

The study shows the development of the role of women in Dutch literature from 1782 until the present day.

Part I shows that in the latter part of the 18th century

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN DUTCH LITERATURE

FROM 1782 UNTIL THE PRESENT DAY.

that by the end of this period the first women were appearing in Dutch literature, writing as a whole was not ready for them. There were very few to appreciate their difficulties in writing and their marriage partners and to find it almost impossible to

FROUKJE AKKE DIRKJE BATES.

Part II shows a far greater freedom for women - and it is notable in English literature. Divorce and abortion were possible, women's references to individualism and women who are financially independent become more frequent.

Part III shows the position of women. They are seen as equal citizens, and as working women. The first few women's colleges in married women in education and higher education are discussed.

M. PHIL. DUTCH.

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This thesis traces the development of the rôle of women in Dutch literature from 1782 until the present day.

Part I shows that in the latter part of the 18th century and for the greater part of the 19th century literature only allowed women to find fulfilment in marriage and motherhood. When by the end of this period the first women were permitted further education, society as a whole was not ready for them. These women were shown to experience great difficulties in finding suitable marriage partners and to find it almost impossible to combine marriage and career.

Part II sees a far greater freedom for women - except in novels by regional writers. Divorce and abortion take place, there is a reference to lesbianism and women who are financially independent become less rare.

Part III shows several new images of women. They are seen as sexual objects, and as nagging wives. The need for mental fulfilment in married women is stressed and lesbian relationships are discussed openly. The term 'radical feminism' is introduced.

In order to do justice to this subject, works by well-known writers on feminism have been used and are referred to throughout.

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INTRODUCTION.

"My hand delights to trace unusual things,
And deviates from the known and common way,
Nor will in fading silks compose,
Faintly the inimitable rose".¹
Lady Winchilsea.

It was reading Virginia Woolf that urged me to write on the subject of women in literature and not the new tide of feminism, though it was already rising by the time I started this work in 1972. And it was especially the above poem she quoted in A Room of One's Own that stayed with me. Because the poet was born in 1661. Her 'factual' poetry is as up-to-date as her 'pure' poetry:

"How are we fallen! Fallen by mistaken rules,
And Education's more than Nature's fools;
Debarred from all improvements of the mind,
And to be dull, expected and designed;
And if someone would soar above the rest,
With warmer fancy, and ambition pressed,
So strong the opposing faction still appears,
The hopes to thrive can ne'er outweigh the fears." ²

"So strong the opposing faction still appears". Still. It means that the poet, Lady Winchilsea, was not an avant-gardist, that her struggle was an old one by then. Virginia Woolf explains: "Men are the 'opposing faction'; men are hated and feared, because they have the power to bar her way to what she wants to do - which is to write".

"Alas! a woman that attempts the pen,
Such a presumptuous creature is esteemed,
The fault can by no virtue be redeemed.
They tell us we mistake our sex and way;
Good breeding, fashion, dancing, dressing, play,
Are the accomplishments we should desire;
To write, or read, or think, or to enquire,
Would cloud our beauty, and exhaust our time,
And interrupt the conquests of our prime,
Whilst the dull manage of a servile house
Is held by some our utmost art and use". ³

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"The hopes to thrive", here the right to be an individualist, to become the person one feels one has it in one to become, without being hampered by "the dull manage of a servile house".

I felt her cause to be a just cause, a cause as up-to-date now as it was centuries ago. And so I tried to trace the fate of women and their relationships with men in Dutch literature from Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken to Andreas Burnier. Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken are on the side of the "opposing faction": "Writing is an occupation for the leisure hours". To Andreas Burnier men are the sex that cause wars, "the murderous sex". The thought that women and war, women and men of war don't go together is not a new thought either. Ovid wrote:

"If you don't know, and you should - that head
 used to carry a helmet;
 That side, which rubs against yours, used to be
 rubbed by a sword.
 That left hand, where the new ring shines, once
 went through a shield-strap;
 Touch his right hand: is it still red from an
 enemy's blood?
 How can you touch a hand that you know has been
 guilty of slaughter?
 How can you touch that hand? Where has your
 tenderness gone?" 4

PART I.

All women characters in Part I have one thing in common: life was practically impossible for them unless they conformed to the rules of their time i.e. nice middle-class and aristocratic women accepted the proposals of marriage from prosperous suitors as in Wolff and Deken, Busken Huet, Van Deyssel, Robbers, Ina Boudier-Bakker, Top Naeff, Jo van Ammers-Küller and Bosboom-Toussaint. Women could not pursue a career as we learn from Potgieter or follow their passions as we see in Van Deyssel. Working-class girls were punished with death by their authors if they became pregnant out of wedlock or at least lost their child as shown by Potgieter and De Meester. When by the end of Part I the educated woman, a new phenomenon, came into being society was not ready for her. Carry van Bruggen and Annie Salomons showed in their writings that these women had great difficulty in finding suitable partners as few men were ready for a partnership marriage.

THE CONTENTED WOMAN.

Wolff and Deken.

Take Pieter de Hoogh's painting 'A boy bringing pomegranates', circa 1662. A middle-class interior, leaded stained glass windows, good furniture, matching colours; there is

an air of prosperity and wellkeptness. Sober black jacket and a long scarlet skirt give the lady of the house a dignified appearance. Tied-back hair and apron show that she supervises her household. She does little actual work. Her hand is a lady's hand. The boy is well clad, well shod, and good humoured. He fits in. The doors are wide open. To the street, to the town, to the seven seas. The pomegranates prove it.

The atmosphere of this painting we find again in Wolff en Deken's epistolary novel Sara Burgerhart, 1782. The same middle-class prosperity, order, dignity. The warm glow in the painting is reflected in the warm relationships in the book. In both, a lady is in the centre. Is she free to close those doors behind her and go where she likes? Does she want to?

The writers make it clear that in their opinion men and women have completely different tasks in life. Men become merchants, artisans and the like, women housewives and mothers. Wolff and Deken have clear ideas how man and woman should arrive at this destination. The boys can go to school but the girls should be educated by their mothers. When some mothers object that they lack the necessary knowledge, Betje Wolff tells them to educate themselves for the sake of the child.

The boys then go to school to gather general knowledge. They have religious lessons on the side. Music is taught to the musical. The merchants, artisans and the like undoubtedly learn their trade in practice. The studios go to University. As for the girls: Saartje's accomplishments at the age of 19 are impressive.

Not only can she cook: "Make quickly a few thin pancakes will you",⁵ but when Mrs. Spilgoed is ill, Saartje runs the whole household though Frits and Klaartje do the actual work of course. "I keep up my French and English, indeed I learn to pronounce both (languages) much better"⁶ she writes in a letter to her guardian. She plays the piano and the guitar, sings, she reads, and not just for relaxation. "Many of you read", it says in the introduction to the Dutch Ladies, "to widen your knowledge and thus to be able to think and act in a more intelligent way". Saartje's insight is indeed remarkable. When her friend Naatje goes gallivanting about with her - Naatje's - newly acquired fiancé, her conscience accuses her of her all-play-no-work life. She settles it by writing a reprimanding letter to Saartje. Saartje recognises the symptoms at once at a time when neither psychology as a study nor projection as such are known. Through the guidance of Mrs. Spilgoed, the discussions with educated young men on religion and virtue, town and urban life and by selective visits to the theatre her education was given the finishing touch.

Saartje has her own ideas on the subject of education: "All of us girls are usually educated in a right childish manner. As far as the existence of our souls is concerned, one seems to think like orthodox Moslems. Much attention is paid to our posture, our complexion, our carriage. We are taught the art of 'how to please', and to that purpose we get dancing and singing teachers, and to that purpose we have to study French, learn to play cards, etc. I confess, that a girl who is not less foolish than I am now,

Will understand before she is old and ugly that all these niceties are nothing but matters of minor importance; that she can think as well as her brother Peter, her cousin John, her uncle Gerard. The number of these girls is larger than one believes it to be; but what should we poor souls do, when we see that our lords and masters to be have such elevated minds that they idolise us for these trifles".⁷

Saartje is saying: Women are not just objects pleasing to men, they are rational human beings. She does not, however, insist on her rights of being recognised as a rational human being. After all, the dancing and the singing are great fun. And what if most men are only interested in her pretty face and dress à la mode. They are good for a giggle. She is downright patronising. Mary Wollstonecraft, however, is rather bitter on the subject: "I lament that women are systematically degraded by receiving the trivial attentions which men think it manly to pay to the sex, when in fact, they are insultingly supporting their own superiority".⁸

Sara Burgerhart is not a work on emancipation as we interpret the word today. The political factor is missing and so is the economic one to a large extent. Wolff and Deken want to educate their girls and women solely to make them better wives and mothers. They stress the importance of the development of the personality of woman and man as creatures of God for whom self-edification is a duty.

The Christian virtues are valued highly both in men and women. Saartje's aunt led her a dog's life, but soon after

Saartje has left her she says: "Well my aunt knows no better, now that I live away from her I feel reconciled to her".⁹ When Mrs. Spilgoed is ill, Saartje cares for her day and night and shows great consideration for the servants whom she does not want to stay awake at night: "These people have to work all day; it's only fair that they rest at night".¹⁰ The love of servants for the families they work for and vice versa is touching. Willem Willis and Pieternel have tea together. No patronising on his side, no servility on hers. Saartje promises Pieternel to look after her in her old age. A shaming thought in an age in which we send our relatives to a home. And how much 'one of us' Pieternel was is shown when she leaves her money to Abraham Blankaart. The rich inherit from the poor. This can only happen in an age when human relationships are more important than money. Obedience to parents is shown in the relationship between Willem Willis and his mother. Forgiveness, charity, kindness, obedience.

Religion is not restricted to women and Sundays. Father and son Edeling, both tough, dyed-in-the-wool merchants, and the well-travelled Blankaart openly show their faith in God. It is a way of life for them, and the reader does not in the least feel it as hypocritical. Only father Edeling has the 'cellular' approach: my Church is the only true one. Blankaart has a much more modern approach and shows an open mind. "Before I went to France, I said to Saartje: "My child, do you read your prayer from Mell every evening?". "Sir, said she, I pray from my own heart; surely I know better what I need now, than did Mell fifty years ago?".¹¹

Everhard Redelik also has a very open mind. He is already thinking on the lines of uniting all Protestants. He calls it a chimera and is aware of the prejudices, but the seeds of oecumeni are present.

Another field where women had not a monopoly in those days was that of emotion: "What gross blockheads are those fellows who laugh at a man when he sheds a tear".¹² The Blankaarts and the Edelings cry in times of joy and sorrow. It would be very interesting to know why the stiff upper lip came in and if it's here to stay.

Religion and emotions openly shown do not prevent Wolff and Deken's people from having a sound common sense. Letje's father forbids her to marry a man with no means, and her virtue (obedience to parents) gets rewarded. Willem Willis is reserved for her. Saartje, intelligent, original, well to do, needs a very special man, an Edeling. A man worthy of her love and respect. For the rest of her life he will be her main interest, so he has to have superior qualities. The tide is starting to turn in this respect. Germaine Greer in her Female Eunuch suggests a reversal of these roles, e.g. a marriage between a woman doctor and a male nurse. A woman doctor has status, finds interest and satisfaction in her work. Her husband need not be a status symbol. One parent with a less highly skilled profession may be practical too. In this case it may be easier for the nurse to take a few days off to nurse his children through German measles than for the surgeon with a list of urgent operations. Though the rule is still the same as in Saartje's days: Most men bolster up their authority

by marrying women who, though normally from the same social background, are slightly younger, slightly less well educated and in slightly less good jobs.

Common sense in love and marriage too. People without money simply did not marry. They went to the East Indies to make a fortune or waited for an inheritance. Everybody accepted that happiness in marriage and poverty did not go together. Wolff and Deken 'use' remarkably little romance. Hendrik Edeling writes to his brother that he is madly in love with Saartje, but after that statement he is down to virtues again: "She has as much judgment as wit, she is young, pretty, intelligent, virtuous".¹³ No long digressions on hair, eyes, and the like. The same goes for Saartje. Love and respect is what she stresses time and again. She is not anxious to get married in a hurry either. And when she does, that does not mean the end of the book. We get a realistic view of her apprehensions during pregnancy and the labour pains are not ignored.

We could do with more Wolff and Deken realism today. The 'and they lived happily ever after' love stories are poison for a maiden's mind. The men in them are larger-than-life heroes. The girl expects to be treated like a larger-than-life heroine in marriage. She is not. Discontent is a depressing bedfellow.

Common sense also prevails in the relationships between the generations. Obedience to parents and guardians is the rule, but there are exceptions. Saartje's aunt treats her badly. Saartje runs away. Saartje laughs last. Miss Buigzaam obeys her parents

when they force her to marry a rich good-for-nothing. The book makes it very clear that the parents are wrong. Daughter Buigzaam should have had the courage of her convictions. Edeling Sr. is an obstinate old man, but his obstinacy never looms so large that his sons lose sight of his good qualities. However frustrated they feel, they do not bang the doors or shout at him; they try to make him see sense in an amiable way. There is no generation gap. Wolff and Deken are too much part of their own past to feel a gap themselves. They are far removed from the grim debunking with which in our time the young generation fights the preceding one.

As for Saartje's attempted seduction, and Mrs. Spilgoed's unhappy marriage, things have hardly changed in this respect. Girls still have to be extremely careful whom to trust. Parents, in this era of the morning-after pill, would be equally shocked if their daughter encountered a Mr. R., aware as they are of the traumas this can cause in years to come. Mrs. Spilgoed, left to her own devices, might have chosen the right partner today.

Some patterns of conversation have not changed that much either. Anna Willis complains about the "dirty ambiguities" that people utter when they have eaten plenty of rich food and drunk great quantities of red wine. "The women started to talk about household matters and servants, the men about commerce or study"¹⁴ sounds familiar too. It is what George Eliot later called the "drawing room trivia".¹⁵

Wolff and Deken give us a clear picture of the role of women. The little girl is mainly educated by her mother. Apart

from general knowledge and domestic science she learns several languages and is encouraged to read a good deal and to think about the reading material. She knows her bible. Often she plays several instruments, has dancing lessons and learns to sing if she is talented. Wolff and Deken state categorically that a girl should develop her qualities so as to become a good wife and mother, not a 'savante'. They stress this in the very last paragraph of the book "Letje is much more useful in the world when she knits children's understockings than Miss Hartog when she writes theses on notes in a sunbeam".

How does this wife and mother see her own role? What is Saartje's life like after she has married Edeling? Religion gives meaning to her life. She believes that she has a task in the world, and that fulfilling this task to the best of her ability will be rewarded. She is happy in her love for her husband and he in turn loves and respects her. They see their five children as a blessing from God. Saartje has to supervise her household but a number of servants give her leisure to go out or receive guests at will. Hers is an 'open' household. Old and young relatives and friends are always welcome, and provide plenty of 'emotional outlet'. In the evening there is money and opportunity to accompany her husband to concert hall or theatre.

Woman's education has not yet got 'out of hand'. Rights and duties are still in balance. Soon the cosy Jane Austen equanimity, whose heroines always managed to combine sense and sensibility on their inevitable progress to the altar, will go

for good. As for Saartje, she is contented, fulfilled. She possesses all she has ever learned to wish for. Her doors are wide open. Mary Wollstonecraft, ten years later, could only see closed doors: "Confined, then, in cages like the feathered race, they have nothing to do but to plume themselves, and stalk with mock majesty from perch to perch".¹⁶

Sara Burgerhart, the first and the last of the contented women. But then she had class, money, a good education, friends, good looks, a sense of humour, sex appeal, and enough common sense to choose a reliable husband. All ingredients to make her into a mature, well-balanced, happy woman at a time when the traditional rôle of woman was hardly challenged. And as Dr. A. de Vletter pointed out, she was meant to be an example: "...they (Wolff and Deken) wanted to give the young ladies an ideal, show them an ideal group of people, ideal motherly women, guardians, friends, so that Dutch womanhood could try to equal them".¹⁷

THE POOR WOMAN WHO WANTS TO IMPROVE HER STATUS.

THE WOMAN WHO WANTS TO DEVELOP HER TALENTS.

Potgieter.

When we see the picture that Potgieter paints us of Blaauw Bes, it is easy to understand why her daughter 'got into trouble'. Potgieter may look at the deeply lined thin face with the traces of grey beard through Rembrandt's eyes, Potgieter may think her faded clothes and her bilberries, which remind him of the country, picturesque, her daughter has undoubtedly a completely different picture of her mother.

"Because she was beautiful, she thought she could become a lady like the next one" ¹⁸ says the young gardener who was in love with her.

The Eefjes never wrote their own stories - all we know is that she grew up in a quiet village in Gelderland and that her parents were very poor - but we can guess what happened. Everybody must have known her for what she was. The boys who were interested in her there were not very exciting. She had known them all her life. When she goes to Amsterdam her life changes completely. At last she is her own boss. No mother breathing down her neck about the dangers of life. She is young and attractive in her clean, neat servant's dress. When a rich man takes a fancy to her, life is perfect. Eefje badly wanted the pretty clothes, the presents and the money he gave her. But she was an inexperienced village girl, overcredulous. When the man talked about love,

she thought he meant marriage, overrating the power of her beauty.

With pregnancy all doors close. Her lover withdraws, her employers send her away, the gardener seems to lose interest, she dares not go back to her parents. Potgieter does not stand up for her either. He voices the opinion of his middle-class society when he gives Eefje capital punishment for her two capital sins: loss of chastity and aspersions to higher estate. Her greatest crime was however that she wanted to become a lady; she was working-class and that is what she was destined to remain.

'The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,'

She is allowed to climb a few ranks in her own class, but neither character, brains, nor beauty can alter the fact that she is of lowly birth.

Even Betje Wolff in her Proeve sees no hope for the poor. She asks herself what to do about education "in the untidy huts of the most sordid poverty". Are these "dregs of humanity" created in God's image, she asks. "Are these creatures with a nature nobler than that of animals". She finishes by saying that we must do for their children as much good as we can. So for this double crime no punishment can be heavy enough.

The man of course remained scotfree. Completely different rules applied to the two sexes. For the lady who would promptly dismiss a maidservant for having gone to bed with the young master, it was a foregone conclusion that the young master would have to sow his wild oats somewhere and the obvious place was among the servants. Mary Wollstonecraft has a progressive

thought on the man's share as well: "when a man seduces a woman, it should, I think, be termed a left-handed marriage, and the man should be legally obliged to maintain the woman and her children".¹⁹

Class structure, poverty, easy virtue came under the heading of religion, not under economy. If you were poor, God meant you to be poor; you worked hard, behaved yourself and humility was the virtue your employers valued most in you. This was an unwritten law. Eefje became an outlaw because she was supposed to have sinned against God's commandments, and yet the accent in the New Testament is on charity, not on chastity.

De Zusters describes two sisters, a conformist and a non-conformist, and though the conformist was set up as an example of virtue, as was the fashion in those days, it is the non-conformist we are interested in.

Anne started learning to play the piano when she was eight but Potgieter disapproved of the spirit in which she learned it: "feeling, stimulated so early, ambition fanned so imprudently had bad effects on the girl".²⁰ "On the girl", not "on the child". Anne was a promising pianist and by nature a perfectionist, so she tried to develop her talent with abandon of everything else. Potgieter was frightened of what the result of this abandon might be. He knew of course that abandonment of abandon gives mediocrity but his theory undoubtedly was that mediocrity in art is enough for

a woman as her main task lies elsewhere. Her mother, also a good pianist, had played to divert her husband's mind as he came home after a tiring day. As Sara Burgerhart had said, it was in order to please that women were allowed to use their talents.

De Zusters shows how difficult it was for women to become really great in their chosen careers however talented they were. Everybody turned against Anne. Her piano teacher who admitted that she was gifted enough to finish her studies in Paris in order to become a great player was doubtful whether she would be able to survive in the big city. We hear how his own daughter, also a gifted artist, had died giving birth to an illegitimate child. A fortnight after her father's burial Anne is told that her piano has to be sold; her aunt and her guardian want to see whether she can take this, whether she can "make a sacrifice". The piano has been the main link with her father, a passionate lover of music, her emotional outlet and has been indispensable to her. When she says that she has made up her mind to become a concert pianist and that her teacher will support her, her guardian admits that her behaviour shows character but the kind of character "which I deplore in a woman".²¹ Her aunt adds: "famous women are nasty women", and also assures Anne that the world is for man, woman should be satisfied with her house, "we women think less, we feel more. It is not the mind, it is the heart that is capable of devotion, denial, sacrifice".²² Aunt Elsabé suggests that Anne might become a governess. Aunt Elsabé did not know what it was like to be a governess, of course, Charlotte Brontë's Villette

was not published before 1853. Busken Huet says that it might well have been Potgieter's aunt who was model for Aunt Elsabé. "In the same way as Nicht Elsabé reasons with ten Have (the guardian), Potgieter's aunt used to reason with Van den Brink. Had she found herself in reality up against a noble-hearted, but spoiled and over-indulged niece Anne, I am convinced that she would have acted just the same as the old lady". Spoiled and over-indulged because she would not behave like a woman and let her great musical gift lie fallow.

Men and women in Potgieter's opinion were completely different: "There comes a time when the parental home becomes too monotonous, too serious, too 'narrow' for daughters; when they cannot help wishing to find a house of their own, to furnish and to govern it, though innate diffidence and acquired culture make her await the fulfilment of this longing patiently, composedly, meekly. We have observed the phenomenon in the weak; let us also unrestrainedly observe it in the strong. To be one's own boss, as people say short and to the point, is not only the prayer, is necessity for the development of the young man, whose strength and courage are panting to enter the wide world; whose society promises independence in exchange for his talents; who is conscious of the fact that he only learned obedience to be able to command.²³ Women are diffident, patient, composed, meek. Men are strong, courageous, independent. Huet agreed with Potgieter. When George Sand described her mother as "a virtuous woman" notwithstanding her common law marriage Huet remarked "...this proves that in

some respects she (George Sand) has been too much of a man".²⁴

About her divorce, he said: "As an innocent young girl, she has unnecessarily and in even trivial matters defied the public opinion of her rural community by giving in to an exaggerated desire for independence".²⁵ And what are women to do if they have these so-called male characteristics? Huet is quite frank about it. Talking about Mina Kruseman he wrote: "...and she does not even take the trouble to pretend innocence or ignorance".²⁶

Mary Wollstonecraft wrote some sarcastic lines on these qualities reserved for women: "Kind instructors! What were we created for? To remain, it may be said, innocent; they mean in a state of childhood"²⁷ and "Ignorance is a frail base for virtue! Yet, that is the condition for which woman was organised, has been insisted upon by the writers who have most vehemently argued in favour of the superiority of man".²⁸ Zuster Doortje, sweet and feminine, would have been Huet's choice and not his only. She was provided with a beau when she was just seventeen!

The life of these women in De Zusters - middle-class women in middle-class marriages - seems atrophied compared to the full busy lives of their husbands. We see Mrs. Graevestein roaming around in her house, locking and unlocking store-room and wine cellar and in the evening entertaining her husband with her music. Mrs. Ovens spends much time in having her seven nightcaps put on and removed while her mind is kept busy finding tactics to thwart her husband's plans. Mary Wollstonecraft also knew her Mrs. Ovens: "Thus understanding, strictly speaking, has

been denied to woman; and instinct, sublimated into wit and cunning, for the purpose of life, has been substituted in its stead".²⁹

Though the women in Potgieter's books get nowhere, even in his time the books must have provided food for thought: Was it fair that Eefje's seducer went scotfree? Should an old relative decide the future of a talented young woman? It seems appropriate to finish this chapter on Potgieter with a question mark because by not finishing De Zusters he did the same himself.

WOMEN IN WAR AND IN HIGH SOCIETY.

Bosboom-Toussaint.

Though called The women of the Leicester era it would have been better to call this book The men of the Leicester era. All the women are there only in relation to the men and we get a far better idea of the characters of the men from the way they deal with political and religious affairs, the way they treat each other and their womenfolk than we ever get of the characters of the women.

Mr. Prouninck, burgomaster of Utrecht in the 1580's, has been given quite a rounded character to use a phrase from E.M.Forster: "The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat".³⁰ When Wijndrik Rueel "a sound decent Dutchman"³¹ wanted to marry Prouninck's daughter, Prouninck had to think twice: "... this is my grievance, that I might well have to make my daughter a prize for others, where I would have preferred to present her hand to a Wijndrik, as a free gift".³² In other words, though he could see Wijndrik's virtues, he might want to keep his daughter in hand lest in the future he needed to sell her for his own political ends. His wife and daughter are pictured only in relation to him and in the case of the daughter also to her husband-to-be. Mrs. Prouninck soothed her husband when he came home tired from his fatiguing political affairs, tempered his anger when he had not been able to unload that anger where it

was excited and attended dinner parties with him where undoubtedly the men talked shop most of the time. We see Mrs. Prouninck in her role as a mediator: "It is true Mr. Gerard is absolute master in his house, but mothers always have a say in the marriage of their daughters".³³ In fact, Mrs. Prouninck was a good wife and mother, her life revolved round her family. But this can be said about countless women through the ages. It has nothing to do with the Leicester era. We know practically nothing about her daughter, except that she loved Wijndrik and would marry him if her parents gave their consent. Again, we know much more about Wijndrik. He was intelligent, trustworthy, and faithful. We know his idea about love: "Men cannot love like women; what for the former is recreation in life is life itself for the latter".³⁴ A variation on Byron's "Man's love is of man's life a thing apart, 'tis woman's whole existence". We know why he wanted to marry Maria: "... she is the sweet lovable maiden one wishes to bring into one's home as a bride because she has virtues sufficient for a lifetime, even where beauty disappears".³⁵ But where did Maria come into this? Did she fancy being sweet and virtuous for the rest of her days.?

We get the same vague picture of Ada Rueel, Wijndrik's sister: she was quiet, virtuous, not beautiful, very much in love with de Maulde. We hear how de Maulde became engaged to Ada on the rebound and that he rejected her when his first love offered him her favours again. We see Ada sitting at home with her needlework with sorrowful thoughts while waiting for his proposal,

with happy thoughts after he has declared his love to her, with sad thoughts again after he has left her. By the end of the book we have come to know de Maulde quite well, but Ada has become a blur in the middle of the book. After de Maulde has lost interest in her we hardly hear from her any more; she never became a person in her own right with a role of her own.

Mrs. Cornelisz, like Mrs. Prouninck, was a devoted wife and mother. She was on the conservative side and she did not like it when her husband suggested that their daughter should study English: "... that a girl must become thus estranged from housework and needlework"³⁶ And estranged from her mother by all that knowledge was doubtless her main concern - sociologists have commented on the fact that though children from working-class families have a chance to study nowadays, their mothers often discourage them, because they fear the gap that higher education may cause between parents and children - besides, Mother Cornelisz did not trust her "poor dove to a (foreign) hawk"³⁷ i.e. an English master. Deliana is the roundest character of the author's young women. When we get to know her she is an adventurous teenager who is keen to learn and experience new aspects of life. Under the influence of her 'English master' she becomes a mature woman who takes considerable risks when assisting him in his political pursuits and who is strongminded enough not to tell anybody about them. From a carefree young girl she became a loving woman prepared to give her life for her lover and that love meant so much to her that she became insane when her English master turned

out to be an English mistress.

The Princess de Chimay formed an exception to the dedicated bourgeois wives. She left her husband because he "had betrayed and left the cause of his native country for the service of the Spanish king and renounced his (Protestant) faith for the worship of the Pope".³⁸ The writer nevertheless condemns the decision of the Princess to leave her husband: "... she herself forgot that she was a wife as well as a Christian and she herself forgot the oath she had sworn; she also betrayed and became unfaithful".³⁹ In this judgment we recognise the Victorian with her cut and dried ideas. There is no writer's comment when the Prince sends an accomplice to kill his wife for sixty Spanish ducats, only the accomplice's remark "... at home in Piémont a man punishes the unfaithfulness of his wife with death".⁴⁰

Time and again we are shown that woman should know her place in this patriarchal society and that she will regret it if she intrudes into a man's world. When Baroness van Hemert, while travelling from Utrecht to the Hague, decided to share a carriage with an Englishman, whose antecedents were not clear, the writer says: "She had forgotten the sense of shame, diffidence, modesty, of her sex".⁴¹ From our point of view one might be tempted to say that she showed courage and that the knowledge that she was engaged in a just cause made her overlook the petty conventions of her time.

We have a somewhat similar case where Ada Rueel confesses

to her brother that she has fallen in love with de Maulde. Wijndrik answers that he has guessed as much and this causes her to burst into tears because it was considered shameful to betray your feelings on this point. Were the young men so brave in those days that they proposed without having an inkling as to what the answer would be or were they clairvoyant?

Barneveld is also given a few negative remarks on women in politics: "... and I confess that I am not very favourably disposed towards female intervention in political affairs; they often complicate them, not infrequently hamper them and many a time finish up with spoiling them",⁴² and "Whatever happens, I intend not to use women again in (political) affairs"⁴³, and finally "Whether it is because the crown has fallen to the distaff in England or; (I know) only this, that the women are acquiring manners nowadays which it would be better for them to do without".⁴⁴

The writer has also a low opinion of her own sex when it comes to hate: "But this seems a serpent's characteristic to me, to hate like this, more the hate of a woman than that of an honest man"⁴⁵ says Barneveld to Master Fabian. A clever remark, psychologically speaking, as Barneveld unwittingly was addressing a woman, but a generalisation. How can anybody prove that there is a difference in 'quality' between the hate of man and woman.

Thus, between the lines, Mrs. Bosboom gives her blessing to the establishment's view of woman; her place is in the home, obedience is her best characteristic. Some twenty-five years

later Mrs. Bosboom will write about Majoor Frans, a round character with all the characteristics of the emancipated woman to prove that much can change in a lifetime.

Yet even now there are one or two hints that all was not perfect with women's lives. We read about Ada Rueel: "... the lonely life, without other amusement but needlework and a little reading",⁴⁶ and the Reverend Gideon Florensz says: "the life of young ladies is mostly so atrophied and empty".⁴⁷ But the woman's-place-theme is never far away: "Now we are not in the Spanish era any more, we can do without the Kenaus"⁴⁸ is remarked when Deliana learns to fence. Betty Friedan in her book The Feminine Mystique remarks that after the last war the "femininity button" was pressed once again. Women had to hand over their often important jobs to men and go back to their kitchens.

Master Fabian, alias Mrs. Leicester, is the best example of a woman who cannot make it in politics. In a conversation with Barneveld she shows a lack of diplomacy, she is carried away by her feelings of hate for Leicester, whereas reason should have prevailed. Love in the end is her downfall. She makes herself known to Gideon Florensz, the man she has begun to respect and to love. His answer: "Now I see nothing but a woman who gets mixed up in political ado, for the sake of personal thirst for revenge".⁴⁹ He has lost interest. So from the women who were involved we finish up with Baroness van Hemert humoured to go back home, Deliana mad, and Lady Margaret dead. The message is clear.

Overheard at airport A.D. 1973: "You shouldn't use such

language, you're a girl". A brother and sister are calling each other names. The boy, about eight, obviously thought he had a perfect right to use "such language".

Should there be different laws for men and women because they are different biologically? Certainly, say Betje Wolff and Aagje Deken in Sara Burgerhart. The only way Sara could lead a happy life was to give her a happy marriage. The only way Hendrik Edeling could be happy was to make him a successful breadwinner and to give him a loving partner. To Mary Wollstonecraft this simple division of roles was not enough. She wanted economic independence for women and she was aware of the fact that this would completely change the character of marriage. Potgieter's Anne wanted financial independence because she did not want other people's charity. Potgieter must have admired the spirit for he did not shove her straight into marriage but neither did he let her go to Paris to return unscathed in order to become a famous pianist. "Famous women are nasty women". Potgieter did not finish the book. Did he sense that a happy marriage was rather too easy a solution for Anne and was he loath to let her loose in the jungle of the artistic world?

Things had changed quite dramatically by the time Majoor Frans was published in 1874. By then emancipation was in progress. The whole approach here was different. No happy united parents for Francis Mordaunt, no wise elders who know all the answers to guide her. On the contrary, though young and female she is shown as an example of common sense compared to

her older male relatives. The accent seems to have changed altogether. Saartje had dress-sense, good manners, wit and we were shown the fruits of her education. Anne, beckoned on by fame, wanted independence. Francis' main characteristic was common sense. From the first time we meet her in the book, even though we see her through Leo's eyes, this is very apparent. Her horse served her as a means of transport and relaxation, therefore she dressed in head scarves and trouser-like garments to be proof against dust clouds and cold winds. It brings to mind that other emancipated woman, George Sand, who also used to go riding in men's clothes. Leo wanted her to dress like a city park showpiece, straight-backed and elegant, ready to pose for a picture. When she dismounts he offers her his arm but what sensible woman wants to walk arm-in-arm with somebody she has never seen before. Leo's surprise about her remark: "I know too well what the friendship of women means"⁵⁰ seems very hypocritical only hours after he has been exposed to their most evil gossip in the "Z.sche beau monde". Her ideas on fashion were extremely sensible. She believed in following the trends she liked, spiced with her own brand of originality and to pass over other trends altogether. Herd-spirit in fashion is very curious. There is also a moral side to this: "One was very amused about Majoor Frans, who had the audacity to sin so grossly against etiquette that she wore a lace pelerine with great toilette, while the custom prescribed that to be dressed correctly one wore décolleté as much as possible".⁵¹

The "gens comme il faut" probably thought this a streak of Puritanism in her, it must have been impossible to explain to the "gens" that wearing décolleté to her felt like wearing a for sale notice. It is a pity we are not given Leo's comment on the subject.

The people who know Francis well give her very good reports; her grandfather: "my grand-daughter has excellent brains, a good heart, a strong character".⁵² Captain Rolf would go through fire for her, Willibald her former suitor: "I owe much to her; she is of such a generosity, of such a sacrificing goodness, that one cannot help loving her",⁵³ and her farmer neighbours: "... a good creature, none to equal her amongst all the nobility, so friendly and kind-hearted".⁵⁴

Too good for Leopold van Zonshoven? Annie Romein-Verschoor thinks so in her Vrouwenspiegel: "Majoor Frans, built entirely on that decayed 19th century liberal morale, which would overlook if need be a natural, sincerely humane disposition, a strong physical and mental personality in a woman like Francis Mordaunt, as long as she subjected herself and played a role in a world in which a woman pretends weakness, submission, and prudishness, and in which a retired soul like Leopold van Zonshoven is a hero".⁵⁵

But this statement is only a half-truth, firstly because the hero is a heroine, and secondly because Francis' values and virtues are more and more recognised as the story progresses. Besides, Mrs. Bosboom-Toussaint in a letter to Potgieter stated that she did not like heroes: "Leicester was not a good novel hero,

you always judged I for my part always do so resent these novel heroes - who are nothing but handsome, young, in love, and perfect, those conti d'alma viva, who just pluck a guitar and walk around in fine cloaks - that I never put them at the head of my cast and preferably in the second or third place".⁵⁶

Not only is the book called after the militant side of Francis' personality but the whole book revolves round her and as it were warms towards her as it goes on; on Page 30 she is called "a shrew", P.63 "Bizarre", P.88 "a forester with a toothache", but by P.180 Leo concludes that Francis "attracted me notwithstanding, no, even because of her imperfections which were possibly only the exaggeration of good qualities", and on P.220 we get what we have been waiting for: "Was it a wonder that Francis had so little respect for form, as she saw much too clearly what might be behind it?".

Leo has a lot to learn of course. His pomposity and patronising manner are extremely difficult to stomach. Statements like: "It seems to be difficult for Majoor Frans (addressing her in the third person) to recognise the supremacy of our sex"⁵⁷ and referring to their friendship "from now on I shall take the leadership of it upon me"⁵⁸ show him up badly. And what about: "weakness and lack of principle in a man are despicable, I admit it, but what must be called cowardice in us becomes lovable compliance in you, one submits oneself to your whims, provided that you dress them up in a modern form, but one does not allow you to sin against rules that have become law. I don't say that

it is altogether fair, but all the same, it has its good side
.... the world is like that, and you cannot change it by kicking
against the pricks".⁵⁹ Disgusting conformity. Fortunately he
balances it a little by ".... and I didn't agree in the least with
van Lennep, that the purest merit in a woman is that one can say
nothing about her other than that she darns socks with perseverance
and pays the most tender attention to her laundry".⁶⁰

This and some other endearing qualities made Francis
decide to marry him after all - besides, Leo gradually changes
through Francis' influence. He starts to realise that her kindness,
generosity and natural disposition are valuable qualities - and
she did not consider marriage lightly: "And yet, a woman brings
thereby for ever after an immeasurable sacrifice; the sacrifice
of her name, of her will, of herself".⁶¹ For the first time
in this book we read between the lines about partnership: "Leo,
you will be neither a tyrant nor a slave"⁶² and Tennyson is quoted:
"Distinct in individualities".

It looks as if it is going to be a Germaine Greer male
nurse and female doctor marriage, figuratively speaking. But this
male nurse has the potential of becoming a mature student. He will
not graduate with a first, but one or two of his subjects may
fetch very high marks, thanks to his tutor.

WOMAN AND PASSION.

Conrad Busken Huet.

".....hi leeft so beestelic
Buten Gods vreesse ende alte vleeselick."

Lidewyde reads like a nineteenth century morality play:

André represents Elckerlyc influenced by Virtue (Emma and her parents) and by Vice (Lidewyde and Ruardi). Cunning has an important role in the form of the politician Uncle Timmermans, religion though always in the background plays a modest role through the priest Stephenson and Freule Bertha. Vice is represented by foreigners or rather people with 'foreign blood'. Even their names sound different whereas Visscher and Dijk (Adriaan is also on the side of the angels) sound delightfully native and 'one of us'.

The purpose of a morality play was to show people the true values in life. Lidewyde tries to show that, for man or woman, to follow one's lust regardless is bound to end in misery. The way in which Huet tries to show this is also medieval. The characterisation is completely black and white apart from grey Uncle Timmermans, "that Uncle was a good man of his kind",⁶³ whose well-meant plan misfired. The plot is worse than those in the morality plays, for at least there we are given all the facts whereas here some facts come to us in such a veiled way that we never quite know where we are.

All through the book it is suggested that Emma is the

right wife for André but the matter-of-fact way in which he sums her up before he has even asked her to marry him is one of cold appraisal: "... he would have sworn to it that nowhere on earth could he have found a more charming girl; so independent in her opinions and so gentle-natured, so small and so brave, so demure and so cheerful, so tidy were her clothes without her being a Miss Pert".⁶⁴ But that is his reason summing her up, not his heart. His first tête-à-tête with Lidewyde gives him different reflections. He talks about the scent of flowers and herbs that arise from her hair, the roundness of her shoulders, how beautiful she would look in décolleté. The assumption is that there are two kinds of women: the kind that you turn into fiancées (virgin) and wives and mothers (monogamous), and the kind you want to go to bed with as soon as you clap eyes on them (they are fun but bad). Van Deysse in Een Liefde makes this very clear. When Jozef's friends talk in one breath about Jozef's wife-to-be and his 'girlfriends' he answers: "You must not associate things that have nothing to do with each other".⁶⁵ Eve the bad one is sexy, Mary the Godchosen one is pure. A.Graham Ikin, who tried to bridge Art and Science, Religion and Vision etc., in the book Wholeness is Living would find a completely new field in this 'split woman'.

Adriaan Dijk must have thought he married a Mary but in fact he married an Eve; or did he marry a Mary and did incompatibility turn her into an Eve? Are Eves born or made? And what exactly did the incompatibility consist of? "Lidewyde caused much sensation by the realistic picturing of passion"

write De Voocys and Stuiveling. But that does not give us the full picture, and to be able to make up our mind about the heroine we should be put in the picture whereas instead we get only vague references like: "My husband is a villain" says Lidewyde to her faithful servant. "I shall never be able to cause him half the grief that he has brought on me. Why should I care about his sadness? When has he ever cared about mine?".⁶⁶ Do we deduct that Dijk is impotent and that Lidewyde grieves because he can give her no children? But later in the book we get the impression from servant's gossip about Katharina the Empress of Russia and her lover that Adriaan is simply lacking in sex appeal as far as Lidewyde is concerned. But how is this to be reconciled with "the grief that he has brought on me"?

We are simply not given enough facts to judge Lidewyde by. So we don't know either whether Adriaan was justified in whipping her. From the reader's point of view the whipping was cruel and senseless, but from Adriaan's point of view? Was he whipping in sorrow or in anger? Did he have sadistic tendencies or was it just a case of hurt pride? We get the impression that since Adriaan did not want her any more he made jolly sure that nobody else would be interested in her in the future. Was he impotent after all? No fun for me no fun for you? Just jealous?

One thing is very clear, her marriage is in a rut. There is no authority Lidewyde can turn to after the whipping, no one to tell that on account of incompatibility with her husband she has had two affairs, that after her husband's recent cruelty

she wants a divorce. Divorce for her would mean loss of good name and reputation, hence social leprosy and having to go out to earn her living as a servant. If nothing else, Lidewyde shows that education for women and suitable divorce laws were essential.

Had Ruardi been given the same treatment for the same offences he would have been whipped to death long ago. Society would point out that there is a great difference, that Lidewyde was married and had therefore a duty to her husband; Ruardi was a widower and after all he did not drag his girls into bed, they came voluntarily. Nevertheless, Ruardi knew that for many girls 'contact' with him would mean lifelong misery. It shows how two-faced society was and often is. One affair could have made Lidewyde into a social outcast for ever. And yet many people in M. must have known about Ruardi's 'love-life'. You cannot have hundreds of girls passing through your house without it becoming widely known. But he is respected, has a steady flow of patients, probably held the admiration of a great many men. He was a man. Huet himself puts it like this: "It is certainly an abuse and an injustice that public opinion grants a man all kinds of debaucheries whereas it persecutes a woman for the rest of her life with the memory of one mistake. But if virtuous women are aware of their own interest - the interest of her influence, of her invisible power for the good - they will never want or try to change public opinion in this matter".⁶⁷ We come across this irreconcilable idea again and again, that men are weak, that it is up to women to be strong, that women in fact are stronger if

they try hard, but then why not make use of her strength in society at large. Why "invisible power"?

André, by far the lesser sinner compared with Ruardi, gets capital punishment, and the cynical aspect is that Ruardi is his informer. André's sin is that he betrays his fiancée, betrays the hospitality of his host, gives in to passion and so is altogether unworthy of the noble name of Kortenaer. Compared to both Emma and Lidewyde André is very naive. Even between the lines of André's objective letters Emma immediately suspects Uncle Timmerman's cunning, and Lidewyde knows exactly which methods to use to catch André in her trap. Elckerlyc has the choice between Vice and Virtue and this Elckerlyc gets trapped by Vice.

Emma after the fashion of the morality play displays a stock response. Three weeks after André's death she is seen in Duinendaal again thin as a wraith, and when winter comes her parents take her abroad to divert her mind. It would have been so refreshing if one of the lovelorn beauties of those times had said in a matter-of-fact way: "That was a close shave, it would have been a lot worse if he had turned fickle after our marriage". No, they had to consider their 'position' and because of that the rumour was spread of André's insanity. Truth must not be out. Even before André's death Emma could not have returned to Duinendaal saying simply that she had made a mistake in choosing André and that she had broken off her engagement. Society, the all-powerful, would not approve of plain honesty.

It is hinted that cunning Timmermans rather regretted

his craftiness. Perhaps he will be wiser in the future so that at least something good came out of the sorry story. The two pillars of religion seem to crumble as time goes by, it is suggested that Stephenson will soon die of a fatal illness and Freule Bertha feels that her strength henceforth lies in her isolation. Lidewyde? Adriaan's handling of her affair with André might have impressed her. She might well have found it worthwhile to use her tactics to get her own husband back. If we had been given a clearer idea about the character of the rift between them, it would have been easier for us to forecast. By the end of the book there seems to be little hope for her and she might well say to herself in the words of one of Elckerlyc's characters:

"Ja ick, tes al verlore,
Al soudi uwen navel uut krijten".

THE ROMANTIC WOMAN AND THE PEDESTAL MAN.

L. van Deyssel.

Uneasiness is the feeling left behind after reading Een liefde. We know that van Deyssel was one of the leaders of the movement of the eighties, a naturalist at the time when he wrote this book, so he tried to give a scientific rendering of reality *vue à travers un tempérament*. We also know that he was influenced by writers like Zola, Balzac, and Flaubert; style characterised by qualifying adjectives and neologisms. All sense of decorum has gone by the board. A spade is a spade.

Van Eeden in his Studies calls Een liefde an immoral book. He does not want to know about the sex life of novel heroes and heroines, he compares his sexual feelings with a white water lily, and accuses van Deyssel of pulling up that "long, ugly stem which roots deeply in the dark recesses of my being".⁶⁸ Only certain women's magazines side with Van Eeden nowadays, the uneasiness is still there. The title of a book comes to mind: A room with a view. There was a view, hope, perspective in Saartje Burgerhart's life, in Blaauwbes, in Majoor Frans; Mathilde has lost it, there is a feeling of claustrophobia.

As a young woman of twenty she had no mother, no brothers or sisters, no friends, just an old father. Her daily tasks? "During these years she made it her main task to make the house as agreeable and cosy as possible for her father

she looked after him, tried to get to know his hobbies and habits, read the papers and talked about politics - she was attentive to everything and made his life pleasant by her piano playing and other things".⁶⁹ We reflect. This must have been written by a doting father. We look it up. Van Deyssel was about seventeen when he wrote these words, he wrote the book between his seventeenth and twenty-first years. Sugar and spice and all things nice. Or, daughters exist to please their parents and other relatives. As Rousseau said: "The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved and honoured by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to make life sweet and agreeable to them - these are the duties of women at all times, and what should be taught them from their infancy".⁷⁰ And Mathilde liked to please. She heated hot water bottles for her father, accompanied him to the zoo whenever he felt like it, thought of little treats for him, entertained his friends, played the piano for them, had a quiet inoffensive hobby: drawing. Mathilde felt that she existed to please her father. Her father in turn showed her his love and gratitude. Where is the catch?

She promises to make as good a fiancée and wife as she is a daughter. When Jozef proposed she did not have to think about it, she accepted him readily and dreamed about the joys of marital life and "all the great pleasures of having and ruling a household of her own".⁷¹ It goes without saying that she was a

virgin and she had had no sex education but when the day of initiation came she actually enjoyed sex. Frigidity, rather the rule than the exception in the middle-classes if we may believe the writers of the Victorian era passed her by. The masochistic tendencies fit in: "she sought in her imagination for a means to express her love, for a deed of sacrifice".⁷²

"She saw in him the power and intelligence, in him, that creature attractive in so many ways, to whom it would be her supreme vocation and delight to sacrifice her life".⁷³ And "Aren't you glad that I am entirely yours now, that you can do with me as you like?".⁷⁴ Though the other side also occurs to her "...he would not steal something from her, take away something for ever which was precious to her?"⁷⁵

It looks as if things start to go wrong when she becomes pregnant and Jozef feels repugnance for her, but in fact difficulties begin when her father dies during her honeymoon. This transfers her total emotional dependence to her husband. Jozef, a weak character, vain and selfish, was not altogether pleased when he heard that his wife was pregnant, as it meant inconvenience for him. His wife was less 'available' and in the future it might mean a less smooth organisation of household matters. When Mathilde was ill for months after the birth of her son, he soon got tired of keeping her company in the bedroom. He started to visit club and theatre again and the fact that he had the generosity to take on an unmarried mother as a wet nurse paid off. Even if Marie had wanted to refuse his advances she

probably would have found herself out of a job had she done so. Right of access you could call it. When Mathilde went to the country to recover her health, Jozef had free play in Amsterdam and only went to see Mathilde once a week.

Mathilde, housebound, reflected on only one subject: Jozef. She had experienced servants who ran the house and garden without supervision while her thoughts swarmed round her husband day and night, chewed over honeymoon and first years of marriage then go to the future, their glorious life together when she will be restored to health. Sometimes thoughts of death crept in: "She had distressing thoughts, which she found agreeable like beautiful songs",⁷⁶ the masochistic tendency persisted. Her son meant little to her, she only saw him as a small replica of Jozef: "She kept on seeing Jozef in Felix, a second Jozef, a small Jozef, very small, very strange".⁷⁷

Towards the end of the book Mathilde suffered from bad fevers and Van Deyssel used these to air his neologisms. It looks as if he did not take this side of naturalism seriously. There is little evidence of them in the rest of the book. Delirious visions and neologisms go rather well together. Mathilde's feverish dreams were bound up with the close relationship she felt to nature during the summer of her illness. J. de Graaf, comparing Van Deyssel to Zola comments: "Van Deyssel, âme lyrique par excellence, s'assimile facilement cette tendance à peindre la nature, frémissant d'une vie intense, en harmonie avec l'état d'âme de ses personnages, de sorte qu'il naît une fusion intime,

une correspondance étroite entre un état intérieur avec son ambiance extérieure".⁷⁸

Gradually, during the course of her illness, she realised that she had expected too much of Jozef, she had put him on a pedestal, put him there for her own benefit because she wanted happiness and as she had put all her eggs in one basket it had to come from him. She tried to revive her boarding school image of God in order to find comfort in her misery but to no avail. Jozef was no longer a knight in shining armour and the consequence was that life for Mathilde lost a third dimension: enchantment. "Mathilde's cheeks filled out and took on the appearance of an ordinary prosperous lady".⁷⁹ A modern writer might have given her an affair at this point, Van Deyssel makes her pick up the pieces: sex and friendship with Jozef. Jozef reflecting on his marriage with Mathilde:—"always that same body and those same wide dark eyes which knew so little"⁸⁰ - had started to dally long ago.

Then the source of the uneasiness becomes clear. Wolff and Deken, Potgieter, Bosboom-Toussaint and Huet wrote in order to give a message to society. They were all middle-aged by the time they wrote the books we have discussed and they give the impression that they were genuinely concerned about the aspects of society they wrote about.

Van Deyssel reacted against the moralistic, religious and romantic tendencies in the works of his predecessors. When he was very young he was an ardent supporter of the naturalistic

view; M.H.Abrams explains very lucidly what these writers aim at: "They tend to choose characters who exhibit strong animal drives, such as greed and brutal sexual desire, and who are victims of both their glandular secretions within and of sociological pressures without".⁸¹ This seems a very fitting description of Jozef. He is a caricature rather than a human being. He has no compassion for his wife and shows little love for his son. To satisfy his sexual desire seems the main interest of his life. Abrams goes on: "The protagonist of the naturalistic plot, a pawn to multiple compulsions, merely disintegrates, or is wiped out" - Mathilde is not treated quite as drastically as a Madame Bovary, but the spark is taken out of her life, her joie de vivre disappears. Een Liefde is not a reflection of the society in which Van Deyssel lived or the expression of concern about the wrongs in his society as he saw them but a reaction against earlier literary trends. Mathilde and Jozef are indeed pawns of Van Deyssel's naturalistic passion instead of being a heroine and a hero in their own right.

POOR, UNDERPRIVILEGED WOMEN.

Johan de Meester.

Geertje tells us about Geertje's life from the day she leaves her village, eagerly looking forward to her life in Rotterdam, until the day not many months later when she returns disillusioned. The style is plain and simple with on the whole short sentences and much dialogue usually spelt in dialect, and as we see people and situations through Geertje's eyes, who works as a nursemaid and general servant, this is very apt.

Geertje feels hemmed in by life in the village where she grew up; the young people are less lively and intelligent than she is and she feels bored by them. Her grandfather is narrow-minded and bossy, his piety is joyless and she expects to find cheerful friends and a pleasant job in the big town. Instead she finds work in a household where the husband and wife are constantly quarreling and where she falls in love with the husband.

Then follows the description of how Heins, the fickle husband, manages to get Geertje in his power; he uses her love for his children: "I wish you were their mother",⁸² speaks badly about his wife, touches her whenever they are alone and finally he rents a room so that they can be undisturbed for a couple of hours. Geertje's moods ranging from himmelhoch jauchzend to zum Tode betrübt are described very well. Sometimes the only thing that seems to matter is her love for Heins, at other times her conscience leaves her no peace. She is very naive but then

her old grandparents were not likely to have confronted her overmuch with the facts of life. Thinking about the causes behind Heins' unsuitable marriage she decides that Mrs. Heins must "have got round him with her money".⁸³ She dreams of going away together if their relationship comes to light, assuming that Heins would leave his house, business, children, just like that. Very naive is the thought: "If the Mistress knew about it would she be very angry?",⁸⁴ reasoning: her husband is happy, I care for her children, her household runs smoothly, what else does she want.

But Geertje is a book with a difference: Couperus' ladies sit in front of an open fire and 'révasseren' about life. Van Eeden does not want to go beyond the white waterlily; it suggests ladies in long white nightgowns with immaculate coiffures raising a glass with sparkling liquid while smiling into the eyes of a Don Juan, then curtain. Van Deyssel's Mathilde enjoys the physical side of marriage though she has her moods of aloofness, but then Mathilde is married. In de Meester's novel Een huwelijk, written fifteen years before Geertje, Frans says about his fiancée: "Her reserve was truly feminine, honest and chaste".⁸⁵

In Geertje for the first time we get the down-to-earth approach: Heins has rented a room so that he can go to bed with Geertje. The price is one guilder, the room is cold, their clothes hang on a chair. Not a trace of romanticising. Geertje is neither idol nor victim. Sex with Jan Heins is the joy and comfort of her life, it refreshes her, makes her feel proud and healthy.

Then Geertje becomes pregnant and Heins loses interest in her. Again Geertje reacts differently from what we expect. Her grandfather condemns her, her uncle and aunt call her a fool and Grandfather expresses the general feeling when he says: "You have been seduced, but it was not as if you were a child".⁸⁶ Geertje knows that it was never like that, but only Maandag the hunchback understands. For months she hopes that Heins will find a way of marrying her and when finally she realises that he has no intention of doing so, that in fact he has found another sweetheart, she does not hate him, she remains faithful to his memory. Neither would she take the easy way out by marrying Willem Heukelman a rich farmer from her village. Here too she is honest with herself and down-to-earth. Apart from his joyless character she cannot stand the thought of his touching her.

It is not surprising that Geertje loses her baby after all the tensions and suffering she goes ^{during} through her pregnancy. But it is disappointing that de Meester sends her back to her village towards the end of the book. With her experience of life he could have made her a helper in the kind of old people's home Heyermans must have dreamt about or an understanding nurse in a home for unmarried mothers. Perhaps the times were not quite ripe for this approach and in some ways Geertje is quite advanced.

In Een Huwelijk Frans, the hero, says to himself: "Women were people after all, weren't they?".⁸⁷ Geertje goes a good deal further. She has independent ideas about life however conforming her education was and she can enjoy sex without

inhibitions. It seems as if the fate of Blaauwbes' daughter and of Geertje is very much the same: Eefje dies and Geertje faces a living death in the intolerant village she had outgrown even before she went to Rotterdam. But in fact there is a tremendous difference between the presentation of the two women. Eefje remains a shadowy, passive figure who, via Potgieter, is condemned by her society. In 1905, the year Geertje was published, society at large had not changed drastically, but socialism was gaining a foothold and several writers started to see society differently. Society condemned Geertje, as it did Eefje; the difference is that in Geertje we also get the reverse, we also see society through Geertje's eyes. One could reason that this view was limited. Geertje was naive and not worldlywise, on the other hand she is pictured as a woman with a strong will, a warm heart and great integrity. The village saw Grandfather as a pillar of virtue. Geertje experienced that his religion lacked charity. Grandmother was loving and kind but she was too dependent on her husband and too weak to correct his wrong influence. Heukelman was respected for his money but Geertje shows us that money is not enough. Eefje and Lidewyde were just victims. After their sin and punishment we hear no more of them. But Geertje's character grows and her personality matures through her months of suffering. She did not become bitter and instead of cursing Heins she forgave him and she did not stop loving him.

We see a completely new approach: Here is a young working-class girl who has a relationship with a married man

and who expects his child. But it is not she who bears the brunt of the writer's condemnation, it is the hypocritical, uncharitable society that is exposed. Women were not just people, they could be superior people, even if they came from the working classes.

M. Scharten-Antink.

Many members of the working classes had an extremely hard life in those days, especially when they were in bad health. Emma Visscher and Eline Vere could travel round the world when their spirits were low but Geertje had little choice but to return to her "dorre ouwe" when her last employer treated her like a whore. And M. Scharten-Antink's Sprotje was the genuine product. Her mother worked in a stone cutter's yard before she was married and during her marriage she took in washing. Sprotje's two sisters worked in a factory, but Sprotje so hated the noise and the stench of the factory, besides her health was so weak that she was granted her one great wish, she became a maidservant. How unhealthy the work in factories could be we read in a pamphlet by Henriette Roland Holst: "There is a sixty percent miscarriage rate for the children of women workers in whitelead factories"; the same goes for workers in mercury and arsenic factories. The mortality rate of the children born alive of these workers is for the whitelead workers forty-five percent and for the mercury workers sixty-five percent. And lately it has come to light that in the flax factories in Ghent only thirty-five percent of the children of the women

employed in flex hackling remains alive. Of other jobs, which have the most detrimental consequences either to the woman or to the unborn child I will just mention the cigar and match factories. Out of seven workers in the match factories in Breda, who as a result of phosphorous poisoning suffered from grave illnesses and horrible facial mutilations, five were women".⁸⁸

Reading about Sprotje's long days and her tiring chores we realise once more how washing machines and vacuum cleaners have simplified housework. And the lack of sympathy and courtesy shown to a maid must have been universal. Margaret Powell recalls the experiences of her Mother's early years in service about ten years before Sprotje was published: "... how she went into it when she was fourteen years old in 1895, and how she had to work like a galley slave, an object of derision to the other servants".⁸⁹

The wages were so low that she always lived from hand to mouth, apprehensive that her health might fail or that she might lose her job. We never hear about holidays, leave alone paid holidays. Henriëtte Roland Holst has also something to say on this score in the same pamphlet: "Consider also what a labour agreement would mean for the class of domestic servants, which for a very large part consists of women. For these people there is at present complete lack of regulation concerning their working hours, whether they are overworked or not, how much free time they enjoy; all that depends entirely on the will of their employers. Fixed working hours, legally laid down, would be of great benefit to them".⁹⁰

When Sprotje becomes engaged she wants to be able to buy a few things for her future home and takes on the demanding job of chambermaid in a hotel. It nearly kills her. The first months of her marriage are very happy. Her husband earns enough for both of them and she can stay at home and take things easy for the first time in her life. Then the unavoidable happens. She becomes pregnant and the pregnancy destroys her last resources. She dies in childbirth. It seems a sad society in which only the fittest can survive the struggle for life.

Herman Heyermans.

Gradually, during the first years of the 20th century, writers start to write about the working classes, are on their side, whereas before the only people we got to know well in literature were from an aristocratic or bourgeois background. Servants were only 'brought in' to give us a better picture of their prosperous employers. In Potgieter's De Zusters Aunt Elsabé buys a room in an old people's home for an old servant who has served the family since she was a girl. Old Geesje accepts the offer eagerly and is very grateful. The readers get proof that Aunt Elsabé is generous, that she practices her Christianity. When in Van Deyssel's Een Liefde Mathilde remains ill for months after the birth of her son, Jozef, her husband, takes to sleeping with the nursemaid. After Mathilde has recovered the nursemaid is sent away. Jozef is fickle, but he has a sense of proportion.

A servant is a servant. Up to now the writer was automatically on the side of the 'haves'.

Heyermans, himself from Jewish origin, automatically seems to choose the side of the underdogs. Op hoop van zegen describes the lives of fishermen and their families in a Dutch fishing village around the year 1900. The play revolves around Kniertje, her relatives and friends. Kniertje's husband and two sons, all fishermen, have been drowned. She has two sons left: Geert, 26, and Barend, 19. Geert, while in the Navy, goes to a ball one night with his fiancée Jo. She is asked for a dance by one of his superiors and Geert advises her to accept. The superior 'retaliates' with calling Jo a whore. Geert's reaction is a normal, healthy, spontaneous one; he gives his enemy one in the eye. Geert is then sent to prison for six months and discharged from the Navy. When he comes home from prison his mother condemns him for his insubordinate behaviour. Geert is unrepentant. At last we hear an intelligent underdog speak up for himself and his fellow men. When in Herman Robbers' De roman van een gezin the workers of the prosperous Croes go on strike, we are only told what the strike does to the boss and his family. The strikers remain a nameless crowd, doomed to lose their cause. Robbers, the son of a publisher, is clearly on the side of the boss. Geert has been around, has done some reading on the subject and he has had time to think in prison. He has come to the conclusion that the Navy is not the noble institution many people suppose it to be. He has had to kill

an innocent man in Atjeh which he now finds distasteful and he throws his Atjeh medal out of the window. He thinks his prison sentence an injustice as he feels he was in the right to defend the good reputation of his wife-to-be. Later in the book when he is told off by Bos the local shipowner because he sings loudly at his mother's birthday party he tells Bos that he is free to do as he wants to do in his own house.

How does Geert's behaviour influence the women?

Kniertje, his mother, thinks him irresponsible. In a long life full of hardships she has experienced that servility pays. His girl friend is on his side.

Whereas Geert could not wait to go back to sea when he came out of prison, the second son, Barend, nicknamed the grocer, is frightened of the sea. He wants to take on any job he can get, but on land. His relatives and friends pester him on account of his cowardice, even his mother wants him to go to sea. This is rather difficult to understand as Kniertje has lost her husband and two sons and still has one son at risk. Better dead than a coward, seems the feeling. Is it related to primitive times, when the survival of the tribe depended on the bravery of the men? Barend might not have been able to get a job on land easily as he could neither read nor write, but this is not made clear.

Finally both Geert and Barend sail out, and during the stormy nights the women keep each other company, telling and retelling the stories of the relatives they have lost to the sea, and of the hardships the men suffer. Too high a price to

pay for fish one would say and yet one generation after another man the ships, many of whom must have been able to get a safe job on land.

The 'Op hoop van zegen' with Geert and Barend and their mates never returns. The ship's carpenter had warned Bos before the ship sailed, in the presence of Bos's daughter Clementine, that the ship was not seaworthy. Bos had not heeded this warning; he wanted the insurance money. Clementine who feels herself to be an accomplice remarks: "Father, I ask myself how I can ever have respect for you again - ever regain respect for myself?".⁹¹

Heyermans describes a similar theme in Ghetto where Rafael loses respect for his father who deceives his customers. Bos the shipowner and Sachel the old Jew count gain above everything else. The values of the children are better than those of the parents. This undoubtedly is why Heyermans wrote his plays about the sufferings in the fishing villages, the abuses in the Army, the miseries of old people, farm labourers and miners. To show the people what had gone wrong in society and to stimulate them to correct things in the future.

Miep in Eva Bonheur was exactly the opposite to Clementine Bos. Miep wanted to be worthy of her father's respect and maintain her self-respect. Heyermans had his own ideas about what respect meant. Miep became pregnant before she was married. This was regrettable but since Miep loved the father of the child Miep's parents did not blame her.

After the conception it became clear that the motives of Miep's lover in wanting to marry her were selfish and wrong. Miep decided not to marry him and her parents supported her, though they knew that the world strongly disapproves of an unmarried mother. There is a parallel with Geertje here. The only understanding and support Geertje received when she was pregnant came from a hunchback who had suffered so much through his defect that it had made him more sensitive to other people's unhappiness. Eva's father also had a physical defect and this made him more tolerant towards his fellow human beings. Miep and her family believed that to marry without love and respect was far worse than to marry just to give a father to the child. If you feel that your own standards are the right ones, says Heyermans, adhere to them. Self-respect is more important than approval from the world at large. Gradually the black and white conventional way of looking at society in literature is replaced by a more understanding approach whereby the individual and his or her circumstances are considered.

EMANCIPATION IN THE MIDDLE-CLASSES.

Herman Robbers.

Robbers, nourished by the art of the great French novelists Balzac, Flaubert, etc., inspired by a Van Deysel, Gorter, van Looy, has yet found his own form. He wrote preferably about "Vrijen en trouwen" amongst the prosperous bourgeoisie of the first part of the 20th century. The romantic period has given way to the realistic era and Robbers as a representative of realism shows us his men and women in their everyday pursuits.

De bruidstijd van Annie de Boogh, 1901, is the story of a bride who changed her mind about her bridegroom in the night before her wedding. Annie de Boogh is quite a round character; we get to know her quite well as we see her through her mother-in-law's eyes, her bridegroom and his brother's eyes, and as she analyses her own feelings all through the book.

Mrs. Holman's - her mother-in-law - verdict on Annie: "That Annie de Boogh was really an angel of a girl, nearly too sweet and good, she was beautiful, elegant, educated, not rich at the moment, but".⁹² And Mrs. Holman is looking forward to the future when the couple, married, will entertain the *crème de la crème* of Rotterdam and she with her "attractive personality" - her own words - will shine in their drawing-room. Mrs. Holman is shown as a somewhat shallow, fun-loving personality, easy-going - she finds no fault with her future daughter-in-law; she must be one of the rare women in literature who at sixty,

widowed and with her last son about to leave the house, is said to enjoy life and to look forward to the future.

From Louis' - her fiancé - opinions on Annie we learn more about Louis than we do about Annie. "She is beautiful, elegant, kind, sweet, intelligent, witty",⁹³ he remarks to Paul, his brother, using practically the same adjectives as his mother does, thereby indicating that their characters are similar. And later about the virtues Annie displays in her home "so willing, so sweet in association with other people, so devoted".⁹⁴ And he gives Paul his directions for use of this specimen into the bargain: "With this kind of girl one should have a solid conversation, act somewhat seriously, confidentially....".⁹⁵ Louis confesses that he had always thought he preferred a coquette to a serious girl but for marriage he had decided that the latter was better. Safety first, is undoubtedly what the Stock Exchange had taught him. "He revelled like a glutton invited for a good dinner"⁹⁶ is the spirit in which Louis was looking forward to his wedding night.

Paul sees life, sees people, sees Annie differently. Her eyes: ".... large, dark, soulful",⁹⁷ "....the spiritual beauty of her appearance".⁹⁸ Paul thinking about Annie feels understanding, respect, tenderness, happiness, ecstasy.

"One cannot grasp the soul in paint Or in words...." are Robbers' last words in this book. "It's all illusion". Robbers underrates himself. In the course of the book Annie has become "an open book" to us. We can understand how she

longed to get out of a house where her attempts at making the atmosphere more peaceful had failed completely. Louis was kind and understanding and Annie hoped that love would come in time. When she meets Paul she realises that Louis is only a substitute; she starts to dream about intimacy between Paul and her, whereas she could never bear it when Louis touched her.

And - times are changing - Robbers made her take the initiative. Very early on the morning of her wedding day she left the town of her bridegroom and travelled to the village of her beloved. She gave him the first kiss. And they lived happily ever after.

Meredith's The Egoist has much in common with De bruidstijd van Annie de Boogh in characterisation and plot. Meredith's heroine Clara Middleton also had a last minute change of mind against all odds when she began to see her husband for what he was: "Clara was young, healthy, handsome; she was therefore fitted to be his wife, the mother of his children, his companion picture He had wooed her ragingly; he courted her becomingly; with the manly self possession enlivened by watchful tact which is pleasing to girls. He never seemed to undervalue himself in valueing her".⁹⁹ Robbers' style is down to earth compared to Meredith's civilised urbanity, but they are saying the same thing: Annie was chosen by Louis and Clara by Sir Willoughby to set off the person and position of their husbands-to-be and as wives they were expected to spend the rest of their days catering to the comforts of their husbands. In the nick of time the fate of these

young women was happily settled. The readers can be satisfied.

But life is more complex than that. Meredith and Robbers knew how to save their heroines from their egoist bridegrooms, but they could think of nothing else to do for them. A life more occupied and interesting than that of a mere housewife never seems to have occurred to them in relation to intelligent young women.

De roman van een gezin, 1910, part one - De gelukkige familie, part two - Eén voor één - has basically the same motif as De bruidstijd van Annie de Boogh. The five Croes children grow up and start leading their own lives. All four marriages described in the book were unsatisfactory. Mother Croes was childish and immature; she was not an equal partner in the relationship with her husband. Daughter Noortje only saw the romance of marriage. She discovered that there is more to it when it was too late. Though by the end of the book the prospect of her divorce and remarriage is in view. Times - in this respect - are changing as well. Ru was more interested in the Stock Exchange than in his wife. Theo married beneath him and then he frets because his wife cannot share his literary interests. Hank, an intense young man, went to America to make his fortune. His descendants, Hank Kruses, are probably living it up on Long Island nowadays. Jeanne, unmarried, had the traditional role of looking after ageing parents, holding the family together, trying to find reward in sacrifice. The book ends with her early death. An ideal story for a woman's magazine.

People and situations are analysed extensively, but never in great depth. Very disturbing incidents like insanity, suicide, illegitimacy, do not occur.

Helene Servaes, 1914, deals with three triangular situations in love - De bruidstijd van Annie de Boogh had one (Louis, Paul, Annie), De roman van een gezin one (Piet, Karel, Noortje) - shortly Ina Boudier-Bakker and others will describe many more triangles.

The main triangle consists of Fokkema, Luuk van der Marel, Helene Servaes. Fokkema has an unsatisfactory marriage and falls in love with Helene. He toys with the idea of divorcing his wife in order to marry Helene, but finally decides against it. Helene then tries to love Luuk van der Marel, who wants to marry her but she is unable to forget Fokkema and she ends up by drowning herself. This concept of Helene's that there is only one man in the whole wide world who can make her happy is rather a romantic notion from a realistic writer, but he is covered as it were because we hear that Helene's father also committed suicide. Helene was unable to live with her grief, to accept life as it came. All the other people involved settled for second best. Four years after Helene's death Luuk married one of the younger Bottevelde ladies, twenty-five years of age, not bad looking. De Botteveldes were one of the most important families in the town. Luuk makes the most of it. Cecile Haardtsen, in love with Luuk, settled for his friend Ben. Dick Oosterous, Luuk's other friend whose chosen one had married a rather

undeserving husband, followed her wherever she went so that he might be at hand when she needed him. Each person acts in accordance with his own inner resources.

Robbers gives no spectacular new ideas on the role of women in general but there is a definite change in his approach to women and marriage. Sara Burgerhart and Lidewyde married men of money and status. Doortje's husband-to-be was a rich man. Annie de Boogh prefers an artist to a Stock Exchange expert. The accent has shifted to love. Fokkema seriously considered divorcing his wife in order to marry Helene Servaes. Noortje Croes did divorce her husband. The institution of marriage is becoming less rigid and the happiness of individuals is considered more important.

Ina Boudier-Bakker.

De klop op de deur is a very suitable book for examining the role of women as it describes several generations of family life.

To start with the Goldeweyn family: Father general practitioner in Amsterdam, wife Fransje, daughter Annètje who grows up in the 1850's and 60's. Fransje Goldeweyn's life is extremely restricted not only seen through our eyes but also through her own. She likes to have social meetings with other women. Her husband does not approve. She likes the theatre. Her husband thinks it a waste of money. She likes to walk

through the Kalverstraat on her own. It is not done by a decent woman. She likes skating, but since her marriage she has not had a chance. It is not ladylike. Her husband buys a house without consulting her. She hates it; it is oppressively small and has no garden. He calls her "eternally discontented".¹⁰⁰

Husband and wife do not talk things over in order to come to a joint decision. Father knows best, guided by tradition and convention. Fransje however does not question his patriarchal attitude. She blames her frustrations on town life and on her husband's character. Talking to Mrs. de Roos who runs a bookshop in the Warmoesstraat she says about Bosboom-Toussaint: "I do wonder what happens to a household when the woman is working. Blue stockings that is what they are It is not in a woman's character It is not done. We should leave that to men".¹⁰¹ The opinion of most men of that time. Fransje had not thought the problem out for herself, her answer is the conventional answer. She and later her daughter learn to play the piano because this was the thing to do in their circles, they did not learn because they had any talent. It reminds us of Top Naeff's Letje who had to play the piano every morning before breakfast in the cold parlour.

The first unconventional voice at this time came from one of Fransje's friends, Annebet Kooistra. A middle-class spinster with plenty of free time, she had read *Multatuli* and it had changed her life. Timidly but bravely, one evening at the Goldeweyn's she gave as her opinion that there ought to be

suitable work for every unmarried woman who wants to work.

"Woman's place is in the home" was the unanimous answer of all married couples present. But that same evening Goldeweyn asked his daughter if she would like to become a teacher.

Annètje however was not interested. She helped her mother in the household, saw her friends, read Dickens, went to balls and was content with her simple life. At this time she met her husband-to-be, the rich banker Frederik Craets. He had lived abroad for a long time, knew Paris well, and comparing Parisiennes with the girls from Amsterdam he found the conversation of the latter "fatuous, boring - as stiff as their wooden figures, pressed in the trammels of what one should and should not say to a man".¹⁰²

Rather a ludicrous idea: Here are all these girls who have been taught for years how to behave in the company of men with the underlying idea of letting them make a good catch, whereas when a 'connoisseur' comes along he finds the finished products fatuous and boring. It would be nice to think that this moulding is a thing of the past. But only in 1973 it said on the cover of a woman's magazine: You are going to a party: What to wear, what to say, what to do.

Frederik Craets was a man of his time in the way he assessed his future wife: "purity, innocence, ignorance concerning worldly matters, dignity"¹⁰³ were the virtues he went for. Annètje took leave of Karel de Roos, the friend of her childhood and youth "who was like herself"¹⁰⁴ and prepared for marriage.

Twenty-four of everything, and on the evening before the wedding Annètje, like Letje, expected some information from her mother: "Weren't you afraid when you were about to marry father?"¹⁰⁵ But like Letje's mother Fransje Goldeweyn found herself unable to answer the question. "...Those are the things every woman has to go through"¹⁰⁶ was her vague not very encouraging answer.

It is just as well of course not to expect too much in life. We don't hear about Letje's sexual experiences. Annètje's are described in terms of "defenceless surrender" on her side and "irrevocably taking possession" on the part of her husband. D.H.Lawrence would have approved of her complete passivity. But we are still in the 19th century. Annètje felt resigned to this side of her married life, greatly relieved probably that these hitherto unknown, unspoken things, blown up in her own imagination, had not turned out worse. Carry van Bruggen's Eva, little more than a generation later, with her conscious attitude towards life, expected too much and felt completely disillusioned with sex for years.

With Annètje's marriage Frederik's relatives and friends enter the book. It is difficult ever to forget the three Craets sisters, Louise, Adolphine and Caroline. Louise was good looking when young, and therefore had a high market value. She was engaged three times but each time she broke off the engagement as the physical side of the relationship did not appeal to her. We are left in the dark about the real reason. Was she frigid or a lesbian? Perhaps Louise did not understand

herself, psycho-analysis was not yet in vogue. Adolphine was plain. Her mother regretted this fact more than once in her presence and this gave Adolphine an inferiority complex. She did an unheard of thing by having a relationship with a servant. Her child did not live but the attitude of her relatives to this mistake was such that it broke her spirit. Caroline was of average attraction but no man desired her. So there they are, the three well-off spinsters, living together in a grand house in Amsterdam, needleworking their way through the days. By the time they were middle-aged Louise, the eldest, got some satisfaction out of the sense of responsibility she felt for her younger sisters, the visits of important friends, and her special brand of piety gave her a kind of sexual satisfaction. Adolphine at this time was longing for death, and Caroline left home for good to found an asylum for neglected animals as a second best, as motherhood had been denied her. "As an example of the morals and ideals of the 19th century with regard to womanhood, the motif of the three Craets sisters has an essential significance"¹⁰⁷ writes Dr. P.H.Ritter.

Not only the lives of purposeless spinsters however were exposed by Ina Boudier-Bakker. In an earlier work De Straat the writer describes how women can suffer from geographical limitations and a narrow social climate: The J.P's wife is miserable because her husband is unfaithful, the burgomaster's wife grieves as she is unable to have children, the town clerk's wife has two children but they have left for the colonies and

her longing for them makes her take to drink, the tax collector's wife has faithful husband and daughter but she wants more affection and appreciation from them than they give and it makes her sad and bad-tempered. The men suffer too but their work provides an outlet for their energy and thoughts.

Though of course it is often forgotten that especially when the emancipation of women started it must have been difficult for men to realise how some women felt about it. Men had been used to thinking of women as wives and mothers. The unmarried woman, far in the minority, could look after parents and brothers and sisters (Dorine in *De kleine Zielen*). It is one thing to feel:

Alle dinghe
Sijn mi te inghe¹⁰⁸
Ic ben so wyt

but how to explain that henceforward just a household would not satisfy her. Going back to Frederik Craets and *Annètje*: there is Frederik's friend Jacob Leedebour, teacher of classical languages with his unmarried sister Truida. He was a capable cellist in his spare time. When young he fell in love with a girl who happened to be a cellist too. Was he enchanted because they shared the same hobby? Not so. "Such an inelegant unfeminine pose, a woman with a cello between her kneesthe idea cured him instantly".¹⁰⁹ When Mina Kruseman made her speech: "I demand work for women, nothing but work. Work that is paid for with money. Educate women"¹¹⁰ Leedebour wrote venomous criticisms on the subject in the '*Amsterdamsche Courant*'. But his sister 'crossed in love' by Frederik Craets left the country to nurse

the victims of the Franco-Prussian War; later she travelled widely and went amongst other things to meetings on prostitution. Jacob's reaction is that she should not even know the meaning of the word. Truida felt she got only second best out of life - but she got that, an improvement on the generation before her - and we feel sorry for her but Jacob is also pitiful. He likes the Annètje type of woman: pure, innocent, well dressed, decorative and he cannot see that he does woman an injustice as he fails to see the human being in her and by doing so he misses out himself. Cloese, another friend of Frederik's, sees more sharply: "He was still a bachelor Sitting with Annète and her mother he thought: 'Such women are the best ones. Always charming, sweet. But their minds are asleep. Behind that facade I want the mind that thinks on a level with me' " ¹¹¹The new liberated man who wants more than just a wife and mother for his children. But Cloese never married!

Frederik remained the same patriarchal figure. He called the women's movement "a bonfire of besotted hysterical minds". ¹¹²Annètje was not so placid as she seemed to outsiders. When the husband of her best friend and their child died owing to venereal disease of the husband Annètje was furious. The thought of the ignorance with which their generation of women entered marriage seemed outrageous to her. And when Ibsen's The Doll's House came to Amsterdam Annètje was on Nora's side.

By the time their grandchildren grow up the fight as far as education was concerned had been won. Grandsons and

grand-daughters went to university as a matter of course.

Top Naeff.

In Ina Boudier-Bakker 80 jaar Anthonie Donker writes about the differences between Ina Boudier-Bakker and Top Naeff. Writing about the fact that Ina Boudier's theme is predominantly human imperfection he goes on to say: "... and it is perhaps the compassion which she brings to it - to the human imperfection - whereas in Top Naeff the sense of truth sometimes dominates the compassion. So one would perhaps be able to characterise them by saying that Top Naeff writes the requisitory, whereas Ina Boudier pleads extenuating circumstances".¹¹³ Using "perhaps" twice, Anthonie Donker finds it difficult to put the differences into words. For both writers describe the same kind of milieu, both have the same realistic approach and both are interested in the "usually so painful contrast between appearance and reality of a situation".¹¹⁴

However devoid of hope a situation may appear in a work of Ina Boudier-Bakker there is always some relieving factor: Eli Bag in Het beloofde land dies young, he leaves behind a woman who would have made him a loving wife, he has not been able to finish his life's project. But his integrity has remained intact. De Straat describes a collection of sad despondent women. The despondency is not taken away, but one of the women finds the

courage to take into her home an underfed Hungarian child. It is suggested that others will follow her example and thus helping others they will relieve their own distress. Letje Craets in De klop op de deur commits suicide because of an unhappy love. Her niece says scornfully that no man is worth it. Her mother receives comfort from the fact that her daughter had been capable of such an all embracing feeling.

Top Naeff has a different way of looking at people and situations. It is not so much that her sense of truth dominates her compassion; she has a fatalistic approach. In Voor de Poort there is only one thing in life that counts for Liesbeth the heroine, her love for Scheffer. When Scheffer marries another Liesbeth goes literally out of her mind. As a slightly demented spinster she finishes her days. Neither she herself nor anybody else derives any benefit from this love. Voor de Poort could have as a sub-title: "The waste of a life". Ina Boudier however quotes Gezelle's:

" 't gaat geen een verloren
Geen ding en dat bestaat". 114 A

The same holds for Top Naeff's Letje. The beginning of the book shows a grandmother, parents who bring up Letje à la convention and the Jones's. Letje is victim. We expect Letje, when she is grown up herself to snap out of it but no such luck. We leave Letje and her husband on their 25th wedding anniversary still obeying convention's rules as much as ever and up to their necks with the Jones's.

Top Naeff describes in Zo was het ongeveer how Letje

when it was published in 1926 received responses of two kinds: on the one hand the people who saw the book as an assault on Dutch family life, and on the other hand a group who "amused themselves with my innocent irony".¹¹⁵ The people who saw a well-meaning grandmother and two diligent parents looking after their offspring to the very best of their ability considered the writer's underlying mockery uncalled for. The others saw the book as a caricature of a Dutch bourgeois family where such things as originality, imagination, individuality were unheard of and perhaps a bit of an eye opener.

Grandma's wisdom sprang from a wealth of proverbs and proverbial sayings which she poured out over Letje with great gusto. "the phrases are used like counters, click-click-click,"¹¹⁶ says Richard Hoggart in a chapter 'An oral tradition' in his book The Uses of Literacy. Letje's parents were pillars of wisdom who could never be wrong themselves and who guided her every footstep. Letje's girlhood is a splendid example of a girl being conditioned to become a lady as against a young human being allowed to develop in harmony with her natural talents. As a tiny girl she has to sleep in hard curlers every night so that the next day the maid can parade her round the town. There she goes in her ermine coat, white boots and kid gloves with dancing curls. In the summer she carries a parasol. She is never allowed to explore a bit and to make herself dirty. When she is nine she gets piano lessons and when eighteen she becomes engaged to the son of her father's boss, as arranged by her mother. Letje makes a shy attempt to get some

sexual information out of her mother's seamstress, but she has no luck. This exemplary soul has been engaged for thirteen years herself, "He is not in a hurry I am glad to say"¹¹⁷ but she is still so chaste that she does not even recognise Letje's despair in her disguised questioning. The couple have a wedding in the French Church (though the bridegroom does not understand the language) and a honeymoon on the Riviera. Then the birth of the first baby, within a year, and the beautiful clichés about the helplessness of the father at that time: "He could not find a thing in his own home",¹¹⁸ "a man, in circumstances like these, was in the way wherever he went",¹¹⁹ "To a man a baby is not very interesting",¹²⁰ and one of Grandma's favourites "A man has an easy deal in the world".¹²¹

We part from Letje at the time when she is celebrating her 25th wedding anniversary in Paris with her husband. She spends this holiday worrying about what impression her Paris bought dress will make back home, if her husband will be in the awards and honours list next year and whether her daughter will be able to get her degree 'cum laudæ' as did the daughter of her best friend. She also comes to the conclusion that whereas she lived in the era where the parents rooled the roost, by now the era of the child has arrived. She has lost out. But then Top Naeff's heroines never win.

Jo van Ammers-Küller.

In De Opstandigen Jo van Ammers-Küller describes three generations of the Coornveldt family each separated by several decades; the first book starts in 1840, the second in 1872, the third in 1923.

The 1840 Coornveldt family consists of Father Lodewijk, Mother Aagje, eight children, a cousin from Paris living with them for some years and two servants. They live in Leiden. Father Lodewijk is the absolute ruler in this household. When he enters, the only comfortable chair in the house is placed near the fire for him, one daughter hurries to get his paper, another to find his glasses and tobacco. Then the household is silent, Father reads his paper, Mother Aagje - "At the age of forty-eight as a result of thirteen confinements the mother was bad on her legs and had difficulty in moving"¹²² - showed great respect for her husband and ruled the children with a firm hand.

When the nineteen year old orphan Marie Elizabeth Sylvain, the daughter of Lodewijk's sister, comes to join the family from Paris, we see the family through her eyes and they, confronted by a relative with different background, ideas and values, reflect in turn on their own values.

On the day the Paris cousin arrives Lodewijk shortens her name to Miebetje. "But I don't want to be called that!"¹²³ is her reaction. "I am the only one to have a will child", is Lodewijk's answer. "You, like all women in this house, have the duty of obedience". And Aunt Aagje adds that: "self-control and

obedience are the best virtues of us women". While eating dinner Father Coornveldt discusses with his sons what he has read in the papers, the women are not supposed to join in the discussion unless their opinion is asked. "What the papers said was no concern of women".¹²⁴ His wife supports him by quoting van der Palm: "A woman is just about clever enough if she knows when to get out of the way of a haycart".¹²⁵

All three sons fall in love with the lively, attractive Miebetje and all three propose marriage to her. She is only interested in David, a cheerful student, but when Lodewijk hears of this relationship he makes David swear never to marry his cousin under the threat of withholding his study allowance and this causes him to give in. His father wants him to marry a rich woman from an influential family. Lodewijk Coornveldt has taught his wife that to train the children's sense of duty and self-control "they should always be made to do those things they like doing least".¹²⁶ And that is why "Marie Elizabeth Sylvain, who could play the harp, translate Ovidius and whose quick fingers could change clumsy headgear into a fashionable hat was darning and knitting every single afternoon in the Coornveldt parlour bewailing the sad fate, that she was 'only a girl'." ¹²⁷ Not that she was treated any worse than her cousins who also spent most of their time doing household chores.

It is not as easy as it looks for the daughters of the rich Coornveldt to get a husband as the candidate must be strictly of their own class and meet with the approval of their father.

Saartje, the third daughter, falls in love with the son of her father's competitor. Her father does not approve of the match and that makes a marriage impossible. Jacoba, the second daughter, is pock-marked, so there are no suitors for her, but she finds her comfort in a fanatical form of religion. Keejetje, the pretty eldest daughter, is forced against her will to marry a doctor. She hates the profession, faints at the sight of blood, and dislikes the young doctor but her sense of duty and gratitude towards her father make her feel that she cannot refuse her father's choice for her. Miebetje's reaction to this marriage: "On the fourth of May in the year 1842 Keejetje Coornveldt, like Jephtha's daughter, sacrificed herself to her father's will".¹²⁸ And this incident more than anything else made Miebetje decide to leave her Uncle's house in order to go back to Paris. Long ago she had asked him to get her a post as a governess, but he refused: "would you really leave the family that has taken you in so lovingly and bring shame upon it by leaving it as an employée?".¹²⁹ One dark evening Miebetje fled the iron regime of her Uncle to find her own way.

Other women in literature who wanted to go a non-domestic way at this time were also thwarted. Potgieter never satisfied our curiosity about Anne's fate in De Zusters - 1844 - and the women in the Leicester cycle - started 1846 - gained no glory.

It was also in the eighteen forties Tennyson wrote

The Princess:

'Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
 Man for the sword and for the needle she;
 Man with the head, and woman with the heart;
 Man to command, and woman to obey;
 All else confusion.'

So sweet and uncomplicated it sounds, such lovely pictures it calls up, but only from a man's point of view. In this first book, the era starting in 1840, we see what it means in practice to women. When they are young they are not allowed an education in accordance with their abilities, often they cannot choose their own marriage partner, when they are married they have no say in the number of children they have or how to bring them up and till their death they are doing dull repetitive domestic chores. The alternative, remaining a spinster is even worse. It means you have to do other people's chores like Kaatje in the Coornveldt family who works from five in the morning till eleven at night. Woman's motto for this era is: You cannot win.

The highlight of book two - beginning in the year 1872 - is Nicolaas Beets' speech in Leiden about the "Emancipation of Woman". The wheels have started to turn; nobody would have dared to utter the phrase in Lodewijk Coornveldt's presence. Beets of course is on the side of the establishment; "Ehret die Frauen, sie flechten und Weben, Himmlische Rosen in's irdische Leben", is his theme. It never occurred to Beets who was wearing his rose coloured romantic spectacles that it might be unbearably dull for most women to plait roses for the rest of their lives and as for the Kaatjes: they had little chance to even sniff a rose. And how much people are still in the "Bij u, over u, zonder u" era as far as women are concerned is clear when Beets has finished his speech and a woman stands up to ask him a question: "... it seemed monstrous and incredible, it seemed more the phantom of an overwrought imagination than

a possibility".¹³⁰ These strong words are used when a lady stands up to ask the sensible question the speaker has conveniently refrained from answering: How about the women who have no man to plait roses for?

The woman was Miebetje Sylvain. Now a rich middle-aged lady she had come back to Leiden to further the cause of emancipation for women. The greatest difficulty was that the women themselves thought it very inferior to work for their living, only the working classes had need to do that. Education for women was also only in the first stage of development. When Lize the daughter of Dr. Wijsman and Keejetje Coornveldt wanted to become a doctor her father was totally against it and forbade it. She had to flee his house and with support from Miebetje she was able to go to University.

The woman who decided to choose a career in that period had a difficult time. Public opinion was still against them and a career meant a lonely life. Few men would risk proposing to a bluestocking and anyway marriage meant the end of the career. A woman could not have it both ways in those days. But at least there was a breakaway from the teachings of Rousseau and his supporters: "The whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to counsel them, to make life sweet and agreeable to them".¹³¹

Other books published at about this time were Lidewyde - 1868 - and Majoor Frans - 1874. Lidewyde's husband discovered her adultery and punished her without mercy; and yet the fact

that here we have a woman who seeks passion for passion's sake, who has no sexual inhibitions, one could see as an aspect of progress. Such women existed. After the meek and the mild, the grateful and the obedient a flash of the sexy woman.

Majoor Frans too shows a heroine with other than just egocentric and matrimonial preoccupations. Riding and the ancestral estate meant more to her than clothes and suitors. Most people saw her as an eccentric, were not ready for the change but we feel that by this time some people begin to rethink the role of women.

Book three starts in 1923 and describes the lives of Steven Coornveldt, Lodewijk's great-grandson, his wife Dorothee Wisdom, grand-daughter of Dr. Wijsman and Keejetje Coornveldt, and their six children.

Times have changed by now. Dorothee is a career woman and has her own busy lawyer's practice. The children, mainly brought up by a Nanny, are independent at an early age and can make their own choice as regards their study, work, friends and marriage partners. Only when Kitty, the beautiful third daughter, wants to become a dancer her father draws the line, because his idea of a dancer is a half-naked woman who exposes her body to lusty men. But paternal permissions have lost their importance and Kitty finds herself a job which pays for her dancing lessons.

By this time Steven and Dorothee are in their forties and Steven wants to separate from his wife in order to marry a young girl; Dorothee feels extremely sad and reflects on her marriage: "We were going to be a 'modern' couple an example

of the new relationship between husband and wife but deep down I have always known that it left an empty space for him when I went to meetings or was working in my room all evening, that I gave up something essential between us that could not be made good by mental satisfaction, success or praise".¹³²

Opinions have changed drastically by now. Eva Bonheur - 1917 - has decided that it is better to have an illegitimate child than to make it legitimate by marrying its father whom she cannot respect any more. Letje - 1926 - experiences that her adolescent son and daughter take very little notice of her. They go their own independent ways. Eva - 1927 - has had the courage to leave her husband on account of incompatibility. But Dorothee Wisdom is more emancipated in a way than any of these women, because as a well paid professional woman she is financially independent.

When we make up the account of the three periods we find that in the view of Jo van Ammers-Küller the 1840 woman had only one choice: the household; the 1872 woman could choose, either household or career; the 1923 woman could at last combine the two, but when as in Dorothee's case her marriage goes wrong, centuries of dedicated wife-and-mother forbears make her blame herself. She goes as far as blaming the Emancipation of Woman for having gone too far. It does not occur to her that maybe it has not gone far enough.

By the end of the 1923 edition we feel as it were at the crossroads of the Emancipation. What will happen to the

daughters of Steven and Dorothee? Jo van Ammers-Küller anticipated this curiosity and wrote Part Two De Appel en Eva - 1930 - It deals mainly with Puck, the eldest daughter, intelligent, woman of many talents. In 1925 she is in her mid-twenties, has a very good job as a lawyer, drives her own car and unlike the first career women who were totally dedicated to their profession, had a busy social life. She feels too sophisticated for marriage. Her father and mother are divorced by now and she has seen so many marriages turn sour that she has no faith left. Then the friend of her youth Han van Doeveren returns from the Dutch East Indies, she decides to risk the experiment of marriage after all and goes back with him to the East. The exhausting climate and above all the extreme mental boredom make her ill and Han has to give up his job for the sake of her health. They return to Europe where he gets a technical job in Paris and she a job as a secretary in a famous fashion house. The work fascinates her and she does it well, so much so that after a year she is offered a partnership with a salary more than twice as high as her husband's. At the same time her husband is transferred to a small village in Holland. And now comes the crucial moment in their marriage: Must she give up the chance of a lifetime for him or must he give up his not so well paid but interesting work for her? "And she knew, if she used her strong will, she would probably be able to force Han to give up his work for hers. But if she did that, she would violate the best of his love. For it was an elementary law for a man that he should be the head of the family, that it had to be

he who cared and earned a living and made the decisions in the last resort. And what was really important for a woman was not her zest for work or her career, but the drive of her heart".¹³³

When we compare this part of the book with contemporary literature we find very much the same attitudes. In De dood van Angèle Degroux - 1933 - Angèle and de Blécourt are equals, but only up to a point. Angèle would have had to follow de Blécourt, lived where he lived, fallen in with his preferences. We could not see de Blécourt arranging his life around Angèle. The same - in our opinion - goes for Het land van herkomst - 1935. What if Jane had been an archeologist who wanted to excavate in Mexico? Emancipation of a kind had been reached in the 1930's, but there it stopped and quite a few people thought that it had gone too far.

Kate Millett in Sexual Politics talks about the apparent causes of this counter-revolution. She explains that the emancipation had concentrated on altering educational patterns, on acquiring the vote for women, on changing legal forms but that nobody had questioned temperament and role differentiations. "Basic attitudes, values, emotions - all that constituted the psychic structure several millenia of patriarchal society had built up - remained insufficiently affected, if not completely untouched".¹³⁴

In other words: It may take another hundred or more years before Han would say to Puck: "Of course you must keep the job, I'll find something else and as I am the one who wants children I suggest you train somebody else in your business as a stand-in for when you have the children, and if we cannot find a reliable Nanny I shall look after them".

EDUCATED WOMEN AND THEIR RELATIONSHIPS.

Carry van Bruggen.

Kate Millett's remarks about the partial emancipation of women before the Second World War (see page 84) refer especially to Carry van Bruggen's heroines. Carry van Bruggen was an educated woman, she acquired the vote, legal forms were changed in her time but neither men nor women had by then questioned temperament and role differentiations, the "basic attitudes, values and emotions of a patriarchal society". Progressive women had to find their own way as their mothers in most cases had still belonged to the old order and we find this reflected in the fiction of the time. Ina in Een coquette vrouw says: "... unconsciously she adjusted herself to the attitudes she had seen in the days of her youth at home: Mother had always been silent when Father spoke, had accounted for her deeds, had asked for his permission for every single thing - a purchase, an outing, a visit, and subjected herself to his refusals, she had had respect for his work and his sleep, even for his chair and his teacup and she had imprinted this on the children".¹³⁵ It is no wonder that a woman coming from this background, with most of her friends apparently happily settling down in the same way, is confused when this kind of life does not satisfy her and when she does not see clearly how she can change it.

Old pre-emancipatory attitudes and ideas persist in her women characters. In Een coquette vrouw: "...that she had

to ask and he to assent, that he gave in to all his own wishes but she not to hers did not trouble her and did not at all strike her as something wrong or unreasonable and when he only spoke a single word of passing appreciation she even felt the full charm of marital servitude".¹³⁶ This masochistic feeling Ina has towards her husband she also shows while looking after her baby: " if it cried at night and if she felt tired or had a headache, she did not complain but she rejoiced secretly about the pain of the sacrifice".¹³⁷ There is also a lack of openness in several respects, especially in Eva. When as a girl Eva is concerned about sexual questions she remarks: "But you can never ask it in words and they will never answer it in words".¹³⁸ When Eva's brother David writes poems and reads them to her he pretends that a friend of his has written them. Both know better but they keep up the pretence to prevent embarrassment. In some ways Eva is still extremely prudish and naive when she has become a teacher. When her colleague Bauk tells fellow teacher Ebner about her missed periods and possible pregnancy Eva thinks: "Oh Bauk Ebner has never been married Perhaps he does not even know what you are talking about"¹³⁹ and there Eva bursts into tears. Then there is the negative feeling about nakedness. Discussing with a friend undressing for a doctor Eva says: "I have not wanted it either perhaps I would have got a scholarship otherwise, like David, like my brotherbut you had to be medically examined for it and I did not want that It is the shame and it is also a humiliation".¹⁴⁰ She felt the same when the doctor was a woman. When her child is born her husband

and the doctor are present: "And there stood Ben, stood Jaap, two men in their dignity, upright, dressed I was not a moment without shame".¹⁴¹ The fact that bare can be beautiful and that however dignified a man looks he can never bear a child or even have one unless a woman agrees to present him with one does not seem to occur to her.

Carry van Bruggen's heroines always look for lords and masters in their marriage partners, never for equals. This might be partly due to the fact that Carry herself as a Jewish girl, an outsider, never had the status and the popularity she longed for as a child but it also seems a hangover from Victorian times, the ivy that clings to the oak tree. Heleen writes to the man she loves: "You must not believe, what people sometimes say, that we girls because of our liberation and mental growth, our so-called emancipation, are changed in our being and that we don't want a lord and master any more to see above us and to serve I have hankered for the man whom I would approach from an inferior position, but who would understand and recognise my own value and who nevertheless would have the ability and the will to master me"¹⁴². This 'superior male' sentiment is rather difficult to understand in Carry van Bruggen. Superior intellectually, emotionally, materially, with regard to greater sincerity, sophistication, sense of truth? Would not the dominant, authoritative male find it impossible to let his wife develop according to her own values and talents? Or does she simply want him to be superior so that his superiority can reflect on her? It looks like it in

De coquette vrouw: "She - Ina - admired him because he was so sure of himself; what strength, what greatness showed in so much self confidence He, the adult, that man of authority who gave his opinion in public and to whom people listened And at the same time how high did he stand above her"¹⁴² A and "Do you really love me Egbert? she whispered, such a big man who loves such a little girl?"¹⁴³ By the time Carry van Bruggen writes Eva she does not need a superior man any more. By now she has enough confidence in herself and enough experience in life to appreciate quite different qualities like understanding and tenderness. Eva is also her first character who comes to terms with sex.

So far, in the works of literature we have discussed, sexual relationships have never been described outright. Illegitimacy only happened to the Geertjes and the Eefjes i.e. in the working classes. Adolphine, the second Craets sister, did have an illegitimate pregnancy but her relatives treated her with such disgust that it mentally scarred her for life. It simply did not happen to the Saartje Burgerharts or the Annètje Goldeweys. They were nice girls. Men could get away with passion - Ruardi - but for women there were different rules - Lidewyde. Contemporaries of Carry van Bruggen did not go into the subject deeply, as if they were not ready to bring it out into the open. We see Angèle Degroux' desire for de Bleécourt flare up and then die down again while they are seated opposite each other in a restaurant. Jo van Ammers-Küller

tells us most there is to know about the relationship between Han and Puck in De appel en Eva but next to nothing about the sexual side. Annie Salomons discusses all manner of man-woman relationships but she skips sex. Nico van Suchtelen's hero, Joost Vermeer, in De stille lach gives a very progressive blueprint concerning the new emancipated man and woman:

- "1. A woman should have the same rights and duties in all respects as a man.
2. The purpose of the education of every woman should be her economic independence.
3. Marriage should be a completely free alliance but for the equal obligation for both parents to look after the children".¹⁴⁴

When Joost finds his ideal woman he wants to express his love as fully as possible, including physically. His friend Elisabeth is a modern, independent woman but she is not ready to see it his way. For so long sex had been taboo as a subject of open discussion and the accepted idea was that it meant fun for a man and children for a woman. Elisabeth saw marriage as too restricting for her character - "one human being is never enough for another"¹⁴⁵ - and she was afraid that sex without marriage would mean the end of their beautiful relationship. After Joost had got out of her what he wanted, his interest in her would wane, she feared. This idea that man is the hunter and woman his prey is humiliating to both sexes. It implies that woman has only one worthwhile thing to give and man can only appreciate one aspect of her.

Woman fears that having given him what he wants she will be left behind bitter and disillusioned while he goes to fresh hunting grounds. History has shown us the varied aspects of men and women. Walt Whitman's words "I am large. I contain multitudes" refer to both sexes. Carry van Bruggen's heroines are also confused about sex. In Enkele bladen uit Helene's dagboek Helene says things like "...but more often I know that there is no happiness which can surpass the torment of my unappeased desire"¹⁴⁶ and "I desire the unappeased desire for his kisses".¹⁴⁷ Helene explains on the last page why she prefers imagined love to real love: "Tomorrow eyes of people who found each other in the deep night will avoid each other". It looks as if Helene has experienced sex as a shameful thing so that dreams now satisfy her more than reality. Ina's initiation in Een coquette vrouw is not very joyful either "... she felt weak and frightened, without desire, without the will to resistance And so she complied with his will".¹⁴⁸ Little Eva was much disturbed by the whispered obscenities about sex she heard as a schoolgirl. As a married woman her sexual life was far below her expectations, only when she was middle-aged she experienced for the first time sexual fulfilment. Carry's men are more overcome by sexual desire than her women. It says about Rudi and Roosje in De Verlatene: "... he felt that he desired her more now than she him, because he was a man and knew".¹⁴⁹ The Victorian viewpoint, that a woman is responsible if a man 'falls for her' is also still with us: "Men are no wiser, but a woman should know that she must leave married men alone".¹⁵⁰

For Carry van Bruggen sex was inseparably bound up with love. But her idea of love was extremely romantic and not really feasible. "Everything concerning love, should be noble and sublime, as in the old books, there the loud laugh should be hushed, the coarse gesture should cease and become graceful, and each word should be of a select harmony. He was the Knight and she was the Bride, the delicate, sweet, modest, the immaculate one, perfect in every virtue".¹⁵¹ This must be an ideal surely, not a reality earthdwellers can strive for. Even the Holy Communion table simply offers daily bread and vin ordinaire.

We see Carry van Bruggen as a woman and as a writer at the crossroads of emancipation. So far we have discussed the ballast she had to drag through life as she was still partly rooted in the old order. Now we will analyse what was new in her work.

Dr. M.A.Jacobs in Carry van Bruggen, haar leven en literair werk - 1962 - thinks Een coquette vrouw rather an inferior work compared to Heleen. Dr. Jacobs writes that the book is so autobiographical as to practically disclose to the general public Carry van Bruggen's own unsatisfactory marriage, that it presents a caricature of her divorced husband and that it is written out of thirst for revenge. She sees Ina as Heleen en négligé. But in that case Heleen is rather overdressed, and errs on the other side. In her high minded search for truth and ideal love she never comes down to earth. Ina is a very good example of a young woman who in popular terms has everything

she could wish for and yet feels dissatisfied. Husband, son and home are not enough. This is the first time in our literature this problem has been posed. She tries writing but she feels really too isolated in her home situation to have much inspiration, she tries admirers but she shies back from adultery and the friendships fade out. For the first time a woman questions her rôle in marriage. Is it her task to sort out his laundry, to sew buttons on his clothes? Is it the end of the world when she misses the train and is home too late to prepare dinner at the usual time? "Why should they as a respectable couple always share the same friends, visit people together, why couldn't she go there without him?".¹⁵² At times she goes back to her housewifely duties because "We women do have slavery in our blood, from our mothers and grandmothers and ancestors".¹⁵³ We see the alternation of guilt feelings and rebellious feelings and we agree with Dr. Jacobs when she says that Ina is neurotic and hysterical but what woman who is as sensitive and gifted and confused as Ina standing at the crossroads could be placid and well-balanced? In Eva more 'heilige huisjes' are demolished. When Eva first comes to town as a teacher she lodges with relatives and she is bemused by her cousins' obsession with clothes: they must be "modern" and "chique", "the newest" or "something special". She refers to it again when she considers moving in with more congenial people "Oh to be able to live where you could kick your red velvet hat into a corner, where you would not get sick and tired of the fashion illustrations and the dressmaking

patterns, the materials, the lace, the whalebone stiffeners, the bows, the artificial flowers, the scent".¹⁵⁴ Eva does not see motherhood as the be all and end all of a woman's life, she also sees disadvantages in it: "In the Mother the Human Being is lost, the Human Being goes bankrupt".¹⁵⁵ Eva does not even condemn homosexuality. Discussing it with a friend who remarks: "But it is sterile, isn't it?" Eva answers: "Why sterile? It need not always be a child surely. Feeling and enthusiasm inspiration that is reality, that is result as well".¹⁵⁶

Carry van Bruggen's women are torn between the old order and the new. Marianne in Uit het leven van een denkende vrouw written under the pseudonym Justine Abbing is another example of this dichotomy. Marianne studies and writes, looks after husband and children and is an exemplary housewife. But gradually she becomes exhausted, not so much because of the variety of her tasks but because she gets no support for her intellectual work, neither from her family nor from outsiders and this makes her doubt herself. Marianne, like her fellow heroines, is potentially an emancipated woman, but her relatives and friends, still stuck in their conventional groove, will not let her be. Dr. Jacobs makes a somewhat mysterious remark about her: "Marianne is a victim of the incompletely realised emancipation of women and seems in that respect somewhat behind her times".¹⁵⁷ Does she mean that by 1920 complete emancipation had become a fact? Carry van Bruggen does not only challenge the domestic role of women, but also her role in marriage generally, she indicates that it is more honest to

end a marriage when there is no affection left than to carry on on a routine basis. She rethinks the concept of motherhood and finds positive words on the subject of homosexuality. And last but not least, she speaks in an unveiled way about sex. She infers that children should be given sex education and she shows that sex can be joyful and fulfilling for a woman too.

Annie Salomons.

'Si conden bi malcander niet comen' is the theme running through nearly all the works of literature of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th century we have considered so far; either the men and women concerned were unable to marry each other or they did marry and regretted their choice of partner so that they were not in fact together with the person they thought they had chosen.

'Het water was veel te diep' can stand for manifold difficulties; In Lidewyde it was incompatibility, in Een Liefde Mathilde was disillusioned by her husband's unfaithfulness, Eline Vere was deterred by the demands that love would make on her. Extase denied the wholeness of woman and split her up into body and soul, van der Welcke's marriage in De Boeken der kleine zielen was founded on a code of honour and it proved too small a base, Helene Servaes and Geertje fell in love with married men

who decided to stand by their first choice, Top Naeff in Voor de poort described unreturned love.

Annie Salomons specialised in this genre. She wrote several books and volumes of short stories, all concerned with relationships between men and women that had no future. Many of the problems between the sexes which seemed insurmountable in her time do not seem great obstacles today: there is the short story Herfst in the collection Daadloze dromen: a woman of thirty-two breaks off her engagement with a man of twenty-five because of their difference in age. In those days this difference was accentuated by the fact that a woman's clothes and behaviour were based on her age. In our time her attitude would probably be: If he is happy why should I worry. In the same volume is the story Weerzien about a doctor who goes abroad to widen his professional experience, leaving behind his fiancée. His absence causes a rift between them and as he gets older he realises that he has made the wrong choice in putting his ambition before his personal happiness. Probably this problem would not have arisen either today. A student marriage would have been the answer. Problems as in the story Over and in the book De oude Schuld will be with us as long as we have marriage in its present form. Over deals with the problem of the spinster who falls in love with a married man and De oude Schuld shows the difficulties of a woman who is married to an invalid. It is the struggle between loyalty and selfishness.

Nena and George O'Neill, a husband-and-wife team of

anthropologists, wrote their book Open Marriage, published in 1973, on this subject. No one, they claim, can expect to fulfil all the needs of another human being; no one can be totally committed to one other person. By allowing each partner individual friends and interests outside their own relationship, the 'open' marriage, they say, acquires a stability and strength denied the closed marriage with its unspoken stresses and secrets. Since the O'Neills allow the possibility of extra-marital affairs it also presupposes a great deal of tolerance from one or both partners.

Life of course is not as straightforward as this.

What happens to the stability and strength of the 'open' marriage when the married man transfers his love to the spinster and when the invalid's wife decides that she will live with a healthy man for a change. Marriage means commitment now and in the 1920's.

Langs het geluk gives more examples of unsolvable relationships, some classic cases in fact: In Levensdwang a marriage is not feasible on account of the class barrier and in Impasse the mad partner - who does not conveniently die as in Jane Eyre - stands in the way of a second marriage. Avondwandeling shows a one man's woman who has decided to cling to the image of her man until the end of her days, rather like Letje to Willem Leevend but without Letje's rapid consumption. This type of woman is rather unfashionable now. Ballingen deals with the special problems of white people in the former Dutch East Indies. A Dutchman hires a Japanese girl on a five year's contract. She looks after him well but he has guilt feelings: How can he

face his Dutch girl friend when he goes back. The fact that it was degrading for any woman to be possessed by a man in this manner never occurred to him. We find the same in du Perron's work. A coloured girl is just a body, a worker, an object; a white girl from your own social class is a person. Now that colonies are becoming a thing of the past and nation^{al}ism is stimulated in the new countries the rôle of their women is gradually changing as well. Also in this volume is the story Bevrijding: the husband is happy in Indiã and sees it as a land with opportunities, the wife cannot get used to the climate. As in Jo van Ammers-Küller's De appel en Eva the husband decides to give up his promising job in order to go back to Europe.

Very few marital and premarital troubles are solved in Annie Salomon's work. Her autobiographical book Herinneringen van een onafhankelijke vrouw is no better in this respect. It deals with three aspects of the relationship between man and woman: affection on an intellectual basis, on a physical basis, and the kind of affection that an older woman might try to cultivate in herself for a man who does not really attract her, for the sake of marital status and her wish to have children. All through Herinneringen van een onafhankelijke vrouw the narrator is split up between her head and her heart. During her first year at University she spends much time with a fellow student, a 'homo spiritualis'. They read Plato, Hegel and Spinoza together and feel completely happy in each other's company. The young man dies. His death seems to state: Love on a purely

intellectual basis is impossible; there is no future in such a relationship. A few years later, in Florence, she meets a medical student who is only interested in her as a woman. The split becomes very apparent now as she cannot deny her intellectual nature but at the same time enjoys being treated as a woman. Under his influence her values seem to change: "I was used to being appreciated by my friends for my intellectual capacities so that they only noticed the girl in the second place"¹⁵⁸ she reflects and "So far, between my friends and me, we had always aimed at equality and when they sometimes talked about typically feminine characteristics I knew that they meant foolish, frivolous, brainless creatures and saw me solely as human being, as intellect".¹⁵⁹

He, Joost, has this opinion about study for women: "It's a fashion, like keeping little dogs or like philanthropical and social work"¹⁶⁰ and more personal "You are too nice to know so much",¹⁶¹ until he finally shows his true colours: "I don't like the fact that you know so much more than I do".¹⁶²

As in Jo van Ammers-Küller's and in Carry van Bruggen's work we can apply Kate Millett's theory here: Equality for women was not evenly distributed over all areas of life. Education was one of the first things granted, but education by itself was not enough. How were women to apply this education, how should they fit it in with marriage. Elize Wijsman in the 1872 part of De Opstandigen was satisfied with being just a career woman. Annie Salomons, two generations later, experiences that educated young men are still not interested in blue-stockings. This Joost

has even a Victorian touch: "You women have to forgive us so much";¹⁶³ the concept that men, though superior, allow themselves different moral standards from women and that women though inferior are supposed to deal with these lapses in a superior way: forgiveness. One of the few times when self-controlled Annetje in De klop op de deur shows anger is when the life of her best friend is wrecked by her (friend's) husband's V.D. A healthier reaction.

But Joost is an attractive male and the heroine finds herself in an emotional turmoil. One moment she says: "But how can a woman love a man, completely and fully, if she cannot respect him and humble herself and look up to and depend upon the man in all respects?",¹⁶⁴ the next moment when she realises that he does not want her to do any 'approaching' she reacts quite differently: "... was a girl never a being who herself felt and wanted....".¹⁶⁵

And even now, a century after Elize Wijsman, the mentality of many men has not changed. Heather Jenner, who has been running her own marriage bureau in London since the 1930's, writes in an article in the Sunday Times of 28th January 1973: "They(men) still don't like career girls, I find it hard to place women doctors. And if their wives do have jobs, they like it to be amateur rather than professional - an interior decorator rather than an architect, say".

Affection on a purely physical basis has no future either. Annie Salomons goes on to describe the difficulties

of a spinster past her prime in a society where marriage is the rule. For years she has been happy doing satisfying intellectual work but gradually she loses interest and feels unfulfilled. We get a very good picture of a woman who appears bright and breezy, young for her age to the world around her - nobody must guess how she feels, she does not want to be pitied - but who in reality feels empty as she has lost her sense of purpose. Futile things become important: the fact that she has no man to fetch her coat from the cloakroom after a concert, no man to get her railway tickets. It is difficult to decide which draws her more strongly to marriage: her longing for a family of her own or the pull of society.

Society has never liked spinsters. In the Middle Ages many more spinsters than married women were burned as witches. Later, if a woman were unattractive physically, people would say that no man wanted her, if she were unmarried but goodlooking she was considered choosy. Nowadays an unmarried woman may be suspected of lesbianism. A girl becomes a nun to forget an unhappy love affair. The positive view is rarely taken; women may claim commitment to the Church, dedication to work, in fact they are often considered 'leftovers'. Admiration for women who have the courage to stay alone rather than accept a secondrate offer is seldom found.

Annie Salomons' spinster is about to marry her second choice when she realises that a yearning for marital status and children is not a firm foundation for marriage. Though a modern

educated woman, remnants of the patriarchal attitude are still very apparent. "Something in us still requires the whip"¹⁶⁶ she remarks, reflecting on the gentle nature of her fiancé and she comes to the conclusion that women have lost the ability to sacrifice. The old masochistic idea was that women got satisfaction from giving up their own wishes. Compare the marriage of Keejetje Coornveldt in De Opstandigen.

By this time the vote has been won, higher education is open to women and several economic and social reforms in favour of women have been introduced. These measures could not fail to affect the man-woman relationship. When one partner in a partnership gets a better deal this should mean that the whole partnership gains by it. It should mean growth. But growth has not only rewards and pleasures, it frequently means giving up something familiar and satisfying. Annie Salomons tends to take the conventional view; she stresses again and again the good and familiar things that have been lost in the name of Progress. Though she is grateful for being an educated woman, she often feels that this very education has made her selective in choosing a marriage partner. Occasionally she rebels, for instance where she realises that she as a woman can do no approaching. She stands with one foot in the past and one foot in the present, and she is not sure which way to go.

Annie Salomons is good at stocktaking, at describing in a realistic way the relationships of her time. She lacks the vision of a seer. Masculine and feminine are still at

opposite poles in her work. A.H.Maslow in Motivation and Personality brings the poles together when he talks about his view of ideal relationships in which the dichotomies are resolved and the individual becomes both active and passive, both selfish and unselfish, both self-interested and self-effacing.

PART II.

In Part II women are fighting for freedom and independence, though still to a large extent within the framework of marriage. Step by step they advance. Women can now live by themselves and travel unchaperoned as seen in Couperus and Marsman, divorce takes place in the writings of Couperus and abortion is practiced in a novel by Jeanne van Schaik-Willing. Clare Lennart discovers that a woman can be a person in her own right though she is married; men discover that women are people, sometimes superior people as in Marnix Gijzen. Anna Blaman is the first 'roldoorbreker'. Her women are free: emotionally, sexually, financially, but only we feel because the writer is a lesbian and therefore herself not dependent on men. The regional authors belong chronologically to Part II, but their women characters belong to Part I. Nine van der Schaaf and Antoon Coolen's women are housekeepers and mothers and as in Part I, the heroines of Coolen and De Man are punished severely unless they conform.

THE ARISTOCRATIC WOMAN.

Couperus.

We shall take Eline Vere at its face value as this is not the place to speculate how much Eline Vere was in fact a reflection of the character of the writer at the time when he

wrote the book. Insiders do not agree on this aspect anyway. Van Tricht wrote: "Much more important as self portraits are Eline and Vincent. They are the only ones who are drawn from within, their feelings and introspections are so subtle that they, at this stage of Couperus' development as a writer, can only be selfdescription".¹⁶⁷ But Garret Stuiveling in the May 1963 edition of De Gids wrote to the contrary: "without being able to say exactly which place Louis Couperus holds between them all, one experiences him as one of them. There is not the least indication for identification with Eline, as Van Tricht argues".¹⁶⁸ Couperus himself in Metamorfose states: " and all that was most gentle, tender and delicate in his own soul became the soul of Mathilde (read Eline), so that they became as one person".¹⁶⁹ To us Eline Vere was a member of the Dutch aristocracy who lived around the turn of the century.

Compared to Eline Vere the problems of her predecessors Lidewyde and Mathilde in Ben Liefde - seem quite straightforward and tangible. Lidewyde sins against the moral standards of her time and she is punished for it. We may sympathise with her when her adultery is discovered, we may disagree about the form the punishment took but as she was found out punishment was unavoidable. Mathilde expected too much from life and van Deyssel shows us how she lowered her standards; her husband was not the centre of the universe but a human being and Mathilde had to come to terms with this reality. Lidewyde and Mathilde were healthy women. They had difficult times, they rebelled, but

basically they could look after themselves. They were bourgeois women, created by bourgeois writers, the kind of women who can pull themselves together and accept life with its difficulties.

Eline Vere is different. Today she would be sent to a psychiatrist who might point out to her that she was in need of responsibilities, that it was lack of purpose that made her ill, but her relatives and friends, men and women alike flourish on much money and few responsibilities, they are only tired by pleasures, never by work. A lot of time and thought of especially the unmarried young women goes into their clothes so that they can shine at their balls and dinner parties; most of them sing, play an instrument or draw a little but nobody takes it seriously, they travel - Eline goes to Spain and France and lives in Brussels for some time and Betsy, her sister, goes with her family on holiday to Algiers - pleasure is the keyword.

Heroines from the past seem to fill their days in very much the same way but in their case there is an everpresent sense of duty. Sara Burgerhart can dance, sing, play the piano and the guitar, but when she reads it is stressed that she does not just read for relaxation but in order to widen her knowledge and to improve her languages. When she is nineteen she can sew and run a household. Potgieter too would put duty before pleasure for both men and women. And even if Majoor Frans had been rich we could not imagine her idling her days away like the young women in Couperus' *The Hague*.

But Couperus, an aristocrat himself, draws the life of

Eline Vere and the lives of her relatives and friends from the inside and we cannot doubt that this was just how they lived at that time. The atmosphere reminds us of Bordewijk's Rood Paleis where Bordewijk often mentions this fin-de-siècle mood without being able to describe it clearly. It seems to be something in the air which does not affect the strong but weakens the weak who feel that they lack a sense of purpose, that life is not worth living. This mood disappears with the First World War. Couperus, talking about his creation of Mathilde (Eline) in Metamorfose uses words like tragic and destiny. Eline herself puts it similarly when she talks about "being pushed down a sloping path". Couperus ascribes her mental illness to hereditary weakness and indeed none of the usual reasons for unhappiness such as extreme poverty, unhappy love affairs, or marital difficulties are present. Van Tricht has remarked on this: "Eline and Vincent Vere are different from the others. Only in them is the worry without reason, the indolence, the languishing, the fatalism, in short the inability to live a full and well adapted life".¹⁷⁰ This also means that nobody understands her when she talks about her difficulties. Once, at the beginning of the book, Eline confesses to her matter-of-fact healthy brother-in-law how melancholic she feels, how her life seems devoid of purpose. He does not really understand her and there is no mention again of her discussing her difficulties with anybody. Today a professional listener might have helped her through psycho-analysis and/or drugs and she might have been able to lead a more or less healthy life.

Eline so overshadows the book that it is easily forgotten how comparatively smoothly the lives of the other characters run. All the pleasure-loving young women marry men from their own small, wealthy, aristocratic coterie; all these marriages Couperus describes as happy marriages which makes Eline Vere's fate look even blacker and which also shows that there is nothing wrong with the group, but that Eline is a special case. Besides, the men seem to have very few responsibilities either. Eline's brother-in-law goes horse riding in the morning, spends the afternoon visiting and frequents the theatre in the evening. When the young women have become matrons not much changes except that they have to spend an hour or so in the morning organising their servants. There are no spinsters in Eline Vere. Couperus is going to make up for that by creating Dorine in De kleine Zielen.

Van Tricht implies that Couperus wrote his platonic works Een Illusie, Extase, and Het boek van Nirwana (Metamorfose) because of his "inability to experience completely the love for a woman".¹⁷¹ Couperus, in fact, does the same as did the poets in the days of chivalry: he put his ladies on a pedestal. He was only interested in romantic relationships, in soul friendships. The ladies do not at all react like the 'chivalry ladies' but neither do they react in accordance with heroines in literature so far. Sara Burgerhart was somewhat frightened when it came to marriage and tried to delay it. Majoor Frans was convinced that marriage meant a lot of suffering for women, and even more than a generation later Annètje, Letje, Angèle Degroux are not exactly

brimming over with passion. Which of them would ever have said to their man: "Ask me what you will. I shall do it for you",¹⁷² as Tila in Een Illusie. Couperus often uses the colour white in connection with Tila, "her white Chinese silk peignoir", "a white silk cord with white silk tassels", "And she was like a white azalea", ".... her very pale face, milkwhite", "my white angel with her tragic white face a soul of snow". White, the symbol of virginity. But he can only admire her because she is a poet, though for her sake we would like to return her passion. "O God, for something of the love with which he had loved a thousand times"¹⁷³ implying that she was too good for physical love. Extase is exactly on the same lines. Quaerts has also loved a thousand times and he too wants a higher relationship to balance his lower urges. White is also used much in Cecile van Even's case: ".... a small, white Venetian mirror" ".... in her white gown her feet in white sheepskin". Quaerts took her pink, white and yellow roses. Quaerts does not want physical union with Cecile either. Van Tricht: "....the man demands from this pure love such ideal qualities that sexual union becomes impossible for him (Een Illusie) or inadmissible (Extase) because of this. Homosexuality is even explicitly denied: both men have adventures with other women".¹⁷⁴ In short, Couperus tries out on paper several platonic relationships with women and none of them succeed. Though he tells himself that the 'higher part' in marriage, the part of which he had plenty to give was by far the most important, he also realises that it is not fair to neglect

the physical side. Tila becomes desperate when her admirer never turns into a lover and she cannot but send him away. Quaerts leaves Cecile of his own accord. In Nirwana, written five years later, Couperus puts the case still more strongly. Here his heroine Helene de Vicq, a divorcee, has a very unhappy marriage behind her: " I feel shrivelled up, I have been trampled upon, defiled, soiled, more than I ever dare tell you. My soul and my body".¹⁷⁵ And yet she rejects Hugo with: "I have loved my husband, and my happiness would have been to have found your soul in his body".¹⁷⁶

A young girl, a widow and a divorcée are not satisfied with a platonic relationship. There seems to be a message here. It is only a very short time since society has started to accept homosexuals. Before this time they were accepted neither by society nor often by themselves. They married like normal men. It is often stressed how fortunate it is for these men that they can be themselves now. Here, indirectly, we see how fortunate it is for women. Here are three women of the world, three realists, who feel that a half relationship is worse than no relationship at all. They set an example to the women who might have been inclined to settle for an unsatisfactory relationship through insufficient self-knowledge and pity for the 'victim'. Couperus tries to separate body and soul in these women but he comes to the conclusion that this is impossible. Both demand their share.

In Langs lijnen van geleidelijkheid Couperus goes to

the other extreme. Cornélie de Retz is separated from her husband and lives in Rome. For the first time here there is a direct reference to the Women's Movement. Cornélie is writing a brochure in which she warns girls against too many illusions about marriage. Her new artist friend Duco van der Staal has some very poetic but hardly practical thoughts with reference to the brochure: "O, how often, if a human being would just let himself go like a flower, like a bird, like a star obediently following its orbit would he find his life and his happiness The lines women follow. But did not every woman have a line of her own?".¹⁷⁷ Obviously the voice of the writer himself.

Duco and Cornélie start a relationship which is described as ideal in every way, a rare phenomenon in literature. She inspires him in his painting and she becomes a more balanced and mature woman through his influence. She comes to see her brochure in a different light: "She felt how difficult it is to fight for a cause in a just way she realised that she had generalised her own feelings about life and sorrow not from love for the women, but from mere hate against society".¹⁷⁸ Couperus himself seems to be speaking through Cornélie here: it is difficult to fight for a cause in a just way, but that is no reason to give it up as Cornélie is planning to do; she had generalised her own feelings, with the object, surely, of letting other women benefit by her experience; when she wrote to warn women, this obviously underlined that something was wrong in society; warnings are only called for when there are dangers. Couperus shows here a negative

view of the progressive movement. We feel Couperus is not in favour of the new woman. He likes his women elegant, well dressed, refined, educated but not to the point of being bluestockings.

The book has an unexpected, hardly gradual ending. Cornélie's husband returns out of the blue and claims her back. She is very reluctant to give up the "sweet ecstasy, all the joy of the harmony attained"¹⁷⁹ with Duco but she does go back to her dominant, sensual husband, because "in him she had found her master, her only one. In her flesh, in her blood, she was the wife of the man who had been her husband and she was his wife even without love".¹⁸⁰ She chooses sexual dominance rather than sweet harmony. Whereas the heroes in the platonic works were not interested in sex, Cornélie's husband is interested in nothing else.

"Begin with an individual, and before you know it you find that you have created a type" was the advice of F. Scott Fitzgerald to young writers. The women in De kleine Zielen are such types. Mrs. Van Lowe had only one interest in life: her children and grandchildren. She thinks about them, visits them or they visit her. She has only one subject of conversation even after her children have long since left home and have started families of their own. She does not seem to realise that this long-exhausted subject is utterly boring to outsiders. Couperus has a word for it. He calls Mrs. Van Lowe "vermoederd". As long ago as 10th July 1733 Justus van Effen wrote an amusing article on the subject in De Hollandsche Spectator

called Malle Moedertjes: "De Schrijver wil spreken van het zwak, dat verscheiden onzer getrouwde vrouwen aankleeft, van altijd en in alle gevallen, het komt te pas of niet, haar kinderen te doen strekken genoegzaam tot het eenig onderwerp der conversatie".

Daughter Bertha Van Lowe is the type of the efficient woman: a good wife, mother, housewife; thanks to her diplomacy her 'jours' usually flourish and her dinners run smoothly. She has brains and occasionally uses them to think with: " until one day we are old and tired and have lived for nothing; for visits, clothes, dinners, all things we thought necessary and which are worth nothing, nothing, nothing".¹⁸¹ Bertha is like busy biblical

Martha: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things". Adolfine is the "Most of all things in the world she was interested in her own home, in her own children, in her own"¹⁸² type. A very common type indeed. They'll use just anybody they can get to listen to them as a sounding board.

"If friend or sister in turn then started to tell how she thought, calculated Adolfine showed very clearly that the affairs of sister or friend did not interest her in the least....".¹⁸³

Adolfine is the self-centred, narrow minded, jealous female.

Daughter-in-law Cateau and son Karel are a couple of egotistic gourmands. They never invite anybody to their table so that they can indulge their gluttony undisturbed. Carmiggelt has written a sketch on such a couple called Very immoral. Watching the couple eat Carmiggelt remarks: "She was raped in public not at all by the man who was bent over his plate as if he was praying,

but by lumps of meat, hunks of potato". Food was to Karel and Cateau the main interest of their life. Dorine is the ageing spinster. She has no household, no duties of her own so she creates them in order to feel that her life has a purpose. Her shopping for relatives is what crochet was to the Craets sisters. Spinsters were always seen in a negative way in the literature of those days. They are unattractive, pitied leftovers. None of them remained single simply because she thought it was more fun, or because she could not stand any of the men who proposed to her. They were the poor, the ugly, the pockmarked or simply those without sex appeal and none of them ever seemed to be able to do something creative with their life. George Orwell in A Clergyman's Daughter as late as 1935 has this to say about spinsters: "Women who don't marry wither up like aspidistras in back-parlour windows; and the devilish thing is that they don't even know that they're withering".¹⁸⁴

From the outside the Van Lowe's were the Upper Ten from the The Hague aristocracy, from the inside they were narrow-minded, selfish, materialistic, backbiting slaves of convention, small souls.

Constance, for many years not accepted by her family because of her adultery, is the only woman in the book who shows growth, who you could call a great soul by the end of the book. Garnt Stuiveling says about her: "According to character and course of life Constance is an 'anti-Eline' ".¹⁸⁵ Eline Vere was incapable of a strong, lasting love. It was through her

Love for Brauws that Constance found the strength to accept all the responsibilities for the stricken members of the Van Lowe family, the "grandeur déchue". This love was the turning point in her life. There is another contrast with Eline Vere.

Eline Vere had one deformed character in an otherwise healthy, normal group: a woman. De kleine Zielen (apart from Addy who is a child through most of the book) acquires one mature, good character in the course of its four books: a woman. Could it be symbolic?

It is somewhat disappointing that this world of the moneyed aristocracy did not contribute more to their times. Their money could buy the best education, which in turn might have given them insight and original thinking aiding them in solving the problems of their society. But there was only one Addy. Instead most of their money was spent on pleasure. There are several new liberties for women though. It is now legitimate that women have a taste for sex. Even the question of 'living together' is mentioned and sanctioned in the case of Duco and Cornélie, and also in the case of grand-daughter Otilie in Van oude menschen, de dingen, die voorbýgaan. Cornélie de Retz lives on her own in Rome. When the narrator in Annie Salomons' Herinneringen van een onafhankelijke vrouw goes to Florence she is chaperoned by two aunts. Women are still seen only in their relationship to men. This is very clear in Eline Vere's case. Once or twice it looks as if she will overcome her indolence as she becomes interested in a man. A man is shown as the only

way out of her depressions, her only emotional outlet. No hope in the form of an interesting career or absorbing voluntary work is held out to her. And yet the beginnings of a change in the rôle of women are there in Couperus' work. The 'close your eyes and think of England' image is disappearing from women's attitude to sex and the fact that she is now allowed to live by herself and to undertake unchaperoned travelling gives her a far greater measure of independence.

FLAWED RELATIONSHIPS.

Jeanne van Schaik-Willing.

So far, in our research, we have not met a girl like Sofie Blank. Her father married her mother, a prostitute, in order to annoy his parents; he left her when their daughter was two. Sofie's mother looked after her daughter but there was much of the father in Sofie which tended to form a barrier between them. Sofie in turn "had no tenderness for her mother" and all through her youth she lived in an emotional vacuum. Before she went to school she played her "impersonal games" on her own, amused herself with things: pictures, coloured paper, a toy windmill. When she was five, boys in the street where she lived buried a mouse alive in a sandheap. This incident made her very unhappy and as she had not learned to communicate she could not unburden herself, she had to digest it all by herself. It gave her a negative image of people. People in turn did not find it easy to love her. Her primary school teacher noticed that she liked neither animals nor flowers, and found her proud and wilful.

When she was seventeen she became an assistant in a lace shop and in due course the mistress of the owner. She adapted her life completely to his, was his hostess, cook, cleaner and personal assistant. But when she became pregnant his reaction was: "But surely you can get rid of it".¹⁸⁶

While she had the abortion he found himself another woman.

Before Sofie Blank, marriage had been a serious and frequently highly idealised institution. Betje Wolff, whose own marriage to the old rector Wolff was not always a state of sheer bliss if we may believe the biographers, nevertheless pictured Sara Burgerhart's marriage to Hendrik Edeling as a near perfect union and their children as gifts from heaven. And the children smile in a heavenly way at their mothers in paintings by for example Vigée Lebrun or Reynolds. Potgieter's aunt Elsabé wants to see her niece married rather than become a famous painter. Majoor Frans married in the end though she had status as a titled spinster. Lidewyde stayed with her husband even after he had whipped her because she had nowhere to go except as a servant. Van Deyssel's Mathilde had to bridge the gap between fact and fancy in marriage. Robbers for the first time introduced divorce. The basis of marriage had been a combination of money, status and love. Carry van Bruggen's heroines could earn their own living so there the accent was on love. Relations between parents and children were always loving. Robbers' Annie de Boogh had nasty, quarrelsome parents but she tried to play a reconciliatory rôle rather than be nasty in turn.

In Sofie Blank the characters have no religious or moral scruples and this gives the book a totally different flavour. Also most of the book describes an artistic milieu with different rules and standards to the mainly bourgeois settings we discussed before. It says about Marius Blank -

Sofie's father - that he loathed his parents. The reason is not quite clear, neither is the loathing mutual. His father is a hard-working business man who wants his son to become his successor, his mother is very proud of her goodlooking son. Marius could have married the pick of the town, instead he married a poor Polish prostitute, just to spite his parents. No status, money, love basis, but a mixture of spite and sex. The new basis does not prove very strong, for when his daughter Sofie is two, Marius disappears only to be seen again as an old man at the end of the book. A husband and father who runs away when he feels like it is a new phenomenon. In our literature so far there had been a 'marriage is for ever' attitude.

The book then concentrates on daughter Sofie and here there is a new approach too. Mother and daughter don't get on very well, a fact which is admitted honestly, and when Sofie is seventeen she leaves her mother to earn her own living. Poor spinsters used to become servants - Geertje, Sprotje - gentlewomen stayed at home - the Craets sisters and Dorine - De kleine Zielen, later on intelligent spinsters had a profession - women characters in Carry van Bruggen's and Annie Salomons' work - by now more jobs are open to women. Sofie becomes a shop assistant.

During the months Sofie was living with Gerard, the owner of the lace shop, we never hear about feelings of guilt. When Couperus' Cornélie de Retz lives with Duco there is a constant feeling of unease. They don't want people to know and

we hear of disapproving relations. Gerard has Sofie for sex and as a general handywoman and when he gets tired of her he leaves her for another woman. No guilt feelings of any kind. Sofie thinks her relationship with Gerard a love relationship but after he wants her to have an abortion she is not so sure. This is also the first time we hear about abortions.

The whole concept of marriage and parenthood has completely changed here. You can marry and leave your partner after a few years and not much harm done. You don't even have to marry, you can live together and if you don't want children you just have an abortion. In the past these deviations from the rule were duly punished. Eefje in Potgieter's *Blaaubes* dies when she has her illegitimate child. The children of Geertje and Adolphine Craets die at birth. Catherine, the heroine in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* dies in labour. For such enormous sins only death sufficed. But Sofie's sins go unpunished. It is even hinted that she has learned a great deal from these experiences. She has become a better judge of people, her emotional life has deepened and she has started to think for herself. She now condemns the fact that she had her child aborted. By the end of the book Mr. Right, rich, sophisticated and of noble character beckons her. Sofie is still shown exclusively in her relationships with men, not as a woman in her own right, but at least these relationships are losing their cage-like qualities.

Arthur van Stuyvesant in *Nachvorst* has many characteristics in common with Sofie Blank. He was also brought up by

one parent, he promised much but fell short of these expectations, he too went through a sad experience in his youth which influenced the rest of his life - hence the title, he was nipped in the bud - and finally at the end of both books a brighter future is indicated for the two young people.

Arthur as a boy lost faith in the people he loved and after that his heart, his capacity for loving, his compassion could not develop in a normal way. This is not said in so many words but he repeatedly ruined his own excellent chances. He married Marceline, the rich daughter of a prominent business man who gave him a good job as a qualified engineer in one of his factories. The marriage went wrong from the start. He found that his wife had a peculiar approach to sex, a mixture of sadism and masochism. She enjoyed it when her man came home drunk, beat her up and later confessed his sins to her on his knees; his humiliation was her joy.

The marriage of Arthur and Marceline has several different aspects from the marriages in Dutch literature so far. Arthur is a qualified engineer without money or status, Marceline has studied and practiced social science abroad, she is wealthy and her mother is a 'freule'. Arthur marries her for her money and status, Marceline marries him because she senses a 'dark' side to his nature and she looks forward to the feeling of power and sexual elation the confession of his sins will give her. Marceline does not want children. A married woman who does not want children has been unheard of so far. Children were a

woman's life. But Marceline wanted to carry on her social work so she did not 'need' children.

Had Arthur been more mature emotionally, he would have realised that there was a sick aspect in Marceline's approach to sex and that if their marriage was going to work they would have to cure it. Instead he writes her off as perverse, loses his respect for her altogether and finds himself a mistress. Marceline just waits and waits for him to come back to her but he never does and after six years she leaves him "because the time has come for me to think about my own soul".¹⁸⁷

This couple had quite a 'modern' marriage. Both partners received a good education, they were financially independent, they had work that interested them and yet one oldfashioned aspect greatly contributed to their divorce as we see it. They could not discuss their sexual problems "because these were things about which they could not express themselves in words".¹⁸⁸ Just as Lidewyde would have been quite unable to go to Adriaan to suggest an early night and just as Eva was unable to discuss her disenchantment about their sexual life with her husband, Arthur and Marceline could not mention the unmentionable.

Equality requires openness and an absence of preconceived ideas. But throughout this book remarks are made indicating that the traditional rôle patterns though less strong are still present: Before they are married Arthur explains some drawings of derricks to Marceline who is interested and understands what he is talking about. Arthur was "verbluft", but "would have

blamed other women for this blue-stocking mentality".¹⁸⁹

Spinsters are still held in the same low regard: "... after all Marceline did want to marry, she too shrank back from the arid existence of the unmarried woman",¹⁹⁰ Marceline became a social worker for the labourers in a subsidiary of her father's factory and in that capacity she often discussed 'cases' with the management, who had to treat her with regard as she was the boss's daughter, although the opinionated behaviour of a woman, even less bearable than that of a man, irritated the management immensely. To a different beholder a blue-stocking could be good company, a woman with wide intellectual interests, a spinster, a woman without marital ties who could therefore exploit her own life to the full and an opinionated woman somebody with a gift for leadership.

De Overnachting by Jeanne van Schaik-Willing and

S. Vestdijk draws another perverse marriage partner named Marcel whose wife is called Line. It suggests that Marcel's sadism and the masochism forced on Line were characteristics united in Marceline. Whereas Arthur had no patience with Marceline, Line had too much consideration for her husband. Marcel, by telling his wife his real and imagined adventures with other women, humiliates her for years on end. Justus Breevoort, a friend from her youth written by Vestdijk, advises Line to leave her husband as these "stylised obscenities" are sure to deform her soul. In the end Line divorces Marcel and marries Justus. Line has all the female characteristics good women are supposed

to have: dedication to her husband, patience, loving kindness and the over-riding desire to have a child. In reality she is her husband's door-mat. She looks after him, after their household and does most of his business transactions for him as well. And not only does she do most of his work for him without getting any of the credit she also functions as a dustbin for his confessions of unfaithfulness, true or imagined. New rôles of woman indeed, but we feel that a normal woman would never have been able to play the dustbin role if the history of the inferior position of her sex and the fact that sacrifice was often considered a great female virtue had not conditioned her to this attitude. We can 'check' this feeling by changing the rôles of Marcel and Line. Could any man behave towards his wife for years on end like Line did to Marcel? The writer proves this herself in a way: Arthur van Stuyvesant withdraws his respect from his wife as soon as he discovers that she has a perverse aspect to her character. He finds out about this as early as their honeymoon. Line goes on trying to find excuses for her husband long after it should have become clear to her that he has hardly a normal aspect left.

Justus Breevoort's share is sharp and witty, his approach realistic and sound but the generalisations he makes about women are not in the spirit of one who has respect for the female sex: "... an affected attitude, at which discontented and active modern women are so good",¹⁹¹ and the patronising: "...for don't forget child, mythology is always a creation of men, and

what woman wants is so much simpler, really"¹⁹² and "Bigamy, in a more general sense, may be necessary for a man, for a woman it is a monstrosity".¹⁹³ He also seems to call male whatever he considers superior. Talking about his friend: "... I was more masculine than he was he always asked me for advice, even in matters of which he essentially knew much more".¹⁹⁴ But surely this is a matter of confidence, not of masculinity. Line is nearly as bad, though generalisations by women about women seem slightly less reprehensible: "A woman as active as a thoroughbred housewife, but less stupid"¹⁹⁵ and "... a male show of self-control".^{195A}

Jeanne van Schaik-Willing proves especially in this book that she is an excellent novelist, but as for Line, she is a university graduate and she is pictured as a gifted woman but she shows little or no awareness of the strong rôle division between men and women. In her first marriage she does all the work and he gets all the credit, in her second marriage he is a famous writer and she just gets a baby. And as we have seen, the very language is polarised. This negative attitude in literature towards women often says more about the writer than it does about women, all the same it not only expresses, it also continues this view. De Overnachting is certainly not God's gift to women's emancipation.

EQUALITY OF A KIND.Marsman.

Looking at boy-meets-girl and man-meets-woman literature in the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries it transpires that men and women rarely met on an equal footing and that women usually were the losers in the relationships: Helene Servaes lost her life, Geertje and Eva Bonheur lost their innocence, van Deyssel's Mathilde in Een Liefde lost her high ideals about marriage and Carry van Bruggen's Eva her illusions. Lidewyde married for the wrong reasons and she had to pay for it, while the heroine of Couperus' Extase was put on a platonic pedestal where she found it extremely chilly. The men on the whole were of the strong and busy type and though some were scarred by the relationship, most of them comforted themselves at their earliest opportunity. Besides, as most of the writers were men it must have come naturally to them to give their heroes a strong masculine image and to make the women losers as soon as they disobeyed the traditional rules.

There were a few exceptions: Annie de Boogh in Robbers' De bruidstijd van Annie de Boogh took her fate into her own hands and she got away with it. She fled her bridegroom on the morning of their wedding day. But then the bridegroom was pictured as an unworthy character and in this black and white Sara Burgerhart-like characterisation Annie could hardly fail to take the right course.

And Eva was only a loser at first sight. She had high expectations of her marriage both mentally and physically, but none of them came true. She never lowered her standards however and when her husband left her she saw this as a natural consequence of their unsatisfactory relationship. Carry van Bruggen was the first writer whose characters were not punished after breaking the rules: As a mature woman Eva, by then a divorcée, had a short affair with a married man. Not the usual bitter after effects in the form of pregnancy and/or guilt feelings ensued but Eva and her partner went their different ways with a sense of fulfilment.

De dood van Angèle Degroux is the first work in which man and woman are on an equal footing and where both gain and lose. The whole approach here is different from the nineteenth-century one: Angèle is introduced to the readers at a time when the hero, de Blécourt, suffers an extreme fit of depression. At that time he thinks of Angèle, not in her capacity of mistress or mental stimulator but he is in need of her as her personality can give him back his sense of spiritual balance. Angèle travels from Brussels to Paris to see him. Gone are the times when as in De klop op de deur people frowned when a woman had the audacity to travel by herself from Amsterdam to Groningen: "Ah, but the girls are clever nowadays" said Marie Weesburg laughingly. "And she told about her niece, who believe it or not had travelled to Groningen on her own. By train to Zwolle and then by diligence, late at night. Early in the morning she finally arrived in

Groningen. Fransje put her nose up at this. Decent women did not do such things. Annètje listened dumbfounded. Goldewyn thought that Marie Weesburg was not suitable company anymore now that his daughter was growing up¹⁹⁶ Gone also is the consideration for a woman's reputation. It goes without saying throughout the book that a woman can look after herself. The days they are together in Paris they show each other mutual respect. He does not lure her into bed against her will, she does not amuse herself by flirting to see how far she can go. Angèle, like de Blécourt, is financially independent, so that money does not obscure the issue. Curiosity about the physical side of marriage plays no role either as it did in Eva's case. She had had sexual experience before she met de Blécourt. She is as human as the Saartjes, Letjes, and Annètjes when she compares the love she felt for her father - a love "without struggle or danger, without horror and insecurity"¹⁹⁷ - with the uncertainties that marriage and especially marriage to de Blécourt would mean. At one time she felt that she would like him to take the lead: "... for sometimes she hoped that he also with regard to her would be the man whose desire spares nothing and nobody",¹⁹⁸ back to nineteenth-century security, an abolishing of responsibilities, but she knows that it is not the answer.

Angèle cannot make up her mind and who can blame her: de Blécourt is an artist, one moment elated by inspiration, the next moment terrified by the thought of death, one day seeing Paris as the only town "where life has kept something light,

something sunny and good",¹⁹⁹ the next day wanting to destroy it, sometimes thinking that his life would mean something in the world, at other times feeling unworthy and insignificant. A man far more complicated than any of the nineteenth-century heroes who were usually either mere pleasure seekers or dull business men. De Blécourt's friend, the hunchback Rutgers, characterised him as a creature which was "angel and beast of prey".²⁰⁰

But both de Blécourt and his antipode Rutgers have a high regard for the women they love, though de Blécourt hardly wants to use this overused word. In a realistic, unromantic way they feel that a woman who is an equal partner can make life worth living. The time of chivalry, the woman-on-a-pedestal time has gone though it survives in popular romantic fiction and the Mailer and Miller era where woman is sex object only has not yet arrived.

The women in Marsman's novel deserve this high regard: Henriëtte, beautiful and gifted married Rutgers, a hunchback. Angèle knows that life with de Blécourt is going to be extremely difficult 'gave en opgave' and only after long consideration did she decide that the 'opgave' outweighed the 'gave'. Her courage failed her. But even after the separation there is the feeling that some people are unique and irreplaceable to others. Rutgers is only filling in time after Henriëtte's death. He was a special case of course, but de Blécourt did not try to find a replacement either after Angèle left him. Again, the time has

gone when people died of consumption if they could not marry their chosen partner and the era of Germaine Greer who suggests partners should move on after five years has not yet come.

Angèle marries a man who has not de Blécourt's extremes of character. A safer bet, one could say. When during her marriage she feels that she has made the wrong choice she keeps these feelings to herself, reasoning that her husband should not suffer for her wrong choice. Only when she feels she is dying - five years after her acquaintance with de Blécourt - does she want to see him again to put things right. Woman has come to the stage where she can make her own mistakes with the advantage that she has only herself to blame when she makes the wrong decisions. Equality in the man-woman relationship has been achieved.

EQUALITY ACHIEVED.Anna Blaman.

Before Anna Blaman, women were described in their rôle as daughters, wives or spinsters, in other words they were seen in their family context. We see Annètje in De klop op de deur grow up in her parents' house, then she becomes a wife and mother and so the story repeats itself. The same goes for Jo van Ammers-Küller's De Opstandigen, Top Naeff's Letje, Scharten-Antink's Sprotje, Couperus' family chronicles, etc. Women described as close to marriage but whose marriages never took place - Top Naeff Voor de poort, Marsman De dood van Angèle Degroux - are shown as unfulfilled, unhappy women. The Craets sisters are examples of how unmarried women were looked at by society and how they saw themselves: leftovers, no good to anybody. So daughters grew up to become wives, wives became mothers, in that order; no other way of life could bring fulfilment. To become pregnant before marriage was a disaster. Girls to whom this happened were rejected by their closest relatives and treated by many men as prostitutes - De Meester Geertje - only a few very 'special' people, people who had suffered themselves, could feel pity for the unmarried mother and for the expected baby - the hunchback in Geertje and Eva's father in Eva Bonheur.

The generation gap, very apparent throughout Anna Blaman's work, is hardly noticeable in the works mentioned before:

Fransje, Annètje's mother, lives with her daughter and is loved by her and by her grandchildren. Addy in De kleine Zielen likes living with his parents even after he is a well established doctor and has his own family. Angèle Degroux compares her suitors to her father with whom she had a very warm and pleasant relationship.

Gradually, parallel with the emancipation of women, career women come to the fore in literature, but if it came to the choice between career and a harmonious marriage the latter was usually chosen -Jo van Ammers-Küller De appel en Eva.

Annie Salomons, who initially enjoys her study, as she grows older comes more and more to the conclusion that something is missing and she has times when she would gladly exchange her university education and her professional career for a 'normal' existence as a wife and mother.

Anna Blaman is also the first writer to mention openly homosexuality and lesbianism. Her lesbians seem to be modelled on herself: though they are tortured in many ways because they are different, not accepted by society, they are intelligent, courageous, interesting people. It is as if Anna Blaman is saying: You don't accept us, society, but have a closer look at the worthwhile people you are rejecting.

Anna Blaman was not interested in a husband and children but she was interested in human relationships and that is what she is writing about. Vrouw en Vriend is mainly about five young people: George, Jonas, Sara, Toos and Marie. All three young women are independent as a matter of course. Sara is a translator,

Toos a shop assistant and Marie a nurse. And, surely another novelty in Dutch literature, Jonas looks after the household. Admittedly, only because he is a sick man and cannot get the light work he is looking for, but all the same he does it. Completely 'modern' is also the relationship George-Sara. Sara goes to bed with George when she feels like it. She does not intend to marry him, she has no conventional or moral scruples, she is not frightened of the consequences. He badly wants to marry her but she is not very interested; in the past the rôles were usually reversed especially as Sara was a rather shy, introverted and not especially pretty girl. Sara is quite remarkable because one day she leaves George for another man just because she 'fancies' the new man sexually. In the past these adventures were for men only: Dr. Ruardi had a relationship with Lidewyde, and Jozef in Een Liefde visited other women when his wife was ill for a long time after her pregnancy. Escapades by men of this kind were judged wrong but rather in the spirit of - men will be men, they cannot always go against their nature - women were not supposed to have this kind of 'nature'. Sara, a woman, is the active party in this affaire and when she tires of it she does not receive him any more. No guilt feelings ensue, no baby announces itself. A woman with a completely new mentality has been created. Even something that has been unmentionable before has happened to her. When she is a very young girl she is sexually initiated by the brother of her girl friend. But he only uses her to see if his fears that he is a homosexual are true.

It turns out that he is right. Sara has had a lonely childhood and a difficult youth, and she becomes a fickle and whimsical adult. The reader can believe in her or not believe in her but she is a new type of woman. She is not the romantic type dreaming of love and a family of her own, nor is she the type of the career woman engrossed in study or a demanding profession. She is a young woman, financially independent, solving her own problems, who does not mark out her life in advance but lets herself drift along. She is not a great character in any way but true to twentieth century life. She lives in very much the same way as does her lover, George; both are financially independent, both have a room in a boarding house - their meals are prepared for them and their rooms kept clean - and both cultivate some form of art in their spare time.

With George's mother we also get a new mother image. So far in prose and poetry mothers were described as superior people; George always talks about her in a patronising way - ".... My mother was a woman who knew little about grown-up children and who was not at all conscious of this fact. If she ever got to know what really concerned us she would not recognise her George. The best thing was to respect her pure and simple motherly feelings if need be by lying and deceiving".²⁰¹ By now the generation gap becomes apparent: I am living my life according to my standards, my parents have standards of their own, different from mine. To avoid misunderstanding and displeasure I leave the parental home in order to lead my own life.

In the past, characters could be ranged under either white or black. Geertje came in the white category, the man who seduced her in the black, Eva Bonheur in white, her fiancé in black, Annie de Boogh - Robbers' De bruidstijd van Annie de Boogh - in white, her bridegroom in black. Both George and Sara are at times appealing, at other times they act in an immature and unpleasant way. The characters of Jonas, Toos and Marie are cast in the traditional nineteenth-century mould as has been discussed in earlier chapters. All three are white characters. Jonas, a sick man, but with a 'golden heart' awakens the love of nurse Marie. Their relationship is extremely promising but Jonas dies. Anna Blaman does not believe in perfect relationships. Toos, Jonas's sister, is the loser. She loves her brother who dies and her affection for George is not returned.

It is difficult to compare Vrouw en Vriend with any preceding book. The young women are not described as being influenced by their parents or by the memory of their parents; they are not shy and withdrawn anymore about love and sex, they do not struggle against conventional or guilt feelings and yet they are very credible characters. The only book at all comparable to Vrouw en Vriend is A.H.Nijhoff's Twee meisjes en ik. These two girls have the same air of independence, they also take the responsibility for their own mistakes, there is an indication of homosexuality, and the men suffer through the girls and not the other way round as in previous literature on men-women relationships. Only the end is different. One girl dies, and the

other ends up as a kept woman, true, unbroken in spirit but financially dependent. It is partly their independence, their integration in society which makes the women in Vrouw en Vriend different, but most of all the spirit of the writer who wrote: "The woman has a destination as a woman but her destination as a human being decidedly exceeds this".²⁰²

Though Anna Blaman makes Kosta in Eenzaam avontuur utter a remark stating quite the contrary: "Admittedly, you are a human being in your spare time, or better, in your waste time, but meanwhile you are longing for the fate which raises you to be a man or a woman".²⁰³ In practice it seems that those people who are fulfilled as men or women are most likely to become mature human beings. And perhaps Anna Blaman's characters are often such lonely people because they are unfulfilled as men and women. In Eenzaam avontuur we find a sub-theme from Vrouw en Vriend made into a main theme. Alide has a good, harmonious relationship with Kosta but as her passion for Kosta burns out she turns to Peps, because she feels that one cannot live a lifetime exclusively for one creature. Kosta feels desperate without her: "without Alide there is a cosmic inanitation".²⁰⁴ The sensible solution seems an all-in relationship: Kosta for harmony, Peps for sex, but - three is a crowd - the world is not ready for this. Alide leaves Kosta for Peps, as Kosta becomes extremely possessive since he knows of Peps' existence.

Alide has also had a lesbian relationship in the past.

The two other lesbians in the book, Berthe a young girl and an older anonymous woman, are both drawn as intelligent women, people of integrity. Anna Blaman goes even so far as to make an old woman with four loving children and a good marriage behind her say with reference to Berthe: "She remembered well what she had thought when she had met Berthe for the first time: Here was hunger for life. And, ashamed, she recalled her own youth, her whole life, in which this hunger had come so tame and well-behaved to neatly laid tables. My whole life I have been peeping from behind bars of convention, and I have felt, thought, heard, seen, nothing".²⁰⁵ The fact that they are lesbians changes their lives profoundly, makes it more difficult, but at the same time more worthwhile. Alide realises this too: "Life could assault and violate them (people like Kosta, Berthe, and the anonymous lesbian), but paradise remained within their reach".²⁰⁶ Though she knows that Peps does not come up to Kosta as a person, that Peps is in a much 'lower' category, at this time of her life Alide prefers Peps to Kosta. Occasionally she visits Kosta to help and comfort him but she refuses to go back altogether. Kosta is writing a book about a detective - King - who is trying to prove that a young woman - Juliette - has murdered her husband. Parts of this detective story are related throughout the book and form as it were a novel within a novel. King falls in love with Juliette though he knows she is a dangerous woman and by the end of Kenzaam avontuur Kosta and King amalgamate as it were and so do Alide and Juliette. The book ends by King taking Juliette out to dinner;

after dinner King leaves the restaurant, without telling Juliette, in order to travel away from her never to return. This seems to suggest that Kosta has at last found the strength to tear himself away from Alide.

All people in the book feel lonely by the end of the book hence Eenzaam avontuur but Anna Blaman implies that some characters keep their wholeness and that this wholeness is by far the most important quality. As in Vrouw en Vriend there are no children in this book and the women set the pace: Alide leaves Kosta, Kosta has to come to terms with it, Alide decides to live with Peps, so Peps sends his own wife away, King tries to set a trap for Juliette but he ends up by falling in love with her.

Vrouw en Vriend and Eenzaam avontuur are about human relationships. In Vrouw en Vriend all relationships have failed by the end of the book and no hope for the future is given. In Eenzaam avontuur all relationships fail too but here it is suggested that so long as you come out of the experience a sadder but wiser person the relationship has been meaningful.

Virginie van Loon in De kruisvaarder is another typical Blaman heroine. Like Berthe and other characters in her later work, Virginie is a lonely woman, an outsider. Not because she is a lesbian this time but because she is very ugly. "That which you are without becomes the most important thing" says Bertha in De verliezers and Virginie feels the same about her total lack of physical attraction. The people she meets on a ship sailing to Indonesia and the subsequent sinking of this

ship whereby many passengers drown but whereby she herself is saved make her realise that she can overcome her inferiority complex.

Op leven en dood is mainly about the couples

Stefan - Stella and Paul - Marian. Like Alide, Stella has left her husband for another man and like Kosta, Stefan is inconsolable. Stefan becomes cynical, withdrawn from life to a certain extent and even distrusts the good intentions of his best friends Paul and Marian. When Stefan gets a heart complaint Marian wonders if he has brought it on himself by suffering from a broken heart for so long. But when Paul dies Marian is as lonely as Stefan: "... she was completely alone. She had no girl friends, she just did not get on with women, women envied her she thought and they were mortally afraid of her pitiless wit. She had had lovers of course but they were men with whom she had never talked and with whom she would certainly not share her sorrow. Anyhow a real woman was always on her own, she has no friends neither men nor women. She has a husband and lovers and the lovers don't really matter".²⁰⁷ A real woman? Being a real woman seems to mean, according to Anna Blaman, a woman who is good looking, prosperous, sexually attractive and not in possession of a single good friend. Is then friendship the prerogative of the ugly, the poor and the mediocre? Surely friendship has to do with heart and personality not with looks and wealth. Unless the vanity of the 'real woman' with regard to her physical attractions and wealth deform her character to such an extent

that nobody wants to befriend her. Marian commits suicide but Stefan gets a new lease of life when a nurse in the hospital where he has to go for his heart trouble falls in love with him. There is not a happy ending of course. Anna Blaman does not believe in happy endings, but we could call the end of Op leven en dood a semi-happy ending: "We are lonely and defenceless, she (the nurse) and I. But we had better try to forget that. We had to, that was the only human possibility to keep up the illusion of happiness, there was no other solution".²⁰⁸ As in the preceding books it is the woman who decides the fate of the man. After Stella has gone Stefan is disconsolate, when nurse Jane takes pity on him he gets back an "illusion of happiness". It seems as if Anna Blaman wants to take revenge on the centuries in which men decided their own fate and that of the women in their lives.

One of Anna Blaman's most moving short stories is Hotel Bonheur in the collection Overdag. The narrator tells us how, while on holiday in Tours, she finds a new small hotel away from the centre where she is the only guest of Mr. and Mrs. Bonheur. Mr. Bonheur is a concert pianist about to go on a tour when she arrives and she senses that he is frightened to go, though all his former appearances have been successful. Mr. Bonheur, unlike his name suggests, is an unhappy man, possessed with fear of life. Half an hour after he has set out to catch the train to Boulogne-sur-Mer he returns, frightened to death, claiming he has missed the train. And now the reaction of Mrs. Bonheur. Does she say: "Are you a man? You were just too frightened to go" or "Why on

earth didn't you leave in time to catch the train?" or "Why didn't you stay until the arrival of the next train?". She does not expose his fear, she does not nag; with her he can be himself, a frightened insecure human being. "One of them was consumed in the white flame of the fear of life, the other set against this all the courage a warm heart could muster".²⁰⁹ The rôle division has disappeared. Here the man does not have to be the breadwinner, the aggressive partner, the strong one, and the woman need not be the weaker vessel. They are two human beings one helping the other as best she can. "Take your coat off, chéri, you are wet through".

In De Verliezers Anna Blaman shows us how even people with the best intentions often fail in life through lack of understanding, human shortcomings or just because their best is not good enough.

Driekje is a capable district nurse with years of nursing experience behind her but the few times that she follows her heart instead of the rules of her profession cause the end of her career as a nurse. For months she nursed Mrs. Lucia Kostiaan. After Lucia dies Mr. Kostiaan starts to think about his marriage and he comes to the conclusion that he should never have married Lucia; that they have been completely incompatible. He needs to speak about these feelings and in Driekje he finds an understanding listener, so much so that he asks her to marry him. Driekje refuses, as she feels only pity and no love for Kostiaan. Kostiaan does not want to go on living with a ruined past and no future.

He commits suicide.

When Driekje's rôle in his death is investigated other things come to light: Kostiaan had given Driekje a valuable ring, once given to Lucia by a lover. Lucia did not want her daughter-in-law to have it so Mr. Kostiaan gave it to Driekje who accepted it against her will in order to do him a favour, though she did not mean to keep it. Besides, Driekje's best friend Bertha was a lesbian. Kostiaan's suicide, her possession of the ring, the friendship with Bertha - who had been betrayed to her superior by a former lesbian partner and discharged as a result - are all points against her and Driekje loses her job. Beforehand, Bertha had warned Driekje against Kostiaan, realising that he was a desperately unhappy man. Driekje said simply: "as far as Kostiaan is concerned, I have only done as I thought I had to do and that is how a human being should act, shouldn't he. Don't you agree with me?".²¹⁰ Through allowing her heart to rule her head Driekje loses her work. But she has not lost her selfrespect because she has remained true to herself. Superficially all characters are losers but Anna Blaman implies that a person like Driekje is never a loser by her (the writer's) standards.

The pictures we get about marriage in this book show better than recent books written on this subject by the most ardent feminists how prisonlike the institution can be. Driekje, not married herself, but with a vast experience of people, "had understood long since that love triumphs seldom or never".²¹¹

Mr. Loosje comes crawling back to his wife when he is ill, but in his healthy days he hardly sees her. For a great part of her marriage Lucia had a lover and during this time the marriage worked better. We see the same in Eenzaam avontuur: while Alide goes to Peps for sex her relationship with Kosta is better and also in Op leven en dood - Stefan, Franciska, Franciska's husband. Again, this is a new thought Anna Blaman brings to literature.

Hanneke van Buuren in the September-October 1975 edition of the magazine Ons Erfdeel has some thoughts on Anna Blaman in an article called niet dulden dat je me zadelt. She states that there are two ways of describing the other sex: "You can describe the other sex as seen from the prejudices of your own sex, or you can do it in a way which breaks with tradition. Good authors have always been able to do the first thing well. Only really great authors are capable of giving a view which is 'roldoorbrekend' and at the same time acceptable to the reader". The fact that the writer was a lesbian must have been a great help in this rôle breakthrough. Neither for her affections nor financially was she dependent on men, so she could follow an independent line. Anna Blaman has fought romance and convention and she has put realism in its place. The world looked rather a lonely place from where she stood, but some of her women are unforgettable: independent, courageous, merciful.

DREAM AND REALITY.Clare Lennart.

Many writers are especially remembered by certain works or by certain aspects of their works that are characteristic of them: to the majority of people Bosboom-Toussaint means historical novels. Busken Huet in Lidewyde gave a for his time very realistic account of passion, indicating that men with bad morals might get away with it, if they were clever - Dr. Ruardi - or they might be severely punished if they were not so clever - André was driven to committing suicide - The women would never get away with it if they were poor as shown by the examples of unmarried mothers. And in case they were young, beautiful and rich? Lidewyde will always be remembered for the whipping scene. De Meester's Geertje shows that a seduced servant does not necessarily have to be a slut; the subtle tactics of her employer are condemned more than Geertje's gullibility. Top Naeff means Letje and Letje is a way of life. The way of life in which convention is your guide, where the Jones's are always with you and where facade is all important.

What will Clare Lennart be remembered for? While reading her work we are reminded of other writers: her mixture of romanticism and melancholy reminds us of Aart van der Leeuw. Several times she shows how a fair can bring out in people the opposite of their everyday feelings, how emotions which normally

remain under the surface are brought out through the atmosphere of the fair and this theme brings us back to Ina Boudier-Bakker's De Straat. Ina Boudier-Bakker also discovered that a fair especially in a somewhat isolated community can be a tremendous event; joy is felt more intensely, sadness is felt more deeply through the contrast with the fun of the fair, people feel courage where they had none before, and they do things which they would not dream of doing on any other day of the year. There are also parallels with Carry van Bruggen's work. Both writers have been teachers and in the works of both of them we come across teachers who invent stories for their children and of children who are very appreciative of the stories. Both writers also have in common their exploring of human relationships; both look into incompatibility in marriage, both have an anti-Letje attitude to life. Rather than following tradition and convention they find their own way through much study and reading and by following the trial-and-error method in their own life.

As far as subject matter is concerned however, Clare Lennart seems to have more in common with Anna Blaman than with anybody else. They seem an unlikely pair but the characters in the works of both authors are pursuing mainly one thing: personal happiness. They try to find this in relationships with other people, and here the similarity ends. Anna Blaman's characters never become happy, at most they become somewhat less unhappy. Clare Lennart's characters nearly always reach some degree of happiness. Clare Lennart tries to fight unhappiness, sometimes

she loses, but she never gives up. Mallempolen is one of her first books. The narrator is describing the lodgers in her boarding house, her relatives and neighbours, the views and events as seen from her windows. Most important to her, though not often mentioned, is her relationship to Jo, the man she is living with. She feels that something is missing in the relationship, but she finds it difficult to put into words. She tries by saying that Jo sees life in black and white and she sees it in colours - we are reminded of Carry van Bruggen's Eva saying the same thing in a different way: Looking at the vague silhouette of a tower in a dark town Eva admires its strength and beauty, her husband tries to read the time on its clock. Then come between the lines the nerve-racking questions: Do I expect too much? Does the man of my dreams exist? Should I leave Jo and wait till Mr. Right comes? But what if he never comes? At least our sex relationship is alright. Life is never perfect. The narrator recalls her friendship with a merry-go-round man who used to offer her free rides. She did not accept because it made her sick. The man assured her that she would like it once she got used to it "... and is not that the very tragedy? Not that we cannot stand it, not that we jump off and perhaps break our arms and legs or even our necks, but that we do stand it and even enjoy this damn merry-go-round in the end. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. Can one imagine a more cowardly proverb? But then we have nothing else. What would we do if this bird were to fly away as well?".²¹² She decides to stay with

Jo and make the best of it: "Thus we go round and it certainly does have its comic side".²¹³ She chooses security, as do most people. But the flower of the book is the hydrangea with its "hesitating, broken colours".

Malleemolen's counterpart is Toverlantaarn. Floortje Désiré is the red haired young teacher in Toverlantaarn who teaches in the small town of Heerenhaghen for exactly one year, from fair to fair. Floortje certainly does not want security. She is not sure what she does want. She knows that "there is nothing that I want to do for ever. Because 'for ever' means only one thing. And I want everything".²¹⁴ And during her one year in Heerenhaghen a variety of things do happen to her: she befriends the baron of the town who has never let himself be befriended before, the town clerk proposes to her and her headmaster names one of his new geranium varieties after her. Last but not least, during the night of the second fair she enjoys her sexual initiation with a young handsome man from the fair. "A thousand dreams have awakened desire that summer evening, have made it great and strong. Now it can no longer be resisted".²¹⁵ In the morning after that night she left Heerenhaghen. Where to? ".... perhaps she'll marry a rich man or will she learn to dance really well. Or she will become a modelOr a thousand possibilities for a Floortje Désiré".²¹⁶ She is not concerned about Heerenhaghen any more, where the baron has committed suicide that night because

he found life without her too difficult, where the town clerk got drunk because she had turned down his proposal - drunkenness was not an event to be taken lightly in this town, it might influence his career for the rest of his life - and where the schoolchildren undoubtedly would be without a teacher the next morning.

She was self-centred, Floortje Désiré, and this made her ruthless concerning other people. She also had youth and beauty and that little something, a touch of magic, which made men dream. 'Such stuff as dreams are made of'. The monotony of the merry-go-round wed to the excitement of the magic lantern might well produce the perfect child: "who each new day takes life out of the oven like a freshly baked loaf and tastes it with pleasure".²¹⁷ But how do we come by two thoroughbreds and how can we make sure that the right genes will be involved. Toverlantaarn's flower is the pink-red geranium, pink for sweet youth and red for passion.

De blauwe horizon is the only Clare Lennart book with a 'where have all the flowers gone' atmosphere and when Stance commits suicide at the end of the book we even get the same feeling as Anna Blaman's books sometimes give us: 'Not to be born is best'. Stance who lost her mother when she was three has a loveless childhood and when 'the coming man' in the town proposes to her she accepts because she expects some warmth from him where before there was only coldness. Aunt Adeline has told

her the facts of life in Letje style that "love would make everything right and that she would get used to it".²¹⁸

But from the beginning of her marriage she feels for Gerard, her husband, "pity, contempt, abhorrence"²¹⁹ because his physical love for her is without any tenderness or love. There is the day-Gerard who treats her with politeness, even with courtesy, and there is the night-Gerard who just takes what he wants, to whom she is an object. Unable to cope with this reality, she creates a dream world of her own with a dream lover who is passionate and tender. Years go by, she has five boys, all looking exactly like their father, none of whom she really loves. Only the world of her dreams is real to her until her daughter is born, an image of herself, and this wakes her up. The thought that her daughter in turn was to go through the agony of life kills her dreams for good. She realises that there is only one solution: one evening when the rest of the family has gone to the fair she tries to drown herself and the baby. She drowns, the baby is saved. The implication is that life is a mixture of dream and reality woven together. The merry-go-round and the magic lantern. Either, on its own, is insufficient. In her later works Clare Lennart has been able to create credible characters who combine the two ingredients in the right measure, though she realises that these characters are comparatively rare:
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 "For them life shines, for most of us it is dusty and lacklustre".

The two ingredients also occur in Hella Haasse's book De verborgen bron, where the hero needs to shift his balance from

dream to reality in order to live a reasonably happy life. Jurjen Siebeling invests all his dreams in the mysterious figure of his dead mother-in-law; he tries to form an image of her by looking at old photographs, old drawings of hers, letters, etc. By finding out about her he also finds out about the youth of his wife with whom he has lost contact. He realises now that this lost contact is not his wife's fault but is due to his own egocentric nature. We gather from the fact that she expects his child by the end of the book that a bridge of understanding has now been built. Dream and reality have come much closer.

In Serenade uit de verte dream and reality have found each other and the book radiates a serenity that must be rare for the second half of the 20th century. The story is simple: a young teacher meets a family consisting of Ludo, Anja, and their three children Lune, Erica and Hanno. The friendship with this family is to influence him for the rest of his life. Ludo is selfish, affected, eccentric, but he is also a poet, he is original, he has imagination. "Lack of imagination is perhaps the most fatal human shortcoming"²²¹ Clare Lennart writes. And the mere fact that Ludo calls his cat Dorémi and his tortoise Sans-Souci shows this imagination. But it is in Anja that dream and reality have really come together. "Anja, did you understand the 'white magic' of adding the scent of blooming lime trees to human shortcoming? Did you multiply our little love with the Spring wind? Did you subtract the reflection of your violets in our pond from death? Did you divide the immense human stupidity

by the playful and humourous^{grace} of your tabby cat Dorémi? Did you thus create the different climate where life always remained acceptable, where it had some sense even in its sadness?"²²²

The wisdom and mildness in this book are heart-warming. The remarks about beautiful women remind us of Marian in Op leven en dood one of Anna Blaman's beautiful women. Marian has no women friends - they are envious - no men friends - they are lovers - only a husband. When her husband dies her last emotional outlet disappears and she commits suicide. Beautiful Lune has no girl friends either, just a host of admirers. Clare Lennart feels sorry for her because she realises that this beauty deforms her character. She sees that "in a relationship with Lune not only every man but also Lune herself would be the loser"²²³ but also that "her unfaithfulness was more honest than much human playacting in relationship to lovementally Lune could not cope with her beauty".²²⁴

A very mature way of looking at it. It is so easy for a woman writer to describe a beautiful woman as empty-headed and sex-mad forgetting that beauty provides its own particular difficulties. Clare Lennart has also put into the mouth of Anja her ideas as to why the world is ruled by men: "Women are just not there for a large part of their lives You are there as a child and as a girl, but then you fall in love and this experience is something so violent and absorbing, your spirit does not survive the physical surrender. Perhaps that is bad for the world, perhaps that is the reason why our society has become so onesidedly masculine, so mechanised".²²⁵ Clare Lennart does not take up the

battle-axe after this statement, she does not declare that women react like this because different treatment of boys and girls starts in the pram, is continued in the very reading books at school, goes on in the romantic boy-gets-girl stories in the popular magazines and is finished by dangling glorified marriage in front of girls as a be-all-and-end-all. We cannot see Clare Lennart on the barricades, we would characterise her by 'De zachte Krachten zullen't winnen int'eind'. She does not become angry and intense, she does not write as if she knows all the answers, she remains philosophical. Anja goes on to say: " You must not listen to me in such a terribly serious way. I am not the oracle of Delphi and love is something so very strange. It is so different from what you think when you are young. When at last after years you have straightened yourself like reed after a storm, with much difficulty and with very much pain then you do feel a kind of delight, because the view is so wide all of a sudden."²²⁶ She has discovered through experience that marriage need not be a cage, that one can be a person in one's own right and be in love at the same time. A whole garden full of flowers is everpresent in this book, full of hawthorn, violets, and wild roses. The very imagery is often taken from nature: Tony, the teacher, thinking about his young days says: "I must have stored all kinds of feelings inside myself at that time, like bulbous plants reserve food for their coming bloom".²²⁷ And talking about the good relationship he had with his father, though they could not put their feelings into words, he says: "Thus, as it were

under the word-line of feeling, live millions and millions of people".²²⁸ Word-line reminds us of tree-line.

Clare Lennart has something basic to say, something we have to know before we get to the rôle of women or the rôle of men for that matter. She says, no she is not a preacher, she implies that in relationships with other people it is not so important what people get out of it but what they can put into it. And if they succeed in finding their right mixture of dream and reality they might become mature individuals who have no need to project their own frustrations and unhappiness onto society but who can play a positive rôle in it.

We have had to quote much from this book because it is not only what Clare Lennart says but the way she says it which is so moving.

How to deal with unhappiness was one of the themes of Serenade uit de verte and Stad met rose huizen also has its fair share of it. Isabel's mother died when Isabel was sixteen and from that time she looked after her father. She had had a very good relationship with her mother; whenever they felt depressed Isabel's mother - Jetje - played a game with her: they built a toy town from pink houses and only kind people, real or fictional, were allowed to inhabit it. Isabel was a bit frightened of her father and after her mother's death the pink town remained uninhabited for years. Her dreams died. Her father's death liberated her: "Don't be angry, Papa I have been so frightened of you because I knew that you did not love me".²²⁹

Albert Noorman had a similar experience: his wife died and after her death he discovered the Spring again. She had fulfilled none of his dreams and for years he had gone through life numb. Clare Lennart brings them together and by exchanging the dreams of their youth they find a new reality. Together they will try to build a good future: "Everybody can understand badness, violence, betrayal, insufficiency, shortcomings, loneliness, inadequacy. But what is goodness?".²³⁰

At the end of Huisjes van Kaarten Clare Lennart once more explains her philosophy: "Nothing of what we dream can we achieve Nothing of what humanity has dreamt through the ages has it really achieved. That is the tragedy of life. But as long as we dream about it we cannot lose it. And that is what gives life its beauty, because life is not only what it is, but also what we human beings want it to be".

Jo's mistress chooses security. Floortje Désiré has "a thousand possibilities", Stance commits suicide, Anja undergoes love as totally absorbing, Isabel loves her mother but not her father. Recapping in this way we realise what we were not aware of while reading the individual books: few of the men are up to the women's expectations and that is the main reason why the women have to dream dreams. Clare Lennart does not go into the reasons for this. Did she see it as unavoidable? The men lack interest and understanding and loving kindness. Here, as in the examples given while discussing Jeanne van Schaik-Willing and Yvonne de Man, the men are inferior emotionally. If the women

really are superior in this respect they must be so either by nature or by way of life i.e. by living a life of loving care and service within the home. If the latter were the reason men and women could benefit immensely from a redistribution of rôles in society. It would give both sexes the opportunity to share a way of life which might contribute to emotional maturity. Dreams might come true.

ROMAN CATHOLIC WOMEN.

Gerard Walschap.

"Quand on a du Dieu sous la peau" is the motto that Walschap gave to his book Sibylle. This motto plays a main part in all Walschap's work or to be more precise not so much 'du Dieu' as the Roman Catholic Church. After he had become a renegade his books still described people from this background because it was the milieu he was most familiar with and which he could picture from the inside. Church, convent and confession loomed large in the lives that Walschap described and give his work an atmosphere all of its own. His heroines are typical Roman Catholic heroines: the married ones have many children, the unmarried ones become nuns. Sibylle, his only career woman commits suicide.

Women in contemporary literature have by now gone far beyond this narrow sphere: Ina Boudier-Bakker in De klop op de deur gave us hostesses, artistes, students, emancipated women in short, women to whom marriage was not the be-all-and-end-all of their lives. Jo van Ammers-Küller's Puck in De appel en Eva finally put her marriage before her job, but she had known many years of job-satisfaction as a lawyer and as a representative of a large Paris fashion house. Carry van Bruggen outgrew her Jewish upbringing and did not just describe good or bad marital relationships. In Eva the husband does not beat his wife; the wife is not

idealised, there is no suicide; there is just a case of incompatibility. Carry van Bruggen, like Ina Boudier-Bakker, Jo van Ammers-Küller and others begins to see people, not men with their special characteristics and women with very different characteristics.

Adelaïde, the first book in the trilogy De familie Roothooft, is the first one of a series of books that show the overwhelming influence of the Roman Catholic Church on its members, especially on women. Adelaïde was educated by nuns; for a time she thinks of entering the convent herself but then she chooses a secular life and marries Ernest who studies to be a chemist. During the two years that Ernest still has to study the couple have no children. 'Very sensible' a modern judgment would be. The couple are financially still dependent on their parents and they don't want this burden to become too heavy. As soon as Ernest has become a chemist Adelaïde finds herself pregnant. 'Well planned' would be today's verdict.

But during this pregnancy, the priest visiting the couple remarks that some women refused motherhood and that this refusal is sure to avenge itself. When Ernest asks which form this punishment will take the priest answers: "either the couple do not find fulfilment in each other and one of the two searches for the inevitable third person, or God punishes them through their children. And this never fails. We priests know it".

And here Adelaïde differs from Eva, Annètje, Puck, even

from Letje who had occasional flashes of insight when she looked at the world through her own eyes instead of looking the way she had been taught to look. Adelaide did not question the priest's words, she believed him. She had sinned by refusing to become a mother for two years, she would be punished. Walschap has softened the blow a little by hinting that there was a strain of insanity in the family as Adelaide's father at this time becomes more and more deranged. In other words, Walschap admits as it were that a well-balanced, normal woman would have used her own discretion and not taken the words of a priest as being infallible. On the other hand, when Westerlinck in Gesprekken met Walschap asks Walschap why he made the priest speak those strong words Walschap answers: "I made the priest accentuate the moral side so clearly so as to avoid the fate of Adelaide being mainly or completely attributed to her hereditary mental instability".²³² This must mean that in Walschap's view her fate was mainly due to the damning words of the priest.

After Adelaide's son is born she worries night and day about which form God's punishment will take: will her husband find another woman or will she have to lose her child. She can see no other way out. Like a horse with blinkers on she decides that she would prefer her husband to commit adultery and she nearly pushes him into it, so as to save her child. She cannot stand the thought of a second child as this will only mean more worry. As a second child does not arrive we see the considerable pressures that this particular society exercises on a married woman.

Adelaide's mother-in-law soon drops the hint that Eric would like a little sister. When Adelaide has to go into a mental home the sister lays down the law: "Surely you cannot expect your husband to live as a celibate".^{232A}

Her unhappiness is greatly increased by her loneliness. She tries to share her problems with Ernest but he does not understand her. In the village where she was born and bred, amongst the friends she went to school with there is nobody she feels she can confide in. Even more so here than in Eline Vere's case we feel that she might have been saved had she been able to express her feelings to an understanding listener. She says to her mad father: "If I had only been able to express myself once, I would have been delivered".²³³ But her father did not even recognise her by then. We hear many complaints about the loneliness in big towns but here we see that one can be as alone in a small, intimate community. It is often forgotten that the typecasting, the living up to the image that this community has of you can be strangling.

Why did not Adelaide try to get help from the Church? Walschap answers this question in his Westerlinck interviews: "Already at that time the prevailing opinion amongst Catholics was that a priest did not know life and that it was no use to put to him difficulties which he did not understand and for which he had no mercy. One had to solve them oneself".²³⁴ Adelaide had not carried out the command of the Church and the fear of punishment drove her mad. When she is pregnant for the second time she falls

or throws herself - it is not made clear which - out of an upstairs window and is killed.

The message as passed on by the Church is: For a woman sex should not mean fun, not even love, it should mean having children. The sister in the mental home told Adelaide not to demand abstinence from her husband or "it will be your fault when your good husband becomes unfaithful".²³⁵ The husband however will not go to another woman to have more children, he goes for his share of sex. Time and again in Walschap's work the differences between men and women are stressed in the society he describes. With few exceptions women are only pictured in their relationships to husband and family, never do they have an interest outside this, whereas the men usually have several hobbies apart from their profession. Everybody accepts these stereotyped rôles and we can hardly believe we are in the twentieth century until we realise that the stifling role division arises from the omnipotence of the Church.

Eric, the sequel to Adelaide, in many ways develops along the same lines as the first book. When Eric hears about the mental instability in his family, he watches himself to see whether he is affected too. Like Adelaide, who calls herself an 'unchaste beast', he is terrified when, as an adolescent, his sex drive becomes very strong. He thinks that other men start off by falling in love with the character and the virtues of a woman and finally finish up by deciding to accept the sensual as well, "but I, I am nothing but a beast. I don't care who it is".

He becomes another victim of the hard-line approach of the Church to sex. On purpose he starts a relationship with a girl who suffers from T.B. in order to catch the illness himself. He succeeds and dies shortly afterwards but not before he has married a grocer's daughter, shoot of a healthy family. After his death his daughter Carla is born.

Carla is the last book of the trilogy. Carla, like Adelaide, goes to a convent school but decides against becoming a nun. In marrying Leo she makes the wrong choice: "After a frustrated youth, Leo's character deteriorates gradually via hypocrisy, mendacity, jealousy, sexual obsession, torturing inferiority and a sense of failure to the extremes of frenzy, delirium, hate of life alternating with murderous impulses."²³⁶ Carla behaves like a saint under her husband's inhuman treatment. We are reminded of Mrs. van Lowe's reaction in De kleine Zielen when her grand-daughter Emilietje is beaten up by her husband, Mrs. van Lowe claims that violence between husband and wife is out of the question in their civilised circles. Emilietje leaves her husband never to return, a far more realistic and dignified way of dealing with cruelty one would think. But Carla of course has been brought up to think of marriage as a sacrament and of suffering as a sacrifice, a means of purification. It seems hardly possible to go through so much suffering but Walschap thinks otherwise, "Not every Christian woman has to bear a burden as heavy as Carla's, but Carla's fate is not exceptional. There are women who are tried still more".²³⁷ And this is supposed to be

a religion of love. One cannot help thinking that if half of the Roman Catholic priests had been women they would not have put up with the gross humiliation of so many of their kind. It is equally frightening how the Church, a body of mere men after all, could inspire so many women to remain passive under such ignominious treatment.

One thing is proven beyond any doubt: with Carla the mental instability of the Roothoof family has disappeared. When at one time she thinks it wiser to have no more children she frankly confesses this to the priest and though he advises her against this she follows her own judgment. She calmly takes in her stride what became Adelaide's downfall. In this book there is again evidence of the pressure of outsiders on the couple to have children. Carla's mother-in-law is outraged when, after eleven months, there is still no trace of a baby.

Throughout the three books people, especially women, have very little personal freedom. When Adelaide, Eric and Carla are at boarding school their letters are read by their teachers before they are allowed to see them themselves. There is an air of suspicion all through the book.

Only when after Leo's death Carla marries her old admirer Henri does she find happiness. Carla had four children by Leo, she also has four children by Henri, a large family, all as prescribed. Henri is a wise man, he tells his eight children about Adelaide and Eric but "Mother has suffered to buy our happiness". The concept of sacrifice returns again and again

in Walschap's work. We find it difficult to see the need for these sacrifices. Walschap's friend the poet Cauwelaert wrote:

'Van vreugde niet, van blijdschap niet,
de Zielen rijpen van verdriet'.

Sorrow may help to create a more mature human being, but does sacrifice? As far as we can see nobody profited when Carla was severely maltreated by Leo. Leo never mended his ways however saintly Carla behaved and from this marriage where the woman came from an insane family and the man showed insane characteristics during his life, four children were born. There is not a thought given to what the fate of these children may be. The last line of the book is "...the mother of the tribe is dancing". A line with an Old Testament ring. Often we seem to read between the lines: "... your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you". And Adelaide begat Eric and Eric begat Carla and And all women, talented or otherwise, had the one and only job: to look after their husbands and their (preferably large) families.

Trouwen has many of the same ingredients as Carla.

"Mie Zaterdag like Carla is a domineering woman. She has many characteristics in common with Carla: proud, courageous, hard, stubborn, diligent, thrifty and unspeakably maternal"²³⁸

The men in both books are weak characters and the partners in both marriages are complete opposites. In Trouwen it is Rik who wants to limit the number of his children but Mie disagrees and so they finish up with fourteen. Another mother of a tribe?

Rik, born when his parents were middle-aged, spoiled and indulged as a child, as a young man seduced as many village girls as he could lay his hands on and became a frequenter of the brothels in Brussels. Sated with this kind of life in which he wasted all the savings of his parents he is on his way to commit suicide when he meets Mie. Mie, unlike Carla, does not come from a middle-class background; her father is a poacher and road mender, but Walschap made her as strong a character as he made Carla. What his own parents, his adoptive parents and several boarding schools could not teach Rik, Mie could: discipline. He is faithful to her, he works hard, loves his children and gains general respect.

In Carla and in Trouwen it is stressed that it is the mother who has the closest relationship with the children.

Carla: "Between the first and the second foursome one can see no difference; they are eight images of their mother".²³⁹

Trouwen: "He knew that if it came to the point the children were hers".²⁴⁰ This stresses once more one of the gaps that are likely to be caused by stereotyped roles in a family: father is the breadwinner, mother cares for the children. Carla and Mie are both idealised characters. Did Walschap have such a high opinion of women? His answer is guarded but positive: "I think that in general the female marriage partner is the more deserving one".²⁴¹

Celibaat was written in the same year as Trouwen.

Walschap's thoughts on celibacy: "Unnatural, senseless, dangerous,

bad for 95% of men and women".²⁴² Walschap describes in Celibaat ".... the malice of a desperate man, his impotence towards life, his timidity, shame, despair".²⁴³

The celibate André D'Hertenfeldt is the son of a professional man, born and bred in the city, but after his parents' death he goes back to the land where his forebears originally stemmed from. He suffers from extreme shyness at which he revolts when he is alone with cruelty to his animals or sadistic daydreaming. His shyness in fact prevents him from proposing to his beloved Ursule; he is a celibate willy nilly. When the First World War breaks out he joins the Army. Towards the end of the war his face becomes badly mutilated, and during his spell in the army hospital his lifelong bitterness leaves him. When he leaves the hospital he rents a cottage in the South of France where an elderly woman looks after him. Her concern for him makes him realise "How many reasons there were to long for a woman, for it is good to be near a woman".²⁴⁴

Here is another example where Walschap stresses the powers of healing and comfort that a woman can give to a man. The whole book is an advertisement for marriage. If only André had been able to marry Ursule he would have been a changed man one can read between the lines. Ursule in turn has a black vision of spinsterhood: "She would live out the rest of her life in this emptiness, she would be like Auntie Trees in Cobbesele, ugly and mean and heartless and sour".²⁴⁵ Neither of them can see anything positive in the unmarried state. This book also shows what it

can lead to when men have one set of rights and women another. If proposing had not been an exclusively male prerogative Ursule could have taken the matter in hand and much sorrow would have been prevented.

Sibylle is a Walschap heroine with a difference: her interests go beyond marriage and motherhood. She starts off in the usual way by thinking of becoming a nun but she decides against it "because she thought herself less suited to the moral grandeur of self denial than to the mountain peaks of intellectual life".²⁴⁵^A

Her father, a teacher and an admirer of learning applauds her choice of philosophy. Few others do: her brother: "... he thought that a woman should be either nun or mother study if it distracts from the household, the maternal, is wrong".²⁴⁶

Sister-in-law: "I have great admiration for philosophy but a good husband and a couple of children is much better for a woman".²⁴⁷

A priest and fellow teacher: "All those learned women nowadays. Why don't they get married".²⁴⁸ Another example of the gap between men and women, of the stifling rôles women are pushed into.

Men can get married and do whatever they fancy with the rest of their time, women just get married. Or have a career. Eitheror.

But Sibylle is not about emancipation, it is about faith. Sibylle loses her faith during the course of her study and it makes her wretchedly unhappy, because she has 'du Dieu sous la peau'. Her upbringing and schooling have been saturated with the spirit of Roman Catholicism; all her relatives and friends are believers; loss of faith means uncertainty and a feeling of utter loneliness.

Even love brings no salvation. Sibylle drowns in her own pond and neither Walschap nor Sibylle herself know whether it is a conscious suicide, according to Walschap in his discussion with Westerlinck. It must have been difficult for Walschap to find a credible way out here. Sibylle was too steeped in Catholicism to make her suicide acceptable to the reader, she could not go on without her faith but neither could she regain it. Death was the only way out. Both Adelaïde and Sibylle die victims of their faith.

So far all Walschap's heroines have wanted to become nuns at one time or another during their spell at boarding school and we get the impression that these schools accommodated collections of saints-to-be. In Denise we hear to the contrary. Denise tells her parents how her schoolfriends, some of them very wealthy, constantly show off their riches to each other. Hardly in accordance with the modesty and humility the nuns preach one would think. Rather than be witness to this vanity Denise wants to go to Teachers' College with the 'petites bourgeoises': ".... the times have changed, Mama, modern woman must be capable of independence. That is really nothing to be ashamed of nowadays. It is typically English. It is chic nowadays".²⁴⁹ Her mother prefers her to get a University degree but Denise disagrees for two reasons: ".... what will she look like after another six, seven, eight years of dry scientific studies? Pale and wearing glasses. What will she have got out of her youth? Papa supports her by saying that degreed people usually are poor people unless she goes into politics

which is not the thing to do for a girl and anyway she'll never use whatever diploma she gets".²⁵⁰

For over a century now this view on study for girls has been typical of many people. If she chooses to study, she does so because it is fashionable, she must not get involved too much or she'll end up as a bluestocking, the worst possible fate for a girl. Wearing glasses is a risk of much study so it is better to avoid the study. 'Men seldom make passes at girls who wear glasses'. Study does not mean a source of knowledge, interest, discipline for the rest of your life, it means years you cannot spend catching a husband. Papa goes by the money the diploma would fetch. And of course, there are limits, women cannot possibly go into politics, and why should Denise, a rich man's daughter, actually use her diploma. That a satisfying job can mean fulfilment to a woman as much as to a man is unheard of.

As it turns out, Denise might just as well have turned pale and bespectacled, her life is a succession of failures. She falls in love with Willy, a married man, for whom she turns down other proposals while waiting for a kind of miracle to enable her to marry him. The miracle never happens and in the end she marries Paul an admirer from her youth. They have a happy but short time together. Paul commits fraud to be able to give Denise all the things she should have, but he is discovered and imprisoned. After returning home he has turned sour and gives Denise a very difficult time before he finally dies. Then Willy's son comes and declares his love but by this time

the war has broken out and she is killed by an enemy aeroplane.

Denise illustrates clearly the views of Walschap's middle-class contemporaries of the pre-second-world-war generation on women's education. In the fashionable boarding schools for girls, though staffed by nuns, the girls often spent most of their time trying to outbid one another with regard to their father's wealth. Teachers' colleges for women were not schools where young people who liked children and who had an aptitude for teaching prepared for their professional teaching career but they were institutions where the 'petites bourgeoises' went to prepare for a future meagre livelihood. Preferably girls did not go to University because it might harm their youthful looks - see quotation above - their fathers agreed for the different reason that a university degree did not mean a good income, mothers might encourage their girls to go, as the glamour of their daughter's high I.Q. might reflect glory on them. Denise's men are again weak characters and Denise's lifelong faithfulness to a married man is seen as a sacrifice for the sake of an ideal love.

Ons Geluk, like Trouwen, describes a marriage in which the wife tries to manipulate her husband in all fields of life. Her dream: "love, a good husband, a great artist, a large pious and prosperous family".²⁵¹ Leontine, unlike Rik's wife Mie Zaterdag, had a middle-class background but her expectations from life were the same, including the large family. "Thrones fall, nations disappear, religions too, but the fact that women confuse bearing

children with religion will never alter".²⁵² Fortunately nowadays women are not so misguided as the narrator states here. Walschap describes the marriage of René and Léontine as a particularly stormy one. René is an artist, he suffers from an inferiority complex, periods of loneliness, doubts about his artistic ability, and spells of aggression. Léontine is a strong, wilful personality who wants everything her own way. After some years of marriage the tensions run so high that the aggression very nearly results in murder and the feelings of guilt almost result in suicide. After this a sense of relaxation sets in and the catharsis follows.

From reading this book we may be inclined to think that Walschap is in favour of a marriageless society rather in Houtekiet style. The physical violence between hero and heroine and between other couples mentioned in passing indicates that marriage is often a life or death struggle. Is the title a cynical one? When asked a question to this effect by Westerlinck Walschap answers: "It is specific to the living together of each husband and wife that there are (good) minutes which make up for many (bad) hours and days and which make marriage preferable to celibacy and to concubinage".²⁵³ When René and Léontine marry, about the only thing they have in common is their sexual attraction for each other. By the end of the book, at the time when their seventh child is wed, René Hox is able to say about his marriage: "Like everything else between us it has turned out differently from what we have wished for and hoped and yet it is good".²⁵⁴

There is much talk recently of women who are slaves

of their households and of their children, women who are left behind compared to their husbands; the husbands through their contacts with society change and mature, and estrangement is the result. Ons geluk shows that marriage can have the opposite effect. Léontine wants René to adopt her conventional standards, her religion, her preference for a large family. After years of 'imprisonment' René cannot stand his wife's tyranny any longer and his breakthrough to freedom and personal growth causes his artistic talents to flourish. There may be one advantage about people who have thus suffered through stunting marriages: only they who have been bereft of their freedom can appreciate it to the full.

"Alberta van Calcken is a sturdy, well-built, mature, handsome girl, wise, moderate, well-balanced, quiet, homely, sincere, modest, used to ruling a family independently, who has the firm intention of becoming really perfect and holy"²⁵⁵

Zuster Virgilia describes how well Alberta succeeded in becoming perfect and holy. Until she was twenty-seven she looked after her father and her brothers and sisters - her mother died young - and when she was not needed in the household any more she entered the convent against the wishes of her family who thought she was made to be a wife and mother. As a novice she "eats much of what she does not like and little of what she likes unobtrusively she throws sand on her plate She uses one or two pillows if she likes to lie low and no pillow if she likes to lie high

Always she prefers the company of the fellow-sister she dislikes most"²⁵⁶ etc., etc. In other words she tries to become perfect and holy by making sacrifices day and night. When Alberta's novitiate is finished she becomes officially Sister Virgilia and is appointed a schoolteacher in a nearby village. The children love her, the parents respect her, she loves the work and as if this is not enough she has dreams that come true and sees visions. Though she works very hard she still wears iron bracelets, too tight garters made of string and she puts nails in her shoes until her shoes are full of blood.

As in Carla, we ask ourselves how a form of Christianity - the religion of love - could ever allow its members such barbaric practices. And Walschap evidently accepts it as such a normal aspect of the life of a nun that the subject is not even touched upon in Gespreken met Walschap. Westerlinck asks why Walschap has painted Virgilia with such loving dedication and the answer is: "Out of admiration for the noble humanity which makes such surrender to an ideal possible".²⁵⁷ Obviously one must be born and bred a Roman Catholic to use words like noble and ideal for a way of life which brings a young healthy woman to the grave in a very short time.

Sacrifice is also the theme of De Francaise. Cel is an illegitimate child and when he grows up he decides to become a priest to 'pay' for the sins of his mother. Cynically the Church will not accept him because he is an illegitimate child. It is a favour to be allowed to make sacrifices. Martine, his

cousin, and Cel have felt a platonic love for each other since they were quite young but the fact that Cel cannot become a priest does not change this relationship, it remains platonic. The tension of this unnatural situation is relieved in their correspondence in which they are completely frank with each other. When suspicious adults open the letters the game is up. Nobody can believe in the pure relationship of the two young people. The fact that Cel's mother had 'sinned' as well made relatives even more suspicious, That his mother's misdeed on the contrary had been a strong reason for the young people not to touch each other never entered their minds. When Westerlinck asks Walschap: "I wonder whether this complete lack of understanding by the relatives from both sides this devaluation from noble love to vile lust, is not somewhat exaggerated"²⁵⁸ Walschap replies in the negative. Walschap herewith affirms that there was an insuperable generation gap, that the adults did not really believe that the young people would follow the teachings of the Church and this also meant that if the young people did not find friends of their own age, who understood them, they were unbearably lonely. To escape this loneliness Cel needs Martine: "His love for Martine was his vitality".²⁵⁹ When the adults forbid any form of communication between them, the only way out for Cel is suicide and so as not to leave Martine behind he suggests they commit suicide together. Westerlinck goes even further: "I think that he wants to take her with him (into death) out of fear, for he who cannot

face life on his own cannot face death either".²⁶⁰ Walschap claims however that Cel has to take Martine with him in death because he cannot leave her behind in a world from which he intends to deliver himself.

At the last moment Martine realises that Cel would be able to cope with life much better without her. Cel had tried to live up to Martine's ideal image of him for years and he could not do this any longer, on the other hand he could not bear to fall from his pedestal. Martine commits suicide by throwing herself from a tower and Cel goes on living by less demanding standards.

The woman in this book is once more the strong character. The book is also another proof of how men can benefit by the emancipation of women. Martine's admiration was all-important for Cel. He did not see her as a human being with whom he was in love but as some goddess on a pedestal. The Church of course is greatly to blame here by idealising chastity especially in connection with the priest's calling. All through Walschap's work it is seen clearly how great the impact of the Roman Catholic Church was on the rôle of women and how necessary it was and is for women who have undergone such a one-sided influence to break out to freedom.

None of Walschap's women escape from their narrow background in order to live a life of their own and thus they live in complete agreement with the views of their Church at that time. Mary Daly in The Church and the Second Sex has investigated

the position of women in the Roman Catholic Church through the ages and she quotes the words of Pope Pius XII - 1945 - where he describes the feelings of the daughter of a working mother:

"Used to seeing her mother always absent and the home dismal in its abandonment, she will find no attraction in it, she will not feel the slightest inclination for domestic occupations, and she will be unable to understand their nobleness and beauty or desire to devote herself to them some day as a wife and mother".

Moreover, she "will want to emancipate herself as early as possible and, according to a truly sad expression, 'live her own life' ".²⁶¹

About a generation later however a different sound is heard:

"Some forward-looking Catholic writers (notably Monsignor J.D. Conway) have suggested that Pope John was opening just a crack the door to the priesthood for women, perhaps without realising it, when he wrote in Pacem in Terris: "Human beings have the right to choose freely the state of life which they prefer, and therefore the right to establish a family, with equal rights and duties for man and woman, and also the right to follow a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life' ".²⁶²

After quoting this passage Monsignor Conway commented: "Pope John might object to my taking his words literally but they deserve meditation. He noted with approval the fading of a stratified society, in which some persons are put in an inferior condition, and others assume superior position, 'on account of economic and social conditions, of sex, of assigned rank' ".²⁶³ And finally in the Jesuit journal The Way -

Contemporary Christian Spirituality - we found that the January 1976 edition had been completely dedicated to Woman. Amongst the writers we discovered a rebel. Ursula King says in her article Women and Religion: Prospects for Liberation: "At present, no religion can offer a fully adequate model for contemporary women's self-understanding. The newness of the situation has to be matched by a corresponding new creative effort on the part of religious leaders and thinkers, male and female alike. Otherwise women, the most faithful devotees and upholders of religious tradition through the centuries, may well have to abandon religion itself as being an instrument of their subjection".²⁶⁴

REGISTRATION WITHOUT CORRECTION.

Marnix Gijsen.

Marnix Gijsen and Gerard Walschap have much in common. They are contemporaries, fellow-countrymen, both were brought up as believers and both gave up the Roman Catholic faith. But their work is totally different. Gerard Walschap tends to concentrate on the lives of his women characters. The books are often called after the women characters, and these women are always steeped in Catholicism; they are usually the bossy, managing type who have many children. Walschap's books give one a feeling of: Men are men and women are women and never the twain shall meet. Real understanding is rare, or even moments of understanding - Adelaide is understood by nobody and is driven to suicide, her son Eric commits suicide too, his daughter Carla's first marriage is a misery beyond belief. Trouwen describes a mother-knows-best figure who rules husband and children alike. Sibylle's relationship with her lover is very shortlived as doubts about her faith tear her apart and she comes to an untimely end. Denise cultivates a platonic friendship - that has no future - for a married man, and Ons Geluk describes a marriage so full of frustrations that the husband nearly murders his wife, after which a kind of peace is reached. De Francaise again ends in suicide for the heroine.

Marnix Gijsen's characters (men and women alike) are totally different; we are given the story from the man's point of view, and his narrators are usually wise men, philosophers,

moderates, who can see different points of view.

Maurice Roelants describes Marnix Gijsen as "strong, vulnerable, intelligent, courageous and balanced".²⁶⁵ These, on the whole, are also the characteristics of his heroes. Gijsen is very interested in the man-woman relationship too, but his characters are infinitely more varied than Walschap's, whose men are mostly weak, whose women are overbearing and who introduces great numbers of religious fanatics.

Joachim van Babylon is the moving account of an incompatible marriage. Joachim, an intelligent man, travels widely when young. This gives him an extensive general knowledge in many fields, it also confuses him because he realises that the different peoples he visits all have their own philosophy as to the purpose of their life on earth. After much study he comes to the conclusion that man can only be sure of one thing: death. Rather than waiting for his death he decides to drown himself but as he is washed up on the shore alive he goes on living. Even Gijsen's suicides differ from Walschap's. Walschap's characters are driven to death by other people and their attempts always succeed. Joachim, risen from the dead, as it were, decides to turn to Suzanna. Their families had arranged their wedding when they were children. "Perhaps she was the bearer of peace, his condition for happiness".²⁶⁶ To expect so much from your partner seems a wrong start; Suzanna cannot give him all he needs and Joachim is bound to be disappointed.

This book shows clearly how true it is that men can only gain by the emancipation of women. The marriage does not work. Joachim is not clear at first what the reason is. Was it the fact that Suzanna had no children? By now his philosophy was "that the only reason for our existence was that we reproduced ourselves".²⁶⁷ The male chauvinist in him is dissatisfied: "In her arms I could never become the conqueror who forces her to submit".²⁶⁸ The reason their marriage never works is sexual incompatibility: "suddenly I understood, that I hated Suzanna, this woman who could give herself while remaining herself" and "This woman who could not desire".²⁶⁹

We are not given Suzanna's point of view. We don't know about her upbringing but it seems that the teaching of virtue took up too large a part of it so that spontaneity was replaced by a sense of decorum and sexual desire by frigidity. "Virtue was first and foremost the duty to receive her husband".²⁷⁰ Suzanna might have made the perfect partner for an old man or a sick man or even for a different young man: "Suzanna was not a woman she was a mother, a comforter, she was compassion and welcome, mercy and understanding".²⁷¹ But Joachim was a strong, young, handsome man who wanted to be loved as he loved her, he did not want her to undergo his passion passively.

We don't know enough about women in biblical times to be sure whether chaste Suzannas were the rule or the exception, neither do we know if disappointed Joachims - disappointed in

this particular sense - were very common. We do not get a very clear picture of Suzanna. Did he discuss his disappointment with her? Did she regret not having children? And why did Gijzen set the story in biblical times? On the last page Joachim comes to the conclusion that "It would have been wise to accept Suzanna as she was". The only sensible solution when divorce is an impossibility one would think, though a fatalistic one.

The questions round Joachim and Suzanna must also have intrigued Yvonne de Man because she too wrote a book about them: Een vrouw met name Suzanna. Now we get an account about this relationship from Suzanna's point of view and all our questions are answered. Why the sexual incompatibility? Yvonne de Man knows the answer. As a young girl Suzanna had lived in Babylon with her aunt and there she met an older man, a doctor, who had had a strong physical attraction for her. She could never forget him. She only married Joachim because the wedding was arranged by their parents, she was not in love with him. When married, she tries very hard to make the relationship work, but she fails. Joachim despises her because she gives him no children. He considers her barren as he claims to have a daughter from a woman in Lesbos. She tries to discuss this matter with him, she is ready to adopt his daughter even but he is not interested: "A man only counts his sons".²⁷² Joachim's opinion of women was low: "Take from a woman that which can add to your personality, give her only crumbs of yourself. The sower and the seed are more important

than the furrow in the earth".²⁷³ How pathetic are these words in the light of what is to follow. One day Suzanna unburdens her great unhappiness to the prophet Jeremiah. He questions Joachim's personal servant and comes to the conclusion that their marriage is childless because Joachim suffered from mumps. Jeremiah advises her not to tell this to her husband: "Joachim is not mature enough for this disclosure His pride and what is worse his vanity are in the way of his intelligence and his inborn humanity".²⁷⁴

Suzanna has to shield her rich, experienced, overbearing husband from the difficulties of life. She has to act like a mother to him. This presupposes that she, a woman, can cope better with emotional difficulties than can he. She takes the prophet's advice and we are back in the vicious circle of female sacrifice which in turn calls up masochistic feelings. In such basic matters only the truth can benefit a marriage surely.

Jeanne van Schaik-Willing also gives examples of the different ways men and women react to problems. In Nachtvorst: "...where women shut themselves away to cry, men often try to bear their sorrow by drowning it in noisy amusement".²⁷⁵ in De Overnachting: Justus Breevort gets himself drunk when Line refuses his proposal of marriage. Line finds it extremely difficult to put up with the perverseness of her husband Marcel, but she perseveres and tries to make the most of her marriage. It looks as if these writers are saying that women will find a

solution to their problems or just live with them but that men try to forget them and that it is women's task to support them if they cannot cope - Joachim - Women's emotional superiority. How gratifying to find that some writers have found an area where women are better equipped than men!

Telemachus in het dorp also has a fatalistic aspect. The hero spends all the holidays of his youth with his relatives in the village of Blaren and he is involved in so much 'living' there that he feels it suffices for the rest of his days. He forgoes love and marriage and when old retires to Blaren, accepting life as it comes.

Gijzen's main characters are round characters, conscientious people who question their attitude to life constantly. People, individuals, matter to Gijzen. Filip Meeuwissen in De man van overmorgen is a progressive politician who cares deeply for his native Antwerp and who tries to invest in long term policy - hence the title. He comes to a point where what he feels as his betrayal of a love and a friendship weigh heavier on him than all the people of Antwerp. He is unable to go on living with himself and commits suicide.

These same motifs : the purpose of life and the man-woman relationship return in Klaaglied om Agnes. A young man finds his ideal girlfriend when they are only teenagers and as they grow older together he finds his own truths: "all too late I have understood that we have been given a conventional idea of man

and woman, which is supported more by mythology and the social prejudices of completely uncivilised or overcivilised nations than by any reasonable or honest basis".²⁷⁶ When he joins the Army he describes the mentality of the soldiers towards woman: "The function of woman was completely passive and if one of their female chance companions dared to show a certain enthusiasm it caused a scandalised surprise. Such a woman was a whore".²⁷⁷

As in Joachim van Babylon woman as an object is stressed here again. The relationship between Agnes and the narrator is moving more and more the other way, towards woman as a subject:

" suddenly it became clear to me that I had yielded to Agnes, whom I had so far treated with pedantic self-assurance".²⁷⁸

The book is a memorial for Agnes, who dies very young.

In Terwille van Leentje - another Army novel - the difference between the narrator's opinion of women and the opinion of his fellow soldiers is once more stressed. The narrator here is an intellectual-to-be, who coming from a protected bourgeois background is not prepared for the obscenities he encounters in the Army. He fails to understand people like his fellow soldiers who consider woman a necessity, that "a cow or a goat would do as well but this is punishable".²⁷⁹ When he goes out for a walk one night he loses his way and surprises a couple during their ²⁸⁰entre nous. The woman says laughingly: "We have not lost our time". "It seemed to me as if she belonged to a third sex, for obscenities I only expected from men".²⁸¹ By the end of the book he nearly

murders this 'obscene' woman and this makes him realise that he has no right to set himself up as a moraliser concerning other people's behaviour.

The tone in Gijsen's work becomes even milder in his later books and often it is the women who are shown as wiser and better than the men. In De Diaspora, a book of short stories, there are more examples of Gijsen's emancipated views. In De nacht trein naar Savannah, Georgia, the narrator gets talking to some Americans. First they all sing the praises of their wives but after they have drunk too much they paint women as "parasites, good-for-nothings, snobs and busybodies".²⁸² They only make an exception for their mothers. The narrator then remarks: "that surely each mother had in turn been a wife"²⁸³ but the company sticks to their black/white opinion.

In the same collection we find another thought on the man-woman relationship: "In this country (America) one calls a husband a provider I find this a gruesome expression, for it lowers both the man and the woman. It implies that the woman mainly wants safety and that the man as counter value has a right to the intimacy of bed and to hot coffee at eight o'clock in the morning".²⁸⁴

Gijsen declares himself repeatedly against the conventional rôle division between men and women but we get the impression that he wants to change the attitudes of the 'conventionals' rather than to change the system. Instead of

stressing the provider-receiver rôle in a marriage, he wants to stress the importance of love in a marriage. It does not seem to occur to him that this whole problem could be solved by making women independent i.e. by educating women to be breadwinners in their own right. This would solve the problem automatically as it would give men more respect for women and it would give women more self-respect. Gijzen spots the weaknesses, but his solutions are too idealistic.

VESTDIJK'S WOMEN.

Vestdijk.

In many ways the rôle of women in Vestdijk's world is not at all a 20th century rôle. He describes no marriages where the partners aim at a relationship of equality, companionship, love; he never describes career women as such, he only sees the female in them, never the whole human being.

One might say that the Ina Damman period of his life has made him a cynic concerning women. Hella Haasse in Twee maal Vestdijk says: "When his own being-split-against-nature has penetrated his mind via the unrequited love for a schoolgirl".²⁸⁵ But this split is already present in the first part De angst of the first Anton Wachter novel. Th. Govaart sums it up in Simon Vestdijk - ontmoetingen:

1. The brokenness of human existence as such: torn loose from a life before birth and living purposeless on this earth: towards nothing or towards an unknown goal.
2. The ambivalent situation of 'Anton', attracted by the father, rejecting the mother and then looking for "compensation" at an early age.
3. The beginning of a sexual disfigurement of the boy who was kept ignorant, with already a suggestion of the unsatisfactory character of the sexual relationship in general, in view of the

immediate return of the fear of loneliness when the 'enchantment' is broken".²⁸⁶ Although J.J.Oversteegen in Vestdijk en de objectiviteit remarks: "In the Anton Wachter books the reader is not confronted with an account of his (Vestdijk's) own youth" and "...though the autobiographical character of the experience according to Gregoor is established, one still has to state that this is not evident from the book",²⁸⁷ it remains a fact that the unsatisfactory relationships the boy Anton Wachter has with women - no respect for his mother, no tenderness in his first 'sexual' experience with Janke, and his rejection by Ina Damman - are repeated in practically all his later work, as we shall see in subsequent pages. Hella Haasse formulates it thus: "Also the inability to love or to create real unity with the beloved is a theme that returns time and again in Vestdijk's work. It is striking that love relationships in Vestdijk's novels are either on the level of gross and cold desire, or affect one as artificial and not warmblooded or, as far as they are very important and intervene deeply in the life of the heroes, are characterised by unfulfilment: they are often platonic relationships with somebody one cannot or is not allowed to love".²⁸⁸ There are a few exceptions to this pattern - for instance in De overnachting written in conjunction with Jeanne van Schaik-Willing and in Avontuur met Titia written with Henriëtte van Eyk. Both books have a happy ending. In De dokter en het lichte meisje the narrator, a doctor, is described as having a very good relationship with a prostitute.

He even goes so far as offering to marry her and to adopt her child which is probably not his. Does one perceive a tongue-in-cheek attitude towards the bourgeois reader here?

In other words, only rarely does the writer expect to find a substitute for Ina Damman, for his dream of the perfect girl. The reason for this is probably that his perfect relationship with her existed only in his mind. When he took her school-bag to carry it to the station for her he was careful not to touch her hands and their minds were not in tune either, for when Anton gives Ina one of his essays, entitled De Muziek, praised greatly by his masters, Ina never gives it back and never refers to it again. In reality Liesbeth-Ina had not reached his level of maturity as is shown in Nol Gregoor's book Simon Vestdijk en Lahringen: when asked what she thought of Anton at the time her answer is amongst other things: "A bit boring sometimes when his subject of conversation was too far beyond my horizon".²⁸⁹ The fact that she was self-contained, independent and did not need him in any way, which made her look powerful in his eyes, must have greatly intrigued him because these were the qualities he was totally lacking in. But even at this stage we only get a very limited view of our heroine; we only know what Anton discloses. What she was really like, whether she loved her parents, how she saw her two brothers or her girlfriends, whether she was an intelligent pupil we are not told.

And this pattern is present all through Vestdijk's

later work. It fits in with the tradition of the romantic idealisation of women, with keeping distance, with platonic love. In Vestdijk's case even a basic fear of women? The hero always shows the female in the woman, never the human being.

Marie van den Bogaard suits Anton Wachter when he goes to another grammar school: ".... Marie van den Bogaard was cut out for him. Whether he really loved her he did not ask himself any more, especially when he thought of their customary kisses".²⁹⁰ He feels less alone at his new school because Marie forms a link with the past, somebody he can trust. Also she serves him as a kind of status symbol: a boy with such a bright, good-looking girl friend must be worthwhile.

When Anton becomes a university student in Part 5 of the Anton Wachter series he soon announces that he could not fall in love with one of his women fellow students even if he wanted to. A friend sums it up for him: "No intellectual females; that was worse than homosexuality; it was much better to have an ordinary nice little bird".²⁹¹ The dislike of intellectual women is mentioned again in De dokter en het lichte meisje: "That had also something to do with my low opinion of cultured and educated women in general, disregarding their individual qualities: this was no prejudice or *idée fixe*; it had gradually grown in me, to find its culminating point in my love for Cor, though I struggled against it I could only love a woman from the people, beneath my station, beneath my education, if need be beneath my moral standard, and a long

way beneath. A sense of superiority? Pity? , , , ,".²⁹² And another instance in Een moderne Antonius: Olivier the hero has married a girl "not altogether without mercenary by-aims"²⁹³ and though she assists him greatly in his business he is not altogether happy about her cleverness: "and yet he had always felt something perverse in embracing a woman who had so much exactness in her head. It was as if one yielded oneself physically to the figure million as if you were the one in that million and the woman all those noughts, one after the other".²⁹⁴

Thus Anton's friendships with college girls are always platonic and usually shortlived. Not so shortlived is his relationship with two sisters, the daughters of his landlord. Most of Part 6 deals with this triangular affaire; Fietje and Clasina share his bed on alternate nights. They act as a kind of counterbalance against his hard study. He needs something to relax his mind, to take his mind off his study and to this purpose the sisters are used. After his exams, he does not need the sisters any more and finds himself new lodgings.

His relationship with Esther Ornstein in Part 7 would in Hella Haasse's summing up come nearest to the heading 'artificial and not warmblooded'. Her main attractions for him are her beauty - in De beker van de Min he remarks: "an ugly girl was not a girl, properly speaking"²⁹⁵ - and the fact that she does not want to go to bed with him. Inaccessibility, as in the days of Ina Damman, still intrigues him. Even as far back as the first Anton Wachter

novel, Sint Sebastiaan, we find an example of this attitude: Anton had long admired his classmate Annie Vermeer but when she comes to play with him his enchantment disappears: "Was this the Annie Vermeer he had dreamt about during long lonely nights and who he was going to marry? She was much too close".²⁹⁶ When Esther finds a job away from Amsterdam he does not even take the trouble to go and see her again.

The last Anton Wachter book shows him chasing the nurses and describes his liaison with Nurse Marie Klaassen. She gives him something to do in his spare time and he uses her as a sounding board, she is a patient listener. Towards the end of this book Anton says to a friend: "In my case it is like this, and I am perfectly sure of it: when I was fifteen, I died it had something to do with with a girl".²⁹⁷ Oversteegen discussing De nadagen van Pilatus puts it like this: "Maria Magdalena's relationship with the blockhead Pilate is just a reversed variant of the Ina Damman motif. Mary can only possess the inaccessible One (and thus not possess) in the fatuous other The sexual 'habitus' of the student Anton Wachter is not much different".²⁹⁸ Ina Damman meant to Anton Wachter perfect love, dreams come true, a worthwhile life. The only quality that the women he meets later have in common with her is the fact that they are female. And that is the only quality Anton Wachter is interested in.

Vrouwendienst, a collection of poems published in the same year as the Ina Damman novel, also deals with a number of

rejections by women the poet had experienced. The title of one poem Potiphar's Vrouw speaks for itself; some poems deal with unsatisfactory relationships but decidedly bitter is the quotation from Paul Valéry, which serves as a Leitmotif for the whole volume: "Dieu créa l'homme, et ne le trouvant pas assez seul, il lui donna une compagne pour lui faire mieux sentir sa solitude". Amongst Vestdijk's many poems there are very few love poems that reflect moments of harmony, surrender, joy. Exceptions are Voor een jonge tekenares and a sonnet from the cycle De Madonna met de valken (Gestelsche Liederen). A few lines:

"In you I can cherish all womanhood,
For every candle of my kindled senses
You carry in your hands,

De Overnachting is also a rare novel for Vestdijk in that it describes a relationship between a man and a woman from the same social background who come to a 'normal' marriage. Line Brose the narrator in Jeanne van Schaik-Willings letters is married to the sadist Marcel Tuyl. Line sees him as a patient and herself as his nurse; Justus Breevoort, the narrator in Vestdijk's letters, sees Marcel as a pervert and Line as his victim. Justus has wanted Line to marry him ever since they met in Tirol over ten years ago. His letters are convincing but sometimes patronising either towards Line and/or to womanhood in general: "... Don't speak of luminous gods my child; they are not matches these chaps".²⁹⁹

"O, the will of women It is always the general, the other, the species, society, or the ideal which 'wills' in them, not a soul knows what they want themselves".³⁰⁰

Generalisations occur frequently and the gap between men and women is hinted at throughout Vestdijk's work:

Sint Sebastiaan: "... only men had a profession".³⁰¹

Terug tot Ina Damman: "... what his father always said: that all women were frightened and weak was not true then".³⁰²

De dokter en het lichte meisje: "As a medical man I may not call Willempje completely normal. But real women are probably never completely normal".³⁰³ Real woman? The disgust of Vestdijk's heroes for intellectual women we have mentioned before. His characters also announce openly that men and women must obey different sexual laws: De overnachting: "Bigamy in a more general sense may be unavoidable sometimes for a man, for a woman it is a monstrosity".³⁰⁴

In the end Line sees her husband through Justus' eyes and leaves him in order to marry Justus. And it is Justus of course who writes the final chapter of the book when his son is a week old. Contemplating his marriage he says: "We feel contented in each other's company But that does not mean that our love is revolutionary, something unique and unrepeatabe, something mighty and inspiring, capable of changing the world!"³⁰⁵ A normal down-to-earth marriage. But Line should have had a last word as well to give us the difference between a bad and a good marriage. Besides, it would have been so informative to compare the notes of this husband and wife.

In Avontuur met Titia Vestdijk takes the opportunity

to give his impressions of a great many paintings in the Rijksmuseum and the book has actually an ordinary woman's magazine happy ending. A kind of homage to Henriëtte van Eyk?

Nol Rieske in De koperen tuin has something in common with Terug tot Ina Damman. Nol, like Anton, cannot forget his childhood love but the difference is that Nol goes back to Trix as a young man in order to ask her to marry him. In this book become apparent again the different sexual laws men and women are subject to. When at one time Trix has written to him that she cannot marry him Nol says: "After six months I understand that I could only make something of my life if I provided what an outsider would call 'successors'. I considered this as a duty to myself. I was very choosy on this point (no brothel visits for me)".³⁰⁶

By the end of the book Nol goes once more to Trix to propose to her. She hesitates on account of her past. She confesses to Nol that she has had sexual relationships with four men in the town and that this might not be a good basis for a marriage with him. Her men were quite important people in the town, choice specimens like Nol's women. The logical thing would have been for Nol to make a confession as well, and that would have made them equal. Besides, one could reason that Trix had every reason to want a little fun. Her mother dead, her father dead after having been an alcoholic most of his life. She describes her adventures very differently from the cold

reasoning way Nol talks about his: "The worst is that you want it yourself, though you know that you'll want to jump in the canal the next morning. It was the only pleasure I had".³⁰⁷ And she wants to jump in the canal because the whole community condemns her behaviour: "How do you know what it is like to feel a fallen woman who can be spat upon by everybody?".³⁰⁸ Because of her past Trix sees no future in a marriage with Nol and she commits suicide. ".... the bourgeois is anti-feminist par excellence"³⁰⁹ says Vestdijk in his Essays in duodecimo. By his own verdict the characters in De koperen tuin are narrow-minded bourgeois. It never occurs to Nol that Trix may have the same sexual rights as he exerts himself; he just feels jealousy at Trix's confessions. It never occurs to Trix that her past is her own concern. The book shows how two-faced society can be when it comes to the rights of women.

A year after De koperen tuin Vestdijk's next book De dokter en het lichte meisje was published. A more different juxtaposition could hardly have been accomplished. Trix has a bourgeois background which commits her to good behaviour. Premarital sex is not allowed. Cor has a working-class background. She is a prostitute. When she gives up her 'customers' in order to live with the narrator, a general physician, he is not altogether happy about his monopoly: "the balance has been disturbed".³¹⁰

This book has received very different reactions from different critics. Oversteegen remarks that the doctor has been

left with "de gebakken peren" when he finally decides to marry Cor and to adopt her child. Hella Haasse calls the book "a burlesque". It could also be seen - as we have mentioned before - as a book with an anti-bourgeois tendency. Finally, the book could be wishful thinking: If a man could have a satisfactory marriage based on a good sexual relationship only, then this would diminish his involvement considerably. The narrator does consider this aspect: "And we were fused together, even though our spirits, our worlds, the outside, which counts as well surely, were foreign and partly hostile towards each other".³¹¹

The men in Vestdijk's work are human beings who pass exams, acquire positions of importance in the world, who in a word are round characters. Vestdijk's women are, with a few exceptions, flat characters. They are shown as females who for some reason or other appeal to the male in the human being man. The terms round and flat are taken from E.M.Forster's Aspects of the Novel: "The test of a round character is whether it is capable of surprising in a convincing way. If it never surprises, it is flat".^{311A} As an example of a particularly round character Forster mentions Charlotte Brontë's Lucy Snowe and his flat character par excellence is Mrs. Micawber. Anton Wachter surprises all the time. After being extremely shy of a schoolgirl he has two mistresses at the same time, the sisters Fietje and Clasina, after them he goes on to a completely different type like Esther Ornstein followed by the unlikely Nurse Klaassen. Except for Ina Damman, the women are

just incidents in Anton Wachter's life, creatures he used. The sisters were used for sex, Esther Ornstein appealed to his sense of beauty, Nurse Klaassen was his sounding board. We remember how Anton Wachter was shaped by life, how he formed his attitudes, how his women disappeared into the background. The same applies to Het glinsterend pantser. We remember Victor Slingeland, his personality, his talents, above all his psoriasis and the influence it had on his life, we remember S., the narrator, who finally fell in love with Eva, Victor's beloved - and therefore safely unobtainable - but we get to know the women mainly indirectly through the dreams and dialogues of the men. Vestdijk's mothers are not usually forceful characters and when Nol Rieske's mother gossips a lot with her friends Nol realises that you cannot blame them because they have nothing better to do. In fact, even compared to women characters created by 19th century writers Vestdijk women are rather flat characters: at least the former are usually shown as heads of complicated households.

We come to the conclusion that Vestdijk was more interested in the portrayal of men than in that of women. We don't get the impression that he set out to be a reactionary in the growing liberation of women. His view of women, of relationships was a reflection of his own personal problems, rather than of what was going on in society.

REGIONAL WRITERS.

Antoon Coolen.

Antoon Coolen grew up in Deurne - Brabant - and what Anton van Duinkerken refers to as "the great Peel novels"³¹² are set in this part of Brabant. Coolen was a Roman Catholic and most of the villagers he describes are unquestioning believers who speak their local dialect and have very little contact with the world outside their own community.

The atmosphere in Kinderen van ons volk is one of sheer bliss. Pastoor Vogels goes round the village caring and praying for whoever needs it, the people are relaxed, unneurotic and have a sense of humour. Doruske, the carpenter, 'enzijn wijf' play a main role. Rather moving is the scene where Doruske shows Father Vogels his eleven children asleep in the attic. When Father Vogels suggests that it might be a good idea to stop at eleven Doruske answers: "Not a sparrow need die of hunger, I like children. And so does my wife".³¹³ Doruske's wife is somewhat concerned whether all her boys will be able to get a job in the future but that is the only aspect she worries about. Irresponsible to have so many children? But they are a gift of God. She never has time for herself? But what would she do with herself anyway. From the cradle it went without saying that her destination in life was to be a wife and mother. Even ambition

might come into it. Most people can manage to bring up a few children but to keep eleven children healthy and happy on small wages must have given Doruske and his wife a great sense of achievement. A one-up-man-ship feeling. They do not question their own feelings, they do not suffer from depressions, they take life as it comes. It seems to work in their case.

But it does not work in the case of Marie Verberne which proves that this book is not a fairy tale but a sample of realistic writing. Marie, an attractive farmer's daughter, is in love with two men who both want to marry her. Giel is spontaneous and affectionate, Godefridus does not show his feelings like Giel, but he is steadfast and utterly reliable. If only she could have married them both! Father Vogels is drawn as a likeable character but he is also limited and conventional. He thinks it highly irregular that Marie can be in love with two young men and he pushes her a little to make up her mind. So she chooses Godefridus and they have a good marriage. Giel however cannot forget her and one afternoon he visits Marie and very nearly rapes her.

And it is here where Coolen's idyllic community, peopled with creatures who live through their instinctive feelings and who do a minimum of rational analysis, comes unstuck. When Giel has left Marie, Coolen remarks: "In the depth of her being an innocent woman is tenderness and goodness. Marie reads no books and does not analyse her feelings".³¹⁴ It sounds as if Coolen

approves of this kind of woman. But in a less primitive society where people had learned to put their feelings into words the tragedy that resulted from this incident would probably not have happened. Godefridus sees Giel leaving the house. He becomes suspicious and questions Marie about Giel: "I would like to know what happens here behind my back." "Nothing happens that you should not know." "Has he been a nuisance to you?" "Yes yes yes"³¹⁵ Marie cries and Godefridus leaves the house threatening to bash in Giel's head. If Marie had read books and had learned to examine her feelings she might have been able to discuss the whole situation with her husband and compassion for Giel (Marie had rejected him after all) instead of hatred might have been the result. There is also the aspect that Godefridus considered his wife his possession. She had been threatened but he had to defend her. The consequence of this was that when Godefridus killed Giel and had to go to prison Marie had to cope without him. Men may like Marie to be good and tender but she should also be cool enough to deal with the Giels in her life herself, even though she has to learn judo to be able to achieve this.

Het donkere licht tells the story of another Marie, Marie Wijnands. Her father is a poor peat digger in de Peel who can feed his family in the summer but who during the winter has to rely on charity. So when Marie grows up her parents let her work in the town - though they distrust its influence -

because it will bring in regular money. Before Marie starts her job - fitting light bulb filaments for Philips in Eindhoven - she goes to town to buy herself a town outfit. The whole family is perplexed about her changed appearance. No more ankle length skirts and thick knitted black stockings but a "green satinette blouse, a little blue knee length skirt, a tiny little hat, pants like rags a few inches long, stockings the colour of bare legs and shoes in which she could not walk and which made her stumble"³¹⁶. Simon, her father, did not like it a bit. "Well, crikey, I can see your bum"³¹⁷ is his reaction. And then, every morning, Marie rises extremely early, walks to the nearest station, travels to town, does her work, travels back and by the time she is home again she is very tired and goes to bed early. When Spring comes she often goes home by a later train having had a look at the shop windows and enjoyed the atmosphere of the town with its bright lights. "But at home everything seemed faded, grey and drab, and there was the distress of bitter monotony. Her food was no joy and the other children around Marie were no joy. Mother who was thin and whose stern face was clouded and saddened dished out the food. After the meal Father sat down and smoked and yawned"³¹⁸ She became disenchanted with her home background when she compared it to what she saw in the town and to the merry conversation and fun she had with her friends on the train. Then Marie acquired a boy friend in town but she never brought him home or even told her parents about him. Was she ashamed of

them? We don't get to know this boy friend at all. All kinds of minor characters are drawn in detail but we don't even hear the name of Marie's boy friend. And now the shortcomings of Marie's parents become apparent. Hardworking - yes, loving - yes, but tactful - no. When Marie is home late they are suspicious, when she is very late they shout at her, when one night she does not come home at all the next day Simon beats her until she bleeds.

When in these Peel novels the people from the villages come to grief in the town Coolen blamed the town. But in many cases the people who go there are illprepared and lack the inner resources to cope with town life. Marie's parents only tackle her in a negative way, they are unimaginative, they cannot see life through her eyes. They do not give her any positive sexual information; Simon shouts at her "I can see you coming home with no pants on your bottom".³¹⁹ And who can blame Simon and his wife. They do their best in educating their children but their best is not good enough. The unavoidable happens. Marie becomes pregnant.

When the Peel workers earn enough money in the summertime many of them 'have a few' in the village pub. There are always one or two workers however who become drunk and squander the money that should be spent on feeding their family. Wrong, but understandable, we read between the lines. They have to work so hard, you cannot blame them if they want to forget occasionally. Marie wanted to forget her long days of monotonous work, her parents' lack of understanding, the fact that she would never

ride in a motor car or have beautiful clothes. But when Marie ended up in hospital after her abortion had failed, her parents were very careful to keep the reason for her stay in hospital a secret. She would have been pointed at as a sinner for ever after, yet her motive was the same as that of the drunkards. "Marie has many sisters"³²⁰ is Coolen's conclusion. Will society ever come to terms with the abortions and the illegitimate children of the Maries? For it seems unlikely that the problem will disappear completely.

Peelwerkers describes a variety of characters. There is Dirty Leenke who fritters away all her husband's money on a Saturday evening and then goes begging for the rest of the week. There is Jan Klot's wife who has a baby every year, but it mysteriously dies as soon as it is born. It leaves us with many questions: did they have no money to pay for a doctor? Did they distrust doctors? Did they consider that it was God's will? There is Sandere Mie whose husband has run away and now she earns a living by buying up goats, slaughtering them and selling the meat. Every mealtime she puts two plates on the table in case her husband comes back but when at last he returns he does not talk to her. He eats the food she prepares for him, goes back to peat digging as if he had not been away for twelve years, but he does not communicate. And yet she prefers this dumb man to no man or another man.

The Peel novels describe mainly working-class people

and the women are wives and mothers or housekeepers. When Marie Wijnands makes an exception to this pattern, things go wrong. There is much neighbourliness in Coolen's communities: when Doruske's house burns down, people come forward immediately to offer board and lodging to his large family. Jan Olie pays for Marie Wijnand's stay in hospital. When Sandere Mie is left by her husband and has to fend for herself she still gives from her poverty to others. Coolen admires this kindheartedness and he distrusts the influence of the town and of further education. But should not Coolen, as a Christian, have more faith in people, men and women alike? The poverty described in Coolen's novels is degrading rather than picturesque. Why should progress, tackled the right way, giving people sufficient wages and self-respect, kill the community spirit.

The characters in Coolen's Frisian novels are different altogether from those in his Peel novels. His Peel people are obedient to authority, the women conform to the customs of the community. His Frisians, both men and women, have a mind of their own and the women seem particularly independent compared to their sisters in Brabant. But then the Frisians Coolen describes are from a middle-class background, whereas his Peelworkers are working-class. It must be easier to be a nonconformer with some money behind you.

Friso van Taeke in De drie gebroeders comes from a long line of general physicians and is himself a doctor in rural Friesland.

The story centres round him, his wife, his three sons Tjerk, Evert, and Wobbe, and his sister Sjiewke. The van Taekes' sense of freedom expresses itself among other things in their unconventional behaviour. Friso once cures a crippled girl by undressing himself slowly in front of her and when he approaches her, hairy and stark naked, she is so frightened that she jumps out of bed. The shock has given her back the use of her legs. Later, his son Tjerk, also a doctor, contrives a similar cure. He turns a dumb girl out naked into the street and the shock gives her back her voice. Notwithstanding extremes in their behaviour the van Taeke doctors are well loved by their patients because they are capable, conscientious, and have heart for their work.

Some of the women show the same unconventional attitude towards life but public opinion is against them and they are all severely punished. "Sjiewke, Friso's sister, was ugly. If she had been a man, people sometimes said, her ugliness would not have mattered"³²¹ Little innocent remarks like this often show most painfully the injustice caused by the social inequality between men and women. Coolen's people mean: In our society a woman needs a husband to function as a breadwinner. It is not as if she can put up with ugliness better than a man but she has no choice. Beggars cannot be choosers. Men are the choosers. And they go by appearance rather than by personality. Education for women should modify this attitude. A woman with a good career has no need for just a breadwinner, she wants a partner. And

education for women benefits men as much as it does women though this aspect is not always stressed. We find an example in Dual-Career Families - 1971 - by Rhona and Robert Rapoport, where architect Benson relates how he made his choice of a marriage partner: "But in fact some part of you accepts very ruthlessly if you're going to find yourself in a married situation, you're not going to marry someone who's dumb, because you can see a lifetime of boredom ahead of you. So you steer miles away from that sort of person".³²² Sjiewke is aware of her ugliness but she is not too concerned about it. She has inherited a big house and plenty of money, she goes sailing, hunting, swimming, and horse riding and visits her brother often. At her brother's she becomes aware of her longing for a son, but "Marriage? Never!". And so Sjiewke sets out to seek conception out of wedlock. It reminds us of that other Antoon Coolen character, Marie Wijnands in Het donkere licht who also became pregnant out of wedlock. But what a difference! Marie, who in some stolen hours, at some secret place, pays for the attention given her by a youth; she then panics when she finds she is pregnant, and is aborted by an old hag. Not so the proud Sjiewke. "She would have the child, bring it up by herself, proud of that independent possession, the child would not have a stranger's name, but her name".³²³ On her Oldenburger mare, "a horse from a fairy tale", she gallops through the country in search of a father for her child. She finds "a free independent Frisian" and in due course she has a son. Public opinion

is violently against her, especially as nobody's curiosity is satisfied, for nobody gets to know the name of the father.

People judge the Sjiemwkes here even more harshly than the Maries. Marie had sinned, she had suffered, she had done penance by an abortion that nearly killed her. It satisfied people's conventional sense of justice. Sjiemwke does not hide it when it becomes apparent that she is pregnant. She is proud of her son when he grows up. People cannot take it. At his baptism, at home, "the child was entered in the church register under his mother's name. It was extremely painful to the vicar that the father was not named"³²⁴

Which side is Antoon Coolen on? Will he make Sjiemwke's son into another eminent physician, a great surgeon perhaps, braver and stronger than the average man because as a child he has had to fight harder against prejudice and biased opinion? Not so. Friso van Taeke can proclaim as his motto "Paganum esse non timeo",³²⁵ he can retire into drunkenness for a week at a time, perform his unconventional healings, nevertheless he grows to a ripe old age and is respected by all and sundry. Sjiemwke's son dies when he is six and the whole community considers his death as a punishment for her sin. The proud Sjiemwke is conquered. "Immobile like the petrified Niobe, who expiates her pride through the death of her children, Sjiemwke sat in her mansion".³²⁶ Coolen is on the conventional side, the safe side, the Church side. But then it was only 1936. Sjiemwke's pride probably stemmed from the disapproving look in men's eyes on account of her ugliness.

She was punished enough in that, why should Coolen want to play God in taking her child away as well? There is even a hint that she might be a lesbian. One night, comforting her crying maid, it says: "She (Sjiewuke) pressed the girl so tightly to her that she(the girl) felt her breath cut off between her sobs".³²⁷ That fate would not be of her own making either, so why add insult to injury.

Marijke, Doctor Evert's wife, is also punished out of all proportion. She is so beautiful that some men go to see the doctor only in order to get a glimpse of her. Admiring eyes follow her wherever she goes and we can imagine her dilemma: her husband is out all day, they have only one daughter, and she has not enough to do. In the neighbouring town she acquires a circle of admirers. Coolen does not make it clear whether she has just flirtations or whether she is unfaithful. One evening when Evert shows suspicion she pleads with him to give her another chance. When she cannot get through to him she tries that rather humiliating device to win him back, a sexy *négligée*. Sex to paper over the cracks. He does not fall for it and leaves her shortly afterwards. Frisians are 'nuchter' people. Did Evert ever pay special tribute to his wife for her beauty. Did he say to her in words what she could read in the admiring eyes of other men? His psychological shortcoming might have driven her into the arms of others. Neither Coolen nor Evert mention this aspect. Tjerk approves of Evert's behaviour and thinks he should never return to his wife

"You are right. Destroy her, she has betrayed you. Let her perish with her child".³²⁸ Tjerk has married a Roman Catholic wife and he took on her religion at the marriage. But here his father's paganism is apparent. An eye for an eye His wish comes true. Marijke finishes her days as a charwoman. Her daughter is so proud to be a van Taeke that she never marries so as not to lose her name. It gives her a very lonely existence.

Coolen juxtaposes an ugly and a beautiful woman. Both come to grief. One because she is ugly, the other because she is beautiful. How sadly does this reflect on the society in which they live, where the appearance of women is all important, where they get no opportunity to develop inner qualities. Sjieuwke feels that she has a right to a child though no man desires her and Marijke needs some tribute to be paid to her beauty while she is still young. What is more understandable. And yet the only thing society demands of them is conformity, it can see no extenuating circumstances.

Nine van der Schaaf.

Friesch Dorpsleven sounds very promising. It suggests that we will now learn how the authentic Frisian thinks, feels, lives, for it is usually the villager who is supposed to reflect most undilutedly the true character and values of a country. Frisians, on the whole, are not exactly exuberant characters; many tend to become 'waersik', a form of melancholy caused by the greyness, the rain and mist of the climate. Slauerhoff who himself suffered from 'Fernweh-Heimweh melancholy' in his poems often refers to this bareness and greyness of his native Friesland. The popular idea is that Frisians are stubborn, that they are obsessed by freedom and are often "Strebers". J.J.Kalma in Leer mij ze kennen de Friezen gives an insider's view: "Our 'I' feels aggressive towards others and our 'super-I' feels hostile towards ourselves".

People with such clear-cut characteristics should make interesting subjects for fiction. As it is, Friesch Dorpsleven could be dorpsleven anywhere. Peelwerkers is a genuine regional novel. Peat digging meant hard work in summer, usually no work and poverty in winter. The shared labour, the Peel dialect, the Brabant brand of Roman Catholicism make us feel that this book could only have been written about this part of the country. This also, though to a lesser degree, goes for Herman de Man's Het wassende water, the Merijntje cycle, most of Walschap's novels.

The main reason why Nine van der Schaaf's characters

do not strike us as Frisians is of course because she cannot let them speak their own language. Too few people would be able to understand it; the people have Frisian names but this is not enough to make the novel a regional one in the accepted sense of the word. The Dutch seems particularly formal. Has it been translated from Frisian in the writer's mind? There is a rather general thought about religion on the last page but throughout the book it plays no part. The story: Heerk Walling, a farmer's son, falls in love with Harmke Gerkes but she prefers Jelmer, an alcoholic, who gives up drinking for her. In due course Heerk marries Iefke a barge owner's daughter and becomes a farmer on his father's farm. Plenty of scope for drama: we might have expected a stubborn Heerk, unable to forget Harmke, remaining a bachelor until she becomes widowed or even for the rest of his life leaving his money to her eldest son. But firstly he takes a job on a barge; while sailing through Holland his new and varied impressions make him forget Harmke. His father threatens to disown him if he does not come back to become his successor and so after a year he obediently returns home. He now has adventures with several girls and with one of them, Anne, we are even told, in a rather roundabout way, he had sexual intercourse "Now they had a secret to hide together".³²⁹ Heerk asks Anne to marry him but she is already engaged and refuses. Heerk then has a very un-'rjocht, sljocht en trou' thought: If he told her fiancé what had happened, he (the latter) would not want to marry her,

and then she would have been made unmarriageable for everybody but him".³³⁰ Only virgins are marketable. He decides against the thought. We now expect Anne's baby to complicate matters but not so. In a year's time she marries out of sight. Quite a number of Frisian plays deal with rich-farmer's-son-wants-to-marry-poor-labourer's-daughter. Will this problem cause drama here? Iefke's father, though not a farmer, must be well off, because nobody offers any objection to the marriage. The first and the last we hear of this marriage is: "And the days, the years afterwards which they spent together bound him to her imperceptibly ever firmer".³³¹ Years later after Harmke becomes a widow she returns to the village. Will it happen now? Will Heerk's old love flare up again? "He had met her again as the same person she used to be But his old love, the desire of that love, was dead".³³²

All through the book we wait for things to happen. They never do. Books can be interesting even though they lack a plot as long as we get something else instead, for instance a real insight into the personalities of the characters, what makes them tick. We don't. We don't know why Harmke preferred Jelmer to Heerk or what Iefke saw in Heerk. No couleur locale, no humour, no depth. Friesch Dorpsleven has given us neither new insight into the role of Frisian women nor into the role of women in general. Antoon Coolen, though not a Frisian himself, gave us in his book De drie gebroeders more insight into the

Frisian character than the native Nine van der Schaaf. All the stubbornness and the sense of freedom the Frisians claim as their main characteristics in their national anthem are present here.

Herman de Man.

One would expect to find more bliss in the regional novels. Fresh air, lack of noise, plenty of space, the fact that people have usually known each other from childhood should give them an air of contentment, some base for a sense of humour. We expect relaxed tranquillity in the spirit of : "De landman gaat nu d'avond is gevallen". The farmers, knowing themselves dependent on God for their crops, one imagines as pious Christians, being kind to those who in turn are dependent on them. Doruske and his wife in Kinderen van ons volk are characters who answer this description. Rijshout en rozen, romantic though the title sounds, portrays neither humour nor tranquillity. Goof Brouwer is a tenant farmer on Land voor water, a farm in river country in the neighbourhood of Schoonhoven. The soil is not fertile so the landlord decides to stop cultivating crops and to plant willows, the twigs of which can be sold for basket weaving. The pool in the middle will be used as a decoy for migrating

ducks. This changeover had unexpected results. "Then came the curse over Goof Brouwer's house".³³³ Tonia, his only daughter, was married before the curse came and she never suffered from it. For a long time she thought she had to die a spinster for her father was a poor farmer which meant that a rich farmer's son would never propose to her and her father would never allow her to marry a labourer. Pure air, wide polderland, but unwritten laws force people into straight jackets of behaviour. But when she was twenty-three Bart Brok, the miller, came to her father to ask her hand in marriage and without being consulted Tonia was disposed of for a thousand guilders and a wardrobe of clothes. Then Goof Brouwer had called her in and left the room "For isn't there an old saying: a girl does her first courting in the 'pronkkamer' at home and her marriage will be successful?".³³⁴ After a few years of marriage we hear that she had to work very hard "but she loved the children she got by Bart and when Goof Brouwer came over for a visit she said that she was happy".³³⁵ Fulfilment through motherhood.

It was when the workmen came to change the farm into a duck decoy that the curse originated. Stans, the daughter of one of the workmen, a lively redhead with sex appeal, did the cooking and washing for the workers. Goof considered her a sinful woman and did not want to see her in his house. One day, when he is high up in a tree picking apples, he sees his only son Janus kissing Stans. The shock makes him lose his balance and he falls to his death. On the day of his burial

Stans tells Janus that she expects his child and that she will tell everybody about this if he does not marry her. Janus nearly beats her to death and says that he will kill her if she tells anybody about it. A marriage between a farmer and a common working girl was unheard of and if the news got around in this fiercely Calvinistic community his reputation would be gone forever. The beating causes Stans to have a miscarriage; she and the workmen leave the district and Janus thinks himself safe. But somehow the story has leaked out and when Janus tries to find a wife in the neighbourhood he is refused time and again.

There is great incongruity between the strong religious beliefs of Father and Son Brouwer and the way they practise their creed. Father Brouwer dislikes Stans because she sings loudly and merrily but never psalms. Her playful banter with the workmen disgusts him. But he does not try to warn her so that she can mend her ways. Janus is worse: "He reproached himself with his stupidity, but that he had murdered the child that she carried under her heart was not felt as a crime by him. He reproached the girl with having stood between him and his later happiness by enticing him"³³⁶ It was annoyance he felt, not remorse. He had treated her as a lust object, not as a person.

Finally he marries a girl from another district and with the marriage the rumours die down. They have two daughters and one son. The son drowns when he is six. One of the daughters inherits the farm. She had three daughters and two sons. One son

dies from scarlet fever, the other is accidentally killed by a poacher. "On 'Land voor water' the girls grow up, the men die" whispered the father"Blood for blood".³³⁷ Daughter Claasje marries Aart Benschap, they have two daughters and a son. Claasje guards her son day and night but one day, playing in the garden, he is poisoned by laburnum. Daughter Thera marries Gijs Gaaikhorst, They have three daughters and one son Rijkaart. This is the last generation we are told about. By this time the family owns the decoy business and the ducks are still coming in fast. When the girls grow up Gijs wants his daughters to help him. They can kill the birds for him. Geesje tries the job for a short time but then she feels like a mass murderer and she refuses to go on with the work. Gijs shows the same unyielding Old Testament spirit as did Goof Brouwer generations ago: "As long as you oppose your parents, child, you are dead to me".³³⁸ And after this he did not speak to his daughter for a whole year and he wanted his wife to do the same. He sees his daughter's behaviour as a sin against the fifth commandment and he cannot see anything repulsive in chain-killing animals. Claasje, however, was also disgusted with the work after a year. He does not dare to shut her up as well. "He fears the oppressive silence which will enter the room if another mouth is stopped".³³⁹ Kee his third daughter is different. "When she felt in her fingers the frightened convulsions of the dying bird she sometimes felt a lusty feeling through her body and legs which tickled and warmed her".³⁴⁰ The killing gave

her sadistic pleasure with sexual overtones. Not long afterwards Kee runs away with a German. Her father's comment: "Kee has left home. Kee is dead".³⁴¹ During this time Rijk comes into contact with a doctor in a nearby town who befriends him. Dr. Elias lends him books on many subjects, helps him to appreciate music and to grow roses. Gradually life opens up for Rijk and he is able to shed the narrow outlook of his ancestors caused by their isolated life and relentless religious teachings. He does not marry a Gerregie or a Clasina but the name of his wife is Frédérique. She is a violinist. And for the first time we get flashes of a marital relationship. "They felt joy in each others presence and safety from loneliness her playful cheerfulness flowed over into his".³⁴² He admits that she has a great influence on him. However, the curse has not been lifted. Just before his son is born Rijk dies in a motorbike accident.

We meet three types of women in Land voor water. Stans, attractive, willing, but penniless. She never makes it to the 'pronkkamer'. A succession of Willemeintjes and Claasjes enter with a spotless past and a modest dowry. They live in the shade of their often tyrannical husbands and the only thing we know about them is that they were good mothers. Enters Frédérique, just as the family desperately needs fresh blood. We feel that through her both aspects of the curse might be dispelled. Because there was the curse as the people saw it brought about by Janus and the curse as the readers experience it caused by

narrow mindedness and tyrannical religion. Frédérique does not believe in the Janus curse and she has not been brought up in the narrow ways of the district. She will educate her child in an entirely different way and thus a woman can make up for the sins a man committed generations ago.

Het wassende water is built up from the same constituents as Rijshout en rozen. The scene is again the same river country and materialism and letter-of-the-law religion rule the lives of the people. There is a difference though. In Rijshout en rozen it is paternal tyranny that forces wives and children to obedience. Het wassende water has a maternal tyrant. "For Vrouw Beijen was a powerful, big woman, commanding firmly like a man She herself drove to market in the green jolty cart, she herself made large purchases As a man she drove the fiery whip-hardened geldings. With a sure hand she ruled her land"³⁴³ Early on in life she had become a widow, she had brought up her four children singlehanded and managed her farm very successfully. She chose a rich wife for her eldest son when he was thirty-five. What did the district say of a woman like that? "Even though, before her, a woman would never have meddled with things like that, she was the boss and because of her influence and wealth it was accepted".³⁴⁴ They clearly see her as the exception that proves the rule. What does she think about the situation herself? "His widow did inherit for her children the hundred and ten hectares of best cow polderland, but not the honours".³⁴⁵ Notary Bestebroer

became the dike-reeve and later crippled Janus Maalen her neighbour was chosen as a member of the Council in Rijk's place. "Though she had immediately anticipated that this would happen it gnawed at her heart But could she put her skirts in the wardrobe and wear the trousers?".³⁴⁶ Who would have expected to find such an out-and-out feminist in the Lopikkerwaard before 1926. A natural, too. Nobody taught her to feel as she did. A strong, intelligent woman farmer, who knows and proves that she can run her private affairs as well as any man feels frustrated because her knowledge of public affairs is not wanted. What does Herman de Man think about her? "The pushing ambition of old Vrouw Beijen would never subside This ambition mutilated her feminine being".³⁴⁷ Herman de Man is not as progressive as his heroine: Vrouw Beijen wanted to live in accordance with her capabilities; the fact that it was not done to have a woman member of the Council was not enough reason for her not to want to be a member. She was an individualist. Herman de Man was more conventional. He disliked too strong ambition in people, but he disliked it most in women: "ambition mutilated her feminine being", not her being. Surely crushing ambition has as bad an effect on men as it has on women.

Her ambition for her eldest son seemed successful in every way. She gets the best of his working years and her son at thirty-five is ready for his attractive widow when he marries her. As he goes to live on his wife's farm his share of his father's inheritance can stay in the bank. More money in the bank

means a greater sense of power for his mother. But Gieljan, her second son, is different. He falls in love with Nelia a poor labourer's daughter. His mother forbids the relationship and he obeys his mother. He has only gone to see Nelia twice. In due course his mother arranges his marriage too, but after two years his wife dies in childbirth. After that his obedience is finished. When his mother wants him to marry again he refuses, for he has hated every minute of his marriage. "Two years can weigh as heavy as twenty years our cocks in the farmyard find their own hens and a human being has more brains than such a dumb beast".³⁴⁸ Vrouw Beijen has to give in. Gieljan never remarries but becomes an important man amongst his people. When, years later, the dikes break and the people in the district have to evacuate their houses he is able to help and support his fellowmen in many ways. The glory of her son's high office reflects on the mother and makes her feel proud of him. She also learned from her mistakes. When she arranges her daughter's marriage she makes it seem as if the two young people meet by chance so that nobody can blame her when things go wrong.

Male characteristics are supposed to be lust for power, aggression, materialism and female characteristics patience, loving care, tenderness. Vrouw Beijen had all male characteristics. Gieljan showed more female traits than his mother. Many people think that feminism means masculine women, but it should mean more female men or rather more men who are allowed to show and

who are encouraged to acquire female characteristics. A better balance between the two could not but make the world a better place ultimately.

André Demedts.

Most work of regional writers - Herman de Man, Antoon Coolen, A. M. de Jong - was published before the second world war. The writer André Demedts wrote some novels in the sixties about Flemish village life and the question arose if much had changed in the regions. Nog lange tijd gives little evidence of this. There is just one aspect that can be regarded as progress. All through these books that deal with village people one point returns regularly: the loneliness of men and women alike. The fact that people have known each other all their life seems to separate rather than unite them. We think of Walschap's Adelaide who says that she might have kept her sanity if she could only have talked to one understanding person. Goof Brouwer, in Rijshout en rozen dreams about himself managing the decoy business "far away from the gossiping neighbours".³⁴⁹ Connected with this is that these people find it difficult to express themselves. "Marie reads no books and does not analyse her feelings"³⁵⁰ it

says in Kinderen van ons volk. And neither does her husband Godefridus. But if he had been able to find in words an outlet for his feelings he might not have committed a murder.

In Nog lange tijd a priest and a district nurse hold a conversation of a personal nature. District nurse: "After that I was quick to speak about everyday things. It always used to be the custom with us that we kept silent about things that really mattered. The younger generation will perhaps change this. I almost hope so. But we who are old-timers have to be silent about this The weather, the village news and the state of the world in general, those are the subjects about which we need not feel ashamed".³⁵¹ She is guarded, using words like 'perhaps' and 'almost'. But it has dawned upon her that communication is important.

Het leven drijft describes the life of a medical doctor. Dr. Gossey is a mixed up, childish, rather pitiful man. When his wife expects her first child and complains about feelings of discomfort we read: "That is normal, he reproved her, without sympathy or a gesture of protective tenderness - I have pain, Juul - You imagine it".³⁵² He is one of those men who confuse showing affection with weakness. But when he wants a second child - "I got married because I wanted children" - she does not oblige, which is rather a relief from the Walschap women who have a rather masochistic, religious feeling about 'giving in' to their husbands even though it kills them. The ways in which

he shows his vengeance are utterly childish. "Where he walked the mud from his shoes fell on to the carpet. Just like the track of a wet dirty animal he thought. Well, the women would clean up the muck. Anyway, that was the reason for their existence." ³⁵⁴ He separates from his wife but on religious grounds he refuses to give her a divorce for the rest of his life.

And yet even this book foreshadows a greater freedom to come. A woman comes to see Dr. Gossey to ask him about contraceptives. "He looked at her menacingly. What are you married for?" ³⁵⁵ The woman gets her prescription from another doctor. But at least the matter is not ignored by this Roman Catholic writer. We cannot imagine Walschap bringing it up.

Alleen door vuur even goes a step further. Nelly, a nurse, is made pregnant by a priest. Gone are the days when the priests are portrayed as always right. Georges, the priest in this book, acts like a nasty frightened little boy when he hears about the child. He wants Nelly to have an abortion, but Nelly refuses. "You are making it impossible for me Nelly. Think what will happen to our reputation if it becomes known that you will be a mother. Nobody will have respect for us any more and those who pretend they have, will not mean it". ³⁵⁶ He is scared stiff about his future, he has no trust in the charity of his fellow human beings and he has no respect for Nelly's opinion. He has very little respect for women in general of which his thoughts bear witness: "Women had no idea of situations

and relationships as they were in reality. Marriage, home, a chained husband, a fixed income, children, that was important to them. Love to them was only a means, never a goal, a pleasure and a satisfaction".³⁵⁷ And "Women always remained creatures with a limited horizon".³⁵⁸ The whole feminist movement might well have been founded in consequence of those few casual thoughts of Priest Georges. What nasty, humiliating, male chauvinistic fantasies they are. But a 'good' priest intervenes, tells him that the only way out is to ask the Bishop to release him from the priesthood. The Bishop is shown as sympathetic and understanding and in due course Georges will marry Nelly and move to Brussels. The mother church shows itself a real mother here. Demedts said that he wrote these books in order to examine the rôle of the Christian in society. In each book there are a few people who have a beneficial influence on their community: a priest, a district nurse, a young girl. As long as there are people who care, he seems to say, there is hope. He gives 'examples' of both men and women. But the men and women are still in the old role pattern: breadwinner - housewife. The remarks about women by Dr. Gossey and Priest Georges show how this affects their image.

PART III.

Part III deals mainly with unsatisfactory relationships. Mensje van Keulen has described the suffering of husbands from nagging wives and the lack of understanding between parents and children. Hermans and Irina van Goeree show that prosperous, modern women need not necessarily feel happy and fulfilled as they cannot always cope with the world they live in. Wolkers depicts woman as a sexual object. Male and female homosexual relationships are by now discussed freely by Reve, Mulisch and Andreas Burnier.

A PROGRESSIVE IMAGE IS NOT ENOUGH.

Willem Frederik Hermans.

Een wonderkind of een total loss describes a modern triangular situation: Sofie, a spinster, once had a relationship with Alex, but Alex married her sister Loeki. After an interval of three years Sofie visits Loeki, Alex, and their four year old son Roderik.

Hermans starts by describing the impression that Sofie gets of her relatives and their surroundings: "There is no carpet in the hall or on the stairs the ceilings are cracked, there

are enormous brown flame-shaped stains on the plaster, the floors are mouldy³⁵⁹ The Floris Verster and the Breitner have disappeared from the wall, the cane furniture - the likes of which you saw nowhere in Holland nowadays - has frayed as if it was going to be made into besoms. Everything here is broken".³⁶⁰ The people fit these surroundings. Loeki "impoverished and neglected dirty, unkempt Alex had not had a shave for three days, the frame of his glasses was repaired with sellotape. And then the little one, his face full of snot ³⁶¹ His nappy ³⁶² has come down, his infected red buttocks are full of brown clots".

You would expect this scene in a Parisian mansarde or in an old crumbling Victorian house with depressed sick inmates, not in a Dutch home with its reputation for cleanliness. Both Alex and Loeki have a University education and there might be people naive enough to think that good brains might help to run a house expertly. A character in Alan Sillitoe's novel The Death of William Posters discovered that this is not necessarily true: "The house was probably run on about forty pounds a week. Yet there was a squalor about it that he had always imagined such money could eliminate, an educated squalor, a stench of untidy intellect that didn't appeal to him. Myra had told him that Pam had a degree from Cambridge, and he had been naive enough to expect an impeccable house".³⁶³ Alex has gambled away the money that they inherited from Loeki's parents, neither of them work, and they are in debt. Their nihilism is not explained satisfactorily.

Sofie cannot understand it either, and describes it as a kind of 'ontmoedigingneurose'.

Sofie owns a comfortable flat, an expensive new car, and has invested widely her share of the inheritance. She has lived in Washington and gives the impression of a sophisticated woman. And yet she has the characteristics of an Ina Boudier-Bakker *third* party. There the setting is very different of course: a well-run villa, a middle-class family with genteel manners and the relative or friend of the family who comes in to look after the household when Mother is ill and who falls in love with the lord and master. Mother recovers and the *third* person goes home, heartbroken, unable to forget her great love and she dies a somewhat mentally deranged old spinster.

Sofie feels lonely when she watches television in her modern flat, alone. Hermans has created in Sofie a modern, independent girl with old-fashioned feelings: "I shall never have another man. He has married Loeki and not me and I am not getting any younger. I will never have a child, there is no man for whom I dare to undress myself except for Alex and there will never be another man. I am monogamous by nature. I am monogamous from pessimism"³⁶⁴ Is Hermans trying to say: Even a modern woman of independent means can still be dedicated to one man, however shabby, lazy and seemingly undeserving he is, and however modern trends attempt to lure men and women alike into sexual freedom. Or is he saying: Women will never learn. Here is a

prosperous woman with plenty of drive who could have a bright future but who is so inhibited that even the thought of undressing in front of a man unnerves her.

Judging by the end of the story Hermans favours the second version. Sofie finds that Roderik has scrawled something on her car "He has written the word of three letters that starts with a k and ends in a t. Through all the layers of paint, down to the bare metal".³⁶⁵ She sees it as a ridiculous incident and races home without being able to face her relatives who will react to this, she fears, with: Our little Roderik, he is a prodigy after all. When she stops on the motorway a policeman comes up to the car: Sofie feels overcome by embarrassment "As if I am psychic I know what he thinks: that he will fine me, but that he really has the right to rape me".³⁶⁶ We must agree with Hermans. Sofie is a nit. She had entered a man's world without having acquired any of its *savoir faire*.

As other work by Hermans did not give any new ideas on the rôle of women we have limited this chapter to the one book that does.

WOMAN AS SEXUAL OBJECT.

Jan Wolkers.

Een roos van vlees describes a day in the life of Daniel. Daniel is divorced, estranged from his parents, unhappy about the death of his two year old daughter, and he suffers badly from asthma. He blames his loneliness on a physical disability during his youth which gave him an inferiority complex and on his upbringing. His father was the strong personality in his parents' marriage, and Daniel hankered for a good relationship with him but he did not achieve it: "I do love that man, he thinks, and he has always made it impossible for me to show this".³⁶⁷ His father's bible readings frightened his sensitive, imaginative mind.

Few people have the honesty to admit that they are born weak-willed, that they are irresponsible by nature and lack the ability to make others happy. Daniel too takes the easiest way out and blames his misfortunes on others. Whatever the reason, Daniel is lonely, unhappy, finds it impossible to establish contact with fellow human beings, and suffers from nightmares. Caspers, Krekels and Weck in In contact met het werk van moderne schrijvers - Jan Wolkers - go so far as to call his state a form of schizophrenia.

The accent in the book tends to be more on the suffering

of Daniel than on what other people suffer because of him. He marries before he is ready for it: "I could not cope, things followed each other up too quickly. One year I was going about with my little brother, the next year with my own child. There was no interval, I could not recover my breath. It was as if I was pushed from one cage into another".³⁶⁸ Pushed is the keyword. He does not write about himself as a free man, responsible for his own actions. When things go wrong he blames his father or the bad time he had in his youth or fate. His marriage with Sonja went wrong from the start; quarrels about futilities soured the atmosphere and after three years and two children Daniel went to Paris to join the Foreign Legion. He runs away from the problem instead of dealing with it. Sonja's pleading sees him home again before he has crossed the Legion threshold. Shortly afterwards their daughter dies and the sorrow about this drives them even farther apart. "...I could not give her (Sonja) that little tenderness she so bitterly needed. I knew that she could not do without it, every day I was conscious of it. And that's why it was even more impossible".³⁶⁹ The next year their son Basje is born. "We had to have another child, otherwise we would have died from sorrow something by which the silence between us would perhaps be lifted".³⁷⁰ Selfish reasons to have a child and they did not work. The divorce brought on Daniel's asthma. He does suffer from his own inadequacies but he cannot cure them.

On the whole he is fair to Sonja and blames himself for their failed marriage. And yet, towards the end of the book he indirectly blames her for asking more from him than he could give. Lying in bed next to his beloved cat: "A woman like an animal, he thinks. Her body covered with blond hair. Who looks straight at you without wanting to penetrate into your soul. Who does not suck and pull at you with her eyes. Who does not plead for an answer where there is none. Who does not ask for more than you can give voluntarily, however little that is. I used to have a female cat and a male cat. They never interfered with each other only during mating time they approached each other and fought and tore each other's skins. But when she died, he died too".³⁷¹

Wolkers' blueprint for marriage, animal style. It caters for the body only. How are the partners going to employ their mind and soul might one ask, that is if Wolkers believes that women have souls. The man in his creative pursuits no doubt and the wife in tending his children. Back to pagan times when the men were pictured as forceful hunters, strong, aggressive, virile with no time for such trivialities as affection, tenderness, love.

Daniel, though sexually attracted by women, is scared stiff of them. He describes the first girl he slept with: "I saw her face spongy and gluttonous, as if she wanted to gobble me up with her dark eyes. I smelt that she was rotten!".³⁷²

He promptly contracts V.D. and worries as much about it as Henry Miller's characters do. We are not told why he approached her in the first place as she was so obviously a bad one. He was pushed no doubt! In one of his nightmares he dreams about "a carnivorous plant like an enormous female organ".³⁷³ Even his mother is not safe from his flippancy. Discussing the death of his mother with a total stranger Daniel describes his feelings as "When my mother was buried, I thought, there at last disappears the shell that I crept out of".³⁷⁴ The remark of an adolescent who feels himself to be so vulnerable that he automatically says the opposite of what he feels. But Daniel is himself a father and what is more his mother is still alive.

Most of this day is spent in recalling his past. Towards the evening his friend Ans, a nurse, rings him up to tell him that she cannot go to the theatre with him that night as a patient of hers who is dying needs her. Daniel's reaction when he hears that the patient is a very old man: "But surely, in that case he is old enough to die by himself".³⁷⁵ Ans says that it is her duty to stay with her patient. Daniel's reply: "I have nobody else. I'll just go to bed early".³⁷⁶ Again, Daniel is shown as selfish, without compassion, as a sulking child even. In the end Ans promises to send her friend Emmy as a replacement. When Emmy arrives we hear her life story which is even sadder than Daniel's. Mother died early, after that Father wanted sexual contact with his two daughters which

frightened her; her boy friend turned out to be a maker of revolting pornographic films who made her pregnant and then forced her to have an abortion against her will, now she is a nurse in a 'sterfhuis'. The kind of life William Blake described as:

'Every night and every morn
Some to misery are born.'

Though Daniel feels sorry for Emmy he cannot show his feelings: "If she were an animal I would be able to comfort her, he thinks why cannot I do it now? Am I frightened that the love will be returned, that everything will become too sad and too human? The same thing happened with Sonja. I avoided her love".³⁷⁷ At least he still feels compassion here, but he cannot show it.

Two more disturbing things happen during Emmy's visit. One could put them under the headings blasphemy and sadism. When Emmy becomes hungry he decides to fry and serve her the young mice that live in his cupboard and feed on his dirty, bloody washing, under the biblical motto: "Take this, this is my body....". Critics may see in this incident an example of Wolkers' weird sense of humour, describe it as symbolism. Religious readers will probably consider it as blasphemy. It looks as if Wolkers is out to shock his readers and at the same time revenge himself on his strict religious upbringing. Of course he does not tell Emmy what she is eating. But we are reminded of the ~~Whale's~~ meat that is served to the narrator in Turks fruit under a different name. He is disgusted at the thought of having to eat whale

but Emmy is good enough to eat mice. Then when Emmy sleeps in his bed, he thinks: "I would like to sacrifice her. I would bind her arms behind her back and screw her with her bottom sticking up. Afterwards I would put a burning cigarette in her arse".³⁷⁸ And he adds as an afterthought "Perhaps I would be able to love her after that, for a little while, out of pity". Very noble. Perhaps it's even better to get Henry Miller's sadism-pur. That way you know where you are: ["]Or else he'd do it ~~in~~ dog fashion, and while she groaned and squirmed he'd nonchalantly light a cigarette and blow the smoke between her legs and shove a big long carrot up her twat".³⁷⁹ As in his other books, Wolkers shows himself strongly under the influence of Henry Miller here, adding the afterthought to modify the scene for the benefit of his more moderate Dutch readers. In this novel there is not the hate and hostility that Miller often shows towards his female characters and there is not a trace of Miller's masochistic tendencies in Wolkers' women. They are hardworking Dutch women, 'nuchter' and normal. And yet, the words that Wolkers associates with the women in his life expresses antagonism and fear. Mother - shell, first bedfellow - gobble, wife Sonja - suck and pull, Emmy - sacrifice.

In Televizier, October, 1963, Wolkers says that he likes amongst others the work of Carmiggelt. Carmiggelt, like Wolkers, meets people, sizes them up, writes about them. People. Not men and women and never the twain shall meet. In Carmiggelt's work

there is compassion, mildness, love for his fellow humans. These qualities are lacking in the narrator of this novel. Yes, Daniel does love his small son and his cat, but there is no risk in that love. A great deal of protection and selfishness comes into it.

And yet. At the end of the twenty-four hours Daniel gets a bad asthma attack. At that time he turns to Sonja to ring the doctor for him. Does it mean that women though awe-inspiring creatures have their uses? Does it mean that Wolkers felt he had to show their bad side only?

The title of the book is perfect. Roos van vlees stands for artificial anus. The book is an outlet for sick, frustrated, frightened feelings. The natural outlet being the psychiatrist's couch. Some titles seem to be created deliberately to deceive readers whether they are meant to be ironical or not. Take for instance Remco Campert's Alle dagen feest, which contains stories of orgies where most people are sick, of the murder of a boy and suchlike.

Turks fruit is another book with an excellent ironic title. Indulgence in sex, delight of a kind, is what most of the book is about. Yet the outcome of the novel is not health and happiness, the supposed result of the eating of real fruit.

The book describes the marriage of the narrator - henceforth to be referred to as N - and his wife Olga and how they both live after their divorce. For several years N and Olga

live in a state of married bliss; the accent is particularly on sexual bliss. N is quite a superior being. He is super virile and they have intercourse up to seven times a day. This is confirmed as it were by a dermatologist who states that N's inflamed penis is due to excessive sexual intercourse. He is also a great sculptor. The Queen in person comes to look at one of his sculptures. He introduces Olga to the world of jazz and films and she is duly grateful: "She was so surprised about the whole world of the film. And I was to her the magician who produced it all".³⁸⁰ With unfailing taste he chooses dress material for her. "and she said amazed: 'You know so well what I am like' ".³⁸¹ Olga in turn is a great asset to him. She is a splendid redhead and wherever they go men devour her with their eyes. A great boost to N's pride naturally. She is also a splendid cook and an excellent 'homemaker'. She does not mind a poor husband either. Between his commissions, she works in a factory for one guilder per hour. For some time she works in an office where she earns much more money but they have to dismiss her: "She could not make up with her diligent office work for the distraction she caused by her appearance".³⁸² Clerks sent her with so-called dossiers from one department of the building to another with notes like: "Dear Arie, here is the delicacy. Have a good look at it. What a pretty one, isn't she! Look at the way she walks. Hop, hop, hop. You know what I mean. Willem".³⁸³ Olga does not rebel at her dismissal. Obediently she returns to her plastics factory

Olga gets full marks for sex and housewifely qualities but her conversation seems somewhat limited: Olga: "Have you noticed that window sills have a special smell?". When N asks her to be more specific, Olga answers that they smell "of wet windows".³⁸⁴ Asked if she would like to go to "The Cherry Garden" her answer is: "Yes, where is that!". Whereupon N explains benignly that it is a play by Chekhov. Wolkers' narrators don't mix with educated women.

When Olga leaves N for another man N is not at all prepared for it and he blames it on the influence of Olga's mother who wants her to be a rich man's wife. That he might be somewhat patronising and overpossessive never occurs to him. Later, Olga herself says about it to N: "That she had felt imprisoned and in all those years had never gone into town by herself once. That I - N - went to bed with her far too often" and she adds "No, I don't laugh anymore. When I started off I thought life is a fairy tale. I am getting married, I will be happy. But I am far less happy than I thought I would be".³⁸⁵ In other words she had been conned by romantic books, admiring glances and the aura of marriage. Besides, sex with N had been new and exciting for Olga in the early years of their marriage but later she began to be bored by it. Doris Lessing has some thoughts on this in The Summer before the Dark: "... the core of discontent, or of hunger, if you like, which is unfailingly part of every modern marriage - of everything, and that is the point - had nothing to do with either partner. Or with marriage. It was

fed and heightened by what people were educated to expect of marriage, which was a very great deal".³⁸⁶

Wolkers' heroines are not educated or intelligent enough to drill in depth in order to get to the source of their discontent. Olga's later life proves this too. She marries and divorces several times until she marries an American. "He looked like Humphrey Bogart she said".³⁸⁷ Looks are her criterion. Not whether the man is good, reliable. With him she travels all over America and the Arab States and yet she gets so very little out of it. She talks about the food she ate, the liquor she drank, the conquests she made. There is no mention of people, their interests, their religions, their architecture, their art, never in depth anyway.

When Olga has left him N lives it up with other women in order to forget Olga. He describes these sessions with relish introducing the girls as Pale Willie, Roman Catholic Truus or bottle blonde Bertie. Wolkers' approach to these women is not so brutally possessive as Miller's but when all is said and done, just as in Miller's case, all these women only represent 'cunt' to him and after some months "I could vomit at the mere sight of a skirt".³⁸⁸

Wolkers also applies the animal metaphors of which Miller has such large supplies. Mother-in-law is "that dirty sly bitch"³⁸⁹ who listens with her "serpent's ears pricked up".³⁹⁰ A snake with pricked up ears? But Wolkers uses this figure of

speech for men as well. A friend of mother-in-law's who is eating his dinner he compares to a baboon who eats his "indeterminate dish of ape vomit"³⁹¹ like a reptile. The book-keeper is "a dressed up cockroach", their lawyer a "dirty corrupt toad".³⁹²

The introduction of dirt more or less coincides with the introduction of Olga substitutes. Reminiscent of Miller's 'cunt stinks'? Kitchen: "... the sink, slippery with my spitting and pissing, which stank of rotten lettuce".³⁹³ Lavatory: "After a couple of months I counted seven different kinds of mould".³⁹⁴ Room: "You could cut the stench, a fruity mixture of chicken shit and dried dab".³⁹⁵ And at regular intervals remarks like: "The stinking headache I woke up with when somebody had once more hidden a sanitary towel under the head of my mattress".³⁹⁶ Women stink. Men's private parts have a halo of glory. At one time when somebody bores him N uncovers his penis and introduces it as: "And this is the holy Habakkuk".³⁹⁷ Immediately Mellors in Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's Lover springs to mind who addressing his own penis says: "Say: Lift up your heads, that the king of glory may come in".³⁹⁸ And of course Miller has something to say on the subject: "Before me always the image of the body, our triune god of penis and testicles".³⁹⁹ Three men who believe in 'God noch gebod' but when it comes to singing the praises of their most valued physical asset they find that only biblical terminology is good enough to express it.

Olga dies young from a brain tumour, and N is one of the few people who visit her regularly in hospital. Not long before she dies she says: "I can tell you that I am not at all satisfied with the life that I have had so far".⁴⁰⁰ Without her beauty she might have had a career. Now she married early and when the marriage did not satisfy her she had nothing else to fall back on but another marriage. She says repeatedly that she feels imprisoned. "She had the idea that she lived in a large rabbit hutch with nothing but straw and her own droppings".⁴⁰¹ N buries himself in his work when he feels miserable but there is no such outlet for Olga.

Turks fruit has had a great many editions in a short time. Why do people find the book so interesting? Who do they identify with? Some people see part of the book as a blueprint for modern marriage without sexual inhibitions. Some are probably titillated by N's post-Olga indulgencies and others by seeing four-letter words in print. There seem to be plenty of messages though between the lines. To parents, to persuade their daughters to train for an interesting career so that they have other outlets than marriage alone. To daughters, that even excellent 'home makers' are not always satisfied with just home making till the end of their days. To women, not to make themselves too easily available to the N type, because far from helping N they were only provoking sickness. And to men and women alike that one cannot live by sex alone.

The best thing about De Walgvogel is again its title. In The Dodo, the Auk and the Oryx by Robert Silverberg there is a quotation from a journal by Van Neck - 1601: "We called these birds Walghvogels (disgusting birds) for the reason that the more and the longer they were cooked, the less soft and more unpalatable their flesh becomes".⁴⁰² And indeed, the more one reads from De Walgvogel the more boring and distasteful it seems. The first part of the book describes N living by himself during the war, learning to paint and his relationship with Lien, 'De Venus van de huishoudschool'. In the second part he is a soldier in Indonesia. Lien is sexually initiated by N; she is young and beautiful (recipe Sonja and Olga) and ignorant of the world in general: "She did not understand a thing about politics, she said".⁴⁰³ Lien learned "under the fierce eye of a witchlike, soured old spinster, who would like to cut off with her bread knife all those backward and forward curving parts of those girls' bodies until they were as flat as she was herself".⁴⁰⁴ Another example of Wolkers' boring typecasting: his heroines are always young, beautiful and dumb. An old teacher = a spinster = sour = a jealous bitch, etc., etc.

When Lien's father catches them redhanded, Lien is transported home and her father swears that they'll never meet again. As in Turks fruit N finds himself substitutes. One get-together is related in detail: "I thought: I won't even look at her mug, I'll suck myself to it at once".⁴⁰⁵ This specimen

gets the full Miller animal treatment: " as if I was drawn like a magnet by that overheated piece of flesh in pig-like manner that hot snake-like tongue of hers she stepped a little sheepishly into her pants".⁴⁰⁶ Needless to say that she menstruated and to make the whole performance even more piquant he cleansed himself from her blood with the white part of the Dutch flag. Kate Millett's remark in Sexual Politics about Miller's language goes also for Wolkers here: "The very brutality with which he handles the language of sex, the four-letter words, soiled by centuries of prurience and shame, is an indication of how really filthy all this is".⁴⁰⁷ She goes on to say: "Miller has given voice to certain sentiments which masculine culture had long experienced but always rather carefully suppressed While the release of such inhibited emotion, however poisonous, is beyond question advantageous, the very expression of such lavish contempt and disgust as Miller has unleashed and made fashionable, can come to be an end in itself, eventually harmful, perhaps even malignant".⁴⁰⁸

This girl is described in a particularly hostile manner. We get the impression that she uses N in the same way as he uses her, as a sex object. She says that the sex act has never before given her so much pleasure, hence probably N's contempt. The pleasure should be his exclusively. When in Turks fruit Olga's father is dying, she is very sad and depressed. N's reactions: "But that made for a nice fuck, that will-less

apathetic body".⁴⁰⁹ D.H. Lawrence in his short story The Fox is quite open about it: "No, he wouldn't let her exert her love towards him. No, she had to be passive, to acquiesce, and to be submerged under the surface of love"^{409A} "He wanted to veil her woman's spirit, as Orientals veil the woman's face".⁴¹⁰ Woman is humiliated, depersonalised. Man derives a sense of power from this attitude. Why does he need to feel so powerful? Womb envy?

In Indonesia he does some experimenting with native girls. His fellow soldiers claim that these girls are all the same, but to N "they were as different as sparrows to an ornithologist".⁴¹¹ As we expect, very soon he picks the best of the bunch "the prettiest of the baboes" to spend his leisure time with. With her "no twaddle about Linggadjati as in the canteen They probably did not even know where it was situated as Marietje or Ans did not know where Rijnsaterwoude and Leimuiden were or de Hoge Veluwe".⁴¹² Far from home but still mixing with the dumb cum beautiful! They could not understand each other but - perhaps because of it - she has such a relaxing influence on him that his artistic powers reawaken. He does several wonderful drawings and compares himself to Gauguin. Then he is transferred to Bandoeng and who should he meet there but Lien. Lien is by now married to an officer who very conveniently for N works outside Bandoeng and only visits his wife on occasional weekends, who even more conveniently does not approach his wife sexually - rumours go

that he is a homosexual - so that the coast is clear for N. In due course N makes her pregnant but forbids her to have an abortion. When Lien tells her husband about her pregnancy he shoots her, and then N - fetched by a neighbour - shoots her husband. End of book. The walgvogel later called dodo - Portuguese simpleton - became extinct centuries ago.

The world which Wolkers creates in his books is a frightening world, because there is no love in it. The marriages with Olga and Lien are based on sexual attraction only. When sexual attraction is not enough any more - as in the marriage with Sonja - there is a divorce. It is not by chance that Wolkers kills both Olga and Lien off while they are still young. For his 'casual women' he has only abuse. Wolkers often uses biblical language so we feel justified in doing the same.

".... the final age of this world is to be a time of troubles. Men will love nothing but money and self; they will be arrogant, boastful, and abusive; with no respect for parents, no gratitude, no piety, no natural affection". 2 Tim. 3:1b-3.

SOUR RELATIONSHIPS.

Mensje van Keulen.

No wonder Bleekers Zomer was praised so highly. There must be very few people who cannot identify with Bleeker. Comes the day when Bleeker feels trapped in his home and in his work situation and just walks out. Bleeker for once does an unpremeditated thing, because he really is a very ordinary, average kind of man. Not superintelligent, not dumb either, not oversexed or undersexed; at the age of thirty-two he has a wife, a son and a daughter. The kind of man who gives his seat to a woman in the train and who so endearingly says "Ik eet het smakelijkst als ik een prak met'n kuiltje jus voor m'n neus heb".⁴¹³ Mensje van Keulen in her interview with Bibeb in Vrij Nederland - 24th February 1973 - describes Bleeker as "sensitive and good-natured". She is on Bleeker's side against his wife.

And yet, by his very nature Bleeker is the kind of man who becomes overruled by a wife. He suffers from constipation, and inertia rather than from ambition. His living conditions are bad. He lives above a hairdressers and he suffers from the smell and the noise. But he does not try to improve his accommodation and says himself: "I am a lazy person".⁴¹⁴ Somebody in the office calls him lazy as well. His family shows the traditional pattern: Man - breadwinner, wife - housekeeper cum

child minder, two children. Adrie, his wife, is the dutiful, reliable type who cooks his favourite dishes, cares for the children and makes all the decisions.

That evening before he leaves, Bleeker feels particularly low. Adrie can do no good. He reflects that she over-busybodies the children, that her knees are too bony, her coffee too weak and that she is over economical. Bleeker mumbles a few one syllable words over dinner, and then while watching T.V. he falls asleep until his wife wakes him up to go to bed.

But when after that particular evening he has a set-back at work the next day, it is too much for Bleeker and he just walks out. He goes to Amsterdam, where ^{he} was born, to visit some old relatives and friends. But it soon transpires that Bleeker is not cut out for the extravagant life his friends lead. After exquisite meals in foreign restaurants ^r he is sick, after a glass or two he worries about his ulcer, when his friends prepare to all have a go with the same prostitute he withdraws shamefully into the kitchen and when he is given only blankets and no sheets he cannot sleep. After only four days, very little of which he experienced as glorious freedom, he returns home.

And by the way Adrie receives him back we can see what is wrong with their relationship. She does not say: "You must have been very upset about something to walk out like this. Let's take the children to Mum, so we can talk about it in peace and quiet". She goes on bossing him about as if nothing

had happened and whether she locked the bedroom door on him or not he feels trapped, not happy to be home again.

Adrie is too overbearing but Bleeker is in the wrong as well because he lets his negative thoughts fester in his mind instead of bringing them out in the open and discussing them. The same goes for their sexual situation. "When I touch her she pretends she is asleep but at the same time she stealthily moves away from me. I am not very good at it of course, otherwise she would ask for it herself. Would she? Or wouldn't she? she wanted everything to happen under the blankets, with the light off and afterwards she would pull her nightdress down".⁴¹⁵ The usual inhibitions women were supposed to suffer from. It also shows that he suffers from an inferiority complex, which makes her even more bossy of course. Besides, it looks from the last lines of the book as if Bleeker is frightened of his wife. So far we have not come across the suffering husband in Dutch literature very often. There is Dirty Leenke in Coolen's Peelwerkers who squanders all her husband's money on a Saturday evening and he is unable to stop her. But on the whole if one of the partners suffered it was the wife. Mensje van Keulen gives us several examples of overbearing wives and downtrodden husbands.

Allemaal tranen is a string of stories in which people or animals suffer injustice. There is Een dooie mus where a child is punished without a hearing, Tigertits Rosie about the suppression

of teenagers by their elders but not always their betters, and Zure zult where the narrator expresses her disgust about the killing of animals on a large scale for human consumption.

Several of the stories - as in Bleekers zomer - deal again with the suffering that men endure at the hands of their wives. The cover of the book - a handsome woman at the wheel of a vintage car - also seems to suggest that woman is well in command. Herman in Truefoodman slaat toe sells baby food. After he has worked for this firm for only a few days his wife decides that now is the time to have a baby, while they can still have the baby food cheaply. Quite an original reason to have a baby. It must come as a shock to a person that he was conceived on account of the cheap apple sauce and kidney beans. However, at least his arrival was planned and wanted. At least by his mother, because Herman bears his wife a grudge for this superpractical approach. One day he takes his revenge by removing a stitch from her pink knitting "with a trembling finger"⁴¹⁶ and then pulling it down. Poor husband? But Herman makes the same mistakes as Bleeker. He lets his wife have her own way and is frightened at the outcome and then instead of discussing the problem, putting his foot down if need be, he lets his grievances fester in his mind and takes revenge in a very childish way.

Nel in De breuk far from having Mrs. Bleekers' sexual inhibitions errs on the other side. "Nel persuaded him - husband - to the most ludicrous positions in bed, which gave

him strained muscles or made him feel sick. Dissatisfied she kept on shouting vicious remarks at him until he started to cry like a child".⁴¹⁷ In all these stories that describe husband-wife relationships, we hear the story from the man's point of view. In De breuk we hear both sides and there are indeed few extenuating circumstances for Nel. She is not interested in her husband's work, she is lazy, greedy, she obviously lies about her husband's sexual demands to her mother who is a constant visitor. Poor husband. But he let himself be taken in by marrying her which showed bad judgment in the first place.

Marius' judgment in De vrouwen van Marius is not all that infallible either. He is an ex-Foreign Legion man who has had a tough and adventurous life in foreign parts. The moment of truth for him comes when while having dinner with his second wife he realises that he need not have divorced his first wife as the women are two of a kind. "Van tut naar tut".⁴¹⁸ Her napkins in silver rings, her face masks, the fact that she wants him to wear pyjamas needle him to such an extent that one night in the dark bedroom he empties an imaginary machine gun at her. The neatness and daintiness that must have attracted Marius to start with annoy him when he becomes part of it. Another argument for sharing the breadwinning and the housekeeping so that partners can see the world and their own house through each other's eyes.

Leendert in Voor de douche staat een kwartier is another

Bleeker, only worse for he is a very frightened man. At fifty, he marries a poor sweet widow and takes in her children. At fifty-one, in his own house, he is tyrannised by his wife - who has now taken in her senile father - and by her two children. When he takes a shower the hot water is turned off after a quarter of an hour and he dare not complain about it. There is no hope for this marriage. Divorce on the grounds of mental cruelty is Leendert's only way out. If he does not get a divorce they'll end up like the van Pijlens, an old couple who hate the sight of each other. One night when he dreams that his wife is dead he feels extremely happy. The story is called hondje-kontje, the name the children in the neighbourhood call out when he lets his dog out. This dog is his only source of affection but one morning he hears that his wife has rung for the Vet. to destroy the dog. The dog was sick and dirtied her carpets. All very reasonable from her point of view but the lack of compassion for her husband shows her true character.

Van lieverlede also describes extremely sour relationships. Hanna Beyer keeps house for her sick mother, though she would prefer to go out to earn her own living. It is suggested that Mrs. Beyer killed her husband who was a drunkard. Hanna's sister, Coby, is living with a man who is quite well off but she hankers to go back to her former job as a dancer in a revue. All three women are thoroughly discontented. It is difficult to imagine how people can lead such joyless lives.

Neither Hanna's parents, nor her school, nor the Church have given her any inner resources. She wants to take a part-time job but she does not seem able to muster the initiative, she wants to enjoy herself at a party but she is just passive and tense and anxious, she wants to find a boyfriend but she does not know how to go about it. She has a demanding mother, a selfish sister, a hostile environment and no friends. The lives of the Geertjes and the Sprotjes seem infinitely desirable compared to Hanna's, at least they had hopes and ideals, they experienced love and had friends who stood by them. Hanna's only dream seems to be a vague urge for sexual fulfilment. We can see no beauty in the book, no humour, no hope. The role of these working-class women is a nihilistic role.

MENTAL FULFILMENT FOR WOMEN.Irina van Goeree.

Eva in Een antwoord gillen is another disappointed woman. She shows a resemblance to Walschap's Adelaïde. Both women commit suicide for the sake of an idée fixe, put there in Adelaïde's case by a priest and in Eva's case by a girlfriend. The apprehension of what might happen to them in the future is so strong that they cannot live with it. Walschap admits that there is a hereditary strain of mental instability in Adelaïde's family which might be a reason for her behaviour. Though not mentioned, Eva must also have a weak link in her mental make-up. If Ibsen's Nora had the courage to slam the door on her family in the 1870's a healthy Eva in the 1970's could have found better ways out than death.

Eva is young and pretty, her husband is a professional man who earns good money and she has two healthy children. But Eva is lonely and dissatisfied. Eva, unlike Nora, is full of self pity. When she wanted to go to University her parents vetoed the idea. "Come, come, you are a girl Being a beautiful woman is as good as having a diploma"⁴¹⁹ according to her father. She submits and marries the man her parents approve of.

Staying at the seaside with her two children - her husband is too busy to join them - she draws up the balance of her life.

She reviews her husband's personality, her marriage, her own rôle in life. Theirs is a strict breadwinner - housekeeper marriage and she resents it. "Peter never cleans anything. His hands are not made for it, his mother says".⁴²⁰ If Eva is ill her mother takes over. She also resents the fact that she sees very little of him because he works so hard: "To what purpose? - Promotion. Sacrificing everything for promotion. Plodding on. Letting Eva dry up and be devoured".⁴²¹ Their sexual life she describes as: "His Lordship plays a measured love-game nowadays".⁴²² She tries to "steal affection" and has a little adventure with Marc but it leaves her "starved and lonely" because she does it from a negative feeling: to revenge the attitude of her husband.

She is full of questions about her own rôle in life, trapped as she feels between the old values and the new opportunities: "Is it enough to be a mother?"⁴²³ and "Who says that I am not a talented creature?"⁴²⁴ Frequently she analyses her own situation and it is clear that she understands it: "Twentieth century wife and mother, rebellious and frustrated".⁴²⁵ Frustrated because only part of her being is satisfied and rebellious because she wants to change this and knows not how. "I want my say. I never want to be cut off from their thinking and I refuse to join the ballet of the millions of cunts".⁴²⁶ Women have come to what Margaret Mead calls "a divine discontent that will demand other satisfactions than those of child-bearing".⁴²⁷ So far in literature

women have wanted one of two things: either a good education to enable them to earn their own living under decent conditions as a spinster or a marriage that is emotionally, sexually and mentally fulfilling. There has always been this need for choice. In the Brontë days practically the only profession open to an educated middle-class woman was that of a governess. But being a governess meant falling a step below the class of their birth, it involved starvation wages and far from being an honoured profession it was but another name for servant. Furthermore, it involved 'living in' which meant complete loss of freedom. As marriage within their own class meant security, social position, and sexual gratification, the scales were loaded in favour of marriage. Problems of this nature are not reflected in modern literature because a really gifted woman gets a chance of developing her talents nowadays, and she has not just access to most professions but she can acquire the status and financial security to go with it. Emotional problems can be solved far better now as well. In Ina Boudier-Bakker's little work De Straat we encounter a whole street full of women with severe emotional problems some of whom cannot even communicate with their husbands. The geographical limitations of their village and the narrow social climate gave them no outlet whatsoever. Better transport and education changed this situation. In Doris Lessing's Golden Notebook we see how a modern woman solves emotional problems through psychoanalysis and close relationships with other people, including sexual relationships. Eva has no

sexual inhibitions as did her namesake in Carry van Bruggen's Eva. "Each time she is erotically involved she feels misused by the man"⁴²⁸ says Annie Romein-Verschoor about Carry-Eva - the 'Carry-Eva' expression is from Annie Romein-Verschoor. Thanks to sexual enlightenment this sense of shame on the part of women is becoming a thing of the past. Mental fulfilment is the only aspect that is often irreconcilable with motherhood. "In the Mother the individual is lost, the individual goes bankrupt"⁴²⁹ says Carry van Bruggen's Eva. From Dual-Career Families by Rhona and Robert Rapoport we get the impression that only the physically strong woman can combine family and career, especially when the children are very young. Eva wants marriage, motherhood and mental fulfilment in the outside world. When she fears that her husband is unfaithful, it means that only motherhood is left, and it is not enough for her. She takes her own life.

The reactions of her husband show that he does not understand the first thing about her death: "Why could not you be just my Eva, for me only".⁴³⁰ But how grossly conceited! He has a whole world of people, study and interest apart from her. Who does he think he is that he assumes he can represent the whole world for her. "He hardly feels any guilt".⁴³¹ By his standards he had given her everything, for his standards had been formed by centuries of male dominated society. The book shows that for many women either-or is not enough any more, they are ready for and-and. Society will have to find a solution for them.

RADICAL FEMINISM.

Andreas Burnier.

In Een tevreden lach a new theme enters Dutch literature, the theme of fulfilled lesbian relationships. Carry van Bruggen had given her advanced views on the subject when she said in Eva "And why sterile? It need not always be a child surely. Feeling and enthusiasm inspiration that is reality, that is result as well".⁴³² Anna Blaman introduced lesbians in her prose and poetry, but she did not go as far as describing lesbian relationships. There were just women who fell in love with other women but their physical feelings were not returned and a platonic relationship resulted with one partner hankering for physical contact and the other partner either unaware of it or uninterested. There are vague references to successful lesbian relationships in the past but they did not last and are never described in detail.

Simone Baling, the heroine in Een tevreden lach decides to turn over a new leaf as she starts university. In her jeans and anorak she is often taken for a man and she is delighted by this. "Totally dedicated I lived all elementary daily things afresh but now as a 'young man', which seemed to me a liberated situation".⁴³³ She describes very well the young person who has just left home, who sees life as full of possibilities and who

cannot wait to explore every one of them. "I would have liked to become a cosmic-embryonic creature again, pure possibility, every realisation, every fixation in a certain rôle seemed original sin to me".⁴³⁴ So apart from her own study, medicine, she also reads widely on a great many other subjects, she writes poems, takes part in sports, goes out a great deal, travels widely, gets drunk in bars, has relationships with men and women alike, stays in a mental home, marries and gets divorced, joins the Army for the delivery of Palestine and ultimately, well in her twenties, she qualifies as a doctor.

In this book, for literature and reality coincide here, it becomes clear how great the possibilities for women have become. She can study what she fancies - given the brains - dress for convenience, travel without danger in many parts of Europe, get drunk without ruining her reputation and future, even enter the Army and enter a profession which will give her status and financial security for the rest of her life. Simone has two grievances against life: 1, she cannot be a man amongst men, 2, people cannot see lesbians as normal people. In the beginning of the book we get the impression that many of her male fellow students do treat her as an equal: "...with Norbert I went as the only not handsome non-male to funny beautiful men's parties...."⁴³⁵ but later she complains that men in bars as they get drunk invariably treat her as an object. In later works of literature and in articles on the subject Andreas Burnier usually takes

an anti-man attitude. Well known in feminist circles is her essay on sex-fascism, a 'j'accuse' from beginning to end. In this book the heroine gives evidence of wanting to keep her options open: "If, on the other hand you once dedicate yourself to la vie lesbienne, you are snared completely in your womanhood, then you can never escape any more".⁴³⁶ What is meant here is not that Simone cannot make up her mind between marriage or a lesbian relationship but she needs the comradeship of men as well as a homosexual relationship with another woman.

The book shows clearly the doubts and difficulties of a young lesbian trying to come to terms with life - But then the lives of male homosexuals are not all that carefree either if we may believe Gerard Reve. In books like De taal der liefde and Het lieve leven the word depression occurs regularly - The end of Een tevreden lach is very unconvincing. After having qualified as a doctor she starts a practice as a general practitioner and sets up house with a woman colleague. She does not want to hide her homosexuality but when she is honest about it she experiences that people cannot take it and she feels an outcast. She finishes up working with a group of men in an ore mine, only two of whom know that she is a woman. "Simplicity, nature, and an uncomplicated, useful man's life".⁴³⁷ Very unconvincing indeed. As a doctor she did not want to hide her homosexuality but as a miner she hides the fact that she is a woman. And how is she able to hide it considering that mines must have communal wash rooms, changing

rooms, lavatories. And talking about useful: would it not have been much more useful from her point of view as a doctor to influence society into accepting homosexuality. If Andreas Burnier wanted to make the point that lesbians cannot develop their potential because of the attitude that society adopts towards them one would have thought that she could have found more convincing ways.

The 'male lesbian' Simone shows all the characteristics of the male chauvinist. We wonder whether the writer intended this to be so, whether she was even aware of it. Simone, talking about a girl she has fallen in love with, says: "And I, who desired you like a man, protected you like a man, looked after you like a man".⁴³⁸ But surely in the heterosexual world it has been established that all this protection and looking after should stop because it stunts a woman's growth. In a homosexual relationship these words seem completely out of place. Simone, describing a bed session with her beloved declares it much better than coitus because "unimpeded by the limiting restrictions of male potency".⁴³⁹ But Simone wants to see homosexuality recognised as a whole kind of relationship, as Andreas Burnier does in her articles, so why talk scathingly about heterosexuality. Is it not possible to love Jacob without hating Esau? Simone, discussing her marriage, declares "I cannot look after a household and create a pleasant atmosphere".⁴⁴⁰ The implication is that she is too much of a man and housekeeping is a woman's job.

There seems to be little reason for contented smiles

as Simone has not been able to put into practice fat Lena's
 advice: "Je moet je eigen nou eenmaal accepteren zoals je bent hè".⁴⁴¹
 It is difficult to accept that an intelligent, educated woman
 with experience in many fields of life can find her greatest
 delight working in an ore mine where none of these qualities
 are needed. Can the comradeship of a group of undoubtedly
 uneducated miners equipoise the ambition and study of years?
 It looks more as if she has stepped out of a world in which
 she did not feel accepted in order to flee the problems which
 became too much for her. Whatever happened to the "cosmic-embryonic
 creature"?

In De Huilende Libertijn the heroine Jean Brookman
 has strongly libertine ideas on the subject of women's emancipation.
 She spends fifteen years trying to put them into practice but
 after that time she feels that she has achieved very little.

As a student Jean comes to the conclusion that all women
 are oppressed and she is determined to do something about it
 "The only way to the liberation of the other part of mankind
 goes via education. Without education no key positions, not
 those which women will have to capture by force and violence
 either, like the positions of power in politics, industry and
 the Army".⁴⁴² This certainly is a new sound. We have read time
 and again about women's claims for equality of education, pay
 and opportunities but for them to acquire key positions by
 violence is revolutionary. In her article Radicaal feminisme

in Opzij, January 1973, Andreas Burnier calls men "the murderous sex". Here however she suggests that women should do the same things that turned men into the murderous sex. But neither Andreas Burnier, nor Jean Brookman, nor anybody else knows whether women would be any better at handling power than men, so they would not be more justified in using force either. In the same article Andreas Burnier mentions that for the first time ever - so far as we can recall - the Norwegian women had managed to get a majority in most of their district councils. Heaven on earth? Well, they had been indoctrinated by the male system to such an extent, according to Andreas Burnier, that things did not exactly improve dramatically right from the word go. She adds that after the incident Norwegian men without delay have changed their voting laws to make sure that women can never triumph in this way again. Very mean of them, we agree. But if enough women had voted for enough female Members of Parliament this meanness would have been impossible. So, to come back to De huilende libertijn: in order to get women into positions of power it is necessary to get women to vote for women and this takes time. You can try to influence them, you cannot force them. And to acquire power by means of violence is undemocratic, whether practised by men or women.

The 'take-over' is never realised in the book but Jean does start a school with the intention of "cultivating a small, select body of very intelligent, very educated and physically

well trained women who could take over a number of key positions in management, industry, science, art, jurisdiction, and information media".⁴⁴³ The school is original in more than one way because men are used as consumer goods and servants. By cleverly reversing the rôles between her school society and society at large Andreas Burnier gives us a clear insight into the ways some women let themselves be used. The girls were taught to appreciate only very young and very handsome men who spent all their time tarding themselves up. They had access to boy prostitutes, the young men of course were selected very carefully. When the girls were older they were allowed to cohabit with a man, as long as he did all the household chores and if possible type her notes, etc. for her so that she could dedicate all her time to her studies. The lesbians could select a girl friend but in that case they were offered a houseboy to do menial tasks. Put like this, women appear to have a dog's life. Many feminist writers make it look as if all women are victims in this way which clearly is a gross exaggeration. Men do not usually cast off their wives when the latter are not young and beautiful any more and there must be a fair percentage of men who are not dependent on prostitutes for their sex life but who have been able to build up a good all round relationship with their partner. No woman is forced to marry, to have children, to do household chores and besides we can think of many jobs more boring, repetitive and with less job satisfaction than that of housewife and mother. Comparatively few people men and women

alike have the capacities for breathtakingly interesting careers.

Overhearing the life story of an 'old style' woman made Jean decide to stop running her school. This woman had been married twice and at fifty-one she was alone and depressed with a lonely future in front of her. Jean realised that her ex-pupils after their excellent education and though in key positions were not really any happier than this woman. Though her pupils had been very successful in getting influential jobs all over the world very little had changed for the mass of women. "My idea of a revolution from above had remained as fruitless as earlier attempts at revolution via the masses".⁴⁴⁴

For hundreds and hundreds of years the rôle division between men and women as we know it now has existed. It stands to reason that it takes time to change this situation. But compared to the Brontë period we have come a long way in a comparatively short time. She also gives two instances in the book of women in Turkey and Greece who revolt against their oppression by men. But this rebellion is quelled and many women lose their lives. It reaffirms the opinion that revolution can only have an adverse effect. Peaceful coexistence with gradual growth and change from within is the answer. Give the men a chance! They have to unlearn so many things.

Apart from the extreme ideas on emancipation there are descriptions of intimate lesbian relationships - Jean of course is a lesbian - and God in this book is called The Mother with

Christ as Her Daughter the redeemer of women.

As in Een tevreden lach where we concluded that the 'male lesbian' sometimes behaved like a male chauvinist, Jean does not always remain within her rôle either. All through the book she is constantly displaying an anti-man attitude, but when her feelings are different from those of two lesbian friends, she remarks: "Was I psychologically a heterophil?".⁴⁴⁵ This surely reeks of the great drawing room days when after dinner the women withdrew while the men put the world to rights. Mentally these men were homophils. And what to think of the remark: "... she has made a man of me ...",⁴⁴⁶ after a particularly agreeable bed session with another lesbian.

Andreas Burnier makes the gap between men and women enormous by constantly stressing the factors that separate them. Men have caused wars and revolutions but women have assisted in sewing their uniforms and guarding their concentration camps. Men have also invented Penicillin and the pill. We never hear about the henpecking that made the lives of many men a misery. And anyway how suppressed are the suppressed that are not aware of their so-called suppression?

In Poëzie, jongens en het gezelschap van geleerde vrouwen there are also a number of articles that deal with the rôle of women. In Van femina faber naar femina sapiens Andreas Burnier discusses the history of feminism, the so-called first and second waves and the literature on the subject by writers from Europe

and America. She states that it would be possible to create a university department Sociology and history of feminism but for one or two gaps that still exist concerning biology, ethology and cultural historical analyses. She does not contemplate a political take over here but feels that the struggle for successful feminism will take a very long time and that the outcome is still undecided. But she does believe that complete participation by women in government will prevent wars which are "one aspect of masculinistic hysteria".⁴⁴⁷ She explains the term radical feminism: some women might want to join the existing systems of capitalist or socialist c.q. communist governments. Radical feminists want to develop their own values and norms in order to achieve a truly humane world. Het beeld van de vrouw in de literatuur gives some interesting thoughts on "the way in which literary sociological research with regard to women could be done".⁴⁴⁸ Andreas Burnier has found seven rôles that were and are given to women in literature - some of these rôles were justified in the past when muscular strength was important and pregnancies could not be controlled - by now these rôles have become clichés and should be abolished, because this rôle casting in literature not only reflects the stereotyping of (a part of) society in which the author lives, it also perpetuates this society and perhaps to some extent it even creates reality. In these seven clichés men and women are completely separated again by Andreas Burnier; they are not human beings working together or disagreeing as the

case may be but people split up into men and women:” Cliché 1: the frightened, maternal woman, who tries to dissuade the hero (male naturally) from his high task.” As an example she quotes the story of Hector the hero who goes off to defend Troy and his crying wife Andromache who stays at home. There would have been alternatives: the women could have fought the battle, leaving the men at home to look after the children. Our history books would have been full of the names of brave heroines and Women's Libbers would be indignant because not only did women have to bear children but they had to fight the wars as well. The other alternative would have been for men and women to fight together. In that case the children would have suffered. And as to the remark that boys reading this story can identify with brave heroes and girls have to make do with weeping women: by now we should be grown up enough in the twentieth century to identify as human beings with other human beings. There is anguish because somebody has to go to war to defend his country and we identify with him, with his fear, his uncertainty, his stiff upper lip. There is anguish because somebody has to stay at home and we identify with her, with her fear, her loneliness, her apprehension of the future. The same goes for Prince André Bolbonsky, and his wife Lisa in Tolstoy's War and Peace. As Lisa was pregnant it was not very practical to let her fight Napoleon's armies on the Russian steppe. And as for the crying women on the quay side: many men probably envy them this natural outlet of

their feelings, who would not prefer tears to ulcers. Now that unwanted pregnancies and the importance of strong muscles are becoming a thing of the past, in time the forcing of men and women into certain rôles should gradually disappear, as people begin to realise the unhappiness and even distortion of personality it can cause. Because men were forced into rôles just as much as women. We think of Barend in Heyermans' Op hoop van zegen.

Barend was portrayed as he was. The Hectors and Andrés were symbols of bravery held up to the public as ideal examples.

” Cliché 2: Woman as a thing, as non-human, as sexual object. ”

In mediaeval times woman was pictured as a symbol of virtue according to Andreas Burnier, now she is often shown as a sexual object - But even in the middle ages women were given power and a mind of their own in literature. Lanseloet van Denemerken shows a powerful queen who tells her son how to act and a servant girl who leaves her country all by herself after having experienced injustice there - It is true that many modern writers do consider women as sexual objects. This is probably related to the fact that there is a trend nowadays for women to believe that wide sexual experience is a must for sophisticated women. As a relationship in depth is not aimed for partners cannot fail to see each other as objects for physical pleasure. Since reliable contraceptives for women have been available only recently it is understandable that more women want to indulge and that literature in turn reflects this indulgence. So women may partly be

responsible for the attitudes of modern writers and the pendulum which has swung from extreme sexual morality to extreme permissiveness might come to rest in the middle given time.

”
Cliché 3: Woman as representative of the devil, the temptress”
and Cliché 4: Woman as too good for this world” are indeed attitudes in literature; she mentions Philip Roth's Portnoy's Complaint amongst others as coming under Cliché 3 and women's magazine stories as representative of Cliché 4. However, men have been portrayed in the same way. There is Helmer in Ibsen's A Doll's House stifling Nora with his empty conventionality, his so-called honour, his superiority and his money-centred existence. There is Lord Willoughby in George Meredith's The Egoist, an overbearing, possessive, vain and patronising male. There is also Couperus' De kleine zielen describing a selfish, materialistic family with one member showing maturity and growth: a woman.

”
Cliché 5: Woman as a creeper.” This attitude was understandable as women were financially dependent on men. When women become financially independent this creeper idea is bound to disappear. Andreas Burnier also made a study of female homosexuality in literature and states that it is even less accepted than male homosexuality. She gives several reasons for this, but the main reason might well be in Slauerhoff's line "Hoe't geluk, vermeerdring te bereiken". Marriage is for begetting children has been an accepted creed for so long that people cannot conceive of a form of living together without children.

As women do the childbearing and most of the rearing of children people cannot understand women who prefer a life without children; it seems sterile and worthless to them. Harry Mulisch writes on this subject in his novel Twee vrouwen. Laura, a divorcée, lives with Sylvia, a young girl. Laura regrets the fact that she was unable to have children, so Sylvia decides to provide her with a child. She goes to live with Alfred, Laura's former husband, and as soon as he has made her pregnant she returns to Laura: "Now I'll stay with you for ever". She considers the child as Laura's child "via Alfred".⁴⁴⁹ But Mulisch does not give his blessing to this convenient solution for Alfred arrives and shoots Sylvia. The reader is left with several questions: Does Mulisch disapprove of the fact that a man is being 'used' in this way? And why is it that Sylvia wants the baby to be a boy? Doesn't she want her child to enjoy the same happy lesbian relationship she has with Laura?

"Cliché 6: That of the woman who is nearly as good as a man" and "Cliché 7: That of the woman as a hero, though she is a woman." As men have had more experience in all fields of life outside the home it is understandable that these comparisons should take place. We pointed out that the heroine of De huilende libertijn herself made a somewhat doubtful remark in this context: ".... she has made a man of me!"

It looks as if Andreas Burnier's ultra radical views on the man-woman relationship are formed by her homosexuality.

Ann Oakley in The Sociology of Housework interviewed some forty women in 1971 about the reversal of rôles Andreas Burnier describes in De huilende libertijn. "What would you think of a marriage in which the wife went out to work and the husband stayed at home to look after the children? The answers to this show the existence of a firm belief in the 'natural' domesticity of women, and a corresponding belief that domesticity in men is 'unnatural'. Thirty out of the forty women rejected the possibility of a reversed rôles marriage for its transgression of gender rôle norms. (The remaining ten said it depended on the couple as to whether or not such a marriage was appropriate; none of the women directly approved of this arrangement). They called it unmanly henpecked effeminate sissy".⁴⁵⁰ Women have been thinking of men in terms of the head of the household, the boss, a proper man. Taking away this image presents a different world to them. Can they cope with that world? The kitchen sink may have its boring aspects but it's safe and secure. Too radical views, use of 'schuttingwoorden', ideas about revolution, frighten off the moderates and the feminist movement cannot afford to lose members or members-to-be because only if many women are won over to the feminist idea will there be a fair representation of women in governing bodies.

Many writers on the subject point out what has been wrong in the past and is unjust in the present about the man-woman relationship, few seem to have ideas about what needs to be done

to rectify it. If we accept that the family is going to be the main form of living together in the future we have to think of different arrangements within this family unit to alter the breadwinner-housekeeper pattern. Schools in Sweden have started to teach domestic science and baby and child care to boys as well as girls. This seems a step in the right direction, because it is getting away from the old rôle division. We should try to make society 'open-minded' to such an extent that each individual gets the opportunity to develop her/his talents at will. That might mean a full-time housewife, a full-time 'houseman', part-time housewives and 'housemen' or full-time careers for husbands and wives with good facilities for the children. Education, novelists and the public media can do much to teach people that there is not such a thing as woman's work or man's work - except where stronger muscles are required - but the message should be gentle. Ultra-radicals who want to turn the whole world upside down make people feel ill at ease and the effect might well be that they nestle more firmly than ever in their old rôles. Better the devil you know

CONCLUSION.

In Part Three we can find most of the aspects of the rôle of women that need to be changed. Hermans shows that it is not enough for a woman to have a modern image; in some ways she must become 'more of a man' to be able to deal with the difficulties confronting her in the outside world.

Wolkers' heroes see women as sexual objects. The women are used as instruments to bring out in the man his artistic talents. Kate Millett comments on this use of women when she discusses an essay by Henry Miller on D.H. Lawrence. Miller says that Lawrence " fought tooth and nail the sickly ideal love world of depolarised sex! The world based on a fusion of the sexes instead of an antagonism (for) the eternal battle with woman sharpens our resistance, develops our strength, enlarges the scope of our cultural achievements: through her we build our religions, philosophies and sciences".⁴⁵¹

Mensje van Keulen in Bleekers Zomer points out between the lines the harm that a strict rôle division can do to a marriage. Mrs. Bleeker suffers from an overdose of energy, Bleeker from constipation. If she had a part-time job she would not have time to suffocate her husband and children with her demands, if he had a part-time job he would be more relaxed and less tired and not fall asleep after dinner. They would be more interesting to each other because both partners would have inside and outside

stories to relate. And if they could bring themselves to consult a marriage guidance counsellor in order to discuss their sexual problems, their future might be rosy. Allemaal Tranen also deals with sad marital relationships and two things spring to mind:

1. Notwithstanding all the books on the psychology of marriage, the articles in magazines about do's and don'ts in modern marriage, the plentiful sexual advice available from several sources, there is still not enough openness through embarrassment, narrow upbringing and fear. 2. What a blessing that divorce has been made easier.

Irina van Goeree stresses that being a wife and mother is not necessarily enough for a woman today. Mental fulfilment can be of paramount importance. For her heroine it is a question of life and death.

When Andreas Burnier shows us a rôle reversal by making men the hewers of wood and drawers of water we realise how right Simone de Beauvoir was when she called women 'the second sex'.

It is not always clear why many men want to go on seeing women as 'the second sex'. Have they had bad experiences with bossy mothers and masterful wives? Elizabeth Hardwick reminds us of an old story: "The Wife of Bath, coarse, brilliant, greedy, and lecherous as any man, tells a tale of infinite psychological resonance. A young knight who is to be banished from the court for rape is saved by the intervention of the queen and her ladies. He is to regain his place in life by setting out upon a perilous journey to find the answer to the question: What is it women most

desire? After the usual torments and trials, the winning answer is discovered: Women desire to have mastery over their husbands".⁴⁵² But if husbands and children are the only responsibility women ever have, no wonder all women's energy and ambition goes into them. Not enough thought seems to be given to the fact that the fixed rôle system harms man as much as it harms woman. Mary Daly expressed it: "Thus the male, through the mutilation of woman, has been caught up in a process of self-destruction. In relation to woman as mother, wife, companion, he is doomed to frustration if he cannot find in the other an authentic, self-activating person - with precisely the qualities which are stunted by the imposition of the eternal feminine. Fated to partnership with 'true woman', he may find this dissociated, narcissistic being less satisfactory than the companion of his dreams. What is more, the 'eternal masculine' itself is alienating, crippling the personalities of men and restricting their experience of life at every level. The male in our society is not supposed to express much feeling, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation, imagination, consideration for others, intuition. He is expected to affirm only part of his real self". And surely this is the aim of everybody who believes in the worth of the individual: To be able to fulfil your 'real self' whether you are a man or a woman.

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