A SUMMER BIRD-CAGE AND THE GARRICK YEAR: 
AN ODYSSEY FROM REFLECTION TO AFFECTION

All of us are born in moral stupidity
taking the world as an udder to feed
our supreme selves.

(Middlemarch, George Eliot)

A Summer Bird-Cage, Margaret Drabble's first novel, is one of the three novels (also called a trilogy) which are filtered through the consciousness of a single female protagonist. In this novel, however, experiences are narrated as they are being experienced in a linear chronological time sequence and hence there is no difference between the experiencing and the cognising self which in the later novels presents a bewildering spectacle and a mature viewpoint. This is in keeping with a developing mind which does not have past experiences to recaptulate (Sarah, the narrator is twenty-one and interestingly Drabble is of the same age at the time of writing this
novel). Even though adolescence is a very popular subject to write about, it is unable to offer a proper perspective on life as its experiences are limited even though intense. However, all the three novels place the protagonists in the background of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex, Part II* to see whether it is possible to transcend sexuality - taking it to be something that has been imposed on women by men as Simone de Beauvoir would have us believe, or is it part of her basic universal nature which is to be satisfied and gratified? Or to put it more precisely, Margaret Drabble is examining in a dense socio-economic and psychological context Simone de Beauvoir's postulates to establish or demolish them with the experiential evidence of the protagonists.

According to Ellen Cronan Rose, "Drabble's first three novels may be read as a translation into a fictional form of Part II of *The Second Sex* which charts the typical development of a woman in a patriarchal society."¹ In this connection she

quotes Drabble's statement, "In those novels I wrote about the situation of being a woman - being stuck with a baby, or having an illegitimate baby or being stuck with a marriage where you couldn't have a job."\(^2\) I do not agree with Rose when she says that the novels are a translation into fictional form of Part II of *The Second Sex*. And I will argue in this chapter how Drabble is actually examining de Beauvoir's postulates by putting them to test in the actual experiences, not of ordinary women but of highly educated, intelligent and independent minded women. Besides, not even the statement Rose quotes from Drabble herself in any way substantiates or supports the view that the novels are a fictional translation of de Beauvoir's views as writing about the situation of being a woman does not necessarily mean that she is committing herself to any particular view.

Simone de Beauvoir's classic analysis of the situation of woman denies the ontological validity

\(^2\) Nancy Poland, "Margaret Drabble: There must be a lot of people like me", *Midwest Quarterly*, 16, No3 (Spring 1975), 262, quoted by Rose, p. 81.
of the concept of femininity. Instead, as Patricia Meyer Spacks has pointed out, *The Second Sex* insists that the "notion" of 'femininity' is a notion created by men, who tell woman "that passivity and acceptance are her nature."3 *The Second Sex* exhorts women to give the lie to this male fiction, to transcend the status of alterity or otherness that men have imposed on them: "Just as for the ancients there was an absolute vertical with reference to which the oblique was defined, so there is an absolute human type, the masculine... thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him."4 And how has man defined woman? As inferior to be sure, but specifically inferior, by virtue of being nothing but her sexuality. "She is called the 'sex,' by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being."5


Implicit in de Beauvoir's analysis of the situation of woman is the idea that patriarchal society has projected the conflict between woman's animal and rational nature on to a conflict between the sexes in which man is defined as rational and woman as animal. It is this over-simplification of human nature that de Beauvoir rejects when she denies that there are not any essential differences between men and women and that there is such a thing as the feminine as distinct from the human. She also puts herself in the position of covertly exhorting women to deny their sexuality in transcending the definition, she says, men have assigned them, as the other, the sex. This is certainly an over-statement representing an over-reaction on the part of de Beauvoir to the terrible oppression and stultifying tyranny to which women have been subjected to in human history.

By implication such rejection of femininity and the denial of sexuality is, in effect, the denial of all those values and commitments that arise from male-female contact, like love, marriage, motherhood,
warmth, tenderness, sympathy, fellow-feeling; and
and all the other accompanying involvements that
keep us in touch with the life giving forces and with
external rhythms.

According to Ellen Cronan Rose, Drabble
recognised de Beauvoir's implication in this novel,
written largely under her influence and in sympathy,
with her brand of 'feminism.' While agreeing that woman
is not "the other," Drabble maintains that, "like all
human beings, she contains within herself an other."
In other words Drabble locates the conflict between
animal and rational where in the whole tradition of
Western literature, it has always been found, within
each individual. "Her contribution to the tradition
is her focus on how women experience this conflict."6

That Drabble recognises the implications of
The Second Sex is alright but it would be a total
misrepresentation of her view point that she is in
sympathy with Simone de Beauvoir's ideology. She
certainly makes use of the implications of her ideology

6 Rose, p.82.
to test them against the actual female experiences, but that in no way implies agreement, sympathy or concurrence with de Beauvoir and least of all commitment to them. If it had been so, there would have been no need to write another version of

_The Second Sex in A Summer Bird-Cage_. This is quite evident from the course of action the novel takes and the characters it throws up. For Simone de Beauvoir is present in the novel in the person of the heroine's best friend, a French woman named Simone who has achieved the autonomy and transcendence de Beauvoir postulates as desired goals for women. But attracted though Sarah Bennett may be to Simone, she finally rejects her as a model because she is 'sexless' and because Sarah feels within herself "the pulls of sex and blood" which 'seem to drag her into unwilled motion.'

The conflict within Sarah according to Rose then, is "between will (which Simone exemplifies and

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which is most purely personal and sexuality which is non-personal), between the specifically individual and the generically female. 8

However, to my mind things do not seem as simple as Rose sees them to be. Drabble examines de Beauvoir's postulates and their implications in relation to the entire experiential paradigm that a woman is capable of experiencing and with which she is faced at every step and in almost all walks of her life. That is why Sarah is shown not only in relation to Simone but, in the major portion of the novel, in relation to her sister, Louise, her cousin, Daphne, her mother, her lover, Francis and a host of other characters. It is her experiences with all these that effect the eventual change in her from the self-willed person of the earlier portion of the novel to a person who recognises the external and non-personal pressures to be able to live a fuller, meaningful life. What she has all along tried to deny as a self-willed person, is, in a way forced

8 Rose, p. 83.
upon her though with a pressure milder than on Rosamund Stacey of *The Millstone*.

The novel opens when Sarah has just come down from Oxford University and is making up her mind about getting married while holding a job and observing the marriages of her sister and friends. Her sister Louise, around whom the novel revolves, marries tritely, for money as it turns out, a neurotic, sadistic, cold fish novelist, Stephen Halifax. Sarah, discussing the marriage with an acquaintance, explains the reason, "She did not know, what else to do so she married..." She was also too intelligent to do nothing yet too beautiful and sexy to do all the first class things like politics or law or social sciences and she was naturally "afraid of subsiding into nothingness, I suppose." Discussing their cousin Daphne, a herbivore, Louise and Sarah speculate upon the moral implications of their own carnivorous nature.

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9 *SBC*, p. 149.
The question that preoccupies Sarah is quite simple. "What a girl can do with herself if over-educated and lacking a sense of vocation" (SBC, p.10). The answer provided by society, of course is marriage, and that is what most of Sarah's friends do, with mostly disastrous results. Louise thinks she is succumbing to social pressures "on her own terms" (SBC p.162), by marrying a man who is famous and rich, but turns out, rather predictably, to be hopelessly neurotic and self-centred as well. Those who fail to marry, whether by choice like Sarah's itinerant friend Simone or not like her dowdy cousin Daphne, emerge to be social misfits from Sarah's own observations as she admits: "Simone gives me a sense of tradition and salons and Henry James. And yet she does n't belong anywhere or perhaps she belongs everywhere" and Sarah says that she would like to be irresponsible like that. "To be able to go on like that for ever..." Even then she did not want to be Simone or only at times:

I do admire as well as love her... I consider her a superior being. She is superior and in contact with her
I share her superiority. I lose the cruel and evasive sentimentality that Daphne and my mother arouse in me and I become created harder and brighter in her eyes... She herself moves through a strange impermanent world where objects are invested with as much power as people, and places possibly with more. These things have for her a pure aesthetic value, totally divorced from the world of sensations and rhythms where I live. Tragic Simone cut after an unlivable pattern. She is the most singular character in the subversive feminine realm which men are so ready to resent and to misunderstand. Even Tony (one of her friends) who is sympathetic to most of the loose vagaries of the passions, would have called my feelings towards her nothing but decadent emotionalism... Friendships between women are invariably described pejoratively as intimacies, sublimations or perversions, but I do n't believe that Simone offered or experienced any of these things. Men and women were the same to her, unsmeared by any image of profit or loss or by the over-hanging future.

(SBC, p. 69-70)

Sarah realises that Simone has no future, she was most purely personal in her life. Whereas in most people and "in myself, I am vaguely aware of
a hinterland of non-personal actions, where the pulls of sex and blood and society seem to drag me into unwilled motion." At such moments the race takes over and the individual loses himself in joy or is left helplessly self-regarding and appalled. With her Sarah sensed a wholly willed, a wholly undetermined life. And how could such a person live? "The French believe they can, but one has only to read their books to mark some heroic dislocation from the pulse of continuous life." Simone lacked an instinct for kitchens and gasmeters and draughts under the door and tiresome quarrels and lacking instinct, "she had to live on will. Willing to get up, willing to go to bed, willing to eat or sleep or love" (SBC, pp. 69, 70-71). The question arises where does one get energy for that sort of existence? "The only way to be recharged is to be put in touch with external rhythms. Otherwise one will run down from exhaustion." Simone, Sarah believes, will certainly run down, in a train or a gutter or a hotel bed-room (being an itinerant) like those fin-de-siecle poets she so admires and resembles, "I know it, I know the signs of a short term, though she is the only living person in whom I have, ever witnessed them" (SBC, p. 71).
That is how, Sarah takes stock of everything in Simone and having taken that in, recognises in spite of Simone's irresistible attraction for her, that a person like Simone is cut after an unlivable and impracticable pattern and hence is remote from the sensations and rhythms of which we are normally aware in our daily life. Her knowledge of Simone's short term, in spite of the fact that she is the only living person she knows of her kind, is itself a demonstration of the instinctual awareness that every human being has of what constitutes the sustenance of a long term. In this way, Drabble examines de Beauvoir's postulates and finds them wanting. The implication of her postulates is that a woman should have a non-committal attitude to life and instead live on the intellectual plane alone while throwing to the winds the instincts and sensations - in short the 'non-personal pulls' and pressures which dominate and actuate us in our daily lives.

Examining her own sister Louise in comparison to Simone, Sarah eventually comes to admire the former because she was after all in line with the
tradition, although she took on the male role and exchanged her own with the other sex. She observes when she tries to understand the implication of Louise's visit to the theatre where her lover John Connell is an actor:

I realised as we walked there that what Louise was doing was a reversal of roles. She was taking the man's part, calling at the theatre instead of being called for. She was in the tradition, but she had reversed it, instead of opting out completely, as most girls are now obliged to do. I felt a glow of admiration. She was, after all, striking a blow for civilization in her behaviour, not as it had first seemed for anarchy. *What that was admirable for* (SBC, p. 180)

(Sarah did not go into but she was sure it was. It was braver, Sarah realises, not to abandon the game completely. To force marriage into a mould of one's own while still preserving the name of marriage it seemed to her an enterprise worth consideration. She found something classic in Louise's position, "something more deeply rooted in the shapes of life than the eternal triangle of a woman's magazine." Her position was certainly a lot more
classic than Sarah's own, and therefore, more beautiful and more gracious, "mine, I couldn't help feeling, was a truly unprecedented mess, which no girl before this century could ever have landed herself in," There can be no doubt that Louise herself realised that she was part of an unbroken line, rather than a freak. And she drew real pleasure from that concept, as she drew pleasure from the idea of "Grosvenor Square and model dresses and entertaining, (SBC,pp.180-81).

Louise, who had always baffled Sarah by her marriage to Stephen Halifax, and was further confounded by the gossip in parties and gossip papers like Tatler - talks her heart out to Sarah toward the end of the novel after having been thrown out by her husband for infidelity. She reveals that she had discreetly married for money and had all along truly loved John. (This relationship seems to be a latter-day version of Cathy - Heathcliff relationship of Wuthering Heights). Since John had no solid monetary position, she married Stephen just to have the cake and eat it too as she had experienced
horror on seeing the poor condition of a friend of hers. Louise, as it clearly emerges from the novel, had lived a willed and purely personal life; had even completely ignored (or tried to ignore) Sarah's existence. She never seemed to forgive her for existence till the very end of the novel. But now in spontaneous outpouring, she breaks the fold of willed and pretentious life and even forgives Sarah for existing: "The oddest thing of all is that she seems to have forgiven me for existing. She is so nice to me now, so genuinely nice. She tells me all sorts of things. She even said once that in marrying Stephen she was trying to stop me from overtaking her" (SBC,p.208).

In fact, in the major portion of the novel, there is hardly any meaningful relationship between the two, which ironically enough they discover when Louise gets liberated from conventional hypocrisy through her love for John and separation from her husband Stephen Halifax, the dilettante. When her willed for and not wished for, marriage proves a disaster and the binding elemental life-force, is
provided by John's love for her and not money as Sarah recognises.

Not only does Sarah observe others' lives but by passing through a train of various experiences in the absence of her boy friend Francis, she comes to realise the limitations and difficulties of absolute independence and non-committal attitude to life as she is not without a private desire for liberation. But characteristically her sense of the "illumination of feeling that can occur between relative strangers, depends on the condition of being socially and existentially displaced" (SBC, p.108). She gradually realises that she would run down from exhaustion in utter loneliness as every time she feels a terrible need for company and the urge and drive that cannot be gratified, she realises, by having only occasional excursions without any durable association and commitment to any one person. In trying to emulate de Beauvoir model, she had not thought of marrying Francis and let him go to America on commonwealth scholarship. But now she is desperate to take any one's hand and realises that the closest possible satisfying relationship one can
have is with the opposite sex only. For sharing her flat with another girl for the sake of company only plunges her into nothingness and despair, and petty squabbles, from which she finally seeks riddance.

The illumination of feeling dawns on her at David's party while she is dancing there with a stranger. Her partner awakens her to what she had not been aware of before when he drives her back to her flat "... alone in the dark with this man, who assuredly didn't mean anything permanent to me, nor I to him, I felt liberated, as though I were drawing a little on his energy and he on mine. I don't/what I am missing in my life of permanent and valuable contact though I feel its absence." The only compensation she gets from time to time, that she would never get, were she not so displaced, is the sudden confidence and the momentary illumination of feeling "ships passing and moreover signalling in the dark." This compensation, however robs her of so many other things and paradoxically reveals to her the shortcomings of non-committal and pointless, wayward life which
presses her to visualise Francis coming back to her: "And who knows, respecting Francis I sometimes think I may be able to have my cake and eat it" (SBC, p. 98).

This is how on her own experiential plane, Sarah repudiates the ideology of total independence from and transcendence of the male sphere. In consequence, such ideology implies severance from full blooded life which a woman could get only through her durable meaningful contact with the male and vice-versa.

The final glaring recognition of the futility and impracticability of absolute transcendence of male sphere and absurdity of pretentious life dawns on her when she listens to transformed Louise with rapt attention toward the end of the novel: "Looking at her crying, so pitifully and unapproachably there, I saw for her what I could never see for myself - that this impulse to seize on one moment as the whole, one aspect as the total view, one attitude as a revelation, is the impulse that confounds both her and me, that confounds and
impels us". To force a unity from a quarrel, a high continuum from a sequence of defeats, and petty disasters, to live on the level of the heart rather than "the level of slipping petticoat, this is what, we spehd our life on, and this is what wears us out. My attitude to the petticoat is firmer, than hers but I am exhausted nonetheless" (SBC,p.206).

This passage also sums up on a spatial level Margaret Drabble's scepticism of knowing the whole from the part, one aspect being the container of the whole view, or by implication, knowing another person even one's sister from behaviour only which modernists adore as the main objective way of knowing another person. For Drabble begins to question modernist conventions and modes in this novel and carries this on in the subsequent ones. Sarah returns from Paris in the beginning of the novel for the wedding of Louise to Stephen Halifax whom she dislikes "I couldn't imagine why Louise was marrying him" (SBC,p.7), she confesses. As the action progresses Sarah learns more, and more strange 'facts' about
Louise but does not feel that she understands her. The difficulty of knowing another by making inferences from behaviour becomes an explicit theme, when Sarah considers novel writing. Trying to render in prose a party given by Stephen and Louise in their fashionable home, Sarah admits: "I don't seem to be able to describe how that party was at all. It ought to be easy, because everything is very distinct in my mind. I can visualise most of the clothes that the women wore, and how they had their hair, and that kind of thing. I can remember how people talked, in a way and I could tell who was successful and who wasn't. But there was something in the air that eluded me" (p.127). It was, Sarah says, almost like being in a foreign country where distinctions are in one sense much clearer and brighter, and yet in another sense strange and very hard to assess. Sarah speculates that the something in the air was perhaps certain sort of worldliness to which she was unaccustomed and uninitiated. "Put, more simply I was socially out of my depth" (SBC, p.127).

Because Sarah is not part of the milieu in which the party takes place, she does not really understand it. Trying to discover the source of this
difficulty, she turns to one of Stephen's novels and concludes: "It is not really a question of observation. In the passage of Stephen that I have just been looking at there is a description of left-wing, Bohemian, sexy type girl, familiar enough in style and intention - the girl is made to seem very immature, very self-deluding and so on. Yet he doesn't actually say anything about her thought-processes; the whole thing is implied from various observations about her badly out hair, the fit of her skirt over her hips, the nicotine on her fingers and the somewhat crass, provocative things that he makes her say". The point is that Sarah could observe these things but she could never achieve the tone or the conclusions. She feels that she could write up the actress with the purple velvet rose in those terms, but she could never feel that she had got her down on paper when she had done it. There are hundreds of things that she could say about Stephen himself, "but they don't seem to add up to anything. They don't imply the truth" (SBC,p.127-128).

This is an outright rejection of Flaubert's realism. Careful observation and physical description
are not enough, for they constitute not 'truth' but an interpretation and Sarah feels that her interpretation would be partial, limited and hence false because it would spring from her own context, from the codes which are her experience and beliefs. Such an interpretation, Sarah knows, would not be the truth because it would not be based on understanding, for that she would have to inhabit the context and codes of the people she tries to write about. "The thing is that I couldn't start to feel them in my terms because I couldn't really feel them in theirs, and one needs the double background. Perhaps it can be learnt by long apprenticeship and dedicated exploration. I hope so" (SBC, p. 128). This is not a question of literary technique but of morality. Sarah's inability to render the party is not a failure of technique but a limitation of experience, lack of sympathy and understanding, and her acknowledgement of this limitation is a moral triumph. We later discover that Stephen, the 'successful' novelist is a moral failure; his success is founded upon the kind of description that Sarah rightly distrusts,
and what the critics praise as 'social satire' is a human failure because not informed by sympathy. Near the end of the novel Louise tells Sarah: "you ought to hear him talking about our (servant) daily, he talks about her as though she weren't human. Nothing but a comic creature that says funny things. I know you and I are pretty hopeless with that kind of person, but with me it's because I am frightened of them, I am aware the whole time of how overwhelmingly human they are. She's a spinster, our daily and she had a budgie that died." Louise tells us that Stephen laughed when she went on about it and said 'poor old Miss McGregor,' but Louise herself was not so dead to all human feeling not to realise that to her that bird was like a child. "And if that's funny then everything is, Everything" (p. 197).

Stephen's 'social satire' is really snobbery; He is an articulate snob. "He doesn't understand, he sneers," says Louise and Sarah identifies his fault as a lack of compassion. The consequences for Margaret Drabble's own novels are clear. Since description of externals always entails distance and alienation, she must seek a mode of narration
that involves commentary upon her characters' thoughts and feelings. At first her novels remain within the rubric of modernism by using the first person and the protagonist can tell us about herself without violating modernist decorum. But her distrust of physical appearances as signs becomes deeper, so that in Jerusalem The Golden it is significant when Clare and Clelia look at the sundial on the lawn and find it had got the time right. "I'm always amazed," said Clelia, "to find the sun is so reliable." (p. 125).

Distrustful of 'showing' then, Margaret Drabble has no alternative but to take recourse to the technique of 'telling', language is, of course, a sign system, and in principle, its interpretation depends upon context, social class, education, place of origin, for example—just as much as the interpretations of other signs such as clothes, furnishings, table manners, but while speech is subject to the same vicissitudes, the hope seems to be that it does not suffer to the same degree; that the broad linguistic context that English speakers share will prove somehow a sufficient basis for sympathy and community. Even at this early stage this is a matter
of faith and no certain knowledge as Drabble indicates when Sarah announces her hope that 'feeling' people in their own terms and in one's own can be 'learned' but in the subsequent novels such a faith will not prove simple to maintain.

THE GARRICK YEAR

In her second novel Drabble has moved away from the immediate direct first person narration to the narrative filtered through the consciousness of the first person narrator. This is important from the artistic point of view because while the narrative is direct first person presentation, it might lack in the maturity of its viewpoint as the impression one gets is that of casualness and off-handedness but while the experience is presented after being filtered through the consciousness of the narrator, approaching Wordsworth's concept of 'emotion recollected in tranquillity', it is mature, better condensed and compact than when presented while the protagonist cum-narrator is actually experiencing the experience, as the gap between experiencing and cognising self does not exist and hence whatever is communicated is more tentative.
This is made crystal clear in the first page of the novel: "while I was watching the ads on television last night I saw Sophy Brent, I have not set eyes on her for some months and the sight of her filled me with a curious warm mixture of nostalgia and amusement... I was very excited by this fleeting glimpse as I always am by the news of old friends and it aroused in me a whole flood of recollections, recollections of Sophy Brent herself, and of all that strange season, that Garrick year, as I shall always think of it, which proved to me to be such a turning point, though from what to what I would hardly like to say" (GY,p.7). The incidents which the protagonist is going to narrate have taken place some months before they are narrated, hence what is narrated is selected and condensed. The benefit of this presentation is that the protagonist is always somehow detached as she has outgrown the stage of experiencing the incidents which she is going to narrate. This makes the presentation more objective and less sentimental; the storm is over and

The Garrick Year (1964; London:Penguin,1968), p.7. All the subsequent page references are to the same edition and cited as Gy, in the text.
the calm state has set in, hence the vision which finally emerges is clearer and more objective because the relapse in time and place shears the experience to a large extent of total subjectivity and makes it more universal.

The Drabble heroine, in this novel, is already married. What is, then, to be explored is whether she could be independent after marriage i.e., have a job of her choice, or whether she could exercise her choice in having children or could she have extra-marital love life? Initially she had thought marriage was all right so long as she did not have babies. She could be left free to have her own way. But her husband gets two children from her by force. By yielding to the supreme power of her husband, she experiences, to her astonishment, the immense pleasure and deep enjoyment of motherhood, which gives the first shocking blow to her concept of Simone de Beauvoir's concept of independence. The infinite love and solicitude she feels for her children, she realises, is preferable to hundred independences. This is implicit in this passage:
After thirteen months we had Flora. I was furious; she was David's responsibility, we owed her to his carelessness, I was appalled by the filthy mess of pregnancy and birth, and for the last two months before she was born I could hardly speak to him for misery. But somehow, after she was born and this again is a common story, I am proud of its commonness, things improved out of all recognition. We changed, I can see now that it is as simple as that: we changed. I was devoted to Flora entirely against my expectations, so that every time I saw her I was filled with delighted and amazed relief. (GY, p.27)

What she had dreaded as the blight of her life turned out to be one of its greatest joys. David too reacted overwhelmingly strongly towards the child, and in the shock of their mutual surprise at this state of affairs they fell once more into each others arms. And so, for the next three years, they drifted on in a quibbling, satisfactory kind of way, with a fairly normal distribution of happiness and woe; "the only thing that never returned was my first rocky terror. The remarkable fact is that we were entirely faithful to each other" (GY, p.27).
That is how Emma shatters the concept of marriage without children and shows how children are actually a fortifying balm between husband and wife and it is they who unite them and commit them to each other for a long time. Marriage, she shows, would be simply hollow, meaningless and would definitely collapse if there is nothing common between man and woman whose concerns and welfare they equally care for.

Children, therefore, she realises are not a liability but a binding, sapin elemental force like blood that binds or blends husband and wife together and makes life so refreshing and engaging every now and then. The particular external rhythm that is offered by children keeps one going, otherwise one gradually loses touch with vitality and vanishes like a vapour finished off by daily boredom and exhaustion.

The second question is whether she could have an independent job irrespective of her husband's demands on her. She had already got a job through the efforts of her friend, Bob, in the BBC where she had to be a news-reader. There was still time to join the service before her husband, an actor, gets an offer from Wyndham Farrar to work with him in
Hereford Theatre: "I had been promised a couple of months before a very pleasant job, as a news-reader and announcer by a television company, which had decided, as such companies will, to have another attempt at the equality of the sexes by allowing women to announce serious events as well as forthcoming programmes." She would have been a pioneer in this field and fully expected to succeed where others had failed. The job, admittedly had been procured for her by an old friend and admirer but despite this string-pulling every one admitted that she was admirably suited for such a post. She had a face of quite startling and effective gravity, a pure accident of feature, and people automatically trust what she says. She feels that the nation would have been impressed by the news as read by her. And she for her part would have enjoyed reading it. She had had a passion for facts and a mild yearning for notoriety, and she could imagine no more happy way of combining these two interests. After three years of child-bearing and modelling maternity clothes, she felt "in serious need of a good, steady, lucrative job" (GY,p.10).
She could hardly believe that marriage was depriving her of this too. It had already deprived her of so many things which she had childishly over-values: her independence, her income, her twenty-two inch waist, her sleep, most of her friends who had deserted on account of David's insults, in short a whole string of finite things and many more indefinite attributes like hope and expectation, "And now, just when I had got my future organised and had glimpsed as it were the end of solitude, I had been pushed back from where I started. There seemed to be no answer but stoicism, a philosophy which I find, I can practise, but which I neither enjoy nor admire" (GY, p.10).

This is how Emma presents her own views about what she had lost after marriage and what she is in danger of losing. The need of her husband to go to Hereford is, indeed, pressing but Emma decides to forego the job and accompany him not so much for his sake as for her own psychological, moral and social security. And, in spite of many scuffles and wrangles, she pretends to give precedence to her
husband's needs over her own. The real reasons are the fear of being left alone with children and the nanny, fear of public defeat, fear of loneliness and her fear of the compensations for loneliness. Looked at in a milder form, she did not want to separate children from their father, didn't want anyone to criticise David for leaving her and she did not like David to be lonely. She views David in a fair and open-minded way and realises that even David is in a dilemma about the whole thing. Even he had been happy for her when she had got the job, but as circumstances would have it, he got an offer for Hereford off London. At the same time, he admits her capacity and resourcefulness to get many more jobs at any time and at any place, and therefore, foregoing one, he tells her, does not really matter. Emma finally conveys her grudging acceptance thus: "I can tell you right now...that I shall come and I shall complain and I'll also tell you that if there's anything amusing to be found, it will be me that will find it... And so it was: although of course, foreseeing those complaints and that amusement was so much more peaceful, so much more orderly and satisfying than undergoing them. This
is always the case." Indeed, even in the case of their marriage, perhaps the "rocks and the speed and the dust" that she had foreseen were exactly what she had found, "though under one's tired feet the aspect of a distant landscape changes and becomes endowed with human exhaustion with blisters and sweat and broken nails" (GY, p.38).

On reaching Hereford Emma observes the surroundings and comments: "The street had a certain low built, peeling, historical look but the wetness and greyness were enough to damp my enthusiasm. I had so hoped it would be sunny" (p.38).

'Wetness and greyness' foreshadow the nature of her forthcoming experiences. These atmospheric qualities symbolise her later dis-satisfaction, boredom, dullness and unsavoury life at Hereford.

Being left alone a lot at Hereford, she turns to Wyndham Farrar. She rather quails pleasurably before the domineering warlike intention projected by him. Though she is acute enough to know in advance that an affair with Wyndham will be futile, she cannot
prevent herself from becoming 'charmed in a fashion so arbitrary that it frightened me to a passion so accidental that it confirmed nothing but my inadequacy and inability to grow' (GY,p.116). But as fate conspires to project Emma into a relationship 'against my nature and against my situation' so events conspire through Margaret Drabble's production of dramatic coincidences, slightly ludicrous conjunctons and compelling predestined situations to bring Emma to a knowing acceptance of both the value and limitations of her life with David and the children. Emma's spirit is strong. She struggles against the limitations of her domestic existence, and by the end of the novel, she comes to accept the truth of her lover's statement that 'people who get married give up the here and now for the sake of the hereafter' (GY,p.207).

This, is, in effect, a repudiation of Simone de Beauvoir's particular concept of marriage which is rather an escape from life as it does not make the married couple responsible either to themselves or to the society at large. That is why Margaret Drabble puts her married heroine, who is quite conscious of
her individuality, her crisp intelligence, and attraction for others in such situations where the absolute irresponsible kind of independence is put on trial and after having fully lived those situations, the heroine comes to the shocking recognition of what marriage means. It is not an escape into an ivory tower or El Dorado but an active involvement with life. It means, as Emma realises living with the external rhythms of life, to be able to create a harmony with the internal rhythms of individual life which alone gives the fullest satisfaction of meaningful, rich, variegated life. In living only with the internal rhythms, one is bound to break down from exhaustion as the only way to get recharged and refurbished is through living with the external rhythms, or by maintaining a dynamic equilibrium between internal and external rhythms of life.

During the convalescent period, after her legs were squashed by Wyndham's fast car, she realises when she hears of Julian's suicide — that because of her commitment to her family she has grown into the earth. She is 'terrestrial' and will not be found at the bottom of any river. And having a
good deal of time at her disposal, she read quite a bit of Wordsworth, Hume and the Victorian novels. Hume, she says, sums it all up in one sentence "whoever considers the length and feebleness of human infancy, with the concern which both sexes naturally have for their off-spring, will easily perceive that there must be a union of male and female for the education of the young, and that this union must be of considerable duration." This comforts her very much and she realises the value of the necessary pleasure of feeling from time to time the warm sense of defeat.

She also shows a totally changed attitude towards Wordsworth's 'Idiol Boy' over which she had laughed in her teenage. On re-reading she wept, real wet tears for its high content of uninflated truth. She weeps partly as an apology for her past ignorance as she admits:

Time and maternity could so force and violate a personality that it could hardly remember what it was. (GY,p.171).
Thus Emma, like Sarah, makes an odyssey from reflection to affection, from the dryness of willed life with the accompanying images of dust, rocks and speed to the felt life with attendant wetness and dampness, the life as we really live it; not on the intellectual plane but on a plane where we perceive harmony between the two apparently distinct realms of reason and emotion, reflection and affection.