Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

# WOMEN IN THOMAS HARDY'S NOVELS: AN INTERPRETATIVE STUDY.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in English
at Massey University.

D O R O T H Y   M O R R I S O N .

1970.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Introduction.

Chapter 1. Plot and Character, p.8.

Chapter 2. Women and Nature, p.12.

Chapter 3. Women and Class, p.31.

Chapter 4. Women and Morality, p.43.

Chapter 5. Love and Marriage, p.52.

Chapter 6. Marriage and Divorce, p.68.

Conclusion, p.90.

Bibliography, p.94.

WOMEN IN THOMAS HARDY'S NOVELS: AN INTERPRETATIVE STUDY.

INTRODUCTION.

When one begins a study of the women in Hardy's novels one discovers critical views of great diversity. There are features of Hardy's work which received favourable comment then as now; his descriptions of nature for instance, and his rustic characters have appealed to most critics over the years. But his philosophical and social comment have drawn criticism ranging from the virulent to the scornful. In particular his attitude to and treatment of love and marriage relationships have been widely argued, and it is the women concerned who have been assessed in the most surprising and contradictory manner.

The first critic of stature was Lionel Johnson[1] best known as a poet. In 1894 he wrote of Hardy's women: 'I cannot think that any of them is so powerfully conceived and drawn as are the best of the men;' but he adds that they provoke an 'amazed awe of their infinite ingenuities,' and quotes a remark of Swift's about the pleasure that a few words 'spoken plain by a parrot will give.'

The only other book written on Hardy in the 90s is Annie Macdonell's.[2] She makes the observation that Victorian women like to see themselves as goddesses and therefore are displeased to see themselves painted as human beings.

John A. Steuart[3] has something to say about this in his Letters to

[1] Lionel Johnson, The Art of Thomas Hardy (1894). London, 1923, p.193.

[2] Annie Macdonell, Thomas Hardy. New York, 1895, p.99.

[3] John A. Steuart, Letters to Living Authors, 1890. Quoted by Lerner and Holmstrom, Thomas Hardy and his Readers. London, 1968, pp.154-5.

Living Authors: 'I understand', he writes to Hardy, 'you are no favourite with the young lady who patronises the circulating libraries. . . . Precisely why the fair one quarrels with you is, of course, among the mysteries of the world, but it is vaguely understood she considers herself slandered in your female characters.' He writes a little later: 'Your women are not conventional. They are not of the flaccid pink and white type; but neither . . . are they inherently wicked. Let us have living creations--that is the great want in fiction--and that you give us in your women as well as in your men.'

Lascelles Abercrombie[4] in 1912 gives a much more common estimate of the women. He considers that Hardy is 'one of the greatest inventors and describers of the female character', but insists that his power lies in drawing 'inevitable caprice', and speaks of the action of the women springing always from emotion 'without passing through the formulation and questioning of reason.'

Samuel Chew echoes this when he says 'they are fickle and vain, insincere, conscienceless, and seductive.' He further maintains that Hardy's 'opinion of them is bitter', and that they are 'all of one type . . . essentially Cyrenaics.'[5]

A little later, in 1925, Herbert Grimsditch adds his judgment--that 'there is no safety in presupposing consistent and honourable conduct on

[4] Lascelles Abercrombie, Thomas Hardy, a Critical Study (1912). New York, 1964, p.85.

[5] Samuel C. Chew, Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist (1921). New York, 1964, pp.133-5.

the part of a woman be she ever so seemingly ingenuous.'[6]

Two writers from France, Pierre d'Exideuil[7] and D. A. Hedgcock,[8] have in common the emphasis which they place on the sensual nature of the women, and in this agree with Grimsditch. However d'Exideuil maintains that Hardy excels as a painter of women, while Hedgcock sees his men as more varied.

Irving Howe, to instance a modern critic who has something to say in line with d'Exideuil and Hedgcock, says: 'At the deepest level of his imagination Hardy held to a vision of the feminine that was thoroughly traditional in celebrating the maternal, the protective, the fecund, the tender, the life-giving. It was Hardy's openness to the feminine principle that drew D. H. Lawrence to his work and led him to see there, with some justice, a kinship to his own.'[9] The first sentence may be true of D. H. Lawrence, who, with much that is perceptive about Hardy writes also much that is simply an exploration of his own attitudes; it is not true of Hardy. 'Tender' some of his women are, but 'fecund' and 'maternal' they are not. None of them is shown as a mother. Tess has a child, Sue has three, but they are not shown in a maternal role and they are not motherly to their men.

Howe says further: 'Sue Bridehead anticipates the modern cult of

[6] Herbert B. Grimsditch, Character and Environment in the novels of Thomas Hardy, (1925). New York, 1962, pp.109-10.

[7] Pierre d'Exideuil, The Human Pair in the Work of Thomas Hardy, (1928). London, 1930.

[8] F. A. Hedgcock, Thomas Hardy, penseur et artiste. Paris, 1911.

[9] Irving Howe, Thomas Hardy. London, 1968, p.109.

personality with all its urgency and clamor' (p.111). Whether there is such a cult is arguable, but I certainly should not agree that Sue was a forerunner. Such a changeable, tormented, gay, courageous woman, a woman so difficult to analyse because of her infinite variety--to sum her up as belonging to a self-conscious cult of personality is to show how little the critic follows Hardy's intention.

The critics today have abandoned the moral stand-point of those of Hardy's day. They do not criticize Hardy's women as fickle and full of caprice; in other words they do not ask them to fit the Victorian mould of womanhood. Perhaps they make a demand of our own time: that they fit type patterns which with hindsight they see emerging from the Victorian period --the feminist, the 'free' woman, the intellectual, the voluptuary. In other words they look for stereotypes just as the Victorians did.

To understand Hardy's women one has to read what he wrote with a clear vision, unclouded by the moral or social conventions of his or one's own time, unclouded by one's own attitudes. How many male critics, for instance, dislike Sue because she lacks sensuality; they see only her 'coldness' and never the whole woman. They do not read what Hardy says about her, either in the novel or elsewhere.

Hardy said of his first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady, that it showed 'a wonderful insight into female character'.[10] This was not, however, the aspect which drew comment from the publisher to whom it was offered. Alexander Macmillan and his friend John Morley praised the rural scenes, but thought much of it overwritten and unconvincing. George

[10] Evelyn Hardy, Thomas Hardy; a Critical Biography. London, 1954, p.86.

Meredith (at this time Macmillan's reader) with whom Hardy had an interview, gave him two notable pieces of advice: 'not to nail his colours to the mast' so definitely, and to try to write another novel with a 'more complicated plot.'[11]

If we examine the first piece of advice we shall recognize a characteristic of Hardy's writing which remained with him in varying degree all his novel-writing career. He took Meredith's advice and wrote plots, but he also followed his original inclination towards 'colours on the mast'. In other words he explored themes in which he was interested and did not attempt to conceal his views on matters of social, religious, moral significance. He looked at men and women in the world around him; he studied them in relation to the world, to society, and to one another.

In opposition to Johnson and Hedgcock I maintain that it is in feminine portrayal that Hardy excels; that in only The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) is a male character the dominant figure, although in Jude the Obscure (1896) Jude is almost a partner of Sue, and in other novels men are finely drawn. But even in the minor novels the women are of some interest, and this is partly because they illustrate the ideas which Hardy would put before us. They embody, they are affected by, the social and moral views which Hardy is examining. In their characters the social battles take place, their fate points the social attitude. They are both victim and agent of society's will. I intend therefore to examine Hardy's women in relation to some of the themes which interested him and see if an interpretation of their characters can be reached closer

[11] Florence Emily Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928. London, 1965, pp.58-62.

to Hardy's intention; to see also whether in fact Hardy always achieved his own intention with regard to them.

His first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady, was much concerned with class distinction, and although he ignored it in his second, he returned to it again and again. Under the Greenwood Tree (1872), for instance, shows a pattern which becomes familiar, of disparity between hero and heroine, Fancy Day being more educated than Dick Dewy. Elfride in A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873) is in the same situation with her first lover, but the position is reversed with the second. Far from the Madding Crowd (1874) shows the same inequality—Bathsheba socially more elevated than Gabriel. The Hand of Ethelberta (1876) is solely a comedy of social disparities. The Return of the Native (1878) explores the question to a degree, and it enters even into the rustic romance, The Trumpet Major (1880). The heroine of The Laodicean (1881) is obsessed with class; Viviette of Two on a Tower (1882) considers it, but less obsessively. It is considered again in The Woodlanders (1887), and in Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891).

Closely allied with this is Hardy's interest in moral attitudes, in many instances shown to be typical of and identified with a particular class. It is noticeable that greater concern with moral issues is a feature of his finer novels. The Woodlanders, for instance, examines a number of moral and psychological problems arising from or connected with concern for social position. The issues appear as less clear-cut and more sophisticated in the novels of Hardy's creative peaks.

Attitudes to love and marriage are dealt with in all the novels; are indeed interwoven with the threads of class and morals.

So the women will be examined in their relationship to their

surroundings. Some of them will be seen as victims of circumstance, society, or their own weaknesses, but each of them accepts responsibility for her situation, struggles on, stands on her own feet, and fights back. Not one of them is the conventional figure of Victorian womanhood though often she is placed in a typical Victorian situation: pregnant and deserted by lover, abandoned by husband in favour of another woman, dependent upon domineering father. Nor does she behave in what we are accustomed to think of as typically Victorian fashion. She makes things happen; she is active, as often for bad as for good, but she does act. She has courage, stamina, and decision. She may also have intelligence and education though not necessarily. She may, and very often does have charm, beauty, and gaiety. Whether she is good or bad we cannot say; Hardy himself is never dogmatic about this. He observes all, loves, sometimes pities, but never judges. In describing one of them he gives us a clue to his attitude: 'The woman herself was a conjectural creature. . . a shape in the gloom, whose true quality could only be approximated by putting together a movement now and a glance then, in that patient attention which nothing but watchful loving kindness ever troubles itself to give.'[12] 'Watchful loving kindness'—this is what Hardy gave to all his characters, but especially to his women.

[12] Thomas Hardy, The Woodlanders, (1887). London, 1935, p.45.

CHAPTER 1. PLOT AND CHARACTER.

It is of interest to examine how Hardy followed the second suggestion which Meredith gave him--to write another novel with a more complicated plot. Florence Emily Hardy says: 'He took Meredith's advice too literally and set about constructing the eminently sensational plot of Desperate Remedies'. Wilkie Collins was the model and a mystery murder story was the result.

I have said that Hardy had a didactic purpose in his writing and that he had intuitive skill in character drawing, especially of the female character. Could it be said that those novels in which he was most intent to give the public what he had been told it wanted, that is an exciting plot, are his least successful? Can it be said that emphasis on plot results in puppet figures rather than credible characters?

Hardy's work is so uneven that a cursory examination of, for example, his first four novels produces a verdict of 'not proven.' Desperate Remedies (1871) has a highly melodramatic plot, yet the characters are not altogether incredible. Aeneas Manston is the villain of the piece; he is a liar, seducer, bigamist, and murderer. One could say Hardy failed in his depiction of a villain, but he failed because of his own strength; he saw and drew always human beings, and human beings he saw always as blending of good and bad, of strength and weakness. There is no perfect heroine, no devilish villain. But the character which stands out above the sensational plot in Desperate Remedies is Miss Aldclyffe. She is not consistent nor does she develop; in fact, as with a number of Hardy's minor novels, the character portrayal ceases in the latter part of the book and the plot takes over completely. Nevertheless she remains in the

memory as a woman of great, almost abnormal power.

Looking at the second published novel, Under the Greenwood Tree, one findsdifferent intention. The first eight chapters are reputed to have come from the first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady, and to have been used again because of the favourable comments received about his skill with rustic scene and character. 'A rural painting of the Dutch school' was Hardy's intention and complex plot was therefore of minor importance. Light of touch and humorous, it affords a surprising contrast to Desperate Remedies. Fancy Day is a charming character drawn in gently satiric manner. Neither plot nor character delineation is complex.

Of A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873) Hardy said that he had attempted to 'trace the influence of character on circumstances.'[13] It was the character of Elfride which caused the plot development; 'The conduct pursued under a certain emergency by a young girl supplied the foundation on which I have built the book,' Hardy says in his early preface. It is not certain to which emergency he is referring, but there are two major events which have a profound effect on the tale and these both stem from the character of the girl. The first was the flight to London, the elopement which came to nothing because of the timidity and conventional upbringing of the girl. The second was the rescue of Henry Knight from the cliff face and certain death by the same girl whose resourcefulness and courage on this occasion change the course of the action.

His fourth publication, Far from the Madding Crowd, again shows the characters of men and women influencing circumstances. Yet this is a plot

[13]Carl J. Weber, Hardy of Wessex. New York, 1965, p.86. Quoted from an early preface to A Pair of Blue Eyes.

of considerable complexity; in outline it is even sensational, embracing as it does accident, bankruptcy, seduction, elopement, and murder.

Could one, looking at these four novels, maintain that Hardy retained his interest in a dramatic plot but at the same time progressively developed his skill in character delineation, since Far from the Madding Crowd has such a plot but has four characters of magnitude and credibility? He shows, however, no even progression, for two years later appeared The Hand of Ethelberta, one of his slighter efforts. It was adversely criticized at the time, the chief objection, according to Florence Hardy, seeming to be that it was 'impossible.'[14] It is satire on the class system, the story predominating but character delineation not entirely lacking, and the strong-minded young heroine emerging with individuality.

After this trifle appeared one of Hardy's sombre masterpieces, The Return of the Native. What was his major concern here? An outline of the plot might incline one to extend Florence Hardy's statement that Hardy 'took Meredith's advice too literally' to refer to others beside his first published novel. But examine the characters of Eustacia, of Clym, of Wildeve, of Mrs Yeobright, study the thoughts of their minds and the passions of their hearts, and one sees that events happen because people are as they are. The people make the story and are never puppets fitted into a plot.

Hardy said 'The real, if unavowed, purpose of fiction is to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human experience.' But 'the uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters.'[15] The

[14] Hardy, p.108

[15] ibid., p.150

distinction between his aesthetically satisfying novels and his failures lies in the character delineation. One might say that Hardy overestimated the 'love of the uncommon;' and this seems certain when one reads The Laodicean or The Well Beloved. But after analyzing the plots of The Mayor of Casterbridge, of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, of Jude the Obscure one is forced to admit that all are 'uncommon', even unlikely. The only conclusion possible is that sometimes the characters grow to such dimensions that they overshadow the plot; in others, although characters are never altogether lacking, they do not develop to the stage where thay can induce in the reader a 'suspension of disbelief' in the 'uncommonness' of events.

CHAPTER 2. WOMEN AND NATURE.

I have said that Hardy excelled in drawing female character and that this was partly because he used women to embody his social and moral theories. They do not merely express his views; they enact in their lives both the strength and the weaknesses as Hardy sees them, of society's attitudes. But more than this Hardy's finest women reflect and repeat his skill with country scene and character. With the one exception of Sue his finest women are placed against a natural background. Their truth, beauty, and integrity are examined as against the truth, beauty, and integrity of Nature. All are of the earth, of the permanence of the land. Their values may accord, or be at variance with the values of the countryside around them, but their elemental natures are rooted in the soil.

Tess of the d'Urbervilles is the outstanding example of this correspondence of woman with Nature. It is also the clearest demonstration of the ambiguity of Hardy's attitude to Nature. He was a countryman living most of his life in or on the fringe of the countryside. Born of modest yeoman stock long settled in Dorset, he knew and loved the countryside and from boyhood had studied its ways. No man who did not have his roots deep down in the soil could give us the intimate details of creature and plant that Hardy does. He knew the whisper of the dry heath bells, the sigh of the seedling pine, the variety of sounds made by trees in the wind. He had studied the life in a heath pool and the nesting habits of birds on a wild night. He lived close to the land as did most of his characters, but his attitude is not one of romantic idealization.

Hardy lived at a time of intellectual turmoil. The Victorian era, commonly considered a time of smug materialist respectability, was, at

least among the intellectual stratum of English society, a time of questioning and searching.[16] The publication of Darwin's Origin of Species (1859) was only the climax of evolutionary studies by a number of scientists. Huxley set himself to spread the knowledge of Darwin's thesis and explain and defend it. The opposition aroused rested not so much on grounds of scientific disbelief but on fear that if theories of evolution were accepted then basic religious beliefs would no longer be tenable. If the continuity of life on earth were believed then the Book of Genesis could not be believed, and the whole of the Bible was discredited as God-given truth. More than this, acceptance of the evolutionary theory made it difficult to believe in an all-powerful God, and a divinely planned universe.

Hardy's writing repeatedly mirrors the religious questing of the age, and the attempt to reconcile Nature, God, and man. In Tess for instance, he speaks of 'the chronic melancholy which is taking hold of the civilized races with the decline of belief in a beneficent Power' (p.141). In The Return of the Native Clym's face shows 'the view of life as a thing to be put up with'. (p.197). 'Haggard Egdon' is his natural counterpart, Nature in sombre beauty corresponding with man, thoughtful, introspective, melancholy in so uncertain a world.

He reached much the same compromise as Mill, Arnold, Huxley, if one may take Tess's statements adopted from Angel as being Hardy's also. She tells Alec d'Urberville that she believes in 'the spirit of the Sermon on

[16] See G.M. Trevelyan, Illustrated English Social History, IV: The Nineteenth Century, London, 1957, for a succinct account of the scientific and religious controversy.

the Mount' (p.361), and that 'you can have the religion of loving-kindness and purity at least, if you can't have dogma' (p.371).

It was this uneasy conflict in a mind trained to belief in 'a beneficent Power' and a divine plan, but in early maturity rejecting it yet longing for some feeling of purpose and direction, that one senses in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. One has a sense of Hardy's grasping at Nature as the essential good. Since belief in God's plan is no longer possible, can Nature's plan be accepted as substitute? Natural forces cannot be denied; in their irresistible power can one find also goodness and rightness? In Tess Hardy appears to be arguing this out, and along with it the antithetical proposition that man's laws are often cruel and wrong. Nature is good and right, society is false and wrong: this is the theory which we may, in particular instances, take it as Hardy's intention to prove. But it is not in the whole as clear-cut as this. He speaks of 'the ill-judged execution of the well-judged plan of things.' This is reminiscent of Mill's belief that there might very well be a God but that he is not omnipotent and requires the help of man to further the cause of goodness in the world. Hardy continues: 'We may wonder whether at the acme and summit of the human progress anachronisms will be corrected by a finer intuition, and a closer interaction of the social machinery than that which now jolts us round and along' (p.53). In this passage society is considered at fault; society is responsible for the 'ill-judged execution,' but whose is the 'well-judged plan'? He has rejected the idea of a 'beneficent Power' or God, and Nature is mentioned in this passage so it is surely Nature's 'well-judged plan.' Yet there are many places in Tess and other novels where Nature's plan and law is described as other than 'well-judged'. He

quotes 'Nature's holy plan' with irony in reference to large families inadequately provided for. He speaks of 'cruel Nature's plan' in reference to the milkmaids overcome by hopeless passion for Clare. In Two on a Tower he mentions 'the cruelty of the natural laws' (p.312). It seems at times almost as though he combines the two, God and Nature, and considers both as fallible.

Tess is described on her first appearance as a 'fine and handsome girl', to the casual observer a 'picturesque country girl' (p.23). But as with so many of his heroines Hardy is at pains to particularize sensual features of her beauty--her 'mobile peony mouth and large innocent eyes'. Her mouth and eyes are described in a number of places in the story sometimes in reference to their effect upon her admirers. Alec d'Urberville, after his precarious conversion, calls her mouth 'maddening' and begs her not to look at him, 'the large dark gaze of her eyes' being too great a temptation. Tess is made to feel, as she has so often before, 'that in inhabiting the fleshly tabernacle with which Nature had endowed her she was somehow doing wrong.' This would appear to be the crux of Hardy's argument: Nature in her wisdom has seen fit to endow a young woman with beauty; there is no sin in the spirit thus clothed in fleshly beauty. Physical beauty is something to be rejoiced in; it is part of nature and partakes of her goodness and wholesomeness. The strawberry and roses episode early in the acquaintance of Tess and Alec emphasises her 'luxuriance of aspect, [her] fullness of growth which made her appear more of a woman than she really was.'

Her pregnancy does not cause her mother undue concern: ''Tis nater after all, and what do please God!' It seems as if Hardy agrees, at least

about its being in accord with Nature. On her nightly walks in the woods Tess imagines she hears reproaches on the wind, and sees herself as 'a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence.' Hardy maintains that 'there was no difference. Feeling herself in antagonism she was quite in accord.' It was only a 'social law' she had broken, no natural law.

In the reaping scene he makes it very clear how he regards the country women. 'A field woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it' (p.106). Imbibe the essence of their surroundings, or conversely express the essence in their personalities; this is what most of Hardy's countrywomen do. Those who are not, by birth or upbringing, countrywomen, may reject, struggle against, resent the essence of their surroundings, but they are never indifferent to it, or unaffected by it.

As Tess suckles her baby in the cornfield, Hardy questions whether 'alone in a desert island' she would have been 'wretched at what had happened to her,' and decides 'not greatly' (p.119). He even goes so far as to state that her experiences would, 'but for the world's opinion,' have been ' simply a liberal education.'

There is some inconsistency here; one remembers the author's questions and comments at the seduction scene. Hardy asks where was Tess's guardian angel, and mourns that so 'coarse a pattern' should be traced upon this 'beautiful feminine tissue.' He recalls that probably some of Tess's ancestors had 'dealt the same measure even more ruthlessly towards peasant girls of their time,' this sentence suggesting rape rather

than seduction. But if it were initially rape there were several weeks following when Tess was not unwilling to continue the relationship. If this was a 'liberal education' then why is Alec presented so unfavourably --with full 'lips, badly moulded' (p.49), with 'touches of barbarism in his contours,' and, after his conversion, as showing 'the same handsome unpleasantness of mien.' Furthermore he speaks of sin, and shame, and wrongdoing, and wishes to make 'reparation.' Tess herself, when she meets Angel, is continually aware of her 'unworthiness.' Yet she had hoped for a new life, almost a renewal of innocence when she made a fresh start at Talbothays. Here again we are shown Tess at one with nature around her. We are told that Angel Clare had 'developed an aversion to modern town life' (p.138). He was attracted by ~~the~~ contrast to the country purity, as he sees it, of Tess. He idealizes her, seeing her as the epitome of all that is good and wholesome. Hardy himself does not do that; to him she is more elemental as witness the scene in the uncultivated garden. Tess stands among the rank weeds, her arms stained by 'sticky blights.' Yet such is her exaltation in listening to the heavenly music of the clear Angel's harp that she is quite unconscious of 'time and space' (p.145). The symbolism of this is decidedly ambiguous. Tess is a woman rooted in the earth, yet of a spiritual refinement. This is the character which Hardy is attempting to paint, the essential truth of a beautiful woman, the truth at the heart of things, as he always aimed to do, but his symbolism sometimes seems to play his intention false. He has been at pains to tell us Tess was not 'stained' by her experience; he calls her a 'pure woman' in his subtitle. Why then does he show her as stained with blight and weeds? It may be that he is suggesting the duality of her own

attitude to her experience: her natural reaction and her socially-induced reaction.

The lush fecundity of the Great Dairies points Tess's renewal and the blossoming of love between her and Angel. 'A visionary essence of woman' she seems to him, and 'Artemis' and 'Demeter'[17] he calls her (p.153). So fascinated with the ideal is he that he never really knows the woman. He is carried away by her beauty and sensuality; who can doubt it who reads the description of her just awakened from afternoon sleep, 'warm as a sunned cat.' But these attributes, combined with her devoted love for him and her delicate and intuitive refinement, are not sufficient for him when he discovers her loss of chastity. 'You were one person,' he says; 'now you are another' (p.259). He had thought that 'by giving up all ambition to win a wife with social standing' he would 'secure rustic innocence' as well as 'pink cheeks' (p.270). Clare has professed to reject the social mores and to feel 'indifference to social forms and observances.' After his time in London and his brief sexual adventures he collated town life with decadence, and country life with purity.

In his trance he leaves her as dead in a coffin. In waking nightmare he abandons her to the aridity of loneliness and drudgery in the harshest of country. She is one with nature again and the land symbolic of her state. The desolate earth and the empty sky, the rain that 'raced along horizontally upon the yelling wind, sticking into them like glass splinters;' all the features of earth and sky reflect the forlorn heart of

[17] On a number of occasions Hardy makes such comparisons with figures of classical mythology. Another instance appears in The Woodlanders where he speaks of a 'Daphnean instinct' in Grace. She, like Daphne, fled from her admirer. Tess seemed to Angel like some beautiful Earth goddess.

the girl. She sees herself now as 'kindred sufferer' with the game birds slaughtered by unthinking man.

Then she meets with Alec again, and although he calls her 'temptress' (p.363), the symbolism soon shows him to be the tempter. Tess stands battered and shaken on the red threshing machine while Alec waits. One sees her as victim again, at the jaws of hell, and the effect is deepened when Alec appears with pitchfork in the smoke of the rubbish fires. Indeed he calls himself the Other One (p.392). The strength and endurance of this child of the soil breaks at last.

Angel returns, blaming himself for his inconsistency in so valuing chastity when he also 'persistently elevated Hellenic Paganism' (p.383). Tess, so Hardy has told us, has much of the pagan in her soul, for 'women whose chief companions are the forms and forces of outdoor Nature retain in their souls far more of the Pagan fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at a later date' (p.124). It is fitting therefore that she should come to the end of her brief idyll on the sacrificial stone of the Temple of the Winds. 'You used to say . . . I was a heathen,' she says to Clare. 'So now I am at home' (p.441).

The book ends on a note of perplexity and ambiguity which has already sounded at various points. 'Justice' was done and 'the President of the Immortals . . . had ended his sport with Tess.' The same question is raised here as in Tess's comment on her state to Alec: 'Once a victim, always a victim--that's the law.' What law did she mean, and whose justice, and who is the President of the Immortals? At first justice would seem to be man's, society's notion of justice, but this does not

answer the question of the identity of the President. Is he the supreme god of classical mythology, indifferent to man's fate? If so he is a newcomer to the story, an interloper in fact, for discussion has all been on nature and man, with references to Christian belief. Exception was taken to the expression when the book was published, for some thought of it as meaning God, and a God who treated his child thus harshly offended against Christian tenets.

By whose law is the victim victimised? I should like to attempt an answer by quoting first from Huxley's essay Evolution and Ethics: 'Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step, and a substitution for it of another which may be called the ethical process.' Secondly Mill, in his essay Nature, maintained that the laws of nature are harsh, or rather 'passionless' and 'impersonal;' progress can be achieved only by man's modification of them.

Hardy's intellect inclined him to agree with Huxley and Mill. His emotions saw as much of the beneficence as the indifference of nature, and thus arose the double image. A combination of factors brought Tess to her death, the sexual instinct being the strongest of them. I see the President therefore as Nature herself, who can as Tennyson said, be 'red in tooth and claw.'

Tess is by no means Hardy's only picture of a woman's kinship with nature. The Return of the Native is his most powerful nature novel. One might almost say that Egdon Heath is a character; it is certainly an influence. Against Egdon Heath Eustacia Vye stands in perspective. Only in the descriptive scenes of heath and storm is the magnitude of the woman acceptable, real. How can one use 'real' of so romantic, so morbid even,

a setting and so larger-than-life a character? One must look to what Hardy meant by realism to answer this.

Realism to him was the inner truth, seeing into the heart of things. A comment in his journal for January 1887 explains this: ' . . . I feel that Nature is played out as a Beauty, but not as a Mystery. I don't want to see landscapes, i.e. scenic paintings of them, because I don't want to see the original realities--as optical effects that is. I want to see the deeper reality underlying the scenic, the expression of what are sometimes called abstract imaginings.

'The "simply natural" is interesting no longer. The much decried, mad, late-Turner rendering is now necessary to create my interest. The exact truth as the material fact ceases to be of importance in art--it is a student's style--the style of a period when the mind is serene and unawakened to the tragical mysteries of life; when it does not bring anything to the object that coalesces with and translates the qualities that are already there--half hidden, it may be--and the two are depicted as the All.'[18]

Hardy then was interested in seeing Nature and Man as interpreted by the mind of the artist. Like Turner he aimed to translate the qualities of his subject into his own truth. One might use I. R. Richards' term and say that in Return of the Native he was making a pseudo-statement on Nature and the woman which, if convincingly presented, we accept as truth.

One can scarcely think of the one without the other, of Egdon without Eustacia, Eustacia without Egdon. She hated its stark loneliness, yet it was a symbol of the woman. 'Egdon was her Hades, and since coming there

[18]Hardy, p.185.

she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto' (p.77). Egdon was as wild and untamed as the woman, as lonely and brooding, and as melancholic.

Hardy devotes a whole chapter to description of this heroine. He calls her goddess and sphinx, speaks of her pagan eyes, and explains her exoticism partially by her Corfiote father. He speaks of her desire 'to be loved to madness,' but 'the abstraction called passionate love' was rather her concern than 'any particular lover.' The truth of this statement is born out in all her relationships with men. She idealizes Wildeve 'for want of a better object' (p.81). With Clym she is quite frank, saying she loves him but has loved another; time is slipping by and love does not last; she fears she will not make him a good homespun wife' (p.234). But she promises to be his; he will 'never adhere to his educational plan' (p.234), and then she will be able to persuade him to go to Paris.

Love, Hardy insists, was not her main concern. She saw it as 'but a doleful joy,' 'the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days' (p.79). What is Eustacia really seeking? What is the truth about her which Hardy is trying to show us?

D. H. Lawrence[19] has an interpretation which is characteristic of himself but not of Hardy. It is unsupported by much of the evidence of the novel for, like Hedgcock[20] and others, he sees only the passionate, the

[19] D. H. Lawrence, 'Study of Thomas Hardy' in Selected Literary Criticism. London, 1955, p.173.

[20] Hedgcock, ibid.

courtesan in Eustacia's make-up, not the delicate, the pathetic, the fragile. 'What she wanted,' Lawrence maintains, was 'some strong-passioned, unconfined man as her mate,' and he continues that Clym might have been that man. 'He was born out of passionate Egdon to live as a passionate being whose strong feelings moved him ever further into being. But quite early his life became narrowed down to a small purpose . . . . His feelings, that should have produced the man, were suppressed and contained, he worked according to a system imposed from without. The dark struggle of Egdon, a struggle into being as the furze struggles into flower, went on in him, but could not burst the enclosure of the idea, the system which contained him.'

One may at first be disinclined to agree with the basic premise of the last section--that Clym is a strong-passioned man--having received more an impression of 'ascetic heath lad' (p.199) grown to thoughtful man whose appearance 'bore evidence that ideal physical beauty is incompatible with emotional development and a full recognition of the coil of things' (p.162). Yet one cannot fail to accept it when one remembers his rage when he believes Eustacia has refused to admit his mother: 'May all murderesses get the torment they deserve.' There is passion too in his grief and self-castigation after his mother's death. His mother recognizes herself as a woman of strong passions, and their similarity is stressed more than once. They are both, as is Eustacia, children of Egdon. Thus far, then, one can accept Lawrence's interpretation.

But marriage with Clym was not the answer to Eustacia's problem. Perhaps, like Clym, according to Lawrence's belief, she had been influenced by 'a system imposed from without.' The natural, the elemental woman in

her might have been satisfied by a 'strong-passioned' man as her mate, but other aspects of her personality demanded other satisfactions. The point Lawrence misses is that she is not only the big, primitive, earth-goddess woman he imagines; she is younger, slighter, more trivial than this. All that is slight in her character is concerned with the standards of the world which she affects to despise. She thinks the answer for her lies in the busy throng of fashionable life. She loves Clym because 'she had determined to love him' (p.166), because he was redolent of the gay boulevards of Paris and might take her there.

But, at the end, when Wildeve offers her the chance of life in 'the great arteries of the world' (p.333) she rejects it. She blames herself for Mrs Yeobright's death and calls herself a 'sinner' (p.370). She has too much dignity to defend herself against the violence of Clym's accusations and she will not reveal the name of Wildeve; in short she is both honest and honourable. At the same time there is that histrionic quality about her, the self-dramatization which has been part of her personality all the time. The whole world was against her, she thought; 'what a sport for Heaven she was!' 'How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me. . . . I have been injured and blighted and crushed by things beyond my control! O how hard it is of Heaven to devise such tortures for me, who have done no harm to Heaven at all' (p.420).

Much of this has echoes in <u>Tess of the d'Urbervilles</u>, for Tess is seen as 'sport' for the Immortals and 'victim' of Nature. Can one accept Eustacia as such? Hardy gives us two statements about her condition on the night of the storm and flight. The first: 'Never was harmony more

perfect than that between the chaos of her mind and the chaos of the world without' (p.419). There is union of woman with nature in this wild Turneresque scene; the 'pagan goddess' is in her Hades. But a few lines later Hardy tells us that 'the wings of her soul were broken by the cruel obstructiveness of all about her.' This suggests the frail victim of cruel nature. But have we not, through the story, found Eustacia more dominant than subject?

The figure Hardy draws is too big for the canvas, too big for the circumstances of the life he gives her.[21] She is not too big for the canvas of Egdon, for it is the woman in relation to the heath that stays in our minds. This is the woman whom Lawrence saw. Hardy saw another woman. He looked into the 'mystery' of Nature, and human nature, and attempted to depict the artistic truth. In this instance I am not sure that he succeeded. He said he found Eustacia 'lovable,'[22] an adjective which at first sight is surprising. One needs to remember that she was only nineteen. Hardy was particularly interested in painting young women. (In The Well Beloved he wrote that matrons never fulfilled the promise of youth). He liked to study the young and see their possibilities. Eustacia seems a developed woman most of the time—a Cyrenaic as Chew says--and this is because Hardy sees her in a future role, sees her potential power. But the mysterious promise of her as a person, and of the story as tragedy is unfulfilled because she is pathetic, frail, and, yes, she is 'lovable.' One has only to remember the scene of the parting

[21] Leonard W. Deen, 'Heroism and Pathos in Hardy's Return of the Native', Nineteenth Century Fiction, (Dec. 1960), gives an interpretation similar in some points.

[22] Weber, p.103.

between her and Clym to admit this:

'Her little hands quivered so violently as she held them to her chin to fasten her bonnet that she could not tie the strings and after a few moments she relinquished the attempt. Seeing this he moved forward and said, "Let me tie them."

'She assented in silence, and lifted her chin. For once in her life she was totally oblivious of the charm of her attitude. But he was not, and he turned his eyes aside that he might not be tempted to softness' (pp.390-1).

She is a young romantic girl with the yearnings of such a one, but the main impression we receive is of a melancholy passionate woman. Is she earth goddess or victim? Victim of her own nature perhaps, and this may be the truth, the 'All' he is trying to show us: that the conflicts in nature are mirrored in man's nature, contradictory and inconsistent as it is. Woman and 'Sphinx,' she rejects life; death in the blackness of the storm on Egdon seems at last the correct negative answer of reconciliation with nature.

Arnold Bennett considered The Woodlanders 'the finest English novel.'[23] A study of the book reveals many reasons for this judgment even if one does not entirely agree with it. The one thread of Hardy's genius which the critics past and present unite in praising, his depiction of nature, is here in living colours. The characters are varied and most of them illustrate some argument or play out some social attitude that Hardy is interested in exploring--concern with social class is one of these, no new

[23]Lawrence Lerner and John Holmstrom eds., Thomas Hardy and his Readers; a selection of contemporary reviews. London, 1968, p.14.

concern in Hardy's novels, but a second one is new--that of attitude to marriage and divorce.

Early in the novel is a statement about the possibility of 'dramas of grandeur . . . truly Sophoclean' being enacted in 'sequestered spots outside the gates of the world' (p.5.). The title Far from the Madding Crowd would seem to repeat this idea, that it is only in teaming cities that people live dramatic lives, and conversely that the country life is not synonymous with quietude, 'listlessness', and one might add, purity and goodness. It seems that it must have been a popular Victorian misconception that along with rural simplicity went purity, as Angel Clare and his parents also would illustrate. While Hardy sees a wholesome quality in those who live close to the soil he does not discount the coarseness, superstition, and fatalism which may accompany it, or indeed all the passions to which man anywhere is susceptible. The characters in The Woodlanders show a greater or less degree of kinship with the woods and general nature around them, and two of those in closest harmony, Marty and Giles, are shown as fine and noble characters. Yet before we can think Hardy overstates this view, we acknowledge that Suke, the earthiest of them, is not shown as a particularly admirable character, certainly not the pure country girl of Victorian romance.

Marty has a strange role, almost a deus ex machina. Her first scene is full of symbolic significance. She makes an 'impression-picture', as Hardy puts it, as she sits in the dim room, only her bright hair highlighted by the lamp- and firelight. Her hair is her only claim to beauty, her only feature of feminine sensuality, but she cuts it off when she finds that her hope of Giles' love is vain. She sells it to Felice, an exotic in the woods, and it helps to fascinate Fitzpiers, the other

exotic. But eventually it contributes to their rupture and to the death of Felice. Apart from the importance of her hair in the story, Marty plays the go-between and companion to other protagonists. She is allowed little life of her own. It is almost as though the loss of her hair had taken her identity from her. Yet with Giles she has close companionship in their 'intercourse with nature.' 'She formed his true complement in the other sex' (p.415); but he never saw her as a woman, and her sexlessness is frequently emphasised--'the contours of womanhood . . . scarcely perceptible' (p.459).

Felice, assisted by Marty's 'rich brown' hair, at first appears the stock figure of the femme fatale elegantly draped on a couch in the lamplight, and smoking a cigarette. She is the extreme example of the misfit in her surroundings as Marty is the example of one in harmony. Lonely and melancholy and passionate she reminds one a little of Eustacia, but her melancholy could have been dispelled by love and marriage. It was not born in the blood as Eustacia's was. She had no kinship with nature, and the description of the woods round her embowered house point Hardy's sympathy with her exoticism: '. . . slimy streams of fresh moisture exuding from decayed holes caused by old amputations, ran down the bark of the oaks and elms, the rind below being coated with a lichenous wash as green as emerald. . . . Wrinkled like an old crone's face, and antlered with dead branches that rose above the foliage of their summits. . . .' (p.248). Hardy seems to suggest the decay and malformation of life which may overtake any creature in abnormal or uncongenial conditions. He speaks of her house as 'vegetable nature's own home' which 'would draw groans from the gregariously disposed.' Felice complains of 'floods of agonized tears

beating against the panes,' and of 'the scrape of snails creeping up the window glass' (p.249).

Between the two extremes of harmony and antagonism stands Grace Melbury, that drifting girl. One might say that all her sorrow and disappointments stemmed from alienation from her natural element, but this is far too simplified an interpretation. In spite of the goodness of Marty and Giles in their close relations with nature, and in spite of the symbolism of South's tree, its parallel with his life, and its fall suggesting the fall of man, there are so many counter-suggestions that nature is not always synonymous with rightness. Felice's attitude has been mentioned, but there are other instances. There are suggestions of the overpowering encroachment of the woods: 'the woodland seemed to change from an open filigree to a solid opaque body of infinitely larger shape and importance;' and Melbury remarks how 'the whitey-brown creeps out of the earth over us,' as though the woods taint and decay those who live too much in their depths.

Grace was born a 'daughter of the woods' (p.349), and loved Little Hintock and its people. But her absence has made her lose touch with 'good old Hintock ways' (p.51), and her education has given her an interest in wider horizons. Nevertheless after her matrimonial venture with Fitzpiers, that 'tropical plant in a hedgrow' (p.59), as she early judges him, she remains sufficiently a child of nature to turn with delight to Giles Winterbourne when he appears with the 'atmosphere of cider' about him. 'He looked and smelt like Autumn's very brother, his face being sunburnt to wheat-colour, his eyes blue as cornflowers. . . . Her heart rose from its late sadness like a released bough; her senses revelled in

the sudden lapse back to Nature unadorned . . . the veneer of artificiality . . . was thrown off . . . Nature was bountiful, she thought' (p.260). This passage in isolation would seem to prove the theory that Hardy believed kinship with Nature, the beneficent mother, brought to man all that is good and beautiful. But in this, as in all his statements, Hardy is not dogmatic. With his equivocal girl Grace he wonders 'if there were one world in the universe where the fruit had no worm' (p.259). Certainly the fruit of nature herself in this world, presents no unblemished perfection.

CHAPTER 3. WOMEN AND CLASS.

I shall start by denying that considerations of class, when by this one means money and entrée to society, count very much with the women in Hardy's novels. This may sound surprising since there is so much discussion of class disparity in his work; it is a subject which interested him and, one assumes, angered him. One may also assume that it was an early irritation in his life, for his first novel, The Poor Man and the Lady, was mainly concerned with the suffering caused by social inequality. As Hardy's range broadened the emphasis on this lessened, but in a number of his minor novels it plays a part, The Hand of Ethelberta being the extreme example.

Having said that class matters little to Hardy's heroines one must qualify the statement, first by saying that, though they care little, the people about them sometimes care a great deal, fathers in several instances being obsessed with ambition on their daughters' behalf. One may say, then, that though from choice few of his heroines aim at social eminence, they are influenced by the value which others place upon it.

Again one must qualify by noting two variations on the class theme that influence a number of heroines. The first is the veneration for old families. Again one must point to the ambition of fathers for raising their daughters in the social scale, John Durbeyfield being the outstanding example of obsession with family, but father Melbury following a close second. Of the girls themselves Paula Power is the example par excellence, with Ethelberta also making her choice on grounds of birth rather than money.

The qualification of the greatest significance, however, is that of

education. A large number of the heroines choose a man who is educated above their own standard, or at least equal with theirs, in preference to a worthy but less intellectual hero. They may not marry the loftier man but they are fascinated by him, or by the wider horizons which life with him would seem to offer.

It seems that Hardy intends the careers of his heroines to point the falsity of considerations of social strata. Ethelberta is the only one of his heroines whose marriage is based on such considerations and is nevertheless reasonably successful, and this novel is intended as light satire. In the 1895 preface he calls it a 'somewhat frivolous narrative' and asks of his reader 'a certain lightness of mood.' The stately family is represented by the old roué Lord Mountclere who sees through the pretensions of the sprightly Ethelberta, but cares nothing for her humble background. The classes have been shaken up 'like peas in a hopper,' (p.334), he says, and if Hardy does not agree, at least he sees it as a desirable condition.

It is worth examining what is known of The Poor Man and the Lady since here Hardy expressed most forcefully his views. It was written in 1867 while he was living in his parents' home at Higher Bockhampton and working for Mr Hicks, an architect in Dorchester. He had recently returned to Dorset after five years in London, and the novel combined city and country scenes reflecting his two views. He sent the manuscript to Macmillan on 25th July 1868, as his diary records,[24] and received a letter from Alexander Macmillan who expressed interest, but suggested that his social criticism was too strong. He added that his friend,John Morley,

[24]Hardy, p.58.

highly praised the rustic scenes.

In conversation with Vere H. Collins in the 1920s Hardy spoke of having 'got rid of' this early novel when he was moving house years before,[25] but in July 1878 there appeared in the New Quarterly Magazine a story called An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress which is, according to Carl J. Weber,[26] the main bulk of The Poor Man and the Lady. He calls it a 'literary dismemberment,' for the beginning appears as the first eight chapters of Under the Greenwood Tree in the description of Christmas Eve at the tranter's. This last statement is at least partially supported by Hardy's biography, which states that Under the Greenwood Tree arose from John Morley's commendation, and in it the tranter of The Poor Man and the Lady was reintroduced.[27]

In 1965 Carl J. Weber published in book form An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress, which he called Hardy's lost novel. Some of the bitterness of The Poor Man and the Lady remains in the criticism of social convention and worldly standards. The situation of heroine and hero is similar to that of many of the later novels, the heroine being of loftier social position than her admirer. Geraldine Allenville is a not unworthy forerunner of the independent women of Hardy's later invention. She is honest and unconventional, courageous and straightforward. She cares nothing for Edgar's poverty and lowly position, but conspires with him how

[25] Vere H. Collins, Talks with Thomas Hardy at Max Gate 1920-22. London, 1928, p.54.

[26] Thomas Hardy, An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress; Hardy's 'Lost Novel,' edited with an Introduction and Notes by Carl J. Weber. New York, 1965, p.14.

[27] Florence Emily Hardy, p.86.

he is to make a success of life in London and impress her father. Eventually she flies to him on the eve of the marriage arranged by her father. They elope, she returns to tell her father, and dies of a broken blood vessel, presumably caused by the stress of confession to an adamant parent. A victim of the world's false standards, Hardy would probably have accounted her. Obviously the contents of the story are too definitely black and white, but the situation continued to interest Hardy and the moral to be pointed.

Paula Power has been instanced as the heroine most fascinated by families of ancient lineage. Ethelberta said that the peerage 'appeal to our historical sense and love of old associations' (p.423). The words could as well have been said by Paula, though she was born a daughter of industry, one of the 'nobility of talent and enterprise', Miss Steam Power, as the scion of noble stock calls her because her father was a successful engineer. Paula is a Laodicean because she is uncertain of her place in society and uncertain of her views. She is the epitome of the factors of old and new, of ~~the~~ stability and change as Hardy saw them particularly in relation to effects of industry and railways on the conditions of country life. Paula inherits an ancient castle and is courted by Captain de Stancy, son of the impecunious previous owner.

The Laodicean is an involved and tedious tale though, as even with the worst of Hardy's writing, it is enlivened by flashes of humour or wisdom, in the heroine in particular. If Hardy intended to show in this novel the decadence and feeble ineptitude of ancient families, he did it in a very gentle manner, for de Stancy is a generous, honourable fellow even if he does 'lack tone' (p.378), in Paula's smug words. His Mephistophelean

illegitimate son sums up the family: 'We de Stancys are a worn-out old party. . . . We represent conditions of life that have had their day' (p.472). Paula decides on Somerset, the architect, but not without a final backward glance of longing at her ruined castle and its ancient family.

Unlike Paula and Ethelberta, Tess Durbeyfield shows little interest in lineage. Her father boasts of his connection with the noble d'Urbervilles but the only result of his knowledge of his blue blood seems to be an increased reluctance to work for the support of his large family. It is her mother who sees a way of profitting from their connections, and persuades Tess to make herself known to the wealthy d'Urbervilles, the parvenu family who have adopted the name. If Hardy wished to point the moral that family snobbery has unhappy results he made his point, for from Tess's unwilling approach to her supposed relations and acceptance of a position with Mrs d'Urberville all her misfortunes develop. The irony of the situation is that Alec d'Urberville, charmer and seducer, had plenty of red blood in his veins, but Tess is the one with the blue blood, and an intuitive delicacy and refinement which make her reject him.

The class consciousness in A Pair of Blue Eyes is illustrative of two points previously made, one being the greater weight which families, fathers in particular, place on position in society than do the heroines, and the other the glamour with which intellectual eminence is regarded by the women themselves. Elfride's first lover, the gentle Stephen Smith, comes from London to give advice on church restoration to the vicar of Endelstow. The situation is patterned on Hardy's own experience, he the architect and Emma Lavinia Gifford the young woman at the rectory whom he

later married. Her social situation was more elevated than Hardy's, a son of yeoman stock, and one feels there is a sharp significance in the repetition throughout the novels of this situation. Elfride is a little taken aback when he tells of his background: 'I do own that it seems odd to regard you in the light of--of--having been so rough in your youth. . . . But I do love you just the same' (p.83). Father Swancourt's reaction is very different: 'His lips seemed to get thinner', and he says to Stephen that 'it does not seem possible that there can be anything in the nature of private business' between them (p.92). Swancourt has earlier been impressed by the young man's erudition and manner, and in fact was inclined to believe him connected with an old county family, but now his tirade against him ends in ludicrous satire: 'I was inclined to suspect him, because he didn't care about sauces of any kind' (p.98). Stephen is banished, but Elfride remains so fond that she runs off to marry him. Her courage fails her at the last moment and she returns home, but continues an affectionate correspondence with him until she falls in love with Henry Knight.

He first arouses her interest by his unfavourable review of a romance she has written; she is irritated yet intelligent enough to see the justice of some of it. She is indeed a young woman of some talent as well as much beauty. She writes her father's sermons and she plays competent chess. But Knight's priggish intellectualism is so far above her that she feels impelled to vie with him, to try to prove herself not the foolish girl he apparently thinks her. She is ignominiously defeated at chess, she who had so easily worsted her first love, and it is as if with this defeat she capitulates completely to his superiority. She admires him so slavishly

that she fears him, and all his opinions become law to her. She abandons her old love, puts her new love on a pedestal and worships him.

Fancy Day is a very different woman, more coquettish, more confident, less nervy, and not at all in love with her superior suitor; but there is something of the same situation. Dick Dewy is the faithful, more humble lover whose affection she returns but from something of an eminence. Mr Maybold, the vicar, proposes to her at the strategic moment when she had been thinking that the doting Dick looked rather 'poor and mean' trudging home in the pouring rain. Apparently the condescending style of the proposal does not strike her--as it does the reader--deliberately phrased, one cannot but see, to soften one's judgment of Fancy's behaviour. The vicar has been presented as a civil and kindly man, but in his approach to Fancy he sounds like another Mr Collins: 'Don't refuse . . . it would be foolish of you--I mean cruel' (p.215). She accepts him but very quickly decides she cannot possibly give up Dick. Her letter of refusal and apology puts her case--and also that of a number of other Hardy heroines: 'It is my nature--perhaps all women's--to love refinement of mind and manners' (p.222).

It is an interesting little point of apparent contradiction that Hardy has tried to avert our likely criticism of Fancy's ambition by making Maybold, on this occasion, unsympathetic; yet he says later of her that she is 'too refined and beautiful for a tranter's wife' (p.236). He does indeed add to this 'but, perhaps, not too good', but there seems to be something in his mind of the feeling that D. H. Lawrence expresses: '. . . . Fancy will carry in her heart all her life many unopened buds that will die

unflowered'.[28] By showing a number of his heroines interested in men of intellect and refinement he seems to be excusing such ambition while decrying that based on more materialistic considerations.

Concerning Grace Melbury, Annie Macdonell has this to say: There is something about her characterisation that 'does not answer to Mr Hardy's touch. . . . The taint of fine-ladyism is about her and her story'.[29] One might almost suspect her of listening to Hardy's remark to Rebekah Owen that 'Grace never interested him much; he was provoked with her all along. If she could have done a really self-abandoned thing . . . he could have made a fine tragic ending to the book, but she was too commonplace and strait-laced and he could not make her'.[30]

She is described on her first appearance as having a look which 'expressed a tendency to wait for others' thoughts before uttering her own', and a delicate mouth showing 'a gentleness that might hinder sufficient self-assertion for her own good' (p.44). She certainly did not assert herself over her marriage plans, but allowed her father not only to utter his thoughts on the subject before hers, but to persuade her to marry before she was ready to marry anyone. Father Melbury has invested a good deal of money in her education and he wants to see returns. Although she objects to being thought of as 'a mere chattel' (p.110), she gives in to pressure to accept Fitzpiers. Melbury is fascinated by his descent from an ancient family. This matters much less to Grace. Hardy says of

[28]Lawrence, p.169

[29]Macdonell, p.55.

[30]Weber, p.160. Quoted from Weber, Hardy and the Lady from Madison Square, p.89.

her as he does of Fancy: 'No woman is without aspirations . . . Grace had been trained socially, and educated intellectually, as to see clearly enough a pleasure in the position of wife to such a man as Fitzpiers. . . . the possibilities of a refined and cultivated inner life, of subtle psychological intercourse, had their charm. It was this rather than any vulgar idea of marrying well which caused her to float with the current. . . . ' (p.207).

I have spoken of the ambition of certain fathers for their daughters' social advancement. There are few mothers who show this concern. Joan Durbeyfield does indeed urge Tess to apply to the d'Urbervilles for help in their financial plight, but Tess 'did not regard Mrs Durbeyfield's matrimonial hopes for her in a serious aspect for a moment. The light-minded woman had been discovering good matches for her daughter almost from the year of her birth' (p.59). There is, however, one mother who is concerned with class-consciousness, and she is far from being 'light-minded'.

Mrs Yeobright is something of a phenomenon. Hardy did not greatly concern himself with depiction of older women. He found women did not fulfil earlier promise mainly because of their child-bearing absorption. In The Well Beloved he says of a woman with a number of children: 'She was another illustration of the rule that succeeding generations of women are seldom marked by cumulative progress, their advance as girls being lost in their recession as matrons; so that they move up and down the stream of intellectual development like flotsam in a tidal estuary. And this perhaps not by reason of their faults as individuals, but of their misfortune as child-rearers' (p.170). This judgment would seem to explain

the absence of middle-aged women of intellect and individuality from his novels. There are a few sensible home-bodies like Mrs Melbury, some elderly comic characters--and Mrs Yeobright. Could it be said that Hardy used her to demonstrate the class attitudes which he decried? Perhaps this was his first intention but the woman did not develop like this. In the Well Beloved he speaks of a man's 'growing fidelity to a woman with all her pathetic flaws of detail' and adds that these flaws 'so far from sending him further, increased his tenderness'. This could be Hardy's own reaction. So often he starts out with a character who is to demonstrate an attitude, a view; but almost always the idea becomes a person, admirable, pathetic, lovable, though flawed. Mrs Yeobright comes into this category.

She was born the daughter of a curate and had 'dreamt of doing better things' (p.35) than marry a small farmer and live in a modest way on the edge of Egdon. Therefore her ambitions centred on her son Clym, and to a lesser degree, on her niece Thomasin. With the heath folk her manner 'had that reticence which results from the consciousness of superior communicative power' (p.35), and they accepted her at her own valuation and accorded her respect. She is described as having 'well-formed features of the type usually found where perspicacity is the chief quality enthroned within', and this emphasis on clear-sighted intelligence is repeated throughout the story. To the reader, however, it is frequently overshadowed by an impression of stubborn pride.

Though civil to Diggory Venn when he offers himself as suitor to Thomasin, Mrs Yeobright makes it clear that a humble reddleman will not do, and she is adamant about the necessity for Thomasin's marriage to Wildeve

to remove a possible 'slur upon her name' (p.111). Yet she is a loving woman, perhaps more warmly affectionate than she would like the world to know, and she weeps as Thomasin goes off to her cool marriage.

One of the most interesting scenes is that in which she and Clym discuss his attitude to life and work. He speaks of his determination to give up his diamond work which he sees as 'pandering to the meanest vanities' (p.207), and to do something more worthwhile. He proposes to become a 'schoolmaster to the poor and ignorant' (p.206). Mrs Yeobright reacts in what might be called typically maternal fashion: he was doing well; he might be manager before long; 'your fancies will be your ruin, Clym' (p.206). Yet her protests lessen in vehemence when he explains his outlook. 'Yeobright, having inherited some of these instincts from the woman before him, could not fail to awaken a reciprocity in her through her feelings, if not by arguments' (p.208), and when he asks her what is meant by the expression "doing well", she cannot answer. She does not deny that schoolmastering is a worthy occupation but she nevertheless reserves the right of trying to better the lot of her son; she has always tried 'to lift him out of this life into something richer' (p.210). She is a thoroughly credible character, the stubbornness, the pride, the rigid respectability being all part of the mother in her, a determined mother seeking the advancement of her only son.

It is tempting to consider Weber's statement:[31] 'As we listen to Clym Yeobright's talk with his mother after his return to the heath, we surmise that we are listening to echoes of a conversation Hardy had with his mother after his return from London. Hardy was dissatisfied with his work and

[31]Weber, p.60.

with London; his mother was of a class somewhat superior to his father's; she was a well-read woman, 'a "progressive" woman ambitious on his account though not her own'. Hardy strongly objected to interpretations of his life and character from his novels[32] but the parallel here is striking, especially in view of the absence of middle-aged women from most of his novels. It may well be that his reaction to class attitudes was early formed in argument with his mother whose views were typical of her era.

[32]Collins, pp.72-5.

CHAPTER 4. WOMEN AND MORALITY.

Views typical of the era: this phrase opens up many possibilities of discussion. To what extent do Hardy's heroines, their attitudes and opinions, and their fates illustrate typical views of the times? Havelock Ellis states that the novelist's art 'lies in drawing the sinuous woof of human nature between the rigid warp of morals'.[33] Ellis is here reviewing Jude the Obscure, and he makes the point that no novelist can show love, passion, any human emotion in a vacuum; it is only in reaction to background code and tradition that human individuality or aberration show up effectively. Hardy tells us of the personality and behaviour of his characters, his women especially, in relation, often in opposition, to the firm moral code of middle-class Victorian England.

I should like to give a quotation here from a source unrelated to Hardy criticism but the comment is relevant. Edmund Leach[34] says that 'by reclassifying deviant behaviour as "wrong" or "immoral" we can push it aside. . . . In this way we restore our confidence in an orderly world'. He gives as instance in literature the acceptance by Dickens' characters of 'the prudish conventions of Victorian orthodoxy. For a fallen woman the rewards of sin are inescapable'. Yet in a footnote he quotes the fact that there were in London at mid-century some 80,000 prostitutes, and that elegant courtesans parading in Regent Street and the Haymarket were something of a tourist attraction. But because they were classed as immoral they became socially invisible and unmentionable by writers.

[33] Havelock Ellis, article in Lerner and Holmstrom, p.140.

[34] Edmund Leach. A Runaway World? Reith lectures 1967. London, 1969, pp.52-3.

Since Hardy lived in London as a young man it is unlikely that he missed this parade; perhaps Angel Clare's forty-eight hours of dissipation started here. The recurrent theme of city decadence as against country purity may be Hardy's and his characters' oblique acknowledgement of the social fact. With his intense desire to present his truth in the novels, however, Hardy would not classify 'deviant behaviour as "wrong" or "immoral"'--the behaviour and attitudes which vary from society's law are the woof of his fabric. Nevertheless it seems, at first examination, as if he had not the courage of his convictions, or perhaps not quite the convictions, to show his breakers of commandments reaping any benefit from their violation. Completing Leach's quotation on Dickens are the words: 'For a fallen woman the rewards of sin are inescapable'. One could never use these words, 'fallen' and 'sin' in reference to Hardy's women, but it is a staggering fact that the statement is as true in his case as in Dickens'. One can demonstrate this in the simplest terms by pointing out the fate of women who have babies conceived out of wedlock: Cytherea Aldclyffe, Fanny, Viviette, Felice, Tess; all die before their time. In Sue's case it may be the sins of the parents visited on the children, for they die, though Sue has her suffering prolonged after lover and children. The other prominent heroine, Eustacia, who dies violently, has not broken the social law of chastity, but proposes running off with another woman's husband.

It is at first a puzzle why Hardy should have contrived these tragedies of social retribution. Tess is the only one who has broken any legal code, though even in this it is suggested that Tess feels she has in some way expunged her original fault by killing the seducer (p.431). The

loss of chastity Hardy sees as no sin or stain upon her; Tess of the d'Urbervilles, a Pure Woman he called his book. The purity of Tess is her goodness, her courage and steadfastness, her love of Clare, her unselfishness, her honesty. All these are much more important than the fact that she is not physically virgin.

And so it is with all the others. There is never a word of blame from Hardy; perhaps it is not surprising that there were a great many words from contemporary readers. In his 1912 preface to Tess in fact he said: 'Melius fuerat non scribere', of his subtitle, because his 'estimate' of her character had been 'disputed more than anything else in the book'.

A Pair of Blue Eyes offers one of his most tragic studies of moral conventions. Technically this heroine is of spotless virtue, but so abjectly does she accept and fear the code that she is led to behave in a manner which the modern reader considers much more reprehensible. Henry Knight speaks of lovers and caresses with self-righteous horror when the first lover had worshipped from afar, and the second had exchanged a few gentle kisses and held her hand. It is the class-conscious opposition of her father which causes Elfride's timorous flight; it is convention which makes her afraid to confess the night spent in a railway carriage with her presumptive husband. Comparison has been made between Elfride's terror of confession and Tess's. In both cases the terror is induced by the great love each bears her superior lover, 'superior' both in his own estimation and in her worshipful judgment. But the matter of the confession is different; Tess has in fact sexual experience to confess, Elfride has none. Hardy says that 'the actual innocence which made her think so fearfully of what . . . was not a great matter, magnified her apparent guilt'. Because

she does not understand the significance of Knight's oblique questions she lies and prevaricates, and when cornered gives answers which, to her older and at least theoretically more experienced lover, appear to condemn her.

In Henry Knight Hardy gives us one of his men who admire but fear the flesh. Perhaps Hardy saw this, too, as a Victorian attitude to be studied. Knight, who has reached the age of thirty without having kissed a woman, is contemptuous of Elfride's vanity; yet he enjoys her beauty, does not fail to notice her figure when with a rope made of her underclothes she rescues him from the cliff edge--her clothes 'seemed to cling to her like a glove' (p.258); and when he buys her earrings he asks if he may put them on: 'I should like to touch that seductive ear of yours' (p.327). It is noticeable that most of Hardy's heroines are seductive. Elfride has eyes of a 'misty and shady blue . . . that was looked <u>into</u> rather than <u>at</u>' (p.2), masses of 'loose curly hair' (p.10), and 'the warmth and spirit of the type of woman's feature most common to the beauties . . . of Rubens, without their insistent fleshiness' (p.2). Grace is considered seductive by both Giles and Fitzpiers. Giles, in fact, thinks of her 'agonizing seductiveness'. Remember the scene in which Fancy first appears: in a white robe, her 'profusion of rich hair' (p.38) gleaming in the candle light--similar to the scene of Marty's chestnut brown making an 'impression-picture'. These women are not the obvious charmers so may better demonstrate Hardy's intention to show his women as whole beings. They are not to be regarded as Victorian convention seemed to require, as angel or as devil; each is a creature of physical, mental, and spiritual components, and his plea is that the reader should so accept her. His men do not always do so. Elfride sobs at Henry Knight: 'Am I such a--mere

characterless toy--as to have no attrac--tion in me, apart from--freshness? Haven't I brains? . . . Have I not some beauty? . . . You have praised my voice, and my manner, and my accomplishments'.

Elfride is an intelligent, spirited girl of seductive beauty who makes the mistake, or has the misfortune, to fall out of love with one man and into love with another. The judgment of society is so harsh upon her fault that she fails in courage and honesty, and the man is so bound by convention that he denies her and his own sensuality, and spurns her. Hardy would show physical beauty as an integral part of the whole creature, not as a thing to be either set apart and idolized in a state of inviolability, or feared as a snare and a temptation. Yet although Hardy sees his characters as complete entities, he nevertheless places them in the society of their time, under obligation to conform to its laws. Because Elfride behaves unconventionally and apparently immorally, in the eyes of society, she must suffer and indeed die young.

This subjection of his heroines to society's laws, this placing of their individuality within the setting of their era has a striking example in Two on a Tower. Only when one realizes the ambivalence of Hardy's treatment of women in society can one see any reason for the last two sentences: 'Viviette was dead. The bishop was avenged.'

Viviette has flouted convention in loving, and later marrying in secret, the youthful astronomer, Swithin St Cleeve. It is only months later that she finds that her explorer husband was still living, and that she is, in society's eyes, a 'dishonoured' woman. Yet she has the courage to refuse to marry because she would thus deny to Swithin the opportunity of an inheritance and further study. Only when she discovers her pregnancy

does she try to secure her social position. 'To what will not convention compel her weaker victims in extremes?' asks Hardy (p.290), and Viviette accepts the proposal of marriage of the Bishop of Melchester.

She is allowed little happiness, even peace, the Bishop being judged even by the kindly Mr Torkingham, as a man of arrogance (p.304). She is an aging woman when Swithin returns, no longer loving her but determined to 'deal with loving-kindness towards her' (p.312). She dies in his arms from shock of joy apparently, and 'the Bishop was avenged.' This is a jarring note for the end of a story in which the writer's sympathy is obviously with the heroine.

In the 1895 preface Hardy says his story is the history of two 'infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe' but suggests that human affairs have the greater importance. Viviette is a person of more warmth, humanity and magnitude than Swithin, the scientist. 'There is something in the inexorably simple logic of such men that partakes of the cruelty of the natural laws that are their study' (p.312), he says. He further states in the preface that he hopes his story will induce in 'some few readers' an understanding of 'the pathos, misery, long-suffering, and divine tenderness which . . . frequently accompany the passion of such a woman as Viviette. . . .' Yet, in spite of such obvious sympathy for his heroine, and even apology for her deception of the Bishop, Hardy ends with the sentence about vengeance.

The sentence can only be understood as society's words. In bitterness of mood Hardy gives the judgment of his times that the Bishop was entitled to vengeance, that Viviette deserved to be punished with suffering, loneliness, and untimely death. Once again Hardy's views and society's

views are interwoven; men and women are presented as Hardy sees them in the setting which society provides, subject to society's 'laws framed merely as social expedients by humanity without a basis in the heart of things'.[35]

It is likely that in such endings of social retribution Hardy saw his only chance of acceptance by his public. He saw Tess as a pure woman, but society did not. She was a 'fallen woman' and as such must 'pay the price'. Since she assuredly does this, some sympathy for her, and acceptance of her story was assured. In this, as in most of his novels, Hardy makes concession to the views of the time. If this be doubted in the larger issues, one can point to smaller instances which appear to prove the point. One need only cite the changes made in the serial version of Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Not only were the seduction scene and the baby removed, but Angel Clare was not even permitted to carry the milkmaids through the flood; he must use a handy wheelbarrow![36]

[35]Thomas Hardy, 'Candour in English Fiction,' New Review, January 1890, in Harold Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings. Lawrence, 1966, p.127.

[36]Mary Ellen Beach, Thomas Hardy from serial to novel. New York, 1964, pp.75-8. A number of Hardy's novels can be seen in serial form in New Zealand libraries: Tess (July to December 1891) can be read in the National Graphic, earlier called the Graphic, held by General Assembly and Auckland University libraries; the numbers of Harper's New Monthly Magazine containing Jude the Obscure (December 1894 to November 1895) are also at General Assembly; The Woodlanders (May 1886 to April 1887) in Macmillan's Magazine at Auckland Public; and Far from the Madding Crowd (January to December 1874) in Cornhill at Otago and Auckland Universities, Alexander Turnbull, and General Assembly. The serial versions were not, however, consulted except for the extracts which appear in Beach's book. Because Hardy wrote his novels as he wanted them to be and then changed them to conform with serial requirements, it was felt that study of the emasculated version could add nothing to an understanding of the characters or Hardy's intention. The point could, however, be made that the serial version does by contrast highlight the qualities of the true heroine.

In her biography Florence Hardy quotes a note of Hardy's relating to the Dynasts when the first part of his poetic drama was published in 1904 (p.320). He makes no reference to his novels but the remarks are relevant to them as to his drama and poetry: 'I suppose I have handicapped myself by expressing . . . philosophies and feelings as yet not well established or formally adopted into general teaching; and by thus over-stepping the standard boundary set up for the thought of the age by the proctors of opinion, I have thrown back my chance of acceptance . . . by many years. . . . What the reviewers really assert is, not "This is an untrue and unartistic view of life", but "This is not the view of life that we people who thrive on conventions can permit to be painted."'

His concessions to 'the people who thrive on conventions' can be seen even in those novels in which there is no 'fallen woman' for whom the rewards of 'sin' are deemed to be 'inescapable', to use Edmund Leach's words again. Consider the end of The Woodlanders as it concerns Grace and Fitzpiers. Hardy gave his public what they apparently accepted as a happy and respectable ending in the reunion of husband and wife. Lionel Johnson goes so far as to speak of happiness 'through purification'.[37] But there is a bitter tang to the reconciliation. Grace persuades herself of Fitzpiers' reformation because she wants an established position again, and has, indeed, regard for his professional skill. Fitzpiers' interest has been rekindled by her relations with Giles, so he acts the part of patient, generous lover, and swears steadfastness and penitence. But Melbury has long judged him 'not staunch of heart' and has little hope of happiness for

[37] Johnson, p.183.

Grace in the reunion: 'It's a forlorn hope for her', he says (p.455).

In this novel the temptress, as Felice would appear by conventional standards, plays also the 'fallen woman' who has reaped the 'rewards of sin'. Grace, the suffering wife, must have a happy ending. The fact that the husband who is to supply it, is also the seducer, cannot escape the notice of the clear-sighted reader. Hardy points here the double standard acceptable to Victorian society: the man's lapses may be forgiven, as Tess forgives Angel, as Grace forgives Fitzpiers. He may swear rehabilitation, he may be received back into his wife's favours; but Hardy leaves us in no doubt of his views. This is social conformity, a makeshift marriage of convenience. Hardy judges this world as being 'made up so largely of compromise'[38] and here he gives us an example of its workings as he sees them.

[38]Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd (1874), London, 1940, p.42.

## CHAPTER 5. LOVE AND MARRIAGE.

Hardy's first published novel, Desperate Remedies, opens the discussion on love which continues through all his novels and culminates in Jude the Obscure. Expectations of love and the loved one are major concerns of most of his characters. In a variety of ways each is seeking happiness in a relationship with another, but the form the ideal relationship shall take and the prerequisites for its success are envisaged in various ways.

A striking feature of Hardy's discussion of love is the great prominence he gives to the female view. There is a wider range of female attitudes to love, a greater analysis of women's attitudes to lovers than there is of men's. Yet Hardy gives us, in one or two places, a clear statement of what he considers ideal bases for enduring love and marriage, and these are the same for men as for women. Indeed one of his recurrent theses is the greater similarity than difference between men and women.

He makes this statement first in Desperate Remedies in connection with Edward Springrove's loneliness and longing for a complete companion whose mind and sentiments would be atune with his own so that he would be almost an alter ego. The pronoun 'he' is misleading, for it was neither male nor female companion for whom he yearned, but 'for somebody wanting, he scarcely knew whom. Echoes of himself, though rarely, he now and then found. Sometimes they were men, sometimes women . . . for in spite of a fashion which pervades the whole community at the present day--the habit of explaining that woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse, the fact remains that, after all, women are mankind, and that in many of the sentiments of life the difference of sex is but a difference of degree' (pp.200-1).

This yearning for a perfect companion, for an 'indefinable helpmate to the remoter sides of himself', as Hardy puts it, has, in Desperate Remedies, a very strange incarnation. Miss Aldclyffe is the largest character in the novel, a woman 'darkly passionate' Lawrence calls her.[39] Of one scene in which she makes pleas for companionship, love, and sympathy Guerard uses the term 'a subconscious portrayal of Lesbianism'.[40] This is certainly the way it strikes a modern reader, but one must emphasise the word 'subconscious'; no such suggestion is made by any of the early critics, so we must accept that Hardy had no intention of describing an irregular passion. Miss Aldclyffe is a mature woman, living alone and lonely. She is attracted to the young Cytherea Graye whom she has just engaged as companion. She gets into bed with the girl, and showers kisses and embraces upon her. She pleads for love and affection, saying she feels like a mother to her 'sweet one' (p.91); but she does not sound like one. When she learns of Cytherea's love for Edward Springrove she is 'as jealous as any man', and abuses her for not being 'the innocent' she took her for (p.93). There is, however, nothing in the rest of the novel to suggest this is a Lesbian love. In the 'penetrating light of morning' Miss Aldclyffe is 'vexed' with herself for 'giving way to emotions' (pp.101-2), and in time they achieve a workable, even affectionate relationship as mistress and companion.

The explanation for this passage can only lie in Hardy's belief that men and women are more alike than different: 'Women are mankind . . . in

[39]Lawrence, p.169.

[40]Albert J. Guerard, Thomas Hardy. Connecticut, 1964, p.105.

many of the sentiments of life the difference of sex is but a difference of degree'. This inferior novel is important as giving the key to much of Hardy's attitude to men and women. There is no doubt that Hardy's women are more finely and diversely drawn than his men. As has already been mentioned, he said of his first novel that 'the only interesting thing about it was that it showed a wonderful insight into female character'. There is also no doubt that most of his men, either of the noble enduring or superficially unreliable seducer type, are lacking in a quality of aggressive virility which is associated at least with the fictional male. In a number of cases the women mention this, though not always unfavourably; Elfride Swancourt, for instance, says she loves young Stephen Smith because he is 'so docile and gentle' (p.70). It seems certain that Hardy saw us all as 'mankind' first, men and women second, and that he made similarities greater than differences--his women so often strong-minded, his men gentle. With Miss Aldclyffe he makes the point that women can have as strong passions as men, and they are not always carefully and discreetly expressed. A lonely woman who has no outlet for her affections is as likely as a man to ask for love with as little restraint and dignity as a man. One might compare Miss Aldclyffe with Boldwood, who shows a similar, almost morbid passion, he also a lonely, shut-away creature.

Yet despite this tendency in Hardy's analysis of men and women to merge their characteristics, to show that each of us is a composite of male and female qualities, there is in many of his novels a repetition of an attitude to love which is peculiarly masculine. This one may call the pursuit of the ideal.

The Well Beloved is concerned wholly with this. Hardy says in the

1912 preface that the hero may appear to some as a 'fantast', but to others only 'as one who gave objective continuity . . . to a delicate dream which in a vague form is more or less common to all men, and is by no means new to Platonic philosophers'. Lascelles Abercrombie has this to say of the Platonic theory of love: 'It is only the gleaming of his own desire that the lover worships; each amour ends in the desire being once more disappointed of perfection, as soon as the lover is able to distinguish the woman under the dazzling transfiguration he himself has caused'.[41] As Hardy suggests in the preface the hero of The Well Beloved is only an extreme example of the idealist in love. He is a sculptor whose life is devoted to the pursuit of an ideal of beauty which he seems to find in one woman after another; but it is a will-o'-the-wisp pursuit and the ideal is never attained. The fantastic part of his pursuit involves a woman reincarnated through three generations, the man of twenty, forty, and sixty loving the woman, her daughter, and her granddaughter. It is not really a woman he loves, but the ideal, 'the gleaming of his own desire', and Pierston is only one among many men who are victims of the 'delicate dream'.

Hardy wrote a poem of the same title, The Well Beloved, which appears in Poems Past and Present. The spirit which walks beside the lover tells him: 'I am thy only Love', and of the bride to whom he travels she says: 'Thou lovest what thou dreamest her/ I am thy very dream!'

The first mention Hardy makes of this proclivity is in Desperate Remedies. Edward Springrove, the young man who longs for a complete companion, speaks of the common occurrence of the lover who 'finds himself

[41] Abercrombie, p.73.

engaged to a sweetheart, like a man who has caught something in the dark. He doesn't know whether it is a bat or a bird, and takes it to the light when he is cool to see what it is' (p.25).

A number of Hardy's men capture an unknown creature, and only when their initial passion has cooled a little, do they trouble to examine it. Often the reality does not please them and the creature is reviled for not being as the lover has imagined her. In A Pair of Blue Eyes Henry Knight thinks he has found his ideal of purity; he values 'untried lips' to such a degree that he would 'never have given [himself] the pleasure of proposing' if he had thought Elfride 'an expert' (p.347). He tells her 'a religion was building itself upon [her] in [his] heart'. He looked into her eyes and thought he saw there 'truth and innocence as pure and perfect as ever embedded by God in the flesh of woman' (p.397). When he finds her an ordinary fallible woman, he swings to the opposite extreme and imagines her much worse. Hardy makes the point that men who at first will not allow a word against the perfection of a sweetheart will, 'once suspecting their purity, morally hang them upon evidence they would be ashamed to admit in judging a dog' (p.399).

Angel Clare is another hero akin to Knight in his ascetic intellectualism and in his idealism. When Tess tells him of her past sexual experience, he says, 'You were one person; now you are another' (p.259), and 'The woman I have been loving is not you'. He has seen her as the ideal of country innocence and purity, seeing the ideal and not looking for the woman. Certainly Angel has received a rude shock, but he has just confessed his own misdemeanours and been forgiven. Tess insists that, having begun to love him, she loves him for ever, 'in all changes,

in all disgraces, because you are yourself'. (p.260).

Elfride says something the same. She cares nothing for Henry's past: 'All I cared for was that, wherever you came from, whatever you had done, whoever you had loved, you were mine at last.' (p.380). Both women ask to be loved for themselves as they really are, not as some impossible ideal. Elfride may have discovered a truth when she tells Stephen Smith that a difference between them--'between men and women generally perhaps'--is that she is 'content to build happiness on any accidental basis that may lie near at hand; he is for making a world to suit his happiness' (p.68).

This might well be true of Edred Fitzpiers, the precursor of Pierston in The Well Beloved. The similarity of names makes it obvious that in the later character Hardy intended to expand the idealist attitude to love which Fitzpiers demonstrates. In The Well Beloved the idea is of prime importance, the man Pierston being devoid of life. In The Woodlanders, however, the idea is not clearly worked out but the man, Fitzpiers, has reality, increased rather than lessened, by his inconsistency and weakness. Superficially he is a philanderer and seducer; 'primarily', says Hardy, 'he was an idealist' (p.168). According to Mr. Melbury he is a 'poor, unpractical lofty-notioned dreamer' (p.287), and the two statements go a long way toward explaining the discrepancy between promise and achievement, between intention and performance in his life. Of love he says it is 'a subjective thing--the essence itself of man . . . it is joy accompanied by an idea which we project against any suitable object in the line of our vision.' He quotes lines from Shelley about a woman: 'Like the bright shade of some immortal dream.' He admits he is 'in love with something in his own head, and no thing in itself outside it at all' (p.146). So it is

not surprising that he sees the earthy Suke Damson as very beautiful in the moonlight (p.189); imagines that in Grace Melbury 'nature has at last recovered her lost union with the Idea' (p.164); and in his admiration for Felice finds her 'a soul of souls' (p.240). He feels 'affection of some sort' for the three women simultaneously, for the love of men like Fitzpiers is, as Hardy sums it up, 'of such a quality as to bear division and transference' (p.265).

Yet with all Fitzpiers' recurrent essays in love, or pursuits of a dream, he is a melancholic and a pessimist in love. 'Sorrow and sickness of heart at last . . . that's the end of all love, according to Nature's law', he says to Felice (p.244). Let her believe that true love lasts for ever if she likes; 'it is a pleasant thought, and costs nothing' (p.245); but he cannot.

This attitude is echoed in the thoughts of another character in The Woodlanders. The tragic, solitary Marty South watches the mating birds tumbling in the hot ashes of the fire and flying off with singed feathers. 'That's the end of what is called love', she says (p.180).

Closer study of these two quotations gives a clue to Hardy's attitude to love and to the view of love which he would give. 'Love according to Nature's law', says Fitzpiers, and 'what is called love', says Marty. Neither of these is enduring love; both end in sorrow and suffering because they are the same. Love in nature and what the world calls love are sex, love on the simple physical plane, according to Hardy. It seems clear that he, along with Marty and Fitzpiers, had no faith in the endurance of such love. He asks whether there is a love which endures; of what it consists; how men and women are to attain it, and under what

conditions of life we may expect it to continue. Does it last in marriage, or are laws a bondage and a stranglehold upon it?

Far from the Madding Crowd gives Hardy's most direct statement on the constituents of enduring love, and he does this by showing his heroine giving and receiving a variety of amatory attentions. Bathsheba Everdene is one of his most attractive heroines, vividly alive and credible, and, with the exception of the much less colourful Elizabeth Jane in The Mayor of Casterbridge, the only one whom we can leave with confidence on the threshold of a happy marriage.

Yet the critics of Hardy's day called her an 'incorrigible hussy','a flirt', 'a wilful woman', and blamed her for her 'caprice'. Abercrombie even considered her 'responsible for the death of Troy and the worse than death of Boldwood'.[42] The last statement must be contradicted. However ill-advised one may consider Bathsheba's marriage to Troy, it could not be said to have caused his death. The failure of their marriage was far more due to Troy's earlier and persisting passion for Fanny than to any capricious behaviour of Bathsheba; and Troy made his own decision to return to Bathsheba, a comfortable home--and death. Boldwood's tragedy may indeed be laid initially at Bathsheba's door. Her frivolous valentine first turned the thoughts of the hermit in her direction; but she cannot be held responsible for the imbalance that drove him to shoot Troy. He had not been, either during or before their acquaintance, quite a normal man. Hardy mentions his 'stillness . . . which may have been the perfect balance of enormous antagonistic forces' (p.137).

[42]ibid. p.116

In Bathsheba Hardy has created a woman of full, well-rounded personality. We see her developing from girlhood to maturity, open to experience, meeting life and suffering with activity and responsibility, rising again with increased strength after disaster, and at the end opening her arms to new experience. If the Victorians could not see Bathsheba in this light it was probably because this is not the light in which their ideal heroines should appear. Bathsheba is too independent (she says so herself), too strong-minded, yet at the same time capable of passionate folly.

To study her relations with the three men who pay court to her is to know the forms of love which Hardy isolated in other characters. To some extent they are isolated here, at least in respect of Boldwood and Troy, both in the love each man felt for her, and in the response she made to him; but in the final relationship with Gabriel Oak, Hardy shows the apex of the emotion as he sees it. But this is a relationship to which Bathsheba has to grow; he does not at first appeal to her.

Consider her first appearance on a waggon surrounded by furniture, plants, birdcage, and cat, 'a soft lustre upon her bright face and dark hair' as she studies herself in a small looking glass (p.5). 'Criticism checks itself as out of place' and looks upon her 'with a long consciousness of pleasure'. One cannot resist the 'bright air and manner about her . . . by which she seemed to imply that the desirability of her existence could not be questioned; and this rather saucy assumption failed being offensive because a beholder felt it to be upon the whole true' (p.19).

Gabriel Oak very soon felt it to be true, though he started by thinking her vain, superior, and ungrateful. He was also 'a little

astonished' at her agile and unconventional horseriding, but her embarassment when he obliquely refers to it makes him regret he has done so (p.22).

The incident which brings their acquaintance to life is her saving him from suffocation. Her commonsense and quick action, and also her denial that she did anything so dramatic as save his life are points which none of the early critics mention; they are not features expected of the conventional Victorian heroine. But they are noted and valued by Gabriel. He wished she knew how he felt about her, 'but he would as soon have thought of carrying an odour in a net as of attempting to convey the intangibilities of his feeling in the coarse meshes of language' (p.23).

Nevertheless before very long he tries to do so, and it is not the inadequacy of his language that causes Bathsheba to refuse his offer of marriage. Candid and direct as she is, she cannot allow him to believe her aunt's lie about a dozen admirers; she is no man's 'property' and she runs after him to tell him so (p.32). But Gabriel misinterprets her action and does his best to persuade her with inducements of piano- and flute-playing in the evenings, and the babies' births in the paper. And she is interested; she would like to be a bride, but a permanent husband is not in her plan so far. 'I don't love you', she says, and 'It wouldn't do, Mr Oak. I want somebody to tame me. I am too independent, and you would never be able to, I know' (p.35).

She is quite right. Gabriel is a gentle man, though by no means spiritless, and she is an impulsive, lively girl and interested, theoretically only at this stage, in a masterful man. When she found one, the masterful qualities were all superficial; he was a husk of a man,

pulpy inside with romanticism, sentimentality, and vanity. She knew it too; she was never deceived, but such was his glamour and sensual charm that she refused to listen to her reason. Who is to say she was wrong? How could she have married Gabriel when he first asked her, when she was a gay, spirited, young thing unready for love. When she did marry him after years and experience had matured her and 'the exuberance of spirit was pruned down' (p.391), she had every chance of happiness with him, and he with her--their friendship and interdependence had stood the test, his fondness had endured while hers had grown. He was, in fact, a 'masterful' man if the word be used to mean master of oneself and not superficially arrogant. And her independent nature had learnt the value of sharing, but never leaning.

Her independence and courage we first notice when she takes over the management of her uncle's farm. Gabriel remarks after the rick fire, that in so short a time 'the unpractised girl . . . had developed into the supervising and cool woman' (p.56).

She could be obstinate with Gabriel and unjust, but no one recognised her faults more clearly than she did; this is why she resents his criticism. Gabriel does criticise her, notably over her treatment of Boldwood, for he is one of those rare Hardy heroes who know their sweethearts and love them as they are, faults notwithstanding.

In this he provides a strong contrast to Boldwood who knows nothing of Bathsheba, or any woman. He is a little like Captain de Stancy in the precipitate violence of his passion. In each a lonely, loveless life precedes a sudden fall into love, though thereafter de Stancy controls himself and conducts a calmer, persistent courtship. Boldwood is seldom

calm, and this fills Bathsheba with contrition. She sincerely repents disturbing 'the placidity of a man she respect[s] too highly to deliberately tease'. Here we have the kernel of her regard for Boldwood. She was also sufficiently young and vain to be piqued by his unawareness of her in church and corn exchange. She finds his indifference and his mystery tantalising. But most she is impressed by his dignity and maturity. The effect of her 'wanton' valentine shocks her; his proposal is so vehement as to be frightening. Gabriel's has been so modest, so matter-of-fact, and now this silent, formerly 'wrapt-up and indifferent' man bursts out with passionate, almost incoherent words: 'I want you for my wife--so wildly that no other feelings can abide in me' (p.146). Bathsheba considers marriage with him; he is 'earnest, well-to-do, and respected'; 'she esteemed and liked him'. Furthermore she felt that 'having been the one who began the game she ought in honesty to accept the consequences' (p.150).

But Sergeant Troy appears brilliant in scarlet from the darkness of the pinewood. From the sombre experience of Boldwood's passion Bathsheba comes to the flashy brilliance of Troy's. Troy is one of Hardy's philanderers, a man not heartless, for none of them is, but decidedly one of passion's slaves, his senses immediately impressionable to the beauty of a woman. He appears, and swears it is so, to love Fanny with some depth of feeling--after she is dead--but this is probably because he could 'do anything with [her]' while Bathsheba, he finds, 'has a will--not to say temper' (p.272).

We have met him first with the pathetic, 'fragile' Fanny, and he has created an impression of unreliability and arrogance. He is prepared to marry her, under persuasion, but not to put up with being made to look a

little foolish by her mistaking the church.

In all her encounters with Troy Bathsheba is at a disadvantage because she is so honest a person herself. His flattery is so smooth and experienced; she suspects he flatters and lies, yet she knows she is beautiful so is forced to admit the truth of much of what he says. And he, seeing her distressed and 'wild and honest as the day' finds her beauty so alluring that it 'bore out fully the epithets he had bestowed upon it', and he began to fear that perhaps he was caught in the gin he had set for her (p.206).

The sword play demonstration completes Bathsheba's ensnarement. This is a scene of the utmost sensuality, a high point of Hardy's achievement in the presentation of physical appeal. It parallels some of the scenes in the Valley of the Great Dairies for the sense of hypnotic attraction between man and woman. In Tess the lush, heavy atmosphere of sex and fertility is almost overpowering, perhaps a little over-written. Here the touch is lighter, partly because the scene is briefer, but mainly because there is less significance in the episode, less the suggestion of enduring love between the protagonists at one with nature.

The ferny hollow is a setting for seduction: 'the tall thickets of brake fern, plump and diaphanous', 'the long luxuriant rays' of the sun, 'the soft brushing-by of Bathsheba's garments' among the ferns, 'their soft, feathery arms caressing her'. Troy's skill is great; his flashy fearlessness, and the considerable danger of her predicament as the sword sweeps round her following the lines of her figure, build up the tension. The effect is hypnotic, his eyes never leaving her, his lips compressed in concentration. 'Behind the luminous streams of this "aurora militaris",

she could see the hue of Troy's sword arm, spread in a scarlet haze over the space covered by its motions, like a twanged harpstring'.

At the end 'she felt powerless to withstand or deny him'. He left her in a state of emotion that quite 'swamped thought', and 'She felt like one who had sinned a great sin'. Why? Surely not simply because, as we are told in the last sentence, he had kissed her, but because of the strength of her own feelings even before the kiss. (Chapter 28).

Now Bathsheba loved Troy 'in the way that only self-reliant women love when they abandon self-reliance'. Far from the Madding Crowd was published in 1874 when Hardy was thirty-four. This means that both he and his book were products of the Victorian era. It is sometimes very difficult to accept this. Self-reliance was scarcely a popular quality in a Victorian heroine, nor was abandonment to passionate love. It is no wonder that Bathsheba earned such comments as 'incorrigible hussy' from the Observer critic.[43]

Her delusions were short-lived, if ever she had any, and early in the marriage she has regrets for loss of independence in the married state. There is nothing like this in Hardy novels until we come to Jude the Obscure: 'Until she met Troy, Bathsheba had been proud of her position as a woman. . . . In those earlier days she had always nourished a secret contempt for girls who were the slaves of the first good-looking young fellow who should choose to salute them. She had never taken kindly to the idea of marriage in the abstract as did the majority of women she saw about her. . . . She had felt sufficient to herself, and in the independence of her girlish heart fancied there was a certain degradation

[43]Lerner and Holmstrom, p.35.

in renouncing the simplicity of a maiden existence to become the humbler half of an indifferent matrimonial whole'.

Yet while she bitterly remembers these thoughts she remains so enamoured of Troy as to seek out the truth of Fanny's death, and to plead wildly with him that he kiss her and love her better than the dead sweetheart.

After Troy's rejection and departure she gradually takes up life again. Boldwood's hopes revive. It is noticeable that his appeal to her now is less than honest. He claims that it is only 'a friendly business--like compact between them' (p.391) that he seeks, and when he presses his suit there is an element of blackmail in it: 'You belonged almost to me!' (p.415); 'You owe it to me!' (p.441); 'You wouldn't let a dog suffer what I have suffered. . . . '

She was 'fairly beaten into non-resistance'--one may ask whether by the power of his love, or his dementia.

Love which requires possession, enslavement, subjection of the beloved receives attention in Far from the Madding Crowd. It is a form of love quite blind to the qualities of the beloved, unaware of her as a personality, blind to everything but the vision, the dream, the projective of a subjective image. But this is not enduring love, says Hardy, and after Troy is dead and Boldwood shut away, Gabriel Oak is still there. It is quite right that Bathsheba should 'come courting' him, he says, for he has 'danced at [her] skittish heels . . . for many a long mile, and many a long day'. There is no suggestion here that the marriage is a makeshift affair like the one at the end of The Woodlanders. They are two people of endurance and responsibility, but there is warmth and gaiety in them as

well. Hardy speaks of their 'substantial affection', their '"camaraderie" —usually occurring through similarity of pursuits'. When this is added to 'love between the sexes', he says, 'the compounded feeling proves itself to be the only love which is as strong as death--that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown, beside which the passion usually called by the name is evanescent as steam' (p.469).

## CHAPTER 6. MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

Apart from Bathsheba's reflections upon marriage, there is no specific criticism of the institution till The Woodlanders. In his preface of 1895 Hardy says that 'in the present novel . . . the immortal puzzle--given the man and the woman, how to find a basis for their sexual relation--is left where it stood'. He continues by saying ironically that it is 'tacitly assumed' that only a 'depraved' person would prefer another to the marriage partner to whom he is contracted. Then he contradicts this by stating, in effect, that the marriage covenant as it stands is by no means the ideal vehicle for human happiness. Since the book was published in 1887 and the preface written in 1895, it is reasonable to consider Rutland's contention that it is rather a preface to Jude which Hardy was then writing, than to The Woodlanders.[44] There is not in fact a great deal of discussion in the earlier book of the social organization of marriage, though enough to indicate a concern in Hardy's mind. But, as Rutland says, 'The Woodlanders has more claims to consideration than as a "ballon d'essai" for the latter manifesto upon marriage', by which he means Jude.

In 1878 there had been some modification of the divorce law,[45] and during the 80s there was considerable controversy on questions of marriage and divorce. The comments in The Woodlanders reflect this. In January 1890 there was published in the New Review an article by Hardy entitled 'Candour in English Fiction'. In this appears the comment already quoted concerning

[44] William R. Rutland, Thomas Hardy; a study of his writings and their background. New York, 1938, p.216.

[45] See Weber, p.156. This was the 'new statute' of which Beaucock speaks in The Woodlanders, chapter 27: 'No more Acts of Parliament necessary for unmarrying'.

'Nature's unconsciousness, not of social laws, but of those laws framed merely as social expedients, without a basis in the heart of things'. Rutland speaks of this article as a 'prologue' to Tess and Jude, and as a 'commentary' on The Woodlanders, 'where the preoccupation with the social aspect of sexual relations begins'.[46] In 1890 also occurred the Parnell divorce case. It was much discussed, as Hardy's journal reports,[47] and is likely to have influenced his train of thought with the discussion of Jude in particular resulting.

The Woodlanders gives a number of clues to the way his views were developing by the late 80s. Fitzpiers offers the first with his statement that 'marriage is a civil contract'. Grace considers this an 'irreverent' view of marriage, and she later insists on a church wedding. Hardy, in saying in his preface that 'the immortal puzzle' of finding a satisfactory basis for man-woman relationship is 'left where it stood', means that in this book he does not arrange a divorce. In fact the section dealing with Melbury's enquiries into the workings of 'a new law' seems contrived merely to point out the sufferings of man or woman tied to an unsympathetic partner, while a lover suffers in alienation. It does give Hardy the opportunity for drawing some of the sweetest scenes in the book, of the love of Giles for Grace and of her at least temporary reciprocation. Giles is another of Hardy's clear-sighted heroes--one might say he sees all but does nothing. Indeed Grace says after his kiss, that if he had only 'shown half the boldness' before she married than he showed then, he 'would have carried her off . . . . first instead of second'. He does not carry her off

[46]Rutland, p.215.

[47]Florence Emily Hardy, p.230.

at all because Mr Melbury was misinformed about the divorce law; adultery and desertion did not constitute adequate grounds for a wife to gain her freedom, and Grace must remain married to Fitzpiers. There is no doubt where Hardy's sympathies lie as he describes the interlude between Giles and Grace, he knowing their hopes are vain, she convinced they must be near to realization since he behaves so lovingly towards her (chapter 39).

Grace has her brief moment of defiance and passionate grief over the death of Giles, but time and her own wavering personality incline her to Fitzpiers again. In her self-persuasion she turns to the marriage service. 'Whom God has joined together', she reads, and 'wondered whether God really did join them together'. They were solemn promises she had made; she certainly could not subscribe to Fitzpiers' belief that it was only a civil contract. How far, she wondered, was a person's conscience bound by vows made without 'a full recognition of their force' (p.444). Grace finds no answer and Hardy leaves the puzzle 'where it stood'. But he tackles it nineteen years later in Jude the Obscure.

It is a matter for discussion whether Jude the Obscure can most aptly be considered under the heading 'Marriage and Divorce'. From its publication till the present day there have been critics who considered it primarily an attack on marriage. Mrs Oliphant, writing to Blackwood's Magazine in January 1896, pronounces Hardy's motive to be 'an assault on the stronghold of marriage,'[48] and the editors of the volume in which her article was reprinted in 1968 agree with her to the extent of saying that 'Jude is an attack on marriage' (p.149). Yet we have Hardy's own denial in his letter to Gosse: 'It is curious that some of the papers look upon

[48] Lerner and Holmstrom, p.129.

the novel as a manifesto on "the marriage question" (although of course it involves it). . . . The only remarks which can be said to bear on the general marriage question occur in dialogue, and comprise no more than half a dozen pages in a book of five hundred'.[49]

Hardy's 'half a dozen pages' may appear something of an understatement until one sees the significance of the italicized 'general'. Hardy was probably referring to part v, section iv, in which Jude and Sue hesitate in registry office and church, watching the couples going in and out, commenting on them and their chances of happiness, and feeling their own to be very slender. On the other hand, those who are inclined to be sceptical of Hardy's statement, may point to comment after comment throughout the book which seem to indicate his attitude to marriage. Arabella and her husband, for instance, are said to walk together after an argument, 'in the antipathetic mood of the average husband and wife of Christendom' (p.357). But since Hardy found it curious that people thought his book 'a manifesto' on marriage we must accept that this was not what he intended.

The first reference to Jude in his wife's biography appears with a diary entry for April 28, 1888, when he records his plan for a short story of a young man's struggles to get to Oxford, his failure and suicide. Florence Hardy has inserted in the diary text the comment, 'Probably the germ of Jude the Obscure' (p.208). This is substantiated by Hardy's statement in the letter to Gosse that the novel is 'concerned first with the labours of a poor student to get a University degree'.

There is interest in the title which Hardy eventually chose for his

[49] ibid., p.122.

novel, the serial versions being first The Simpletons, and then Hearts Insurgent. What he meant by 'obscure' has not been explored by the critics; the only attention it seems to have received was from the critic of the Pall Mall Gazette who sarcastically reviewed the novel, which he called Jude the Obscene.[50] It seems that Hardy has in mind both Jude's humble origin and lowly station, and his unenlightened intellectual state. If this be so then Hardy's intention is stated in the title: to tell the story of a 'poor student' and his 'labours' after enlightenment in the form of a University degree. As so often with his titles Hardy might be accused of a little irony: it is obvious that he has respect as well as pity for Jude as a person and as an aspirant scholar, and does not regard him as lowly and uneducated. He gives the world's view in the title; his own comes through the text.

However Hardy set out to tell the story of a poor youth's intellectual struggles, and the first forty pages are concerned exclusively with his early years, and the growth and dedication of his ambition. In this section is seen much of the typical Hardy style, both in philosophy and technique. We are given a pathetic picture of the boy, orphaned, lonely, and unloved, a boy whose extreme tenderheartedness 'suggested that he was the sort of man who was born to ache a good deal before the fall of the curtain upon his unnecessary life should signify that all was well with him again' (p.13). There is an inconsistency in this which supports a proposition that I shall later put, the inconsistency being that Jude as a man showed himself far more active and optimistic than these words suggest. He can be cheerful,

[50] ibid., p.109.

making the best of things, gaining happiness in a variety of small ways, and adjusting his expectations of life to each reversal of fortune. Only once before the final tragedy does he lose hope and attempt suicide, and when this fails he decides to 'avoid morbid sorrow. . . . Bene agere et laetari', (Strive in good heart and be joyful) (p.86), and this he does his best to carry out.

Returning to discussion of the early pages one finds a certain parallelism of the boy's lonely circumstances in the bleakness of the uplands surrounding his village. The emphasis on loneliness is in the Hardy tradition. He saw and felt in his bones the loneliness of the boy, the loneliness of every human spirit. Thus Jude, despairing over his first grammar books at the magnitude of the task before him, lacks the comfort of a friendly word: 'Nobody did come, because nobody does. . . .' (p.32).

There is a symbolic significance in the glimpses of the city on the skyline; from his wilderness it seems like the promised land, 'the heavenly Jerusalem' (p.18). It is the intellectual light to which he aspires, until its brightness is obscured by events introduced by another symbol, the pig's penis, thrown by 'the substantial female animal' (p.42), which is Arabella.

Hardy says in the letter to Gosse that the novel is concerned 'secondly with the tragic issue of two bad marriages', and by the violent irruption of sex upon his intellectualism, Jude is set upon the sidepath which leads to one of them. It was no unexpected fever which caught Arabella in the toils of matrimony; she determined she must have him from the first. But for Jude sex and marriage were no part of his plans; he

enters into the adventure with transitory gusto and guilty backward glances at his neglected books. It was obviously part of Hardy's plan to show the difficulties placed in the young man's path by sexual demands, as well as by the conservatism of the colleges. The somewhat heavy symbolism of certain passages emphasizes the sensuality of this marriage: the killing of the pig in agony and spilling of blood on snow, and the sequel of Arabella rendering down lard, 'her hands reeking with melted fat' (p.80). Later we see Jude trying to gain oblivion in drink in a second-rate pub with a picture of Samson and Delilah on the wall, the parallel between another victim and another temptress being obvious. Thus the second part of book one concerns the first major difficulty in the attainment of Jude's goal.

A further characteristic feature of this first part is the comment about the destruction of historical 'relics' in the countryside, thatched houses and the old hipped church having been demolished. Hardyan irony appears too in occasional remarks like the one concerning the farmer, Troutham, who has treated Jude harshly, that he had contributed to the building of the new church 'to testify his love for God and man'.

After the first section the book changes direction. Particularly from the entry of Sue this novel becomes something different from any other of Hardy's writings. In the same letter already quoted, Hardy refers to Gosse's review of the book and says: 'It required an artist to see that the plot is almost geometrically constructed--I ought not to say <u>constructed</u>, for, beyond a certain point, the characters necessitated it, and I simply let it come'. Reference has earlier been made to Hardy's sense of independent life in his characters, and the instance given of his complaint about Grace Melbury that she was too 'commonplace and strait-laced' to do

anything 'impassioned'. Now we have the same sort of comment about the characters in Jude. Guerard speaks of some of Hardy's characters as 'rebels against the author's outlines'[51] but Hardy was obviously aware of their independent development.

The touch of inconsistencey in the development of Jude's character has been noted, and this too can be put down to the stubbornness of the creatures of Hardy's invention once they come to a life of their own. It is Sue Bridehead who incites Jude to rebellious life, both against his creator and against society, and with her advent the novel becomes something different from its plan.

A number of features can be singled out to account for this. The most obvious is the absence of natural description; it has been noted that the first book shows a little of Hardy's talent not only for description but for a comparison of man's condition with nature. None of this appears in the main bulk of the book. Its setting is almost completely urban with, it should be added, some fine descriptive passages of colleges and streets and ancient walls seen through the devoted eyes of Jude. With the absence of rural scene goes the paucity of rustic characters, Aunt Drusilla having a very small part to play and Mrs Edlin little more. Jude's drinking acquaintances might be considered as substitutes but their role is unimportant.

Another noticeable lack is of description of the physical appearance of major characters. When one remembers with what detail and variety in repetition Eustacia, for instance, or Tess, or Bathsheba were described, it

[51] Guerard, p.70.

is remarkable how little we are told of Sue's looks and mannerisms. 'Pretty', 'light', 'slight' are repeated a number of times, and 'vivacious', 'nervous', 'mobile' are used to colour our impression of the girl, but it is an impression only and no detailed portrait. Even Arabella, whose charms were obviously of a more substantial nature, has no lengthy descriptions. She is a 'fine dark-eyed girl' with 'prominent bosom, full lips, perfect teeth, and the rich complexion of a Cochin hen's egg'. We hear later of the switch of false hair and the artificial dimple but little more.

It is the same with the men, even Jude having only a brief sketch: 'meditative and earnest rather than handsome', with 'dark complexion', 'dark harmonizing eyes', and a 'closely trimmed black beard'.

The most important difference between this novel and all his others, however, is a radical change in style of presentation. It is far more objective. The omniscient author is almost entirely absent. The characters reveal themselves through action and speech; even 'the indefinable charm' of Sue, which Hardy has avoided describing, comes through to us by her words and behaviour. The arguments and philosophizing are done in the conversation or in the minds of the characters, and only very rarely does the author add his views. The views given are ostensibly Jude's, Sue's, Phillotson's, most of them in conversations but a good many in the meditations of Jude. Book IV, At Shaston, contains much that is meditation in Phillotson's mind. It may be noted that one is never admitted into Sue's mind; one must get to know her from the outside only. This objectivity is certainly new in Hardy's technique. A number of critics refer to this novel as 'cool' or 'cold';

Rutland calls it 'cold as ice' in comparison with the 'white heat' of _Tess_.[52] The change of style is responsible for this reaction, such apparent non-committal on the author's part being a new experience for readers.

A statement of Kettle's is worth considering here: 'The unconvincing moments in his novels are those when, to make a "point", Hardy allows his own inadequate _ideas_ to weaken his profound _understanding_'.[53] Although one may not agree that Hardy's ideas are always weak, one can admit that their statement is sometimes obtrusive and laboured; and one can wholeheartedly agree with Kettle's judgment of 'profound understanding', and this is more than usually evident in _Jude the Obscure_, possibly because the ideas are less obvious. Hardy in fact stresses his own distance from the narrative when he says: 'The purpose of a chronicler of moods and deeds does not require him to express his personal views upon the grave controversy above given' (p.348), the controversy being the discussion on marriage in the previous section.

Occasionally Hardy forgets this resolve and (to use Guerard's words), 'the invasion of the moral by the didactic usually betrays itself at once'. Guerard complains that many of Hardy's ideas are 'far too cosmic to be of any human interest'; however of _Jude_ he says that 'the original cosmic idea subsists as one of several dark undercurrents, but as a didactic formula is generally absorbed by a wide variety of human situations'.[54] One rare

[52] Rutland, p.239.

[53] Arnold Kettle, _An Introduction to the English Novel_. London, 1961, II, p.60.

[54] Guerard, pp.63-4.

example from Jude where it is not absorbed but is altogether too obtrusive, is seen in the passage of meditation after Sue's miscarriage. The last clause of a long sentence reads thus: ' . . . at the framing of the terrestrial conditions there seemed never to have been contemplated such a development of emotional perceptiveness among the creatures subject to those conditions as that reached by thinking and educated humanity' (p.413). It is not only the invading didactic that jars, but the verbosity of its style.

This is a flaw also in Hardy's conversational style in many of his novels. Educated characters speak often in artificial and pedantic measures. But not in Jude the Obscure; conversations, especially between Jude and Sue flow easily and naturally, and are the most moving part of the book. Hardy is absent; there is no one between the reader and Jude and Sue, loving, arguing, and suffering.

We have found then that Hardy's characters took over his plans, his ideas, and transmuted them, which of course is a metaphorical way of saying that Hardy's instinctive understanding made his characters come to such vibrant life that he dismissed plans and submerged ideas in the actions of his characters. What has the novel become as a result of this?

It is not a 'manifesto' on marriage. It is not just a story of a young man's intellectual strivings and the 'tragic issue of two bad marriages', because Hardy found he was creating people of such strength and validity that he had to write a story in logical development from their characters. It is nearer being an attempt to solve 'the immortal puzzle--given the man and the woman, how to find a basis for their sexual relation' of which Hardy spoke in the preface to The Woodlanders, and in which novel

he said he left it 'where it stood'. Sue might be said to be seeking the answer to Grace's question of 'how far a person's conscience was bound by vows made without at the time a full recognition of their force' (p.444).

But it is so much more than this--a search for a satisfactory sexual relationship, or an examination of the binding power of marriage vows. It is larger than these aims would suggest, embracing as it does the situation of Everyman and Everywoman in their attempt to fulfil all the requirements of male and female personality in a close relationship. To some extent Jude and Sue epitomize man and woman loving, but finding facets of their personality at odds with facets of the other's, trying to find a basis of joint life in which each may develop in his own way, yet in partnership. But it is also smaller, more particular, more individual.

A. M., the Bookman critic, wrote in January 1896 that 'the book is not made up of theories' and that 'Jude is the real subject'.[55] With the first part of the statement one would agree; it is in line with statements already made about characters taking over, and the didactic being absorbed in the human situation. With the second part agreement can be only partial. Jude is a character whom one can admire as well love, for whom one's heart aches in his intellectual and physical struggles. His integrity, his staunchness never fail, his constancy is a rock in the stormy seas of his and Sue's love. One's sympathy is most often with him perhaps, and his end is almost unbearable. He dies alone remembering his blighted hopes, 'and Sue defiled', and murmuring terrible verses from Job. Yet Job was beloved of God, and Hardy holds out no such hope for Jude. As Swinburne wrote to

[55]Lerner and Holmstrom, p.131.

Hardy: ' . . . how cruel you are . . . to [your] children'.[56] It is not, however, Jude who makes the book what it is, so difficult as that is to analyse. It is Sue Bridehead.

'Sue is a type of woman which has always had an attraction for me but the difficulty of drawing the type has kept me from attempting it till now', Hardy wrote. He continues that the book seems 'a miserable accomplishment' compared with what he intended--'e.g., Sue and her heathen gods set against Jude's reading the Greek testament; Christminster academical, Christminster in the slums; Jude the saint, Jude the sinner; Sue the pagan, Sue the saint; marriage, no marriage; etc, etc.'[57] Hardy meant to show this woman in different aspects, as a two-sided figure, just as he meant to show his town, his argument, and his male character. He did indeed do this, though not apparently to his satisfaction; but with Sue he showed so many facets, created so diverse a woman that it is not surprising that no two critics or readers have agreed in their estimate. It is the character of Sue which is mainly responsible for making Jude the Obscure the masterpiece it is.

It is entertaining to reflect how Hardy's Tess was so frequently criticized as not being the 'pure' woman he styled her, yet Sue, 'ethereal' and 'fay', as she was, was even less acceptable. Contemporary critics called her 'revoltingly refined', 'unnatural', 'abnormal'. Even Gosse called her 'a poor, maimed, "degenerate", ignorant of herself and of the perversion of her instincts'. Mrs Oliphant says Sue 'makes virtue vicious by keeping the physical facts of one relationship in life in constant

[56]Florence Emily Hardy, p.271.

[57]ibid., p.272.

prominence by denying . . . them'. Even as recently as 1938 Rutland calls her 'a psychological abnormality'.[58]

It is worth considering what Hedgcock says in general of the women in Hardy's novels: 'The picture of the English woman painted by Mr Hardy differs sensibly from that which other novelists of the country have given of them. The Englishman, thanks to his sentimental and romantic temperament easily attributes to woman an idealized character; he loves to consider her as a creature of the most pure essence, more delicate and more ethereal than himself. The novelists of the nineteenth century have imagined feminine characters who, thanks to refinement of sentiment and chastity of emotions, lack humanity and vital force. . . .'[59] Many of Hardy's contemporary critics were placed in the confusing situation of having to deal with 'new' women like Bathsheba, Eustacia, Tess, individuals all of them and none conforming to the etherealized, delicate model of whom Hedgcock spoke. Then appeared Sue, different from all of them, no child of nature, etherealized indeed, and delicate, but a woman of so subtle a character as to evade their conventional understanding. Her greatest crime, as Mrs Oliphant said, was to bring into prominence the physical facts of marriage.

But contrary to that critic's statement, she did not deny them. What she denied was the right of a marriage partner to claim physical love as a part of the contract whether or not the other was willing. Love, Sue claimed, was a spontaneous giving, a 'voluntariness' (p.255). Havelock Ellis, in his article in the Savoy, October 1896, speaks of 'the refinement

[58]Rutland, p.256.

[59]Hedgcock, p.311.

of sexual sensibility with which this book largely deals' as being beyond the understanding of many contemporary critics, who clearly 'consider human sexual relationships to be as simple as those of the farmyard'. They were as shocked by Sue as a farmer would be by an independent hen.[60] Mrs Oliphant and her sympathisers would no doubt condone the situation of which Sue speaks shortly after marriage: ' . . . it is said that what a woman shrinks from--in the early days of her marriage--she shakes down to with comfortable indifference in half-a-dozen years' (p.255).

The introduction of Sue into the story is full of the contradictions which we later find are part of her character. Jude admires the photo of her 'pretty girlish face' under the hat with 'radiating folds under the brim like the rays of a halo' (p.90). Here is 'Sue the saint', and the impression is deepened when Jude finds her doing ecclesiastical design: 'A sweet, saintly, Christian business', he says (p.103). But it is not long before he admits that his own interest in her is more Cyprian than Galilean (p.107), and we also find out that her interests are more pagan than Christian when she buys the statuettes of Venus and Apollo. Here is 'Sue the pagan' as Hardy says. She shows herself, in the first meeting, neither strongly one nor the other, but gay and frank and altogether charming; Jude finds that 'an exciting thought would make her walk ahead so fast that he could hardly keep up with her'. Her sensitivity, her vibrancy, her quick intelligence enchanted him, as it did also Phillotson, whose pupil teacher she became.

Information from Aunt Drusilla and her neighbours gives us some clues

[60] Lerner and Holmstrom, p.143.

to understanding the woman--a 'pert', unconventional little girl who liked to play with the boys and recite dramatic poetry. She is the same still: a woman who makes up her own mind and does not accept society's standards, moral or intellectual; a woman who wants to live life dramatically, to the full; a woman who enjoys the company of men because with them she feels intellectual kinship, and as well gains their admiration. This need in her personality was responsible for her living with a student who was deeply in love with her without her returning his love or acceding to his request for sexual relations. She entered into something the same arrangement with Jude and he began to think the same 'torturing destiny' (p.189) might be in store for him. Are those critics right then who, like Abercrombie, say she has 'horror of physical sex';[61] and is Gosse justified in speaking of 'the perversion of her instincts' and in saying she plays 'at loving though she cannot love'?[62]

D. H. Lawrence has done an inspired study of Sue and Jude, and comes to much the same conclusion though in no adversely critical spirit.[63] He considered that the 'vital female' was atrophied in her; that she was of 'the witch type which has no sex'; that she did not wish to mate because she had nothing of herself to give; 'she needed all the life that belonged to her, for her mind'. He ends his study by asking: 'Why must it be assumed that Sue is an "ordinary" woman--as if such a thing existed? Why must she feel ashamed if she is specialised? And why must Jude . . . force

[61] Abercrombie, p.162

[62] Lerner and Holmstrom, p.120.

[63] Lawrence, pp.206-222.

her to act as if she were his "ordinary" abstraction, a woman?

'She was not a woman. She was Sue Bridehead, something very particular'.

There is so much in Lawrence's estimate that accords with the facts of the story and with statements of the characters, that one might accept it as true if it were not that the whole thing is too sombre. He says: 'They never knew happiness. . . . There is always this pathos, this poignancy, this trembling on the verge of pain and tears, in their happiness'. Leaving aside the debatable point that happiness for people of sensitivity is usually such a 'trembling on the verge of pain and tears', the statement disregards much evidence.

The first thing to realize about Sue is her insecurity. Her family background militated against her growing up a well-balanced, conventional girl, her parents' marriage having failed and her mother having killed herself. After the tragic episode with the young man who loved her and died of consumption, her father would not have anything to do with her. She is haunted with a sense of guilt wondering whether she was responsible for her lover's death. She even says to Jude that perhaps 'better women' would not have denied his love (p.178). Such feelings of doubt about herself appear in her abnormal sensitivity: she has 'a nervous little face', 'everything she did seemed to have its source in feeling'; she was 'easily repressed' in argument; 'her voice revealed a tremor . . . absurdly uncalled for by sarcasm so gentle'; 'her ever-sensitive lip began to quiver' in fear of Jude's reproach. All the time she is critical of herself and fearful of other's reactions; she is 'a harp which the least wind of emotion from another's heart could make to vibrate' (p.335).

Almost immediately she and Jude establish a relationship of sympathy. An affinity of blood and the bond of a tragic heredity are partly responsible. Phillotson soon sees the 'extraordinary sympathy or similarity between the pair'. They seem to him to be 'one person split in two' (p.276). And after eavesdropping on a conversation between them he sees little of the physical about their mutual attraction; 'their supreme desire was to be together--to share each other's emotions and fancies, and dreams'. This was not the whole of the truth for Jude, for even before he meets her he realizes his interest in her was 'unmistakably of the sexual kind'. The fact that it was the truth for Sue, at first, is the cause of much suffering for Jude. He sees her as 'so ethereal a creature' that he is 'ashamed of his earthiness' and he wonders whether it is possible for Sue to be 'wife to any average man'.

In her insecurity Sue reached out for the strength and companionship which Jude offered, and indeed she was prepared to accept his admiration and love because they protected her from the cold world where she feels 'an Ishmaelite' (p.159). But the fact that she feels so hurt by Jude's belated confession of his married state, suggest that there was more feminine warmth in her regard for him. So strong is her reaction that Jude feels that the 'old relations of confidence seemed suddenly to have ended, and the antagonisms of sex were left without any counterpoising predilections' (p.199).

So she marries Phillotson, mainly because she feels her lone and friendless state too sharply after the dismissal from Training School and the news of Jude's marriage. But marriage with Phillotson was no solution; she has never had great regard for the institution and now she finds the

physical relationship with a man she does not love quite unbearable: 'What tortures me so much is the necessity of being responsive to this man whenever he wishes' (p.255).

Even when she joins Jude she refuses a sexual relationship, saying, 'Put it down to my timidity'. Her answer to Jude's distressed accusation that she does not love him is evasive. One is reminded of the defence of another of Hardy's heroines: how can she 'define her feelingsin language which is chiefly made by men for the expression of theirs'.[64] Sue's emotions and reactions are of so complex a kind it is almost impossible for her to explain them even to so sympathetic a man as Jude. How then can she answer a question about love? What is love? Arabella says Sue does not know what love is, but her friend returns, 'Perhaps . . . you don't know what she calls love' (p.348). Does anyone? Perhaps Jude does later. But at this time of bitter disappointment he can only accept her decision. 'So that I am near you, I am comparatively happy. It is more than this earthy wretch called Me deserves--you spirit, you disembodied creature, you dear, sweet, tantalizing phantom. . . . ' (p.294). In her attempt at explanation Sue says: 'It is a delight in being with you, of a supremely delicate kind, and I don't want to go further and risk it by--an attempt to intensify it!' (p.289). Read in the knowledge of her aversion to sex with Phillotson, this makes sense, for her, though perhaps not for Jude. She was afraid that her aversion might carry over to the act even with Jude whom she loved, though she did not say so, because love to Jude meant sex--by no means exclusively, for his relations with Arabella he never called

[64]Thomas Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd (1874). London, 1940, p.415.

love--but sex was part of the tenderness, the one-ness, the comradeship. It became a part for Sue too, but not until her fear of losing Jude to Arabella pushed her into submission. Those horrible words 'if I must I must'(p.321) point her attitude. Society considered it obligatory for a woman to 'submit' to the wishes of a man, and submission was a quality which Sue despised in all human relations. Her independent mind demanded the right to make its own decisions, to control her own destiny. Physical submission implied surrender of a woman's independence in other areas also. There are numerous hints to substantiate this statement, Bathsheba's words for one: 'a certain degradation . . . in becoming the humbler half of an indifferent matrimonial whole'. Sue resents the 'giving away' of a woman in the marriage service. Any giving should be done by the woman when and if she wishes.

There is no suggestion the next morning that she regrets that her jealousy pushed her into surrender; in fact quite the contrary. She is ashamed of her behaviour to Arabella and visits her. More than this she goes with Jude to the parish-clerk but draws back for fear the 'legal obligation' of marriage may stop them being 'so happy as [they] are now' (p.327).

Here is a definite statement that they are happy together, and there are many more. There are scenes full of happiness and there are brief comments that make the perfect sympathy of their love very clear: 'they had become such companions that they could hardly do anything of importance except in each other's company' (p.338). Earlier it has been said that 'there was ever a second silent conversation passing between them and their emotions' even when they were talking on a mundane subject. The Great

Wessex Agricultural Show is a highlight in their happiness. Their 'tender attention to each other', their complete mutual understanding so that they seemed 'almost the two parts of a whole' (p.352) are obvious to Arabella who cannot keep her fascinated and envious eyes from them. And speaking to Arabella three years later at the Kennetbridge fair Sue says they 'were never so happy in [their] lives till his illness came' (p.377).

But their love and happiness is never so obvious as when the tragic deaths of the children end it all. 'O my comrade, our perfect union--our two-in-oneness--is now stained with blood!' she cries. In her unbalanced state she sees the tragedy as a punishment. 'We went about loving each other too much--indulging ourselves to utter selfishness with each other! We said--do you remember?--that we would make a virtue of joy. I said it was Nature's intention, Nature's law and raison d'être that we should be joyful in what instincts she afforded us--instincts which civilization had taken upon itself to thwart' (pp.408-9). One cannot accept Lawrence's version of the 'Vestal' and the 'moonlit cold' woman when one reads this. This is 'Sue the pagan' but she had not the strength to remain a pagan after the blow of her children's death. 'I am beaten,' she says, the first of Hardy's women to admit this. Others have railed at Fate, but Sue submitted, utterly crushed. Perhaps because she had less of earth in her make-up, in her imbalance she saw it as her fault; she must bring her body into 'complete subjection'. She becomes, not 'Sue the saint', but Sue the self-crucifier, the masochist.

Richard le Gallienne wrote in one of the more thoughtful contemporary reviews: 'It is true that the tragedy of Jude and Sue was partly brought about by the marriage laws, but their own weakness of character was

mainly responsible for it'.[65] One may disagree with the rather moralistic word 'weakness', but certainly it was elements in their characters which were responsible. A more recent critic says much the same: Jacques Barzun states that 'no reform of the divorce laws would of itself have increased their chances of happiness'.[66]

Jude the Obscure, rather than being a study of marriage and divorce, is a study of personal relationships: of a woman with an intellect like a star, a fearless thinker as well as a 'feeler' (p.417), and of the man who loved her 'better than [his] own self' (p.422).

[65] Lerner and Holmstrom, p.137.

[66] Jacques Barzun, 'Truth and Poetry in Thomas Hardy', Southern Review, VI, No.1 (Summer 1940), p.188.

CONCLUSION.

Hardy's women are not conventional Victorian women, neither are they stridently 'the new woman'. They are women of timeless veracity, women who are individual, women with feet in the earth yet with aspiration and spirit. His women are also mankind. They, like men, want to grow to full stature, develop every aspect of personality. There is nothing new in this. The only thing new about it was that Hardy showed it in an age where most of the potentialities of women were denied. The role of woman as breeder and helpmeet, or plaything, was emphasised so disproportionately that it required a seeing and courageous man to write of the possibility of other roles.

Several critics have mentioned Hardy's interest in Ibsen; Florence Hardy in her biography notes that, together with Meredith and George Moore, Hardy was one of the first supporters of the Independent Theatre Association which formed in 1891 to put on his plays in London. It is illuminating to examine the character of Nora in The Doll's House (1879) in comparison with some of Hardy's heroines. She appears at first to be the perfect 'little woman'; her loving husband calls her 'little squirrel' and 'singing bird', and her role is to play and sing and sweeten the hours which he can spare as relaxation from the real business of life. It is soon apparent however, that she gains great satisfaction from having helped him financially in an emergency, and is still paying off the moneylender by work done in secrecy. Already we see the antithesis of two points in the picture of women which Hardy paints: his women are never slight playthings, and they all work for their living or use their brains in their leisure. It seems almost as if Nora aspires to the individuality and

independence which Hardy's women achieve. When her husband reviles her for her forgery, fearing it will redound to his dishonour, she realizes there has never been a mature marriage between them; she has been a doll in a doll's house. Now she must leave him until they have both sufficiently developed so that 'communion between them shall be a marriage'. Compare this with what Hardy said in 1874 at the end of Far from the Madding Crowd about 'substantial affection--"camaraderie"' being added to 'love between the sexes', and we shall see how the minds of the writers were in accord--or rather, the minds of the women they depicted. For Ibsen, like Hardy, saw women as they were under the facade demanded by the middle-class conventions of the era.

Hardy continued to a greater or less extent to 'nail his colours to the mast' all his life. The strongest of his 'colours' was that of Truth, or perhaps it was the only one. He attempted to show truth as translated by the mind of the artist, the 'inner reality' of men and women, of relations with nature, society, God and man.

He expresses something of this in his 'Candour in English Fiction' article. He complains that 'the great bulk of English fiction of the present day is characterized by its lack of sincerity'. 'Conscientious fiction alone it is', he says, 'which can excite a reflective and abiding interest in the minds of thoughtful readers of mature years . . . who consider that, in the representations of the world, the passions ought to be proportioned as in the world itself'. Greek and Elizabethan drama, he continues, 'reflected life, revealed life, criticized life'. Then he goes on to complain of the demand of 'the circulating library' and the magazine for such reading that 'does not foster the growth of the novel which

reflects and reveals life'. He speaks of 'the censorship of prudery' which results in dénouements which the writer knows to be 'unreal and meretricious'. He refers to Pascal's statement of "la dignité de la pensée," and concludes: ' . . . the position of man and woman in nature, and the position of belief in the mind of man and woman--things which everybody is thinking but nobody is saying--might be taken up and treated frankly'.[67]

He wrote this in 1890; in 1891 Tess appeared in book form, in 1896, Jude. In these novels he carried out his own advice in the article, as he had already done for over twenty years.

One of D. H. Lawrence's letters refers to 'the gloom of the dark moral judgment and condemnation and reservation of the [English] people', and states that he, like Hardy writes because he wants 'folk--English folk--to alter, and have more sense'.[68] Indeed Hardy called himself a 'meliorist', one who hoped for improvement in conditions of life for all men and women. He wants 'moral growth' and 'ennoblement of man'. References to his longing for peace, tolerance, understanding, fullness of living abound in his letters and journals. He values 'individual spontaneity' rather than 'a curbed and uniform' system to which all must conform.[69]

All these attitudes one can read in his novels. He shows society as it is, with the inference of how much better it could be; he shows men and women as they are and as they fit, or do not fit, into the world around them. By inference he shows how much fuller and richer life might be. He

[67]Orel, pp.126-133.

[68]Letters of D. H. Lawrence. London, 1937, p.120.

[69]Florence Emily Hardy, pp.306,368,258.

chooses women as his subjects because they, more than men of the era in which he wrote, were frustrated in this fulfilment.

Was Hardy's conception that of realist or romantic? I have said 'he shows society as it is', and 'he attempted to show the truth'; and this sounds like the realist. But the additional phrases 'with the inference of how much better it could be', and 'truth . . . translated by the mind of the artist' have a bias toward idealism, 'meliorism' and romanticism. The answer is that he was both realist and romantic--'at once poet and realist', says Virginia Woolf.[70] He looked at the world with the eye of the poet and gave his 'deeper reality'. In the novels he gave it so bluntly, so realistically that many people could not face its truth. So he turned to poetry, his first love, where 'man's artistic interpretation of life' was more readily acceptable.[71]

[70] Virginia Woolf, 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', The Common Reader, 2nd series. London, 1959, p.247.

[71] Hardy, pp.185,383,285.

# BIBLIOGRAPHY


The Novels of Thomas Hardy. (The final date refers to the edition used in this study).

Desperate Remedies (1871). London, 1951.
Under the Greenwood Tree (1872). London, n.d.
A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873). London, 1926.
Far from the Madding Crowd (1874). London, 1940.
The Hand of Ethelberta (1876). London, 1951.
The Return of the Native (1878). London, 1948.
The Trumpet Major (1880). London, 1957.
The Laodicean (1881). London, 1951.
Two on a Tower (1882). London, 1960.
The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886). London, 1953.
The Woodlanders (1887). London, 1935.
Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891). London, 1967.
Jude the Obscure (1895). London, 1949.
The Well Beloved (1896). London, 1952.

Collected Poems. London, 1928.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIES.

Purdy, Richard Little. Thomas Hardy, a Bibliographical Study. London, 1959.

Stevenson, Lionel ed. Victorian Fiction, a Guide to Research. Massachusetts, 1964.

## PRIMARY REFERENCES.

The Period.

Huxley, T. H. 'Evolution and Ethics', Selections from the Essays. New York, 1948.

Ibsen, Henrik. Prose Dramas, I. London, n.d.

Leach, Edmund. A Runaway World? Reith Lectures 1967. London, 1969.

Mill, J. S. Three Essays on Religion. London, 1874.

Trevelyan, G. M. Illustrated English Social History, IV: The Nineteenth Century. London, 1957.

Biographies.

Collins, Vere H. Talks with Thomas Hardy at Max Gate 1920-22. London, 1928.

Hardy, Evelyn. Thomas Hardy, a Critical Biography. London, 1954.

Hardy, Florence Emily. The Life of Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928. Compiled largely from contemporary notes, letters, diaries, and biographical memoranda, as well as from oral information in conversations extending over many years. London, 1962.

Weber, Carl J. Hardy of Wessex; his Life and Literary Career. London, 1965.

Criticism.

A. Articles:

Barzun, Jacques. 'Truth and Poetry in Thomas Hardy', Southern Review, VI, No. 1 (Summer 1940), pp.179-92.

Lawrence, D. H. 'Study of Thomas Hardy', Selected Literary Criticism. London, 1955, pp.166-228.

Woolf, Virginia. 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy', The Common Reader, 2nd series. London, 1959, pp.245-57.

B. Printed Books:

Abercrombie, Lascelles. Thomas Hardy; a Critical Study. New York, 1964. First published 1912.

Chase, Mary Ellen. Thomas Hardy from Serial to Novel. New York, 1964.

Chew, Samuel. Thomas Hardy, Poet and Novelist. New York, 1964. First published 1921.

Exideuil, Pierre d'. The Human Pair in the Work of Thomas Hardy; an Essay on the Sexual Problem as Treated in the Wessex Novels, Tales and Poems. London, 1930. First published in French in 1928.

Grimsditch, Herbert B. Character and Environment in the Novels of Thomas Hardy. New York, 1962. First published 1925.

Guerard, Albert J. Thomas Hardy. Connecticut, 1964.

Hardy, Thomas. An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress. Hardy's 'Lost Novel', ed. Carl J. Weber. New York, 1965.

Hedgcock, F. A. Thomas Hardy, Penseur et Artiste, Etudie dans les Romans du Wessex. Paris, 1911.

Howe, Irving. Thomas Hardy. London, 1968.

Johnson, Lionel. The Art of Thomas Hardy. London, 1923. First published 1894.

Kettle , Arnold. An Introduction to the English Novel. London, 1962.

Lerner, Lawrence and Holmstrom, John eds. Thomas Hardy and his Readers; a Selection of Contemporary Reviews. London, 1968.

Macdonell, Annie. Thomas Hardy. New York, 1895.

Orel, Harold, ed. Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings: Prefaces, Literary Opinions, Reminiscences. London, 1967.

Rutland, William R. Thomas Hardy; a Study of his Writings and their Background. Oxford, 1938.

SECONDARY REFERENCES.

The Period.

Arnold, Matthew. Literature and Dogma. London, 1883.

Beauvoir, Simone de. The Second Sex. London, 1954.

Brennecke, Ernest. Thomas Hardy's Universe; a Study of a Poet's Mind. London, 1924.

Brittain, Vera. Lady into Woman; a History of Women from Victoria to Elizabeth 11. London,1953.

Bush, Douglas. 'Evolution and the Victorian Poets', Science and English Poetry. New York, 1950.

Chesterton, G. K. The Victorian Age in Literature. London, 1966.

Daiches, David. Some Late Victorian Attitudes. London, 1969.

Essays and Reviews. London, 1862.

Raleigh, John Henry.'Victorian Morals and the Modern Novel', Partisan Review, XXV, No 2 (Spring 1958), pp.221-264.

Sherman, George Witter. 'The Wheel and the Beast: the Influence of London on Thomas Hardy', Nineteenth Century Fiction,1V, No 3(Dec.1949),pp.209-19.

Stevenson, Lionel. Darwin among the Poets. New York, 1963.

Biographies.

Hardy, Emma. Some Recollections, together with some relevant Poems by Thomas Hardy. London, 1961.

Paterson, John. 'The Latest Gossip; Thomas Hardy and the Toucan Press Monographs', Victorian Studies, IX, No. 1 (Sept. 1965), pp.45-49.

Weber, Carl J. ed. 'Dearest Emmie'; Thomas Hardy's Letters to his First Wife. London, 1963.

Criticism.

A. Articles:

Bartlett, Phyllis. '"Seraph of Heaven", a Shellyan Dream in Hardy's Fiction', P.M.L.A., LXX (Sept. 1955), pp.524-35.

Blackmur, R. P. 'The Shorter Poems of Thomas Hardy', Modern Poetry; Essays in Criticism, ed. John Hollander. London, 1968, pp.150-75.

Carpenter, Richard C. 'The Mirror and the Sword: Imagery in Far from the Madding Crowd', Nineteenth Century Fiction, XVIII, No. 4 (Mar. 1964), pp.331-45.

Chapman, Frank. 'Hardy the Novelist', Scrutiny, III, No. 1 (June, 1934), pp.22-37.

Davidson, Donald. 'The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction', Southern Review, VI, No. 1 (Summer 1940), pp.162-78.

Davis, W. Eugene. 'Tess of the d'Urbervilles; some Ambiguities about a Pure Woman', Nineteenth Century Fiction, XXII, No. 4 (Mar. 1968), pp.397-401.

Deen, Leonard W. 'Heroism and Pathos in Hardy's Return of the Native', Nineteenth Century Fiction, XV, No. 3 (Dec. 1960), pp.207-19.

Gosse, Elliott B. jr. 'Psychic Evolution: Darwinianism and Initiation in Tess of the d'Urbervilles', Nineteenth Century Fiction, XVIII, No. 3 (Dec. 1963), PP.261-272.

Heilman, Robert B. 'Hardy's Mayor: Notes on Style', Nineteenth Century Fiction, XVIII, No. 4 (Mar. 1964), pp.307-29.

Lawrence. D. H. 'Morality and the Novel', Selected Literary Criticism. London, 1955, pp.108-13.

Muller, Herbert J. 'The Novels of Hardy Today', Southern Review, VI, No. 1 (Summer 1940), pp.214-24.

Zabel, Morton Dauwen. 'Hardy in Defense of his Art: the Aesthetic of Incongruity', Southern Review, VI, No. 1 (Summer 1940), pp.125-49.

B. Printed Books:

Beach, Joseph Warren. The Technique of Thomas Hardy. New York, 1962.

Blunden, Edmund. Thomas Hardy. London, 1958.

Cecil, David. Hardy the Novelist; an Essay in Criticism. London, 1943.

Duffin, H. C. Thomas Hardy; a Study of the Wessex Novels, the Poems and the Dynasts (1916). London, 1967.

Guerard, Albert J. Hardy. A Collection of Critical Essays. New Jersey, 1963.

Holloway, John. The Charted Mirror; Literary and Critical Essays. London, 1960.

Morrell, Roy. Thomas Hardy: the Will and the Way. Kuala Lumpur, 1965.

Richards, I. A. Science and Poetry. London, 1926.

Webster, Harvey Curtis. On a Darkling Plain. London, 1947.

Wilson, Rev. S. Law. The Theology of Modern Literature. Edinburgh, 1899.

Wing, George. Hardy. Edinburgh, 1963.