. 12.

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9 Hill, Milton, p. 127
James T. Johnson, "English Puritan Thought on the Ends of Marriage," Church History, 38(1969), p. 430.

10 Thomas Gataker, Marriage Duties Briefly couched together, (London: Printed by William Iones, for William Bladen, 1620. Micropublished in University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan), p. 3.

11 Gataker, Marriage Duties, p. 4.

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13 Ibid.

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15 See Chapter I, pp. 19, 21.

16 Ibid.

17 Milton, DDD, p. 268.

18 Milton, DDD, p. 269.

19 Milton, DDD, pp. 271-272.

[20] Milton, DDD, p. 244.

[21] Milton, DDD, p. 243.

[22] Ernest Sirluck (ed), Complete Prose Works of John Milton, Vol. II (New Haven: Yale University Press, MCMLIX), pp. 149-150.

[23] Milton, DDD, p. 229.

[24] Milton, DDD, p. 274.

[25] James T. Johnson, A Society Ordained by God (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 41.

[26] Milton, DDD, p. 344.

[28] See Chapter I, pp. 4.

[27] Hill, Milton, p. 127.

[29] ~~Milton, DDD, p.~~

[30] Chilton Latham Powell, English Domestic Relations 1487-1653. (New York: Russell & Russell, c 1917, this ed., 1972), p. 60.

[31] Milton, DDD, p. 343.

[32] Milton, DDD, p. 353.

[33] Milton, DDD, p. 350.

[34] Milton, DDD, p. 353.

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[36] Sirluck (ed)., Complete Prose Works, p. 353.

[37] Powell, English Domestic Relations, p. 96.

[38] Milton, DDD, p. 22.

[39] See Chapter I, pp. 22-23.

[40] Milton, DDD, p. 324.

[41] Milton, DDD, pp. 324-325.

[42] Milton, DDD, p. 344.

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45 Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800 (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 325
See Chapter III, pp. 54.

46 Christopher Hill, Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 445.

47 Milton, DDD, pp. 275-276.

48 See Chapter II.

Chapter IV

End notes

1 John Milton, Paradise Lost (1674) ed. Merritt Y. Hughes, (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1957), Book IV. 288-295. All future references will be made to line numbers in this edition within the text.

2 William B. Hunter (Gen. ed.), A Milton Encylopaedia (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, Inc., 1979), Vol. 2, p. 78.

3 Meritt Y. Hughes, ed., John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose (Indianapolis: Odyssey Press, 1957), p. 296.

4 See Chapter I, pp. 11-14.

5 See Chapter II, pp. 29-31.

6 See John Milton, Comus (1634) for an emphasis on the virtues of virginity and sexual abstinence.

7 John Carey and Alastair Fowler, The Poems of John Milton, (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd, 1968), p. 631.

8 See Chapter II, p. 38-40.

9 This definition is also stated in John Milton, Areopagitice. Citation in Carey and Fowler, The Poems of John Milton, p. 874.

10 See Chapter I, pp. 11-12.

11 See Chapter IV, p. 72.

12 See Chapter I, pp. 11-12.

13 Isabel Rivers, Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1979), pp. 35-39.

14 See Chapter IV. p. 67.

15 Hughes (ed)., John Milton, p. 374.

16 Carey and Fowler, The Poems of John Milton, p. 840.

17 Hughes (ed)., John Milton, p. 376.

18 Carey and Fowler, The Poems of John Milton, p. 846.

19 See Chapter IV, pp. 65, 77-79.

20 Carey and Fowler, The Poems of John Milton, p. 838, Chapter III, p. 53.

21

Henrie Smith, in A Preparative to Mariage (London: Thomas Orwin for Thomas Man, 1591 Republished in The English Experience, No.: 762. Norwood, New Jersey: Walter J. Johnson, Inc., 1975), states that "the wife should meete and fit with the husband...so man and wife should be like, because they are a paire of friends." p. 33.
See also Chapter I, p. 11.

22

See Chapter IV, p. 68.

23

See Chapter III, pp. 54-56.

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