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THE WOMEN CHARACTERS OF HARDY AND LAWRENCE

By

Shake Ashjian

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By

Shake Ashjian

Approved:

Karl C. Kopp

Prof. Karl Kopp , Advisor

John M. Munro

Prof. John Munro , Member of Committee

Marcus Smith

Prof. Marcus Smith , Member of Committee

Suheil Badi Bushrui.

Prof. Suheil Bushrui, Member of Committee

Date of Thesis Presentation: December, 1968

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I, Shake Ashjian:

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Shaké Ashjian
Shake Ashjian

December, 1968

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Victorian Age opened with great possibilities of social improvement. Scientific discoveries planted the seeds of this optimism and the rise of the industrial middle-class filled intellectuals with the hope of achieving a utopia for mankind. But with scientific advances complications arose, as a conflict emerged between science and religion, and the Industrial Revolution led to monopolisers, the growth of city slums and the draining of the countryside. Rapid social changes did come but they were not what idealists had expected. Against a mood of growing uncertainty and dissatisfaction the humanists of the period made every effort to preserve the moral tie among the middle-class. In "Culture and Anarchy" Matthew Arnold wrote:

> "But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help beneficence, the desire for removing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it, --

> motivates eminently such as are called social, -- come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a study of perfection. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for its doing good."[1]

Arnold attempted to humanise the middle-class and make them aware of the possibility of "internal perfection" in the face of growing dehumanising "relaxation or insensibility of the moral fabric."

The novelists of the period, especially Dickens, Thackeray, and later George Eliot, carried on the movement of strengthening moral values among the people and put special emphasis on inner basic "goodness". Morality still could protect people from the dangers of anarchy, they believed, and moral possibilities still promised a utopia for them. Their novels presented young heroes and heroines, face to face with manipulative social odds, whose only weapon was their virtue and high morals. And they came out victorious because their creators believed that justice should prevail at last. Any deviation from the virtuous path invariably led to degradation and disaster.

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[1] Mathew Arnold, "Culture & Anarchy," The Portable Matthew Arnold (New York, 1949), p. 473.

A great number of nineteenth century novels are fanciful and romantic pictures of life, hardly connected with reality. The ones that tend to be realistic are so colourfully painted, so exaggerated and fiery that they also open a gap between themselves and life. They look like conventional comic stage plays or heroic romances with their artificial circumstances, stock or flat characters and sentimental episodes. Examples may be drawn from Scott, the Brontes, and from Dickens and Thackeray. These novelists left out a great deal in their novels. They avoided what may be called any detailed treatment of the animal side of human nature. Their subjects were narrow although their novels were crammed with hundreds of characters. They omitted broader and perhaps more important issues that occupy mankind: man's relation to thought, to art and to sex. There is no inner struggle in most of their novels.

In Thackeray's _Vanity Fair_, for instance, his characters move about in a corrupt, artificial, pseudo-aristocratic, pseudo-respectable and sometimes vulgar world, deal with equally selfish, and false people, and finally are rewarded and punished each according to his merits. The struggle that his heroes and heroines undergo is one with outside forces only. It is between selfishness and vanity on the one side, and honesty and kindness on the other. Moreover, Thackeray indulges in the repetition of many conventional events and tricks which Becky plays over and over again. He also comments, every now and then, upon these events, as if the reader cannot understand what he means, and thus lengthens the bulk of the novel, driving the reader towards tedium.

Thackeray, as almost all Victorian novelists, sought to maintain the reputation of his female characters. Despite the fact that he has chosen a woman like Becky as one of the heroines of the book, he is over-scrupulous not to say much about that Bohemian who lived well for several years on "nothing a year." Enslaved to the moral point of view of the Victorian public, Thackeray presented a calculating, clever woman whose sole interest was to appear at balls and obtain banknotes which she secreted here and there, and carefully excluded the animal that was lurking beneath the smiling face.

Contrasted to the "bad" Becky is the "good" Amelia, the kind, simple, modest and unselfish woman who was, nevertheless, weak and sometimes silly and stupid. Thackeray had to be true to the Victorian point of view. While at one point he showed her vanity and foolishness, he did not fail the next minute to present her as a pure and faultless creature worthy of our love and admiration. Becky's share was otherwise. She had to be disliked and though at some points Thackeray did show us her good-naturedness, he, nevertheless, presented incredible and false incidents to raise our disgust. A fair example may be the scene in which Becky boxed the ears of poor young Rawden, her son, because he was admiring her singing.

Furthermore, none of the characters--male or female--have anything to do with thought or intelligence. They move driven by their emotions, sentiments, and intuitions. They do not analyse situations they find themselves in, they do not analyse themselves either. At the end of the book it is Thackeray himself who decides their fate. They, therefore, "possess no psychological inwardness,"[2] something which the modern novelists have often tried to develop in their characters.

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[2] Seymour Betshy, "Society in Thackeray and Trollope," The Pelican Guide to English Lit., VI, (London, 1964), p. 156.

Dickens' women characters are no better; in fact, they are more conventional and stereotyped. In David Copperfield, for example, where the reader is introduced to several female characters, nothing appealing or interesting is said about them. Agnes, the conventional "good" and virtuous girl endures all kinds of injustices, misunderstandings, and slightings without the least attempt to protest, and as all women of her type, she is rewarded at the end. She has nothing to say for herself. She is, actually, passive and does not seem to be human at all. She is neither lifelike, nor even alive. No less credible a character is Dora, the second "heroine" of the book. She is over idealised and too silly to impress us.

Not only Agnes and Dora but a host of other Dickens heroines fall in the same category of sentimental presentation of the plight of the middle-class because of social injustices. Florence Dombey, Mary Graham, Madeline Bray, Esther Summerson--those lucky orphans--are subject to all sorts of intrigue and plots, but have honest and generous uncles, friends or cousins who support them and finally give them to their beloveds. They never attempt to solve their problems by themselves; they never think, never fight, neither with themselves, nor even with those harrassing outside forces. They are in the background with a handkerchief in their hands, weeping. But they should not. After eight hundred or more pages of irrelevant episodes and disconnected incidents, all turns out to be well and the evil are punished. The black and white characters disappear and the curtain falls.

Only in Great Expectations does Dickens change his attitude towards his "heroine". Estella has become a beautiful monster instead of the usual virtuous heroine. But even here she is not on her own. She is an instrument in the hands of Miss Havisham, herself a highly improbable creation, who motivates her according to her wishes. Yet Estella possesses the power to think, and is capable of analysing herself. She is horrified when she realises what she has been turned into. It is this realisation and conflict which Estella faces that makes her different from the rest of Dickens's heroines and makes her stand out. The scene of confrontation between her and Miss Havisham is one of the most successful scenes that Dickens ever wrote. But it is not elaborated and we are vaguely aware of the battle Estella is fighting with herself to change herself from a heartless creature to a person who can love and forgive. The book appeared too late in Dickens's literary career and he was never able to pursue the new theme which he presented in Great Expectations. The latter deals with an unheroic snob who tries to pass as a gentleman discarding heartlessly, though no without remorse, his own values, and finally finds himself disappointed, instead of fulfilled as was the case in all of Dickens's previous novels.

Love and sex in Dickens's novels are almost non-existent. He is more conservative in this respect than Thackeray was. Almost no passion exists in the hearts of his heroines and heroes. Their marriages are a reward that virtue gains at the end of the novels. No sinners are tolerated in his novels. Like Thackeray, Dickens did not attempt to leave the conventional path plodded previously by Richardson, and accepted by Victorian society.

Charlotte Bronte, to take another example, may outwardly seem the closest to the later novelists, but she, too, is confined to a very narrow range. She does not deal with people from the outside, and mostly strange outsiders are foreign to her pen. If Dickens and Thackeray studied their neighbours and wrote about them, Charlotte Bronte wrote about herself, her inner life and passions, mostly. She was different from them in that she was subjective. She was interested in the inner life of the men and women she wrote about, but the way she approached this inner life shows the greatest difference between her and the later novelists who pursued the same theme. She does neither explain the inner life, nor analyse it. And her characters, especially the heroines, do not analyse their motives, their feelings: they do not think. They just feel.

Like Dickens and Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte's plots are highly improbable, mostly melodramatic. Jane Eyre is the best example. Unrealistic people like Mrs. Reed, unrealistic incidents like the existence of the insane Mrs. Rochester free in the house to bring about every misfortune and melodramatic horror, unrealistic coincidences like the meeting of Jane with her kind cousins at the time when she is in need of kindness and help, ruin the book and make it ridiculous.

We do not know what Jane thinks or if she ever does think. Charlotte Bronte feels strongly about her heroines and as a result forgets to penetrate deep into their character, and the result is that they become not fully drawn figures, and we do not see if they really have any inner or outer conflicts. We come to like Jane Eyre when we read about her: she is simple, kind, virtuous, and generous. She is a force for good, as Mrs. Reed is a force for evil. This is the way Charlotte Bronte conceived her characters and then presented them. In this respect she is very much like Dickens. The fate of her characters is decided not by the characters' actions nor by circumstances or social obligations, but by Charlotte Bronte herself: the good must be rewarded. And so Jane comes flying back into the open and eager arms of Mr. Rochester and all ends well. We should not stop to ask questions.

Sex is something she does not discuss, although she does write about "love" in her novels. Jane is passionate, but she is not after pleasure. She believes in self-sacrifice rather than in sensual satisfaction. Her love for Rochester might be passionate and fiery, but she does not exert such strong feelings. She is plain. Charlotte Bronte does not show the effect of passion on Jane; she cannot analyse it. And of course being a typical Victorian she probably deliberately ignored the animal side of Jane's nature. The result is that she is a character who embodies plainness, fiery passion and high morals all at the same time. To some critics this may seem something to be accepted naturally and without any dispute; it may even accredit Charlotte Bronte for combining these incongruous elements of human nature in one composite character. But I do not see any coherence and touch of reality in this.

Descriptions in these novels are mostly outward with very little philosophical or even psychological analyses. George Eliot developed the latter but she did not perfect it. Instead of the normal arena of the heart and the imagination, she had the mind at work. She, therefore, analysed many situations and their implications. It was this that inspired her imagination, and not the vision or the fancy of a character, as was the case with Dickens. Her vision was that of a society which expressed certain principles. She dealt with these principles carefully and honestly. The situation first, and then the character emerged. Her characters, therefore, were not individuals or representatives of a social class, like Dickens's or Thackeray's. They were people who could think, feel, and act. The origin of her novels is an idea of a situation or character; therefore, she does not decide for herself what is to become of her characters. She lets that idea take its natural and logical course to a logical end. The result is that most of her characters do not end up in marriage or happiness, as is the case with Dickens, Thackeray and Charlotte Bronte. Her heroes and heroines are not the heroic, beautiful and gallant characters who lurk in the novels of the writers mentioned above.

But like a true Victorian, she, too, omitted the physical aspects of human relationships. She gets credit for dealing with the deeper aspects of human life, like the intellect, and with the problems of the emerging new age. She represented her characters with the drive to understand themselves first before finding any relationship with the society. But she approached her characters as a moralist and consequently almost all the conflicts her heroes and heroines experience are moral conflicts and struggles. They are struggles between their ideals and weaknesses. Maggie Tulliver, for example, desires the prevalence of goodness, honesty and justice, but she has no chance, and therefore she gives up after bringing misfortune to the people around her. Moreover, George Eliot's characters do not change all of a sudden for better or worse. Their strengths and weaknesses are there from the first and their actions depend upon which aspect of their character takes the lead. But her moral point of view is a marked weakness in her. It is impossible to divide people into right and wrong categories and at times she functions so systematically and intellectually asfar as her characters are concerned that she forgets to deal with their passions, their recklessness. She is an artist, so she approaches her characters accordingly, through art, forgetting life and its chaos. Her characters, therefore, are not alive, and move uncomfortably.

The prime concern of these four and many other Victorian novelists, was, then, to present to the Victorian public,and especially to the middle-class, the idea of the necessity of abiding by morality and other social laws and codes. They showed how the ones who tried to defy these codes were punished eventually and disintegrated into nothingness. The Victorian public was extremely interested in life and morality and the Victorian novelists complied with their demands, because basically the novel was a form of entertainment, like the cinema or the television of today, and writers had to please people to gain as many readers as possible. They wrote about people, social codes, habits, about environment, and omitted the principal of life itself: love with a sexual basis. This is not to say that there was no love in their books. There is some, of course, but it is always hinted at by the way. And then it is mentioned in such a subdued tone that one is bound to think it is something one should not talk about loudly, as listening to a clandestine radio station in a dictatorial country.

Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence later saw that protecting people against growing anarchy was not achieved through morality which to the Victorians meant careful adherence to social manners, but through love between a man and a woman. Love and the formation of a fruitful relation between man and woman gave the two the right to break from these codes. This view opened up a whole new territory of struggle for freedom and individuality. The social codes of the Victorian society forced the individual to give up his otherness and mingle and merge with society. But Hardy and Lawrence believed that the individual himself and not the society was to fight against pressures. To Hardy and Lawrence mass morality meant slavery as quelling as the growing industrial capitalism. It provided no happiness for the individual and no freedom from authority. Hardy's fearless treatment of sexual passion as an escape from man's dilemma in society, inspired Lawrence tremendously and the latter himself saw the solution of man's chaotic situation in forming lasting relations with the opposite sex.

Both Hardy and Lawrence saw the woman as the only person who could grow up both intellectually and spiritually to develop such a relation with the opposite sex. Only she could bring about a change in attitude towards life because, though less intellectual than the male, she could understand the important issues of life.

Hardy raised the volume of his voice, opened the shuttered windows of life and penetrated deeply into it, voicing bravely about what the Victorians had only whispered. His Tess is not much different from Dickens's Little Em'ly, and yet there are miles and miles of difference in his treatment of her. The "decency" of Dickens forces him to use the most indirect manner of conveying her lapse from virtue, and he whole-heartedly sends her off to Australia to spend the rest of her life in lonely, yet deserved, misery; whereas Hardy screams desperately at the "President of Immortals" who finishes his "sport" with Tess by sending her to the gallows.

Dickens does not elaborate this trait in Em'ly. It is not his main concern. Hardy devotes the whole book to study the reasons and consequences of the human search for love and the failure to obtain it.

Hardy and later Lawrence did not seek to please their readers. Both novelists' books, actually, raised an unusual commotion and rejection leading to burning and banning of most of their "daring" but frank novels. Their Eustacias, Tesses, Lady Chatterleys and Ursulas walked through life's stage with little heed as to what Mr. Smith or Mrs. Jones next door, or across the street thought of them. Theirs was the desire to live, to love, and--why not?--even to laugh. Both Hardy and Lawrence realised that there was more to life than drawing rooms, London slums, pure Esthers or Agnesses or Florence Dombeys, more to life than suspenseful fights with Pecksniffs, Tulkinghorns or Becky Sharps to be ended by happy smiles and wedding bells. Man was not only against such outside forces. More importantly a person had to face in himself his desires to change and to love. The inner conflicts were important to Hardy's and Lawrence's characters, something whose importance the Victorians did not discern or perceive, or rather did not think mattered. Tess or Eustacia or Sue as well as Connie Chatterley or Miriam or Ursula have their own respective fights with their own Pecksniffs or Tulkinghorns and the society at large, but these fights are subordinate and secondary to what they undergo within themselves to reach to their David Copperfields or Mr. Rochesters or Dr. Woodcourts or Nicholas Nicklebys.

And finally, though Hardy and Lawrence started from the same root, they branched to separate horizons. To Hardy the world was a "cold accretion" and the tree of life infected by disease. No matter how hard the individual tried to water and fertilise that tree, the disease still remained and the tree was barren or the fruits--if there be any-- were sour and bitter. Lawrence cut down the tree altogether and planted new seeds and carefully watched the growth of the new tree. His tree is young, as yet without any fruits. But there is no disease. And its growth is promising. Lawrence grafted his ideas onto Hardy's. His novels repeat the same theme, but they are different, and in some cases more positive. How this basically similar theme is developed (with individual differences) in Hardy's and Lawrence's novels is what I shall be examining in the following chapters.

It is noteworthy here, I think, to mention that this basic similarity between Hardy's and Lawrence's characters has attracted the attention of other people, among whom is Richard B. Beards, who has recently written a dissertation on Hardy's and Lawrence's novels.[3] The dissertation's main bulk is devoted to the study of "their themes, sympathies, and ideals for the novel as a literary form." The study, therefore, examines the similarities of style and technique, with the main emphasis on their heroes' individualistic traits, their estrangements from the social environment, their struggle into love, and their relationship to the natural world. As in Beards' work, my thesis will largely ignore Hardy's and Lawrence's philosophies of life, and stress mainly the similarities of their characters, focusing upon the women and their conflicts and struggles into love.[4]

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[3] Richard D. Beards. "The Novels of Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence: A Comparative Study." (University of Washington, 1965), Diss. Abstracts, XXVI (1965) 2743.

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[4] The study of Hardy's & Lawrence's novels is not chronological. I have arranged them according to the needs of my thesis.

CHAPTER II

HARDY

Thomas Hardy was the first to come out of the conservative circle of the Victorians and shock his readers by presenting a new theme. What he was concerned with was not manners, but the principle of life itself--sex. To me, Thomas Hardy is the first modern novelist who deals with the problems of our age, with its apprehensions, fears, hopelessness and miseries. He was one of the first serious novelists to present a conflict in man's nature: not letting him battle with outside forces only, but allowing him to undergo a bigger fight within himself. And thus he paved the way for another great modern writer, Lawrence, who followed his tracks, developed his themes but never failed to be original. Hardy's novels are not sweet or cynical. They are true pictures of life in their most realistic, and perhaps in some cases, most tragic pictures. His novels reveal true and vivid relationships. The greatest of these relationships, for humanity, is naturally the relation between a man and a woman.

Hardy honours this relationship as it is. His characters do not care for money and do not think about comfort and security in a conventional society. They are struggling to become individuals and they are looking for love, because they believe that by having a complete relationship with the opposite sex one becomes himself. In the process of this self-seeking, they naturally clash with the "self-preserving" society. And the result is tragedy. They are destroyed because they want to get out, want to will for themselves, and not according to the will of the society and the established moral laws and codes. To some critics--Ralph Boas, George Wing, D.H. Lawrence, and many others--Hardy is a fatalist and studies the "workings of fate or law in the chief vivifying and disturbing influence in life, women."[1]

Most of the female characters of Hardy are led by their instincts. They are fascinating, lively, simple, irresponsible and sometimes cruel and evil. They include all these characteristics at once. They are not altogether bad or capricious. Even the worst of them has a rare quality of self-respect as well as purity, beside the demonic traits of her character. In his early novels, Hardy tried to follow the prevailing rules of morality, and therefore he did not present his women with freedom. Later novels depict frankly instinctive actions of his heroines and their consequences. He is not confined in the narrow circle of careful presentation of women's reputation. His heroine becomes an "untamed instinctive creature, eager and yet shy, who is compelled to satisfy her own moderate desires for happiness before she can reflect her joyousness on others. It is instinct only that saves so egoistic and primitive a moral conception from becoming utterly evil. Thomas Hardy is not concerned with the bearing of moral problems on human action, and his heroines do not talk the language of morals, but a very exquisite language of love."[2] The woman becomes the supreme from first to last, and though fallible, is pronounced "pure". This is clearly seen in The Return of the Native, and more obviously in Tess of the D'Urbervilles. Hardy's female characters are more interesting than his male ones and better creations. His women are alive, no matter how negative that aliveness may be, whereas his men are usually dull, more intellectual than instinctual, and therefore unpleasant and not striking. The women are the rebels, the new ones, the proud and beautiful ones.

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[1] Ralph Boas, Enjoyment of Literature (London, 1952), p. 248.

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[2] Havelock Ellis, From Marlowe to Shaw (London, 1950), p. 235.

The Return of the Native

A good example of a typical Hardy character is Eustacia Vye in The Return of the Native.(1878) The novel itself is perhaps Hardy's finest creation. Eustacia is passionate, wild. She detests Egdon Heath where she is forced to live with her grandfather after the death of her parents. She does not belong to that place and as an outsider she cannot comprehend or accept the value of Egdon Heath, nor its traditions or everlasting presence in people's minds and lives:

> To dwell on a heath without studying its meanings was like wedding a foreigner without learning his tongue. The subtle beauties of the heath were lost to Eustacia; she only caught vapours. An environment which would have made a contented woman a poet, a suffering woman a devotee, a pious woman a psalmist, even a giddy woman thoughtful, made a rebellious woman saturnine. (79)

Eustacia is ambitious and sometimes selfish. Unlike Clym she wants to serve herself. She does not have any warm feelings towards the people of Egdon who live there without the least attempt to understand her and her feelings. At one point she does confess that she does not "have much love for my fellow creatures. Sometimes I quite hate them." (211)

Like all Hardy's heroines, she is looking for freedom and individuality, and like all human beings she is looking for happiness and love. She wants to enjoy a full and deep life, become complete and realise her powerful needs and desires. Egdon Heath with all its desolation, she feels, is not the answer or the provider of all those needs:

> "To be loved to madness--such was her great desire. Love was to her the one cordial which could drive away the eating loneliness of her days. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than any particular lover.
>
> She could show a most reproachful look at times, but it was directed less against human beings than against certain creatures of her mind, the chief of these being Destiny, through whose interference she dimly fancied it arose that love alighted only on gliding youth-that any love she might win would sink simultaneously with the sand in the glass. She thought of it with an ever-growing consciousness of cruelty, which tended to breed actions of reckless unconventionality, framed to snatch a year's, a week's, even an hour's passion from anywhere while it could be won. Through want of it she had sung without being merry, possessed without enjoying, outshone without triumphing. Her loneliness deepened her desire. On Egdon, coldest and meanest kisses were at famine prices; and where was a mouth matching hers to be found?" (77-8)

Something new is needed, something exciting, something alive and beautiful. Anything that would satisfy her thirst for love and attention and warmth is fine with her; anything that would provide her comfort and charms away from Egdon Heath and its austerity is what she dreams of possessing. This romantic image of luxury takes shape with the passage of time and identifies itself with Paris. Paris, then, becomes the ultimate goal of her life and she strives to reach it.

Entanglements follow, first with Wildever, another outsider, a vain, superficial, shifty young man, who cannot decide anything positive, and more importantly, with Clym Yoebright, an intelligent native of the Heath. Clym, having experienced the vanity of Paris, comes back home to educate his people, to serve the community rather than himself. Eustacia wants to live in the present and let the future take its own course:

> "I dread to think of anything beyond the present. What is, we know. We are together now, and it is unknown how long we shall be so: the unknown always fills my mind with terrible possibilities,even when I may reasonably expect it to be cheerful ..." (226)

Clym being an intellectual, and an idealistic intellectual at that, is not on this earth. He thinks of high goals to achieve and mysterious dreams to realise, and is ready to "live and die in a hermitage here (Egdon), with proper work to do." (226) Clym chooses big universal meanings in life, philosophy, art; Eustacia "desires unreasonably much in wanting what is called life," (321) the beating and pulsing that is going on in the great arteries of the world. But she does not get it because Clym on whom she had based all her hopes, cannot wrench himself from his ideals and morals for the sake of the woman he loves. He follows the tradition and therefore loses his originality, his early passion and asceticism, and is left at the end trying to preach dully on morally unimpeachable matters. Eustacia uses both these men, not deliberately because she hates them, but as means to the long-desired freedom. She had tender feelings towards them, especially Clym who had "come direct from beautiful Paris--laden with its atmosphere, familiar with its charm." (131) But I doubt if she really loved them. Her feelings of uneasiness and even disgust at the level Clym descended to after the loss of his sight, are justified and natural, I think. In the midst of this struggle she unconsciously breaks the universal plan, the powerful law. Hardy believed that there could not be any reconciliation between love and law and that the spirit of love must always succumb before the blind, stupid, but overwhelming power of the law. Eustacia was outside this law; she was not like the other people living in Egdon Heath who behaved like half-tamed animals wandering in the wilderness. She was not a passive subject to the traditions, the community. She sins against the society, against the law, when she agrees to elope with Wildeve, not because she loves him, in fact, she considers him beneath her in all respects:

> "He's not great enough for me to give myself to--he does not suffice for my desire! ... If he had been a Saul or a Bonaparte-- ah! But to break my marriage vow for him--it is too poor a luxury!" ... (404)

She decides to go to America with him because he has come into possession of eleven thousand pounds. It is not the money she is after but what that "money could bring." (341) She also acts against the law when she refuses to let Mrs. Yoebright into her house. But she knows she is wrong; she is torn with conscience, and in the height of her despair she accuses outer forces as responsible for her fortune:

> "How I have tried and tried to be a splendid woman, and how destiny has been against me ... I do not deserve my lot ... I was capable of much; but 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!" (404)

But at the end she realises that Heaven or fate or Egdon Heath correspond to one meaning and one fact in her life which she had tried to defy and challenge. And this drives her to her final destruction without hearing Clym's words of forgiveness. It was she against the populous of Egdon and their laws. She lost.

Eustacia is not a weak character because she does not yield to the will of the society; and therefore she must die. Her weakness is not fear of the law, but passion. Hardy was sympathetic with what she felt or needed, but he could not allow her to destroy the old traditions and establish the new, the dark and passionate laws of the individual. This is not only so in Eustacia's case, but throughout his novels Hardy presents this conflict of the individual versus the society and, because he believes that the old is always the dominant, he destroys his characters to satisfy the people, This is why all his novels are covered with a coat of pessimism. Eustacia, the dark-eyed rebel, is no exception. She clears the way at the end for the woman accepted by society--Thomasin. The latter is the good, kind, loyal, passive character who does not have a distinct personality of her own. She does not intend to leave the warm, safe and comfortable society and plunge into the wilderness. Unlike Eustacia, she is a native of Egdon

Heath, and therefore she feels herself part of the whole system. Although outwardly she is unlike the desolate, wild and untamed Heath, she has come to accept it meekly. It is something she does not question. For her there is no other world other than the Heath and she never for once thinks of deserting it.

Eustacia cannot take this silent surrender. She herself is too much like the Heath to accept it. They clash because only one of them should be the leader, the dominating power.

Egdon Heath is described as a:

> "Place perfectly accordant with man's nature--neither ghastly, hateful, nor ugly: neither commonplace, unmeaning, nor tame; but, manlike, slighted and enduring; and withal singularly collosal and mysterious in its swarthy monotony. As with some persons who have long lived apart, solitude seemed to look out of its countenance. It had a lonely face, suggesting tragical possibilities." (4)

Eustacia's nature, too, is filled with "tragical possibilities." She is the "Queen of Night"--obscure, lonely, and outwardly, at least at first, waiting silently for a change, which she cannot name or materlise. It is a strange nature, "untameable and Ishmaelitish" (4), as Egdon Heath had always been. What we know of her outer appearance is that "she was tall and straight in build, that she was"ladylike in her movements" (58), and that she roamed in the wild heath alone, listening to the strange voices of the wind, and hoped to hear some news of deliverance, even though what she heard resembled "the ruins of human song which remain to the throat of fourscore and ten." (59) The dry whispers of the wind, as her desperate cries could be heard nowhere else on earth off Egdon Heath. As tense as the heath she continues the search for a home, but finds herself building a wall of hate around her for everything that was part of that great scheme where civilisation was an enemy, and "ever since the beginning of vegetation the soil had worn the same antique brown dress, the natural and invariable garment of the particular formation."(4) It is from this permanence that Eustacia wants to break. The people of the heath and Nature that produced them become detestable facts to her. And when an easy separation becomes an impossibility, she clashes with these "colossal and mysterious" powers, and finds herself shattered beyond repair.

Thomasin, on the other hand, survives, because she is too weak to fight, or rather, too indifferent to look for reality.

Marred and disgraced Eustacia, nevertheless, remains, until the very end of her life, a dignified person. Her disgrace is only physical; spiritually she remains a "pure" woman, because she does not surrender to the mental-spiritual corruption of the society, the "morally restrained universe", and because she does not give in to Egdon Heath's oppressive power, In this respect, if in no other, she comes close to yet another "pure" woman--Tess.

The book is not without faults. The character of Clym is not very convincing. He is too exaggerated at the beginning and too dull at the end. The passion with which he is introduced does not correspond to the cold, unfeeling attitude he shows towards Eustacia once he gets her. And then even in the story of his passionate love for Eustacia, there is a contrivance. He had come to Egdon Heath to forget all that was Paris and its "immorality". The first thing we see him do is throw himself into the arms of Eustacia--the symbol of all he had hated and was trying to forget. The book is not free from coincidences either which fill Hardy's novels: Clym's loss of eyesight; Eustacia's letter of appeal; Diggory Venn's unexpected presence everywhere; Mrs. Yoebright's visit at the time when Wildeve is visiting Eustacia, and later her being bitten by a snake. Havelock Ellis may call this "tragic irony" indispensable for the tragedy, but still, they are too many to be ignored.

Despite all these shortcomings the book stands as a masterpiece of artistic creation, primarily because of the superb portrayal of Eustacia's character. She is a blend of heavenly spirit and earthly physical magnificence; something that Clym could never grow enough to understand or appreciate.

Far From the Madding Crowd

As mentioned earlier, Hardy's women characters are almost all in one way or another alike. In fact according to some critics--Albert J. Guerard, David Cecil and Havelock Ellis--every heroine in Hardy's novels has served as a basis for the heroine of the following ~~previous~~ novel.

Bathsheba in Far from the Madding Crowd, written four years earlier than The Return of the Native, has definitely served as a sketch for Eustacia. Like Eustacia, she is unruly, passionate, romantic, and is looking for a sort of prince charming to enter her life and carry her off to happiness. But she is vain and flirtatious. Because of this irresponsibility she refuses an offer of marriage from Oak, a good, steady, nonest, kind and forgiving farmer with no striking personality of his own. Bathsheba likes the idea of marriage, the pride of being called a bride, other young girls' envious looks at her victory, but not the responsibility itself:

> "I shouldn't mind being a bride at a wedding, if I could be one without having a husband. But since a woman can't show off in that way by herself, I shan't marry--at least yet." (38)

Although she later almost totally depends on Oak for his support and help and management of her farm, she, at first, is frightened of his steadiness and seriousness: "It wouldn't do, Mr. Oak. I want somebody to tame me; I am too independent; and you would never be able to know."

This certainly is a contradiction and misunderstanding on her part of the kind of person Oak is, the person she most needs to "tame" her. But as yet she has not found her way in life. She is a sort of passionate pilgrim wandering in life, unable to define a goal.

Two more men fall in the snare of her charms. For sure she provokes them, especially Boldwood by sending him a Valentine card and teasing him out of his complacent bachelorhood and thus causing the destruction of the honest man who becomes mad in her pursuit. The second one is Sergeant Troy, a dashing young man. He is an early version of Wildeve. Troy is unscrupulous, selfish, and after physical pleasure. Like Bathsheba, he is vain. When Boldwood offers him some money to marry Fanny and forget about Bathsheba, his sarcastic and roguish answer is:

> "I like Fanny best, and if, as you say Miss Everdene is out of my reach, why I have all to gain by accepting your money, and marrying Fan. But she's only a servant." (217)

Like Bathsheba also, he is wild and impulsive and does not discern the responsibility of his actions. He moves on the spur of the moment, even though, like Bathsheba, he may have to regret a foolish act for a lifetime: "I love Fanny, but Bathsh--Miss Everdene inflamed me, and displaced Fanny for a time." (217)

Bathsheba falls in love with him because he seems to correspond to the idea of prince charming, and runs after him shamelessly to Bath. The tragedy is that he does not love her. The one woman he really cares for is Fanny whom he seriously considers marrying but heartlessly leaves behind because a misunderstanding injures his pride and makes him a fool in front of the villagers congregated in the church.

The marriage between Bathsheba and Troy does not work because the latter is struck with repentance at the monstrous manner in which he has treated Fanny, causing her piteous death.

> "This woman," he says to Bathsheba standing by Fanny's coffin, "is more to me, dead as she is, than ever you were, or are, or can be. If Satan had not tempted me with that face of yours, and those cursed coquetries, I should have married her. I never had another thought till you came in my way. Would to God that I had; but it is all too late! I deserve to live in torment for this!" (281)

Troy is of course forgetting the fact that when he walked out of the All Saints Church leaving behind him the frightened, perplexed Fanny who had not realised yet the full consequence of her mistake, he had not yet encountered Bathsheba. This is a clear evidence of Troy's immaturity and his playing with human beings and fate as toys at his own disposal. In this he is very much like Bathsheba herself.

Bathsheba is not destroyed by this tragedy, although she grows up a great deal and, instead of the vainglorious person she had been, she starts to think more carefully about her position in life. She says yes to Boldwood not because she loves him but because she pities him. Watching the pitiable condition Boldwood had descended to,no one could be more moved than Bathsheba herself who realises her dreadful mistake at playing a seemingly quite an innocent trick on him. And when he utters the words:

> "Say the words, dear one, and the subject shall be dismissed; a blissful loving intimacy of six years, and then marriage--O Bathsheba, say them! Promise yourself to me; I deserve it, for I have loved you more than anybody in the world! ... You wouldn't let a dog suffer what I have suffered, could you but know it! Sometimes I am distressed that all of it you will never know. Be gracious, and give up a little to me, when I would give up my life for you!" (348)

Bathsheba feels she has no alternative but to condescend to his entreaties, out of kindness, and so pay for her foolish act. But when he, too, leaves the scenes of the book and disintegrates in a prison cell she, naturally turns to Oak, the faithful dog who is always there to help her in times of difficulties as a sort of compromise. Oak's motto has been: "I will help to my last effort the woman I have loved so dearly." (230) Bathsheba is not to forget this. Critics, as George Wing, David Cecil, and Albert J. Guerard, consider the Bathsheba of the latter part of the book as a matured, resourceful, and enduring character changed by the disasters in her life and the lives of the persons around her. I do not share this conclusion. Bathsheba married Oak because there was no other alternative. After the scandal of her husband's murder and Boldwood's imprisonment, Bathsheba felt herself quite alone in the world, She was shunned by the people: "Poor Bathsheba began to suffer now from the most torturing sting of all--a sensation that she was despised." (364) She felt herself helpless:

> "She was bewildered too by the prospect of having to rely on her own resources again: it seemed to herself that she never could again acquire energy sufficient to go to market, barter, and sell. Since Troy's death Oak had attended all sales and fairs for her, transacting her business at the same time with his own. What should she do now? Her life was becoming a desolation."(365)

Yet Bathsheba was determined to continue surviving and the one person who could and would offer his services so freely was Oak. So she agreed to be his wife. Change is rather difficult in human nature and a forced one strikes us as rather artificial and contrived. All that Bathsheba has to her credit is a beautiful face. As Troy says of her, she is a "higher class of animal--a finer tissue, an haughty goddess, dashing piece of womanhood, Juno-wife..." (338) who not only causes the destruction of three men, but also sinks herself beneath the self-imposed pedestal of her haughteur. And we see her at the end of the chapter before the last walking up the hill with Oak and humbly discussing matters of the farm and carefully evading the discussion of her feelings with him:

> "Theirs was that substantial affection which arises when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other's character, and not the best till further on, the romance growing up in the interstices of a mass of hard prosaic reality. (368)

She seems crushed and her pride is downtrodden. To this "camaraderie", then, Bathsheba finds herself destined and not to the passionate love between two sexes, nor even does she--we are left to understand--dream of becoming a bride without a husband. It is a defeat for her more than a reconciliation and maturity. A last straw and she clings to it. That is why the book does not, at least to me, measure up to The Return of the Native.

Though a less sincere person, Bathsheba is hailed in the book as the reigning queen of the village, respected and obeyed by all the rustics. In contrast to this, Fanny, another of Hardy's "Pure" woman, is dragged away to a degrading death. It is a tragic irony that Fanny, and not Bathsheba, should be killed by the society, and her act seen as an unforgivable sin. Bathsheba was no less "shameless" than Fanny. The villagers watched silently, and surprisingly enough, uncomplainingly, her amorous intrigues with Boldwood and then Troy. Because of her social position, Fanny, like the forthcoming Tess, was treated as a fallen woman, shunned by everybody with no one to sympathise with her, except a kind old dog, another outcast. Like the dog, Fanny is stoned by the society, whereas Bathsheba is accepted with no questions or suspicious looks. Society is often misguided in its judgments, but unfortunately, its judgments are usually final, and Fanny carrying the fruit of her impetuous love, was too weak to resist fate boldly. Her last walk towards Casterbridge Union is both a forced, hard labour to Golgotha where she will pay for her sins before the angry eyes of the villagers, and a suicide, for she finds she has no other alternative but death. She leaves behind Bathsheba who, in front of her coffin, wrenches herself from her blind, "fairy-tale" existence, and faces reality. The effect is tremendous on her and the defeat of her vainglory and pride begins, to be replaced by fear of rejection and hatred. It is not a growth in maturity, but rather a realisation of a greater weakness in her, of a greater need to depend on a mature person. Oak happened to be the only person to provide her with security. She married him.

Once again the book is filled with coincidences and exaggerations. Boldwood is not a real character. His mad passion for Bathsheba rises too suddenly after a dormant, sexless life for two score years.

After the loss for his wealth Oak sets out in a search of a job. The first place he comes across is Mr. Everdene's farm. This may seem quite natural at a first reading, but on second thought, it is a gross exaggeration and an unlikely coincidence. What saves the novel is the successful presentation of the rustics and perhaps also the beautifully portrayed scene of Fanny's last journey to Casterbridge Union.

Like Eustacia, Bathsheba hurts many people around her without actually meaning any harm to them; but unlike Eustacia, she yields to compromise and therefore survives.

Tess of The D'Urbervilles

Tess is Hardy's purest woman character. She is soft, tender, humble, unselfish and innocent. She is prepared to sacrifice her own happiness to ensure that of her family. She is the representative of mankind, forever the victim of superhuman forces--Fate.

We see her at first as a beautiful, gay country girl dancing happily with her friends on a May evening. But there is a hint of an approaching disaster just as a flock of black clouds is a hint of an approaching storm. She is singled out: all the maidens are dressed in white; Tess has a red ribbon as well.

Throughout the book Hardy insists on her being a victim. Her ancestors, her "useless ancestors" bring her disaster after disaster. Her parents' stupidity increases her misfortunes. It is with such a background that she starts life to help her family, and the series of sufferings begins. First, it is the seduction by Alec, with its shameful consequences, namely, the society's talk which had actually brought about the tragedy; little Sorrow; and fallen reputation. Throughout this early phase of her life, there is marked endurance in Tess's character, a trait that strikes some people as passivity. D.H. Lawrence thinks of her as passive out of self-acceptance, a true aristocratic quality, amounting almost to self-indifference. Tess never tries to convert anybody. She respects other people's rights to exist. Unfortunately, other people do not respect her right to be. The second crisis is her meeting with Angel at the Dairy farm; her marriage to him followed by her confession; and their separation. The third crisis is her decision to go and live with Alec in order to support her family, followed by Angel's return and her killing Alec.

Although outwardly passive, she is an individual nevertheless, an individual who finds herself face to face with both superhuman and human odds. Her young life is spent in fighting against these invincible odds in her own, and unfortunately, unsuccessful way.

The superhuman odds are represented by the crushing force of Fate. It is a hopeless fight she has to undergo from the very beginning. It is also a lonely fight. In Tess Hardy saw the symbol of all individuals who tried to achieve happiness in their own way, but were quelled by the inexorable forces of chance, accidents, coincidents--agents of Fate, in one word. Tess's failure to dance with Angel Clare at the May Day celebrations marks her first encounter with Fate. She is disappointed but makes no attempts to defy her luck. Prince's death clearly shows Fate's manipulative power, but Tess's endurance supersedes it and she makes an attempt to ameliorate her family's living conditions by going to the d'Urbervilles and claiming kin of them. Phase the first ends unhappily in The Chase, where Tess loses her innocence, where "Darkness and silence ruled everywhere around. Above them rose the primeval yews and oaks of the chase, in which were poised gentle roosting birds in their last nap; and about them stole the hopping rabbits and hares." (93). For Tess too this is the last carefree "nap" and the beginning of a long, sleepless and passive resistance to Fate which "was sleeping somewhere and was not to be awaked." (93)

She is sad but she is not overcome. For a while "Sad October and her sadder self seem the only two existences" (102) in the world and she finds a refuge in the dark, away from the innocent giggles of the peasant girls and the whispers of the villagers. There in the dark woods she seemed least solitary. Going there at

> "that moment of evening when the light and the darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralise each other, leaving absolute mental liberty. It is then that the plight of being alive becomes attenuated to its least possible dimensions. She had no fear of the shadows; her sole idea seemed to be to shun mankind--or rather that cold accretion called the world, which, is terrible in the mass, is unformidable, even pitiable, in its units."(110)

The desire to live, then, is there, but it is life away from the "moral hobgoblins", the society which had made her feel "as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence." (110) She is in harmony with nature. Fate had made her "break an accepted social law" (110) but she had not broken any law of the environment and so there she was left in "absolute mental liberty."

But Nature forms part of the Universal Plan which is controlled by "the God of Tess's childhood" or by Fate. It is to be noted that as the story develops these two become almost identical. And so harmonious Nature turns now "hazy" and the "denser nocturnal vapours, attacked by the warm beams, were dividing and shrinking into isolated fleeces within hollows and coverts, where they waited till they should be dried away to nothing." (111) It is the same with Tess: she, too, was approaching the time where her solitary peace would be taken away from her and trampled to nothing.

Her anguished fight takes a new form after the death of Sorrow, her little child. She does not altogether succumb under the heavy, manipulative power of Fate. She does not bring herself to collapse, and leaving behind her family and the whispering people who had passed their judgement on her by condemning her as evil, she stands up, and lifting her chin up, walks away for a fresh start. Her defiance is rewarded: the Rally begins in a particularly fine spring when Tess sets out "on a thyme-scented, bird-hatching morning in May" (133) to Talbothays "that happy green tract of land, sunshine and unspoiled love", where scene after scene is conjured up with all the warmth and glow of Hardy's poetic inspiration. "The new air was clear, bracing, ethereal. The river itself, which nourished the grass and cows of these renowned dairies, flowed not like the streams in Blackmoor ... The Froom waters were clear as the pure River of Life shown to the Evangelist ..." (135)

No person with any sort of passivity would mingle her hopes with this "River of Life", no person with any resignation would hear "a pleasant voice in every breeze", and notice that in "every bird's note seemed to lurk a joy." (136) The crisis being over, she thinks of making the most of Nature's lavishness and of building a respectable future. But she has no chance--no one has a chance in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. (1891) If back home she was physically seduced by Alec; in Talbothays she is spiritually seduced by Angel. Their meeting is again a coincidence. She is destined to suffer. And she suffers silently but not passively. There is an unconscious satisfaction in her heart when Angel turns his attentions towards her rather than the other dairymaids. The conflict between her morality and her personal desires for gratification reaches its peak towards the end of the Rally.

After the tragic failure of her marriage with Clare, her past mood of self-preservation changes to a subdued mood of self-sacrifice. Now she is shattered. Everything around her is ashy, gray and desolate: "The gold of the summer was now gray, the colours mean, the rich soil mud, and the river cold." (323) Her life becomes meaningless to her. She acknowledges the loss of her battle against Fate and works at Flintcomb-Ash hopelessly, uninterestedly and listlessly to provide for her family after the death of her father. When Alec appears in her life for the second time and promises the support of her family, she silently, almost blindly assents to live with him. The violation of her body means nothing to her any more. She had been violated from within the depth of her soul by the unfeeling, ununderstanding and unforgiving Clare. Her killing of Alec is nothing but a suicide. Her downfall is the cause of her family's eviction. Once looking at the rain sliding down the window she gazes at the "web of a spider, probably starved long ago, which had probably been in a corner where no flies ever came." (351).

The realisation that she is not more than a fly in the eyes of Fate, and the injustice she has to bear, are enough to crush any one, let alone Tess who was no more than a child when those misfortunes clouded over her and threatened to smother her.

The human odds against which Tess has to battle are represented by the complementary figures of Alec and Angel. The two men in Tess's life are subordinate to her but they manage to destroy her both from without and from within. Alec sees her as the embodied fulfilment of his desire; Angel, as the embodiment of spiritual perfection and purity. Neither satisfy her fully. They use her to satisfy their own egos regardless of the harm they bring to her. Alec's was a sensual ego; Angel's, an idealistic one. Physically defiled after her seduction by Alec, Tess still has energy enough to start a fresh page in her life. But she has no chance: she meets Angel who detested the body. When he agrees to marry her, he puts all his divinity and purity at stake and descends to the flesh.

Like Eustacia, Tess desires attention and care. She is looking for complete love: spiritual and physical. That is why she does not actually stop Angel in his pursuit to get her, although she tries to discourage him and tries several times to tell him of her past, but it always sticks in her throat at the last minute, either through accident or fear of losing him. She loves him.

Angel is an idealist: his idealism is a dead one which rejects everything that is connected with the Woman, with life. He cannot feel, cannot understand, cannot forgive. His passion for Tess is all sham and unreal. What we feel for him on that fateful night of Tess's confession is contempt and hatred. We are hurt to see Tess suffer because of his injured ego. He destroys her completely and after that she has nothing to look forward to. Therefore she yields to the body and goes back to Alec.

Alec is male, but only physically male. He looks like the traditional stage villain, the Evil Spirit. He is irrational, flashy, fake and aggressive. He does not give himself to Tess, but only takes. He is an incomplete, almost a fragmentary being. This is why Tess was shattered by him.

Angel finds out too late that life, and successful relationships with women, which inevitably includes sex, can lead to a spiritual development and bliss. He repented too late when the unforgivable was committed. There is no reconciliation, only death. They all die: Alec, Tess, Angel. The latter though physically still existing, is nothing but a book, a piece of paper, like Clym, left to preach. Tess fails and loses her battle not because she is weak or a passive character but because the odds she finds herself against are too great. She is abandoned by her guardian angels, the people who with their fatalistic acceptance of events saying "It was to be," become the indirect collaborators with the manipulative Fate, and, finally, the man she loved whole-heartedly.

This magnificent story of human pain and suffering, human helplessness and pettiness is not clear of certain cracks and lesions. Alec's religious conversion seems too odd to the reader to accept it without explanation. This is highly improbable considering the way with which he is presented at the beginning of the story. When meeting Tess again he reverts to what he was before. Hardy dismisses the issue saying that the conversion lost its power. Tess's killing of Alec also seems meaningless. Angel wanted her back, and she wanted to go to him. The only reason for this may be that Hardy had in mind a final catastrophe and therefore had to create a situation which led to an official hanging.

The night in the Druid Temple is serene and imminent. Hardy ends the novel by:

> "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess."(516)

The words are a defiant, despairing cry against the injustice of the universal plan. Tess is a medium through which shine the Christian virtues of selflessness, loving kindness,and fortitude, fated by the social conventions which force her to think that living in full awareness of her sexuality is a sin. But she is capable of rising to heights of moral and spiritual grandeur despite the sorriness of things.

This picture of Tess plus the superb portrayal of the parallelism of season and landscape with the rise and fall of human fortune and hope in the book are enough to rank the novel as one of the best ever written in the English language.

The Mayor of Casterbridge

The women of The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886) are painfully overshadowed by the gigantic figure of Henchard. The story itself tells of the disintegration of Henchard because of a folly in early life: the selling of his wife in a moment of drunken stupor. By this action Henchard had violated the moral scheme and therefore must suffer and die. In this story of crime and punishment the three women move like shadows and leave the entire stage to Henchard. Their study, nevertheless, is important, as through them the character of Henchard becomes more complete, and our understanding of him better and perhaps more sympathetic.

Lucetta is vain, and proud, like Bathsheba, and tries to reach happiness in the most unlawful and impious manner. She tries to forget her past, and to appear as a noble woman, as Bathsheba had done after moving from Northcombe-Hill to her uncle's farm. Like Bathsheba, also, she rejects the first man in her life, Henchard, when a younger, more exciting and interesting figure appears--Farfrae. But Lucetta is not like Farfrae. The latter is an understanding, good-tempered, efficient, and humble person. Lucetta is Henchard's match. Like him, she is hot-tempered, proud and ambitious. Unlike Farfrae, also, she is self-willed and tries to be an individual acting on her own accord and not on the society's, as is the case with Farfrae, who because of this wins the admiration of the people and is pronounced Mayor eventually. Lucetta thinks she loves him, but actually the reason why she does marry him is because he has a future, and Henchard has none. Added to this is, of course, Lucetta's knowledge of Henchard's abominable past. And then there is the story of her own shameful past which she tries to bury deep in infinite oblivion:

> "I loved him so much," she tells Henchard. "And I thought you might tell him of the past--and that grieved me! And then, when I had promised you, I learnt of the rumour that you had--sold your wife at a fair like a horse or cow! How could I keep my promise after hearing that? I could not risk myself in your hands; it would have been letting myself down to take your name after such a scandal. But I knew I should lose Donald if I did not secure him at once--for you would carry out your threat of telling him of our former acquaintance, as long as there was a chance of keeping me for yourself by doing so." (209)

Because of her contemptuous attitude towards the people, she is not liked by them. Her life at High Palace Hall opposite the market place is both envied and whispered at. High Palace Hall is actually a trap. Lucetta moves there to be close to Farfrae and thus be able to charm and lure him; it is also a trap where she eventually herself falls. The rustics having found out about her affair with Henchard gather around the house and jeer at her. It is during this scene that she accidentally falls down and after a miscarriage dies.

Her pride and her will were her undoing. The fact that she refuses to humble herself and acknowledge the fact of her sinful life with Henchard in Jersey and her desire to love where she chooses are considered moral crimes. Her rejection of Henchard, then, is a disruption of the moral order and therefore Lucetta's marriage with Farfrae ends soon in her tragic death. Here there is a streak of Eustacia in Lucetta's character. She belongs to that group of people who reject their fortune and strive against the misfortunes of their lives. Like Eustacia, she is defeated at the end.

Opposed to Lucetta is the good and loving and simple Elizabeth-Jane--a second Thomasin, representing law and order, reason and thought, abiding by the community and its codes. Like Farfrae, she does not try to act against her destiny. Although she sees the man she loves moving desperately into the claws of Lucetta's charms, she does not protest. She only suffers alone, silently, accepting her lot as desired by providence. Henchard's mistreatment of her also passes unobjected. She sees everything, but does not complain. She accepts her sorrows as well as her joys with little emotion:

> "The pains she experienced from almost obliviousness to her existence that was shown by the pair of them - Farfrae and Henchard - became at times half dissipated by the sense of its humorousness. When Lucetta had pricked her finger they were as deeply concerned as if she were dying; when she herself had been seriously sick or in danger they uttered a conventional word of sympathy at the news, and forgot all about it immediately." (176)

She feels grief, then, but does not fail to find a justification for their neglect of her: "What was she beside Lucetta?--as one of the 'meaner beauties of the night,' when the moon had risen in the skies." (177)

It is the same situation here as Thomasin was faced with when Wildeve, though married to her, moved his attentions towards fascinating Eustacia. Once again there is no complaint. Elizabeth-Jane reechoes what Thomasin in the earlier book had thought of herself:

> "She had learnt the lesson of renunciation, and was as familiar with the wreck of each day's wishes as with the diurnal setting of the sun... Continually it had happened that what she had desired had not been granted her, and that what had been granted her she had not desired."(177)

There is marked inclination to resignation in this. And yet, strangely enough, this is what the society approves of, as it had approved of Thomasin's passiveness before. Elizabeth-Jane survives, like Thomasin, because her marriage to Farfrae at the end is necessary for the triumph of the will of the society. There is nothing striking about her character and she is forgotten as soon as one closes the book. Albert J. Guerard calls her as belonging to the

> "Class of the unclassified not because she is highly individualised, which she is not, but because she has no very prominent traits. She is neither selfish nor exceptionally generous, neither stupid or remarkably intelligent, neither highly sexed nor epicene. She is an ordinary English woman, examined with quiet ordinary realism, and her interest thus depends almost exclusively on the mishaps that befall her."[2]

Susan Henchard has absolutely nothing prominent about her. She is the naive, enduring, unprotesting, resigned and faded wife of Henchard who is treated ruthlessly by the latter. She does not protest against her husband's monstrous action of selling her to Newson nor the latter's declaration that she rightfully belongs to him thereafter:

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[2] Albert J. Guerard, Hardy: Collection of Critical Essays (New Jersey, 1963), p. 68.

> "Her simplicity--the original ground of Henchard's contempt for her--had allowed her to live on in the conviction that Newson had acquired a morally real and justifiable right to her by his purchase." (23)

Not until after living with Newson as his wife for twenty-one years does she become aware of her ridiculous position (this being done by the help of a friend), and losing all her peace of mind sets out with her daughter to find her lawful husband. She agrees to remarry Henchard not for personal reasons but to "provide a comfortable home for Elizabeth-Jane under his paternal eye." (81) There are no personal interests in her life. She is less influential than even a shadow. She enters and leaves the book without as much as uttering a cry to prove her presence.

The book shows a change of focus from women to men. Here, as in his last novel, Jude the Obscure, the plot centres around the study of a man in relation to women, society with its codes, and Destiny. The two women, Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane represent his conflict: his vain desires, his pride, his individuality (which in their turn conflict with society and its moral order), and his good-naturedness, his soul's capability of accomplishing better things for himself as a society man and the people around him. The first is his heart; the second his conscience. Viewed in this respect these two women are important and worthy of study.

Jude The Obscure

In Jude the Obscure (1896) once again the women are subordinated to the principal figure--Jude. There is no heroine in the book. Jude is Tess turned round about. Instead of Tess aspiring to become a complete being, it is Jude, and the two women take the place of the two men in Tess's life. Arabella is Alec, Sue is Angel.

Arabella is described as "not exactly handsome, but capable of passing as such at a little distance, despite of coarseness of skin and fibre." (44) She is buxom with full lips and perfect teeth. "She was a complete and substantial female animal--no more, no less." (44) She is able to grab the innocent, dreamy and book-wormish Jude very easily and wakes in him his hunger for women. In certain ways she is like Eustacia, lawless and proud. She thought herself the centre of life, that all which existed belonged to her in so far as she wanted them. She felt strong and abundant. She needed a complement, and the nearest to her satisfaction was Jude:

> "In a few moments Arabella replied in a curiously low, hungry tone of latent sensuousness: "I've got him to care for me: Yes! But I want him to have me--to marry me! I must have him. I can't do without him. He's the sort of man I long for. I shall go mad if I can't give myself to him altogether! I felt I should when I first saw him!" (55)

And so she does succeed in luring him with all sorts of lies, as Bathsheba and Lucetta had done before her. Jude deliberately puts aside his search for spiritual satisfaction and dreams of a glorious future, and "rushes up the stairs at Arabella's heels." (62) It is to be noted that this sensual desire which springs up in Jude after his seduction by Arabella is a hindrance to his academic ambitions, but he wants her as he had never deemed he would need a woman, and as he would never need another woman in his life:

> "...Somehow or other, the eyes of the brown girl rested in his own when he had said the words, and there was a momentary flash of intelligence, a dumb announcement of affinity in passe, between herself and him, which, so far as Jude Fawley was concerned, had no sort of premeditation in it. She saw that he had singled her out from the three, as a woman is singled out in such cases ... The unvoiced call of woman to man, which was uttered very distinctly by Arabella's personality, held Jude to the spot against his intention--almost against his will, and in a way new to his experience." (44-5)

To be sure it is only a physical need but for Jude "It is better to love a woman than to be a graduate, or a parson, ay, or a pope." (54)

Arabella teaches Jude that life cannot be learned by deduction; it is to be lived. Jude, like Tess, wanted a full and complete relationship. Arabella, like Alec, desired to be made aware of herself as a woman in contact with a man. She sees in Jude a male who can gratify her. She gets him and is gratified by him. Through her Jude comes to know himself sexually. There are no conflicts in her.

Side by side to being sensual and over-sexed, Arabella is described as coarse and vulgar. Her awful dimples and false hair are enough to give the chills to any sensitive man, let alone the naive and tender Jude. He is soon disgusted and disappointed. The fire having died, he longs for his books and Christminster again. Arabella is not unhappy. She is proud of her husband and satisfied in her life with him. She is a child of nature, as unaware of the dead Classics or Saints and the matters of the soul as the pigs she used to kill and wash. The present matters to her most and her fulfilment in it. To tend to a husband and household cares are what life is for her. She has no high ambitions to realise. Her needs are simple and superficial.

As stated earlier, Arabella is not a complete character in herself, but rather seems to be an extension of Jude's personality--the physical side of Jude's nature--and that is why she is not able to satisfy him completely, although physically they are very much married. Their marriage is filled with contempt: Arabella's for Jude's spiritual and fine instincts and Jude's for her animal and coarse ones. The constant conflict between Jude's idealism and his grosser desires and Arabella's lack of understanding help break the marriage, and Arabella sails for Australia.

When the marriage fails, Jude goes back to his studies and works hard to finally get to Christminster. He had lost his innocence by his marriage with Arabella, but neither his belief, nor his hopes were taken away with his innocence. He had gained his manhood. She left him the stronger and more complete.

And now Sue enters his life. This phase of his life deals with his "elevation of purity to a Sue Bridehead pedestal, a roseate idealisation of sexual relationship, which did not, however, necessarily exclude the physical aspects."[3] Though the physical aspects were to come later. After the disappointment with the universities at Christminster, when they prove to be conventional institutions where he could never get intellectual freedom or strength, he turns towards Sue. She takes over the role of the university. Just as Christminster had been his ideal of intellectual life, Sue becomes his ideal intellectual woman. The consciousness of her living presence stimulates him and he weaves fantastic daydreams about her. As said earlier, Sue is an intellectual,

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[3] George Wing, Thomas Hardy (London, 1963), p. 127.

> "... the first delineation in fiction of the woman coming into notice in her thousands every year--the woman of the feminist movement--the slight, pale "bachelor-girl"--the intellectualised, emancipated bundle of nerves that modern conditions were producing, mainly in cities as yet; who does not recognise the necessity for most of her sex to follow marriage as a profession, and boast themselves as superior people because they are licensed to be loved on the premises."[4]

Sue is a woman who tries to be like a man, and therefore sexless. She is an ideal woman: a pretty artist. She at first, is a picture, an idea, like Christminster, to which Jude forms an attachment. After his failure with Arabella he wanted to exist in the mind only and Sue corresponded to this idea. She wanted to live intellectually; she wanted no sensual experience: she wanted to learn. Jude should not have had any physical entanglements with her. For her marriage was submission, a service, a slavery. She wanted Jude's love, but she wanted to live in the mind only. She wanted him to excite her and give her a new sense of life without asking a return from her. At first Jude did not mind because that was what he wanted: bodilessness, intellect, nerves and sensitivity. She was proud of his intellectual life, his ambitions, the refinement of intellect and sensibility. In this non-physical purity Jude sees something he can never reattain. It is something he has lost forever: his innocence, before Arabella shifted his ambitions. She is his untouched part.

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[4] Thomas Hardy, Preface to Jude the Obscure (London, 1964), p. 8.

She undergoes a conflict within herself: a conflict between her "bachelor-girl" independence and her conventionality. She, like Jude, aspires to some form of higher life. She tries to believe that she is pagan in spirit, and keeps the figures of Venus and Apollo in her room, but, either accidentally, or through oblivion, forgets to put away the Gothic-framed Crucifix- picture hanging from her wall. She considers herself a free woman and elopes with Jude, but refuses him even to kiss her: "I don't want to let you do it again, just--considering how we are circumstanced, don't you see!" (251) The truth is that under the affectation of her independent views she is as enslaved to the social code as any other woman of her time. There is always a spirit-like quality about her. Jude realises this: "You spirit, you disembodied creature, you dear, tantalising phantom--hardly flesh at all, so that when I put my arms around you I almost expect them to pass through you as through air." (255) She is incapable of real love, and yet Jude loves her: "If he could only get over the sense of her sex, as she seemed to be able to do so easily of his, what a comrade she would make." (161)

Sue and Jude are alike at heart, though not in the head. Phillotson at one point says: "They seem to be one person split in two! (239) Therefore Sue's rejection of real love does not repel Jude at first for he has in himself similar tendencies. But he soon gets over them, and then the mistake of their relation appears.

Even when she agrees to elope with him, the mismatch is evident. She is horrified when she learns that Jude has booked only one room for them. When she finally gives herself to Jude, it is with a feeling of sacrifice because she loves him:

> "Vey well then--if I must I must. Since you will have it, so I agree! I will be ... But, yes--I agree, I agree! I do love you. I ought to have known that you would conquer in the long run, living like this!" (275-6)

The surrender is also due to the fact that Arabella has reappeared on the scene and Sue is afraid of losing Jude for her:

> "I am not a cold-natured, sexless creature, am I, for keeping you at such a distance? I am sure you don't think so! Wait and see! I do belong to you, don't I? I give in!" (276)

They are not a harmonious couple and forced domesticity could lead them nowhere. During her life with Jude Sue suffers a great deal and does not know any happiness, save perhaps in her children, and Jude's son, little Father Time. The latter is a mysterious, puzzling and depressing figure in the story. As his name suggests, he is an old man in a lad's body, symbolising Jude's folly and hopelessness of man's strive to happiness. At the end he not only kills himself but also kills the two other children. Their death "Done because we were too menny" (374) shows Jude and Sue how incompatible they really are and they have no alternative other than separation. When the children are gone, Sue stops living: she renounces her mind and surrenders to mere existence in conventionality and goes back to Phillotson, her legal husband. Her conflict ends, then, with the victory of her conventionality. When she goes, there is nothing left in her: no body, no soul, no spirit, no mind. She is a bundle of emptiness.

Jude could not save her because he was too tired. She had asked what he could not give--passionate love without physical desire. She was no woman and had no love for him and so had to be destroyed:

> "I do love you, Sue, though I have danced attendance on you so long for such poor returns! All that's best and noblest in me loves you, and your freedom for everything that's gross has elevated me, and enabled me to do what I should have never dreamt myself capable of, or any man, a year or two ago. It is all very well to preach about self-control, and the wickedness of coercing a woman. But I should just like a few virtuous people who have condemned me in the past about Arabella and other things, to have been in my tantalising position with you through these late weeks! they'd believe, I think, that I have exercised some little restraint in always giving in to your wishes--living here in one house, and not a soul between us." (275)

Once again Sue is a subordinate character to Jude. If Arabella satisfied him physically; Sue satisfied him spiritually and intellectually, but neither could really provide him with complete fulfilment: being both a friend, a stimulator, and a lover at the same time. At the end "It was hell--'the hell of conscious failure,' both in ambition and in love." (133)

Probably Sue never meant the harm she brought over Jude. Her cruelty, selfishness and rigidity are due to her fears, her conventionality. Arabella's words probably sum up Sue's character:

> "He's charmed by her as if she were some fairy! See how he looks round at her, and lets his eyes rest on her. I am inclined to think that she don't care for him quite so much as he does for her. She's not a particular warm-hearted creature to my thinking, though she cares for him pretty middling much--as much as she's able to; and he could make her heartache a bit if he like to try--" (302)

"As much as she's able to". This is how Sue's love should be weighed. She is a victim of her foolish ideas and principles, as much as Arabella is of her body, and as much as Jude is of "the germs of every human infirmity" (275) in him.

Accidents and coincidences which filled Hardy's previous novels disappear almost completely in this last novel. The tragedy is not brought about by outer or supernatural forces but by the characters' own weaknesses, even though social codes do have their harassing influences on them, especially on Sue. The only objection that could be raised against the novel--something which can be raised against almost all his novels actually--is his treatment of dialogue. His characters, especially Jude, speak as graduates of Oxford. It sounds false and awkward. A. Alvarez finds a justification for this forced dialogue. It is part of the nature of the book, he says, "For the essential subject of the novel is not Oxford, or marriage, or even frustration. It is loneliness ... When they are together the characters often seem amateurishly conceived, and sometimes downright false. But once they are left to themselves they begin to think, feel, act, and even talk with that strange, poignancy which is uniquely Hardy's ... When Jude is on his own, as he is for a great deal of the novel, walking from one village to the next, one Christminster college to another, then he emerges as a creation of real genius."[5]

Arabella and Sue form complete opposite poles. The first is looking for the possession of superficial appearances of life; the second the substantial realities of it. Arabella does not question anything. Her physical needs satisfied, she is the happiest person on earth. Sue spends the whole time of her life, until her returning back to Phillotson, in questioning her position in life, God, the universe, morality, and other such religious and secular matters. As the women of *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, they bring to light Jude's conflict, though not without capturing our attention as to their separate identity as individuals in their own right, especially Sue.

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[5] A. Alvarez, "Jude the Obscure," Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Albert J. Guerard (New Jersey, 1963), p. 120.

In his five major novels Hardy creates several types of women, although almost all are similar in some traits.[6] Hardy's women in the preceding five novels can be divided into only three types: there are the individualised, free souls who cannot succumb to the corrupt social codes and the "morally restrained universe", like Eustacia, Tess, Fanny and Lucetta; there are also those who have no individuality but comply with the demands of the society and accept the "second hand" happiness and security it offers, like Bathsheba, Elizabeht-Jane, Thomasin and Sue; and finally, there is the vulgar amoral Arabella, who respects no codes, and has no codes of herself, but lives to take most of physical pleasure. Like Bathsheba of the later part of the novel, she forces herself upon the society and does not find it antagonistic, and continues to enjoy a personal happiness. Arabella is a new creation and has no real sisters in the previous novels.

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[6] Albert J. Guerard in *Thomas Hardy: The Novels and the Stories*, draws a chart illustrating the way in which he shows the different types of Hardy's women and how they draw on their predecessors. I feel they are divided into too many types; some of them can be brought under the same heading.

The women in Hardy's novels present the complexities of the universal system, and man's conflict with this system. They are the ones who grow up enough to ask a change, a better situation in life, both socially and economically. Their relationships with men are to portray their desire to bring about a sacred communal life, their desire to teach men the selflessness of love, and their right to participate fully in a relationship and not be passive instruments of a Clym, an Angel or Alec who use them to satisfy their physical needs and desires. The women are to teach men the real meaning of love, and not to give them sexual love only. They are to soften some of the conceit and selfishness and pompousness of the men who try to assert their manhood over them. If they fail, it is not through a mistake or weakness of their own, but because the men are not prepared yet to accept their role, and perhaps because Hardy did not want to push his already new theme to a bright finale. The first shock was too much for the conservative Victorian public.

Hardy's view of womanhood was critical and disparaging, except perhaps in Tess of the d'Urbervilles where he sympathises deeply with her, crying out in bitter irony against false ideas and unjust fate. "His view of women," says Boas, "is more French than English, it is subtle, a little cruel, but as tolerant as itsseems thoroughly a man's point of view, ... He sees all that is irresponsible for good and evil in a woman's character, all that is untrustworthy in her brain and will, all that is alluring in her variability. He is her apologist, but always with a reserve of private judgment. No one has created more attractive women of a certain class, women whom a man would have been likely to love or to regert loving. In his earlier books he is somewhat careful over the reputation of his heroines. Gradually he allows them more liberty, with franker treatment of instinct and its consequences."[7]

Hardy revolted against the Victorian conventions of morality and religion. And if he let his Thomasins and Elizabeth-Janes at large at the end enjoying the approving smiles of the people, it was not that he liked them himself. His real heroines are the Eustacias and the Tesses who are in a blind and painful struggle for existence, for individuality, for freedom and love. The purity of Thomasin and Elizabeth-Jane is a false one and a dead one. Eustacia and Tess though violated, are still pure and beautiful and exciting. The latter two are the children of nature: they are instinctive and creative, as the former two are impotent and dead in their soul. Tess and Eustacia are dignified and fearless, despite their fortunes, as Thomasin and Elizabeth-Jane are meek and frightened to stand on their feet and assert their presence.

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[7] Enjoyment of Literature, p. 250.

Both Tess and Eustacia possess a high sense of moral idealism. Though both were "pure" to Hardy because he knew them very well, they were "scarlet" women in the eyes of the world. Their sense of morality led them to misfortunes in the first place, and though Hardy insisted on their "purity of heart", it was too late to save them. They were victims born to suffer, crushed by the mysterious power which shaped man's destiny and society. Both Tess and Eustacia go out into a world for which they are ill-prepared, and their life is blighted by early sexual downfall.

The survival of Thomasin and Elizabeth-Jane is a deliberate irony. Hardy believed that life was a tragedy. "The best tragedy," he wrote in his diaries, "is that of the worthy encompassed by the inevitable." Both Tess and Eustacia are human and worthy, but in their lives they are faced with the inevitable quelling powers of fate, social codes and manners. Added to these are their own human weaknesses which bring about their final destruction. Thomasin and Elizabeth-Jane have neither of those qualities; therefore they are not faced with the inevitable.

Hardy's literary career did not live long enough to examine thoroughly the full emergence of women with their rights of equality with men, their independence in society, but with Sue he started to consider the matter seriously long before other novelists, like Lawrence, pursued the theme. Hardy started it, but did not continue, and the picture of Sue is all distorted and vague, anyway. He is a transitional figure, still hung up with Victorian conventions and frustrated by them. But Sue is definitely unlike any other heroine he has created. She is new in conception and treatment. By presenting her, Hardy has paved the way for later novelists, and Lawrence in particular.

Nothing new is said about Jude: all was said in Tess. The novelty came with Sue--the complicated, depressing figure. She is a combination of Eustacia, Bathsheba, and Thomasin, inclining more on the latter. But unlike Thomasin, she suffers and dies spiritually and sexually. The person left free at the end is Arabella, the vulgar and coarse woman with no refinement, and certainly no virtue like those of Thomasin and Elizabeth-Jane--his previous survivors of the conflict of moral-individual codes. Hardy no longer seems interested--no matter how negatively--in complying with the social demands. Arabella is certainly as much unacceptable to society as Sue was.

The new woman was a Sue to Hardy, extremely hopeless and pitiable: a woman who was trying to integrate herself in the great ideas of equality, rights, paganism, free love, etc., but who was actually nothing but a brainwashed, frightened wreck belonging nowhere. This gloomy picture of the emerging new generation probably was one of the important reasons that shattered Hardy and led to his abandoning of novel writing.

As mentioned earlier, my thesis approaches Hardy as a writer who has created men and women in conflict with each other and with themselves, and not as a "philosopher." His ideas about the Universe, Nature, Destiny, Circumstance, Chance, etc., and the effects of these forces upon his characters have been more than adequately explained. For example, Harvey Webster, in On a Darkling Plain, approaches Hardy from this angle and finds that Hardy's characters are puppets of an indifferent Nature or God.

> "Society, natural law, and accident again prevent realisation Jude's attempts to make Sue happy. By heredity, both Jude and Sue belong to a family that does not live happily in marriage bonds ... Jude and Sue become permanently stigmatised, and the cruel mass that constitutes the world of people adds to their already difficult struggle for existence. As if it were not bad enough, Chance intervenes to make matters still worse. Jude's child by Arabella, Father Time, is returned at least propitious moment possible. Taking literally Sue's statement that it is a pity to enter a world so ill-conditioned, Father Time kills himself and the children of Jude and Sue.
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> ... Sue leaves Jude, goes back to Phillotson, and destroys forever the possibility of happiness for either herself or her lover. Chance and natural law work together, once Sue is gone, to precipitate the final catastrophe.
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> ... The course of the story and the nature of the First Cause specified in the story are sufficient indications of the sombreness of Hardy's outlook ... All the important characters are convinced of the cruelty of life. Nature's law is mutual butchery, Sue declares. Phillotson thinks of cruelty as the law pervading all nature and society. Jude believes that he has all along been struggling against malignant stars.

> ... The case of Jude and Sue can undoubtedly be paralleled, but it is not representative of normal human characters in a normal human situation ... Hardy was blankly pessimistic about the fate of such characters at such a time."8

It is surprising that Harvey Webster does not see Sue and Jude as "normal human characters in a normal human situation." Hardy's characters are not types or symbolical representatives of his ideas; they are human beings, with human aspirations and human weaknesses. If there are outside forces harassing them, these are only secondary; inner conflicts are of prime importance. Hardy's characters, especially his women, are struggling into love. They, therefore, struggle with other characters and their own self-imposed laws, and not with universal forces. Richard Beards in his recent dissertation,is one scholar who has focused on this truth, though he devotes only one chapter to it:

> "The third chapter of this dissertation, 'The Struggle Into Love and The Struggle With Love,' grows out of Lawrence's recognition that the 'love struggle' is thematically the core of Hardy's fiction. Using his own 'Love Ethic,' which requires that the dominating male be energised by the female, who in turn is stabilised by the partnership, Lawrence evaluates the success of failure, the 'being or non-being'

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[8] Harvey C. Webster. On a Darkling Plain (University of Chicago Press), 1947, p. 185-6.

> of Hardy's characters. Furthermore, Lawrence's 'love ethic' provides the central idealogical framework for his own creation of character."[9]

In simpler words, Hardy was concerned with men and women and the conflict between them. Lawrence who was influenced by him greatly, examined Hardy's characters and even adapted some of them to his novels. His naturalistic ideas Lawrence completely ignored, because for both novelists the welfare of a person depended upon his (her) willingness to accept himself (herself) as an individual in full control of his (her) desires to live and love.

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[9] Richard D. Beards. "The Novels of Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence: A Comparative Study."

CHAPTER III

LAWRENCE

Lawrence's philosophy of life is not much different from that of Hardy's. He, too, is concerned with the study of man and the record of human experience. He believed in the duality of life: the existence of Light and Dark, the Intellect and the Blood, the Male and the Female, and the inevitable conflict of these pairs of opposites. Happiness on this earth becomes a possibility, he believed, as Hardy had done years before, when these conflicting powers are brought together and neither side is victorious. Complementary balance was what he tried to achieve. Then a fullness, a completeness of being is achieved and harmony prevails. Otherwise there is nothing but destruction awaiting the people involved.[1]

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[1] A good expression of this philosophy is found in Lawrence's short novel The Man Who Died, where he shows that the life of the flesh receives its purpose from a life of the spirit which is eternal and transcendent:

> For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower, beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive. Whatever the unborn and the dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look after the afterwards. But the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours alone, and ours only

If Hardy wrote his novels in strong criticism of Victorian society and its codes; Lawrence attacked in his the new industrial civilisation and its mechanical materialism emerging in the society. Both writers realised the harassing and ugly pressure on the individual and his attempts to lead a free and happy existence. Both Hardy and Lawrence, no matter how indirectly, tried in one way or another to reform society. Hardy's criticism of the university system in Jude the Obscure is evidence enough of his attempts to influence social reforms, which actually realised later. Lawrence's condemnations of the new industrial system in The Rainbow, Lady Chatterley's Lover, and elsewhere proved true. The forces they found themselves confronting were strong, to be sure, but they endeavoured to bring about a change through the introduction of a new purpose in life which individuals could turn their energy to and thereby possibly evade the claims of the society. This purpose was forming

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for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. In my own very self I am part of my family. There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters.

true and lasting relationships between men and women. Their characters who are trying to become themselves trust in instincts and desires; they believe that the basis of individuality is the intensity and aliveness of self, and the proper integration of body, spirit, and mind--something which Lawrence called "quick of life". These characters move about with the realisation that the source of all life and knowledge is in themselves, and the source of all living is in the interchange, and meeting.

In Hardy's characters society is always in the background and the characters move fully aware of their existence in the community. This is not so in Lawrence's novels. The characters matter from first to last. It is their behaviour, their acceptance of themselves, their individuality, physicality and spirituality or the rejection of them that decide their fate. Hardy's characters have no chance. He does not give them the chance to form such relationships. He gives them the ability to sense the need of bringing about change, of personal liberation from the system, but he is too much under pressure to let his characters act freely. Life is a tragedy for Hardy and success has noth ing to do with inner worth. In fact, the worthy ones are those who suffer and are destroyed, because the narrowing circle of the societal and supernatural powers give them no outlet. Here is the main difference between Hardy and Lawrence. Hardy does not believe in the individual's capability of coming off successfully in his great attempt to become himself and achieve happiness. Lawrence believed this and several of his characters realise their dreams. They do this by reestablishing the natural flow of common sympathy between men and women, including sexual relationship, which Lawrence believed modern civilisation had destroyed. Lawrence, then, continued the path started by Hardy, and went beyond it. Hardy saw no way out for the individual, and stopped; Lawrence continued from where Hardy had left off. Like Hardy's, his novels are filled with images of intensity, aloneness, tenderness, and pain. But they are also filled with images of resurrection, wholeness, and restoration. It is these images of promise, of hope that are missing in Hardy.

Lawrence's characters are looking for happiness. They achieve this goal only when they realise the fact that they are dependent upon each other, without losing their individuality, without acually merging. "And the two poles are eternally opposed, the whole fruitfulness of the relationship depends on their opposition, yet its whole integrity depends on moments when the sense of opposition has vanished."[2] Unity in duality is what he professed. His characters experience the life of both poles: fulfilment in the spirit and the flesh. Like Hardy, therefore, he saw this possibility in sex. "Sacred love" and "Profane love" between man and woman was the basis of life for him, and the sexes were complementary figures.

Lawrence saw marriage as the most important factor in one's life. Marriage could be real only when it was permanent, and the person who could make marriage permanent and the fixed centre of life, was woman. There was her satisfaction and if in her search for an everlasting relationship she met someone who could not satisfy her, she had the right to leave him and look for another. A satisfactory male for Lawrence's women is the one who is sexually vigorous and independent: a physical and spiritual male at the same time. Any man outside this category will fall flat and the woman is bound to leave him.

Lawrence believed that love was a "unifying force"[3] and a creative force which intended to bring together two essentially different poles in a perfect balance. He also believed that a human being was not to sacrifice himself to the person he loved. Freedom and individuality had to be cherished by man or woman in relation with the other, without the negation of the self. Love, then, to Lawrence means a oneness, a becoming together, and a separateness or otherness. Spiritual or "sacred" love would bring about a communion, and sensual love would bring about the essential distinctness of the person--the essential otherness. This is the basic theory on which Lawrence based almost all his novels. Forming such relations would provide man and woman a chance to escape mechanisation and death-in-life existence. This was his answer to the evergrowing intensity of the questions asked by several deep and sensitive people: "What to do?" and "Do I dare?" Naive? Romantic? Probably. But it was an answer, nevertheless, unlike the resigned submission of several of his predecessors, including Hardy himself, to a certain extent, the passive evasiveness of his contemporaries, and the perplexed helplessness of his posterity.

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[2] Graham Hough, The Dark Sun, (London, 1956) 228.

[3] D.H. Lawrence, "Love" Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers (London, 1967), p. 151.

His vision of woman is primitive. In his novels he sought the core of the woman in her relation to a man. His women are either pure and simple--or neither pure nor simple. The demure and the dauntless. His demure ones accept the authority of the man without questioning; the dauntless ones want to assert their individuality and refuse living a domestic, narrow, and dark existence. They want freedom, they want to become themselves and be as strong as the male. In most of his novels, then, there is no perfect man-woman relationship without a conflict and without the ultimate respect for each other's individuality.

Lawrence had a complete realisation of the feelings of women, just as Hardy had years before him. Sometimes he wrote as a woman would write: The White Peacock was attributed to a woman, just as Hardy's Far From the Madding Crowd was attributed to George Eliot. Sometimes he is tender as in Lady Chatterley's Lover when Mellors is watching Lady Chatterley crying over the new born chicks because she wants a child; sometimes understanding as in The Rainbow when Anna is cleaning the house for a tea party; sometimes critical, as in his treatment of Miriam's fear and recoiling in Sons and Lovers, or Winifred in "England, my England" sometimes sympathetic as when he describes

Mabel, the impassive, judging, self-sufficient girl, isolated among her brutally egoistic brothers, in "The Horse Dealer's Daughter",

Lady Chatterley's Lover

One of the finest women characters of Lawrence is perhaps Lady Chatterley, his last heroine. Connie Chatterley is lively, passionate, Bohemian. She is the daughter of a Royal academician, grown up in Germany among people of great love and interest for art and politics. She, therefore, is a woman who cannot conform to rules and codes. She is a free soul, a rebel:

> "They (Connie and her sister Hilda) lived freely among the students, they argued with the men over philosophical, sociological and artistic matters, they were just as good as the men themselves: only better, since they were women. And they tramped off to the forests with sturdy youths bearing guitars, twang-twang! They sang the Wandervogel songs, and they were free. Free! That was the great word. Out in the open world, out in the great forests of the morning, with lusty and splendid-throated young fellows, free to do as they liked, and--above all--to say what they liked. It was the talk that mattered supremely: the impassioned interchange of talk. Love was only a minor accompaniment."(6-7)

What mattered to Connie was the Romantic concept of freedom, shaking off the "old and sordid connections and subjections." But a "minor accompaniment" or no, a love affair had to come. "The thing was so talked about, it was supposed to be important." And so she had to yield, without yielding her inner, free self. She had no pleasure and no interest in the act because it was based purely on sensation and physical pleasure.

After the experience in Germany, Connie, the passionate pilgrim, is still wandering through life, looking for a place, for answers. During the war years she meets and married Clifford who belongs to the aristocracy. His position is attractive. She married him because, I think, she still had not defined her goal in life. In this she is very much like Eustacia. Both had the same love for something bigger, higher than they possessed. For Eustacia it was Paris and its luxury symbolised in Clym; for Connie it was gentility symbolised in Clifford. Once again it is an unsatisfactory relationship, though Connie is attached to Clifford. It is not a complete relation. But the Comnie who had held herself aloof and let her German lover have his satisfaction was glad, at least for a short time, that Clifford was not after this satisfaction and that their intimacy was much deeper than that, where "sex was merely an accident, or an adjunct, one of the curious obsolete, organic processes which persisted in its own clumsiness, but was not really necessary." (13) After the honeymoon Clifford goes back to war and comes back shortly after paralysed and impotent. Connie sets out to help her invalid husband, just as Eustacia attends her blind husband, Clym. For a time this goes on well. Connie becomes the instigator of Clifford, a friend who urges him to create famous writings:

> "Connie and Clifford had now been nearly two years at Wragby, living their vague life of absorption in Clifford and his work. Their interests had never ceased to flow together over his work. They talked and wrestled in the throes of composition, and felt as if something were happening, really happening, really in the void." (19)

It is this "voidness" and the state of non-existence that strikes Connie. Soon signs of boredom and frustration manifest themselves, and she becomes aware of a growing restlessness in her, something which at once reminds us of Eustacia's frustration at the kind of life she was leading with Clym. The loneliness and the dreariness that follow fill Connie more than ever with the necessity of finding a new life away from the dead, decadent society of Clifford and his "intellectual" friends who treat life and sex as a mechanical act, even a degrading act. Purely mental -spiritual life cannot satisfy her. She is looking for complete fulfilment: physical and spiritual consummation.

An unsuccessful attempt at finding this kind of life follows. Michaelis, one of Clifford's artist friends, a play-wright, has an affair with her, but cannot satisfy her. The disconnection is still there. This also reminds us of Eustacia's turning to Wildeve as a last resort for freedom and satisfaction. When the affair fails, life becomes meaningless to Connie, and she sees no possibility of coming out of her present deadlock. She sees no substance to her, no touch, no contact. Her feelings now are identical to those of Eustacia, Hardy sees no hope, and so Eustacia dies, whereas Connie meets Mellors, the gamekeeper. Lawrence, it seems, has taken her where Hardy has left the subject, because, basically, he did believe in the possibility of happiness.

Connie's trip into the adjoining wood of Wragby House is a symbolic journey from death to life, from unreality to reality, from unbeing, into being. Before meeting Mellors the wood had had a sort of dark fascination to her; she would go there to get away from the house, but still there was something missing in it:

> "But it was not really a refuge, a sanctuary, because she had no connection with it. It was only a place where she could get away from the rest. She never really touched the spirit of the wood itself."(21)

The "touching of the spirit of the wood" comes slowly as she grows to know the mysterious Mellors. The desire to forget the world and its dreadful "carrion-bodied" people fills her, and in the wind of March endless phrases like "You must be born again! I believe in the resurrection of the body," (87) sweep through her consciousness. When she accepts Mellors as a lover she shows her desire and ability of coming alive in the body, and the resurrection is done. This honest picture of physical love continues and flourishes, though at first is filled with difficulties, as social pressures, personal misunderstandings and aloofness. But Connie is not to be put off by social pressures. What the society thinks of her affairs with her husband's game-keeper does not bother her. She has nothing to lose and all the peace and ecstacy of the world to gain. To be sure, fear and her will stand in the way at first:

> "It was not the passion that was new to her, it was the yearning adoration. She knew she had always feared it, for it left her helpless; she feared it still, lest if she adored him too much, then she would lose herself, become effaced, and she did not want to be effaced, a salve, like a savage woman. She must not become a slave. She feared her adoration, yet she would not at once fight against it. She knew she could fight it. She had a devil self-will in her breast that could have fought the full soft heaving adoration of her womb and crashed it. She could even now do it, or she thought so, and she could then take up her passion with her own will." (141)

Having kept herself aloof, then, she fears of "losing herself," of becoming a "slave", just as she had felt with her German lover and even Michaelis. The conflict is between her desire for Mellors, her "adoration" of him and her "self-will" and her shame at letting herself go completely. But soon Mellors teaches her tenderness and the sex act stops being a mechanical act, but becomes a living, throbbing, and tender process. Lawrence believed that the world is "alive and that aliveness is the only thing worth cherishing. Men and societies denying this fundamental fact will sicken and die."[4]

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[4] Julian Moynahan, The Deed of Life (New Jersey , 1963), 147.

Unlike Eustacia, Connie does get out, and comes to the place of her desire--the wood--and does find the long-sought happiness there. In her relation with Mellors, Connie learns a great deal, and grows up. The old, immature Connie finds in time that she was "gone, she was not, and she was born: a woman." (181) She becomes a woman who could feel as much pleasure in life and sex as Mellors did. The latter taught her warmheartedness in love, and shame which was fear died away. There is the promise left in the end, the final hope of triumph over misfortunes, artificial barriers, people, followed by the beginning of a "new chastity that flows" between them. "It is like fresh water and rain. How can men want wearisomely to philander ... But a great deal of (them) is together, and (they) can but abide by it, and steer (their) courses to meet soon." (317)

Clifford is a symbol of the outgoing, dead aristocracy and the newly rising industrialism, and Connie, being a believer in warm sensual tenderness, had to clash with him and separate. Clifford is empty, as he had been even before being paralysed, and though we are sorry for his situation, we do not feel any sympathy for him.

The book ends with a note of hope when Connie and Mellors decide to marry and live on a farm.

Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928) is filled with tenderness and beautiful descriptions of nature and phallic love; but it is not void of shortcomings. We believe that Connie and Mellors are going to be happy in the future, but if we stop to think for a moment, we realise that Connie and Mellors have not really discussed anything together. The reader is forced to ask himself if physical compatibility is evidence enough for a harmonious life together. It is true that Mellors and Connie recognise a spiritual development in them which flows from physical love. But, still, that is not everything in life. There is no mention of the mental life that Connie and Mellors would lead. The book is an attack, for sure, on the mental life of the English intellectuals at that time, but a level of mental life is a must in any relation. After all, completeness in a relationship, which Lawrence professed, included a harmony of thought and feeling, didn't it? It must be admitted that the descriptions of phallic experiences are ingenious, in some cases extremely beautiful and convincing, but some are ridiculous and silly, such as the scene in which

Connie and Mellors cover their bodies with different flowers.

Lady Chatterley's Lover is an honest portrayal of a woman's deep desire and struggle to become herself; her great search for life, vitality, and tenderness. And though she is not a spiritually "pure" woman in the Hardeyesque sense, Connie wins our love and sympathy.

Sons and Lovers

Mrs. Morel in Sons and Lovers (1913) is a proud, refined and intellectual woman, married--according to her--beneath her to an uncouth proletarian. She feels she is cut off from the world and has led a spiritually impoverished and narrow life in the colliery community. She has led a bitter life with Mr. Morel, filled with contempt for his coarseness and drunkenness. She is a high-minded, educated woman who fell in love with a passionate, vigorous and sensuous miner, whom she believed she would be able to change and moralise in time. The incompatibility is obvious from the beginning. She is soon disillusioned:

> "There began a battle between the husband and wife--a fearful and bloody battle that ended only with the death of one. She fought to make him undertake his own responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations, But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensual, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to face things. He could not endure it--it drove him out of his mind."(23)

Mr. Morel does not change: he is not affected by her civilised manners, he rejects her and continues his drinking and rough manners. She then felt herself turning towards her sons for love and tenderness. Her son, William, for instance, becomes the sole meaning of her existence: "She loved him so much! More than that, she hoped in him so much. Almost she lived by him." (73) Mrs. Morel dominates her sons' loves, dreams, and aspirations. She is determined that her sons will not be miners. So the children grow up to despise their father. She has them all educated to become clerks. This is an urge on her part to assert her superiority. She fills them with a desire for learning and gives them energy to realise what she wants them to realise.

The boys become so attached to her that they cannot love when mature men, because the mother's love is always the stronger power in their lives, and holds them. When William, the elder son, tries to break this chain, love another woman and leave home for good, the tension kills him. The conflict between his love for his mother and his love for his fiancee is too much for him.

Afterwards Mrs. Morel turns to Paul and tried to possess him, just as she had tried to possess first her husband, then William. "It's the living I want, not the dead," she utters. Paul is infatuated with her and loves her as a lover. To him she represents spiritual perfection which she tries to attain. Their relation is more subtle and fine. She is a sort of Christminster to him. This obsession continues until the very end, although Paul tries several times to get rid of this dominion. His attempts are all in vain. He is held strongly by her clutches and there seems nothing he can do to establish some sort of natural life and attain natural manhood.

The two women in his life are not much different from his mother. The first, Miriam, is the exact image of Mrs. Morel. She urges the artist to life in Paul. They discuss books together, and Paul paints. Their early relationship is a very innocent one, one of mutual inspiration and stimulation to a perfect spiritual life:

> "He was conscious only when stimulated. A sketch finished he always wanted to take it to Miriam. Then he was stimulated into knowledge of the work he had produced unconsciously. In contact with Miriam he gained insight; his vision went deeper. From his mother he drew the life--warmth, the strength to produce; Miriam urged this warmth into intensity like a white light." (196)

Like Mrs. Morel, Miriam is a possessor and fights for Paul's soul, but shrinks away from his touch. She tends to ignore the man in him. Paul does not mind this at first, because he ignores the woman in her. But when "life itself" gets hold of him, he becomes aware of himself as a man: a vital living person who has to come in touch with the darkness of his own soul and experience darkness itself, accept it. Agony follows, Miriam likes to be with Paul; she also loves him, but it is a Shelleyan love:

> "Almost passionately she wanted to be with him when he stood before the flowers. They were going to have a communion together--something that thrilled her, something holy." (197)

It is a romantic love and adoration she feels for Paul: platonic and completely spiritual. Miriam is afraid of everything that involves any physical difficulty in it. She is afraid to let herself go fast and high when she and Paul are taking turns on the barn swing. At another point she is shown shrinking from chickens when they peck at her hand:

> "As he (Paul) went round the back, he saw Miriam kneeling in fromt of the hen coop, some maize in her hand, biting her lip, and crouching in an intense attitude. The hen was eyeing her wickedly. Very gingerly she put forward her hand. The hen bobbled for her. She drew back quickly with a cry, half of fear, half of chagrin.
>
> "It won't hurt you," said Paul.
> She flushed crimson and started.
> "I only wanted to try," she said, in a low voice.
> "See it doesn't hurt," he said, and, putting only two corns in his palm, he let the hen peck, peck at his bare hand. "It only makes you laugh," he said.
> She put her hand forward, dragged it away, tried again, and started back with a cry. He frowned." (159)

Her fear and uncertainty irritate Paul extremely. She feels she has to love him all the way, but the doubt is there inevitably:

> "A deep pain took hold of her, and she knew she must love him. And she had discovered in him a rare potentiality, discovered his loneliness. (205) ... How could it be wrong to love him? Love was God's gift. And yet it caused her shame." (212)

She loves Paul but refuses to give her love freely to him. Paul realises this and becomes gradually angrier at her passivity. Miriam feels herself to be a romantic heroine, right out a fairy-tale and wants to approach Paul in this manner. But the fault is not only Miriam's; it is only the interference of his mother that makes him critical of her and impatient with her. Even when she finally forces herself to accept Paul as a lover she does it with a feeling of sacrifice, because she believes that she is his chief need in life. In this respect she is very much like Sue in Jude the Obscure:

> "She lay as if she had given herself up to sacrifice: there was her body for him; but the look at the back of her eyes, like a creature awaiting immolation, arrested him, and all his blood fell back.
>
> She was very quiet, very calm. She only realised that she was doing something for him. He could hardly bear it. She lay to be sacrificed for him because she loved him so much. And he had to sacrifice her. For a second, he wished he were sexless or dead. Then he shut his eyes again to her, and his blood beat back again." (354)

Miriam is defeated after this. It was the final test upon her and it fails. She herself had wanted this test. She had felt herself somehow deficient. Now there was the proof. But she would do without him. She, as well as Paul, realise that she does not want to be touched physically; it is her soul that needs him. She is incapable of giving any living warmth to him. She is never alive, actually. Like Jude, Paul realises that "looking for her was like looking for something which did not exist. She was only his conscience, not his mate." (358) For Miriam the fault lies also with him: "It has been one long battle between us ... It has always been you fighting me off." (362) Miriam's relation with Paul is similar to Sue's with Jude. Miriam is the conventional girl without even any attempts, like those of Sue, to appear modern in her manners and beliefs, except perhaps an unconscious desire to cover up her conventionality by self-education: "She was mad to have learning whereon to pride herself." She is conditioned to this kind of life because she is religious and because her mother had taught her that sex was something she had to put up with, not really enjoy. "There is only one thing in marriage that is always dreadful, but you have to bear it," she advises her daughter.

Miriam's relationship with Paul is one of struggle and conflict, with herself as the proper loser. Their relation is also an unproductive one, and a failure because Miriam, like the early Connie, resisted Paul's domination. She had fought to keep herself free from him. She had succeeded in keeping herself aloof, but destroyed whatever there was left in their relation.

The second woman in Paul's life is Clara, one of the "new women" of the period. Clara like Mrs. Morel, is married beneath her to a weak workman. The conflict between her aspirations and her circumstances had driven her to choose separation and assert herself as a "free woman". Clara lives with her mother and works in a factory, earning her living and trying to educate herself. She is a striking defeat for both Miriam and Mrs. Morel. Paul's relation with her is almost exclusively physical. She lacks Miriam's depth, sensitivity and dreaminess, but she is a mature woman. She is warm and hungry for love--physical love. Paul appears to her as a helpless, frightened little boy, in need of love and care and attention, away from the sick spirituality of Miriam and his mother. She sets out to help him, and give him anything he wants, like a mother:

> "She knew how stark and alone he was, and she felt it was great that he came to her; and she took simply because his need was bigger either than her or him, and her soul was still within her. She did this for him in his need, even if he left her, for she loved him." (430)

It is not really love, then, it is pity that makes her hold him tight to her, clasp him and caress him. It is also something she wants to find for herself, something that would take her away from her lonely, dreary days. It is security that she is looking for, the security which will come permanently with a man, and a husband--something which Arabella had wanted from her relation with Jude. And though for the duration of intercourse it was ecstasy because

> "It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood which carried them always, gave them rest within themselves. If so great a magnificent power could overwhelm them, identify them altogether with itself, so that they knew they were only grains in the tremendous heave that lifted every grass-blade its little height and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves? They could let themselves becarried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life." (430-1)

It was unsatisfactory for Clara, because it was not permanent and did not bring her the long-sought security. The "peace" she had felt would vanish the next morning, and she would want to hold him, touch him, keep him every minute. In the morning she would not want herself to "be carried away by life." On his part, Paul had loved Woman, not Clara. His experience, therefore, was impersonal. He had loved her passionately to get his own satisfaction, to feel "the baptism of fire in passion", regardless of what she felt or desired. There was no communication between them: each was on his own. The "verification" which they had together was separate, and neither was aware of the other's "belief in life."

Clara is also a possessor, in her own way. When she fails to hold her grip fast on Paul, she begins to shrink. She does not realise that love should give a sense of freedom, not of prison. And that is exactly why she fails to have Paul fully. Her husband, Baxter Dawes, had submitted to her will thoroughly. And though she had a certain satisfaction through her passion for Paul, she still preferred her husband, and his need for her. "She felt a certain surety about Dawes that she never felt with Paul Morel." (439)

Paul himself shrank, and he realised that "It's not her I care for." (435) She was connected with one idea for him: sex. That was all he could think of when they were together:

> "When he started love-making, the emotion was strong enough to carry everything--reason, soul, blood--in a great sweep, like the Trent carries bodily its black-swirls and intertwinings, noiselessly. Gradually the little criticism, the little sensations were lost, thought also went, everything borne along in one flood.

> He became, not a man with a mind, but a great instinct. His hands were like creatures, living; his limbs, his body were all life and consciousness, subject to no will of his, but living in themselves. Just as he was, so it seemed the vigorous, wintry stars were strong also with life. He and they struck with the same pulse of fire, and the same joy of strength which held the broken-fond stiff near his eyes held his own body firm. It was he, and the stars, and the dark herbage, and Clara were licked up in an immense tongue of flame, which tore onwards and upwards. Everything was still, perfect in itself, along with him. This wonderful stillness in each thing in itself, while it was being borne along in a very ecstasy of living, seemed the highest point of bliss." (442-3)

This "bliss" is short-lived and provides Paul temporary escape from his reality and his mother. It is, actually, an illusion of bliss. Clara is not taken account of. Gradually he keeps some big and vital part in him for himself and does not exert it. Their love-making becomes a blind, instinctual battle with occasional splendid moments, which they have separately and not so satisfactorily. The blissful, happy days of their early relation with their overwhelming and mysterious power fade away gradually. No more does Clara sense that her passion will hold him to her. Within time even instinct fades away and mechanical action takes its place.

The relation fails because there is something missing. Their satisfaction is only momentary because their experience fails to lead them to recognise the deep sources of vital mysteries. It is not a complete or satisfactory sex experience. It does not enable them to go to the deepest sources of their natures, and thus, they are not able to understand themselves or to know exactly what their separate and complementary roles in life are. The sexual act for Lawrence is merely renewal of life, a path which will lead both the men and the women involved into a much more subtle relationship with life and a significant spiritual development. It is this that was missing from the Clara-Paul entanglement.

The result is disillusionment and separation. Clara goes back to her weak and insensitive husband.

If the three women in *Sons and Lovers* bring all sorts of misfortunes on Paul, and he is "left ... naked of everything, with the drift towards death," (495) his experience eventually fills him with a new determination to start life afresh. He can release himself from these chains and face light.

The characters of *Jude the Obscure* and *Sons and Lovers* are similar in many respects. Both Paul and Jude are conditioned by social facts, which do not leave them much choice, but their aspirations are so urgent and their will is so strong that the obstacles do not seem confining or oppressing. Both heroes leave their ideal behind, looking for satisfaction; both find projections of their own personalities, not complete individuals; both, therefore, love and leave two women. For both, their art is a medium to create beauty with more than a physical shape, form and pattern--a beauty which will be the expression of their own intensity, desires and unconsciousness. This is not a means of escaping from reality or society, but rather an assertion of the positive trends of their natures; living and creating among people. But the people they have to deal with are the ones who really limit their freedom or lock up the paths of their existence, until finally, the deadlock threatens to strangle them. Jude surrenders to this self-annihilation, but Paul is somehow capable of finding a way of getting out before the "last train leaves."

The four women of these two novels also have a great deal in common. They, too, are conditioned by social conventions, except perhaps Arabella, to a certain extent. They, therefore, become the victims of their own conventionality, as well as the victims of social oppressions. Miriam and Sue eventually are destroyed by these social conventions. For Miriam these conventions were symbolised in her mother; for Sue, the society of Wessex at large. Their readings and self-education were nothing but self-deceit and unconscious hiding of plainness. Both Arabella and Clara belong to the class of the lawless and the "free"--Arabella in practice; Clara theoretically only.

Conventional or unconventional the four women of Jude the Obscure and Sons and Lovers exemplify Jude's and Paul's sexuality and their intellectuality. Through them Jude's and Paul's characters appear more vividly and more fully.

Both Miriam and Clara are subordinate to Paul, just as Arabella and Sue are to Jude. In fact these four women are very much alike in their approach towards life and their men. All four manage in one way or another to destroy the men they love: the first altogether; the second almost. Because they are not complete characters themselves, they cannot have complete relationship with men.

The Plumed Serpent

Kate of The Plumed Serpent (1926) is considerably older than any other heroine of Lawrence. She is forty; has been married twice; and is not looking for love or excitement in life, but cherishes her aloneness and individuality. She tries to get away from the ugliness and boredom of society both in England and Mexico City and penetrate into the dark, spiritual life of the country, the villagers. The opening few scenes show this ugliness and violence. The bull-fight with which the book starts sets the scene. Unlike Hemingway who is fascinated by the game, Kate turns her face away in repulsion at the beastliness and cowardice of mankind who "bring the old wrecks (bulls) to finish them off in the arena." She sees the bulls as helpless creatures fallen in the hands of "brave" men who "finish off" unarmed beasts with their knives and spears and call that game a "gallant show." Society means the death of helpless creatures and Kate feels altogether cut off from society, standing alone, "looking always out to freedom." (25)

While still surrounded by city people, she reads about the return of the ancient gods of Mexico and meets the representatives of this movement--Cipriano and Don Ramon. The former is a small man of Indian origin; the latter big, handsome man of Spanish descent. She is fascinated by them and goes to the country-- Ramon's estate, to be closer to the primitive and old cult. She likes the mystery, as almost all Lawrence heroines do, but she cannot stand the horror that has swept the country. And as a result her life there is one of attraction and repulsion. She feels repugnant because all around her she sees deadness, sterility, and evil--something which is actually beyond her comprehension:

> "She felt again, as she felt before, that Mexico lay in her destiny almost as a doom. Something so heavy, so oppressive, like the folds of some huge serpent that seemed as if it could hardly raise itself."(29)

But this "serpent" represents the unknown, no matter how "oppressive" it may be, and the unknown has always a kind of charm for Kate, It provides a change from the "politics or jazzing or slushy mysticism or sordid spiritualism" of Europe: it is new and exciting. Unlike Europe, the mysticism and the spirituality of Mexico have not lost their magic yet, and:

> "So in her soul she cried aloud to the greater mystery, the higher power that hovered in the interstices of the hot air, rich and potent. It was as if she could lift her hands and clutch the silent, stormless potency that roved everywhere, waiting. "Come then!" she said, drawing a long slow breath, and addressing the silent life-breath which hung unrevealed in the atmosphere, waiting." (116)

Her previous life in Ireland and the continent gradually seem to her sterile, wan and cold. The darkness of inner Mexico brings a new meaning to her bleak life, and she sees a new fire, a new "kindling of mankind" executed there. And like the rest of the people, she sits through the Quetzalcoatl Rituals, with drums and hymn singing announcing the death of Christ and the return of the old gods, waiting for the "life-breath."

Her relationship with Cipriano brings her a sort of rebirth. She feels she finally has cut her relations with the old, spiritual Christianity and civilisation, and when its death comes--symbolised in the death of Dona Carlota, Ramon's wife--she watches it with no pity or sorrow. She wants to cover herself up with the darkness, the mystery, and Cipriano seems to correspond to this idea, so she unites herself with him and they are married according to the Rites of Quetzalcoatl. With him she finds complete sexual fulfilment, though at moments of weakness she vacillates between her individuality and utter surrender to Cipriano's will. At times she wants to shut her eyes and "sit in dark stillness" with Cipriano and Ramon, because they have a richness she does not have. She wants to stop all knowledge, all desire to obtain knowledge and just be part of Mexico, part of the dark vision of the new religion. At other times, she realises that if she shut her eyes to all knowledge, she would have to submit her will to Cipriano's ego; she would have to fill the gap in his life, make him complete, without thinking about her own satisfaction, her own self:

> "She could conceive now her marriage with Cipriano; the supreme passivity, like the earth below the twilight, consummate in living lifelessness, the sheer solid mystery of passivity. Ah, what an abandon, what an abandon, what an abandon!" (325)

Marriage with Cipriano meant the death of her individual self, it also meant abandoning her very foundations, because she believed that every man and every woman was founded on the individual. It meant submission she had never made. Her conflict is quite apparent. She had two selves: one belonged to

Cipriano, and the other still hung from home and children. At home she was free, "her own mistress"; in Mexico she would have to sacrifice her freedom. She does finally choose to yield to Cipriano, not because she believes in his cult totally, but because she is frightened of getting old alone in a civilised world. Aligning herself with Cipriano makes her an important personality and she likes that idea of being wanted and accepted, something which she knows she will never have again, at her age, at home, in England. In the end she concedes to limit herself and submerge her will--as far as she needs, and no further. It is not really love that binds her there; it is the horrible fear of becoming an "elderly female feline." Deep inside she knows full well what she is:

> "What a fraud I am! I know all the time it is I who don't altogether want them. I want myself to myself. But I can fool them so that they shan't find out." (461)

She also knows they would not let her go away. They need her as much as she needs them, although each is driven by his or her own needs that do not correspond with the other's.

The story, therefore is not one of passionate pilgrimage, but of comformity. It is a compromise at the end. It is not convincing and sometimes even boring, especially the ritual parts. The whole religious movement is also false and unreal and lessens the value of the book, I think, and if Lawrence calls it his "most important novel", it is, unfortunately his most unsuccessful novel--in some parts even more amateurish and unbearable than The White Peacock--; his most magnificent failure.

Lawrence's fame will remain not as a prophet of a new religion, but as a great advocate of simple human fact of sexual love--something which he magnificently portrayed in The Rainbow, Women in Love, and Lady Chatterley's Lover.

The Rainbow

To most critics, F.R. Leavis being in the lead, The Rainbow (1915) together with Women in Love (1921) form the best output of Lawrence. They both are highly original. The former was the first novel to present physical passion as an important and normal aspect of human life. Another, though less obvious aspect of life discussed in the book, is the change of the Western man as a result of the technological and social developments. Lawrence sees the only way out of this deadlock in the individual's passionate relation with the opposite sex.

The Rainbow is a sort of family chronicle telling the story of three generations: with the same problem of life--with individual changes--occuring to each generation; its attitude towards the elders, etc. The principal characters of this novel as well as its sequel (Women in Love) are women.

The Brangwen women actually have a special place in the family and are shown as different from the men even before we are introduced to the three women of interest to the novel. The women desire to possess a higher form of life; they struggle to realise higher human possibilities:

> "The women were different. On them too was the drowse of blood-intimacy, calves sucking and hens running together in droves, and young geese palpitating in the hand while the food was pushed down their throttle. But the women looked out from the heated, blind intercourse of farm, to the spoken world beyond. They were aware of the lips and the mind of the world speaking and giving utterance, they heard the sound in the distance, and they strained to listen." (8)

The women are not to be satisfied, then, with the limited, down-to-earth existence. They want something that goes "beyond". It is a desire to know what man has achieved in the sphere of knowledge, what conquests he has realised. This knowledge of the unknown cannot come by watching the sky, the harvest, the animals and the land in the fields, which their husbands engaged in:

> "But the woman wanted another form of life than this, something that was not blood-intimacy. Her house faced out from the farm-buildings and fields, looked out to the road and the village with church and Hall and the world beyond. She stood to see the far-off world of cities and governments and the active scope of man, the magic land to her, where secrets were made known and desires fulfilled. She faced onwards to where men moved dominant and creative, having turned their back on the pulsing heat of creation, and with this behind them, were set out to discover what was beyond, to enlarge their own scope and range and freedom; whereas the Brangwen men faced inwards to the teeming life of creation, which poured unresolved into their veins." (9)

When this struggle failed to achieve a higher being in the women, or rather failed to change their husbands, they turned towards their children, just as Mrs. Morel had done. Change, they believed could come through education and experience, and:

> "It was this, this education, this higher form of being, that the mother wished to give to her children, so that they too could live the supreme life on earth. For her children, at least the children of her heart, had the complete nature that should take place in equality with the living, vital people in the

> land, not be left behind obscure among labourers. Why must they remain obscured and stifled all their lives, why should they suffer from lack of freedom to move? How should they learn the entry into the finer, more vivid circle of life?" (10)

Their effort continues in the three generations that appear in the book. It starts again in each generation and is handed over to the next. In each case the discovery and realisation of those aspirations and values would come in the life of the individuals themselves. The experience that these three women desire is in forming lasting relations with the opposite sex that will bring them fulfilment and satisfaction. Tom Brangwen, filled up by his mother with the notions of going beyond the immediate community, turns his attentions towards Lydia Lensky, a foreigner, but his roots are still deep in the traditional world. So he keeps swaying with the uncertainty of belonging actually nowhere. The community is broken up and Tom likes the strangeness of his life, but he cannot fully adapt himself to the new situation.

Lydia Lensky is Polish; a widow of a refugee doctor. She has a small daughter, Anna. Her meeting and relationship with Tom Brangwen is a strange one. They do not have any special love for each other.

It is a sort of silent curiosity that drives them to each other. Lydia is remote, cold and unyielding. She believes that in personal relations with Tom she has to keep her individuality. She accepts her separateness and otherness, and approaches Tom in this respect. She does not want to depend completely upon him, because then there would not be fulfilment, a true relation, but dominion and silent, passive acceptance. No creativity. For Tom she is the remote unknown he wants to survey and discover. He cannot fully accept her "otherness", though. When she keeps herself aloof, he hates her. The first curiosity satisfied, Lydia becomes more and more unaware of him. This is a characteristic of all the women in this novel. Tom tries to accept his role of "otherness" at first. The intimacy of their sexual relation is enough to satisfy him for the time being, but eventually he cannot detach himself completely. He wants to yield to the "blood-intimacy" of his predecessors only. It is Lydia who saves the deadlock, when instead of shrinking away she confronts him with his faults:

> "I'm not satisfied with you. Paul (her first husband) used to come to me and take me like a man does. You only leave me alone or take me like your cattle, quickly, to forget me again ... You come to me as if it was for

> nothing, as if I was nothing there. When Paul came to me, I was something to him--a woman I was. To you I am mothing--it is like cattle--or nothing--" (93-4)

The idea of dependence, of possessing is refuted here and is not to be permitted. For Lydia she counted as much as he did and submission on either side was intolerable:

> "She waited for him to meet her, not to bow before her and serve her. She wanted his active participation, not his submission. She put her fingers on him. And it was torture to him, that he must give himself to her actively, participating in her, that he must meet and embrace and know her, who was other than himself. There was that in him which shrank from yielding to her, resisted the relaxing towards her, opposed the mingling with her, even whilst he most desired it. He was afraid, he wanted to save himself." (95)

It had been this fear that had encompassed them for two years. The desire had always been there to find out the unknown and the "beyond" which Lydia had represented, but the fear had checked Tom from surrendering to the utter darkness of that mysterious woman, until she herself had opened up completely--probably an unconscious attempt on her part to release herself from the memories of her relations with her first husband--and give Tom the clue to herself:

> "Then gradually, the tension, the withholding

> relaxed in him, and he began to flow towards her. She was beyond him, the unattainable. But he let go his hold on himself, he relinquished himself, and knew the subterranean force of his desire to come to her, to be with her, to mingle with her, losing himself to find her, to find himself in her. He began to approach her, to draw near." (95)

With this "coming" and "mingling" together a new existence opens before them. They achieve the discovery of themselves and of each other. A new life with bonds as well as liberty presented itself before them. She was the doorway to him; he to her. The fulfilment is done because they are able to bring together their "blood-intimacy" and their desire for "higher being", their individuation:

> "And always the light of transfiguration burned on in their hearts. He went his way, as before, she went her way, to the rest of the world there seemed no change. But to the two of them, there was the perpetual wonder of transfiguration." (96)

Anna, the proud little girl is at first attached to her mother, but gradually we see her "an independent, forgetful little soul, loving from her own centre." (83-4) She grows up in this manner: independent and wild. She also had a "splendid-lady" ideal which her father, who loved her tremendously, encouraged. And she grows up romantically in love with love, and when the first prince charming--Will Brangwen--comes along, she falls madly in love with him. Will is the hope for her to get out of the family bindings and establish her own little nest. Like every teen-ager she has her fears, insecurity and a defiance of authority, her parents' efficiency, settled peace:

> "She was seventeen, touchy, uneasy, uncertain ... Her mother's dark muzzle and curiously insidious ways, her mother's utter surety and confidence, her strange satisfaction, even triumph, her mother's way of laughing at things and her mother's silent overriding of vexatious propositions, most of all her mother's triumphant power maddened the girl." (105)

This hostility to her parents, this envy of her parents' understanding and love for each other, resulted in her seeking attention and love elsewhere. It was an escape from her reality, a refuge she found in the arms of young, immature Will. And she thought she loved him:

> "Without knowing it, Anna was wanting him to come. In him she had escaped. In him the bounds of her experience were transgressed: he was the hole in the wall, beyond which the sunshine blazed on an outside world." (114)

Her courtship with Will is short and passionate. Anna is a vital, intense creature and her relationship with Will is a passionate and happy one. They both cut themselves from the world of reality and live in a dream world:

> "As they lay close together, complete and beyond the touch of time and change, it was as if they were at the very centre of all the slow wheeling of space and the rapid agitation of life, deep, deep inside them all, at the centre where there is utter radiance, and eternal being, and the silence absorbed in praise: the steady core of all movements, the unawakened sleep of all the wakefulness. They found themselves there, and they lay still in each other's arms; for their moment they were at the heart of eternity, while time roared far off, forever far off, towards the rim." (145)

In the first heat of their passion these moments are fine and precious. But nobody could indefinitely live at such a depth of impulse. And so the first spell passed, Anna and Will find themselves face to face with a conflict: lack of communication. Anna is irresponsible, dominating, selfish. And at first Will is only too happy to serve her, to forget his maxims, his beliefs to amuse and satisfy her. There was no understanding between them. "There could only be acquiescence and submission, and tremulous wonder of consummation." (156) But soon this submission stops, at least for a time, and he retaliates. Their relation afterwards becomes a "battle of wills". It is fear which results in resistence on her part to understand the mysterious Will. "It was always the unknown, always the unknown, and she clung fiercely to her known self." (167) And because afraid of it she tried to dominate it. The result is failure of growth of any prosperous, and lasting relation. It is true that she yearns for stability:

> "She fretted, however at last, over the lack of stability. When the perfect hours came back, her heart did not forget that they would pass away away again. She was uneasy. The surety, the surety, the inner surety, the confidence in the abidingness of love: that was what she wanted. And that she did not get. She knew also that he had not got it." (167)

Anna did not respect her husband, his dependence on her. She only respected and loved the thrill that he gave her. And on his part he wanted her body and denied her spirituality. In their relation Will's inability to stand alone, and the non-existence of separateness and otherness are frustrating and disastrous factors. There is no fulfilment because Anna's desire of obtaining a "higher form of being" and Will's "blood-intimacy" never come together in one organised experience. Their relation afterwards becomes mechanised, lifeless, and uninteresting. Soon after the thrills the hard facts of communal life impose themselves on the couple. Anna accepts them whole-heartedly and settles down in a satisfied mood to be a wife and, more importantly, a mother. Now she is "Anna Victrix". But Will does not share this idea. He does not want to go back to the world, to face the people and establish day-to-day existence, opposed to which he has absolutely no other basis. Nevertheless, he, eventually, is forced to do just that. The marriage of Anna and Will is, at last, a deadlock, because they do not understand or respect each other's right to be an individual. Will is the artist, the dreamy, religious figure; Anna is not so aesthetic. Her joy lies in the living, passionate existence she has with her husband tied up with the "splendid lady" ideal of her childhood. She neglects her husband and becomes absorbed in her children. Her relationship with Will is sometimes extremely cold, and sometimes extremely lustful. There is no intimacy, no tenderness of love, as there was none in the Jude-Arabella relationship. Both are disillusioned and Will looks for fulfilment in his eldest daughter--Ursula.

The relationship of Will and Ursula reminds us a little of the Mrs. Morel and Paul relationship.

Here, too, a disillusioned parent turns towards his child for love and fulfilment. The second part of the novel is devoted entirely to the study of Ursula, just as the second half of Sons and Lovers deals with the development of Paul.

Ursula is at first passionately religious; she, like her father, craves the ecstasy. Her object of passion is Jesus himself:

> "The passion rose in her for Christ, for the gathering under the wings of security and warmth. But how did it apply to the week-day world? What could it mean, but that Christ should clasp her to his breast, as a mother clasps her child? And oh, for Christ, for him who could hold her to his breast and lose her there! Oh, for the breast of man, where she should have refuge and bliss forever! All her senses quivered with passionate yearning." (286)

But she cannot really differentiate between sensuality and spirituality:

> "Jesus--the vision world--the everyday world--all mixed inextricably in a confusion of pain and bliss. It was almost agony, the confusion, the inextricability. Jesus, the vision, speaking to her, who was non-visionary! And she would take his words of the spirits and make them to pander to her own carnality." (287)

But it is not Jesus that she wants. She uses him "to pander to her own carnality." She wants to experience love with a man, and not a "Son of God."

She soon discards this idea of sentimentality, and waits. But the confusion is still there. Even when she meets Anton Skrebensky and falls madly in love with him. Her love for him is romantic and rapturous. She soon begins to associate Anton with the Son of God, because he is self-satisfied and established, at least outwardly. The "man out of Eternity" seems to be Anton himself who would take her with him to her goal. And she waited for him to approach her "like the Sleeping Beauty in the story." (299) He does, because he wants to assert his manhood over her, to cover up his basic weakness. The thing that grows up between them is not love, is not even passion. It is a dangerous game:

> "And he kissed her, asserting his will over her, and she kissed him back, asserting her deliberate enjoyment of him. Daring and reckless and dangerous they knew it was, their game, each playing with fire, not with love. A sort of defiance of all the world possessed her in it--she would kiss him just because she wanted to. And a dare-devilry in him, like a cynicism, a cut at everything he pretended to serve, retaliated in him." (302)

Each one is seeking to know and understand his or her "maximum self." It is selfishness and not mutual respect for each other's right of enjoyment.

Theirs is just sensual passion. Love, then, for them, is an end in itself. Ursula is the first to realise the deadness and sterilty of their relation. On his part Anton physically wants Ursula without loving her soul, without worshipping her. Anton lacks individuality:

> "I hate soldiers," says Ursula, "they are stiff and wooden. What do you fight for, really?"
> "I would fight for the nation."
> "For all that, you aren't the nation. What would you do for yourself?"
> "I belong to the nation and must do my duty by the nation."
> "But when it didn't need your services in particular--when there is no fighting? What would you then?"
> He was irritated.
> "I would do what everybody else does."
> "What?"
> "Nothing. I would be in readiness for when I was needed."
> The answer came in exasperation.
> "It seems to me," she answered, "as if you weren't anybody-- as if there weren't anybody there, where you are. Are you anybody, really? You seem like nothing to me." (311)

Skrebensky is a "nothing" to Ursula because he does not fill her with life and tenderness. He does not acknowledge her "otherness" and so she strives to destroy him from within:

> "But hard and fierce she had fastened upon him, cold as the moon and burning as a firce salt. Till gradually his warm, soft iron yielded, yielded, and she was there fierce, corresive, seething with his destruction, seething like some

> cruel corrosive salt around the last substance of his being, destroying him, destroying him, destroying him in the kiss. And her soul crystallised with triumph, and his soul dissolved with agony and annihilation. So she held him there, the victim, consumed, annihilated. She had triumphed: he was not any more." (322)

Afterwards he becomes her servant, her slave, empty and dead. Then comes an abrupt separation as Skrebensky goes to war. Little by little the individual free woman starts building up in her. This is as a result of meeting Miss Inger, the teacher. The latter is a representative of the modern free-woman, self-possessed, proud and intelligent. Miss Inger is a sort of Sue who tries to appear modern and therefore machine-like. Ursula realises this deadness in her and bitterly walks out of her life by bringing her to another machine-like person, her uncle, Tom.

In her early attempts to find herself, therefore, Ursula is terribly unsuccessful and helpless. But unlike many other people of her age, she is determind to fight against the binding chains. Attempts involve becoming a teacher and later a student. She is equally disillusioned here also.

It is during this time that Skrebensky comes back to her life again. Ursula sees a new hope, a new beginning. But the romantic love now turned physical, can provide no ultimate satisfaction to her. She is looking for an "ultra-sexual" relationship. She is not sure of it at first. That is why she sways between her desire to leave him, and her fear of him which tells her to yield, to compromise and marry him. But she is seeking something more than he can give, something more than the ordinary concept of love:

> "It isn't a question of loving him," said Ursula. "I love him well enough--certainly more than I love anybody else in the world. And I shall never love anybody else the same again. We have had the flower of each. But I don't care about love. I don't value it. I don't care whether I love or whether I don't, whether I have love or whether I haven't. What is it to me?" (475)

Love, and physical love at that, does not lead her anywhere; personal gratification is not everything that forms the basis of a lasting relationship. This "beyondness of sex" includes "strong understanding", "dignity", "reckless passionateness"--things which Skrebensky did not give her because he did not have them. There is no spiritual contact between them and Ursula is the first to suggest the parting. Ursula feels she has freed herself of her struggle with Skrebensky. Now, she is absolutely free of the past.

Ursula's life before her final determination is one of struggle to release herself from her hold of her family, lover and society. Unlike her grandmother and mother, Ursula is not satisfied with what she has, neither does she intend to raise a family regardless of the kind of life that awaits her. She is trying to become complete, and does not intend to settle down unless she has found her goal: "to create a new knowledge of Eternity in flux of Time." (493) Some may say that she treated Skrebensky harshly by casting him off at the end, after taking everything he had to offer. But he could not satisfy her and her decision is just and inevitable.

The novel ends on a note of hope, with Ursula's vision of the rainbow,which symbolises a change andaa new beginning:

> "And then, in the blowing clouds, she saw a band of faint iridescence, startled, she looked for the hovering colour and saw a rainbow forming itself. In one place it gleamed fiercely, and her heart anguished with hope, she sought the shadow of iris where the bow should be. Steadily the colour gathered, mysteriously, from nowhere, it took presence upon itself, there was a faint, vast rainbow. The arc bended and strengthened itself till it arched indomitable, making great architecture of light and colour and the space of heaven, its pedestals luminous in the corruption of new houses on the low hill, its arch the top of heaven." (495)

The"rainbow" opens before her a vast, undiscovered land, as yet unknown and unexplored. She lands there alone, "after crossing the void, the darkness," which Skrebensky's world had signified. The goal defined, the rest is easy for Ursula, In this respect the book is like *Sons and Lovers*. The novel is more original and more successful than *Sons and Lovers*, but it is not clear of faults. One of the most obvious faults is Lawrence's insistence on making a point of what he is saying. He prolongs the descriptions of several key episodes and experiences and the repetitions sometimes seem out of place. Examples: Will's devotion to religion and Ursula's teaching experience.

But this is minor to what has been achieved in the book. "*The Rainbow*," says F.R. Leavis, "shows us the transmission of the spiritual heritage in an actual society, and shows it in relation to the general development of civilisation ... It has historical depth." [5]

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[5] F.R. Leavis, *D.H. Lawrence, Novelist* (London, 1964), 151.

Women in Love

The Rainbow (1915), for the most part, is the story of roots and slow organic growth and life and salvation; *Women in Love* (1921) is a book of change, escape and death. The revolution started with *The Rainbow*; in *Women in Love* there is the uncertainty of what ought man to do now that he has broken all links with mechanism, community, and authority. There is no answer. Ursula, in this novel, is not the only important character. But though three new major characters are introduced--Birkin, Gudrun and Gerald, she retains her position as one of the most interesting characters. These four form two opposing poles in the book. Ursula and Birkin present the drive to life; Gudrun and Gerald, the drive to death.

Ursula is now a fully-grown woman. The hesitation and doubt as to a goal in life, which were obvious in *The Rainbow* have now completely disappeared. One thing has remained: the determination to find a complete relationship. The opening scene in which she discusses marriage with her sister, Gudrun, indicates her desire not to rush into silly, romantic entanglements, and certainly not into marriage. But the experiences of her early life have affected her greatly. Fear and mistrust have surrounded her. She has withdrawn from society, although she is not passive. "Baffled" would perhaps describe her better:

> "She lived a good deal by herself, to herself, working, passing on from day to day, and always thinking, trying to lay hold on life, to grasp it in her own understanding. Her active living was suspended, but underneath, in the darkness, something was coming to pass. If only she could break through the last integuments! She seemed to try to put her hands out, like an infant in the womb, and she could not, not yet. She still had a strange prescience, an intimation of something yet to come." (10)

There is a slow but steady emergence from the "integuments", and if she answers her sister doubtfully about whether she would ever marry, it is in spite of the "strange prescience" of a forthcoming entanglement with the right person. She is like any other human being: once bitten, twice shy.

But entanglements she surely has. She meets Birkin, the school inspector. Birkin is physically weak and poor, but spiritually alive, strong and rich. He does not want to have the superficial, passionate relationship of man and woman. He knows he has to avoid the possessiveness of women and their domination--a chronic disease from which most "new" women seem to suffer. This hard lesson Birkin has learnt through his disastrous relation with Hermoine Roddice, one of the representatives of the new women: "a woman of the new school, full of intellectuality, and heavy, nerve-worn with consciousness." (17) She has a certain craving for knowledge and learning which she feels Birkin will give her. She, therefore, yearns to hold Birkin tightly to herself by imposing her will on him and running his life for him. Birkin's affair with her has taught him of her corruptness:

> "Your passion is a lie. It isn't passion at all, it is your will. It's your bullying will. You want to have things and have them in your power. You want to have things in your power. And why? Because you haven't got any real body, any dark sensual body of life. You have no sensuality. You have only your will, your conceit of consciousness, and your lust for power, to know." (46)

Although Hermoine appears quite complacent and free, she has an inward insecurity and she clings to Birkin thinking that he would satisfy her and drive away her fears of society and life. This possessiveness of her nature almost destroys and shatters Birkin, until finally he is able to get away from her clutches, saving not only his life, but also his spirit. What Birkin believes in is a "profound and permanent bond between a man and a woman which still leaves them separate and independent as persons; the achievement at the same time of freedom and relationship; at the deeper-than personal roots of being."[6] Ursula falls in love with him but does not quite capture the full meaning of his philosophy of love; she even makes fun of all his ideas about "impersonal relationship beyond the emotional, loving plane." She still mistakes real love for full committment, even self-sacrifice; she still thinks that individual love can provide an escape from mechanising society whose chief representative is Birkin's friend, Gerald. For Birkin this kind of love is fine as long as it lasts, but it cannot be an absolute; it is only a part of human relationship. A true and lasting relationship must be something beyond love:

> "There is a final me which is stark and impersonal and beyond responsibility. So there is a final you. And it is there I would want to meet you--not in the emotional, loving plane--but there beyond, where there is no speech and no terms of agreement. There we are two stark, unknown beings, two utterly strange creatures, I would want to approach you, and you me. And there could be no obligation, because there is no standard for action there, because no understanding has been reaped from that plane. It is quite inhuman because one is outside the plane of all that is accepted, and nothing unknown applies." (162-3)

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[6] The Dark Sun, p. 81.

This relationship is "inhuman" because it is a strange conjunction where two single equal beings are balanced perfectly. It sounds inhuman because it is something novel and unlike the standard relationships. Ursula has not reached to that stage of "inhuman" knowledge of love, has not experienced it, and therefore she mistakes it for "bossiness." Birkin's committment is not to the opposite sex but to the conjunction with the other person. Ursula realises that what he is looking for is a sort of mystic relationship. He does not want to submit. Ursula feels and believes that he wants her to serve him, and yet refuses to serve her. She thinks that what he wants her to be is to become his satellite. Birkin hates the family, the home, possessions. "What I want is a strange conjunction with you not a meeting and mingling, but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings--as the stars balance each other," (164) he says. Both Ursula and Birkin are trying to start life anew. But they disagree on the means of reaching it. Ursula wants to make Birkin more committed to her; Birkin wants to teach her a new kind of love, different from the conventional, doomed love of the masses. It is almost something impossible he wants to achieve, because it is impossible to get away from the society. There is nowhere to go. But their self-awareness and desirable drive towards life, give them the chance and the hope of making it after all. If Birkin's task was to teach Ursula the idea of the "star-equilibrium"; Ursula's was to help Birkin understand that they did not have to be on the non-human level to build a new life. She is not a fatalist as he is. Though part of a corrupt society, she does not feel herself a "fleur du mal"; she still can be a "rose of happiness." At the beginning of their relationship she thinks that he wants to destroy her hope of achieving happiness, but it is only later that she will learn that no form of happiness could be achieved in a "doomed society" running wild towards dissolution. Happiness will be possible only outside the sphere of the known world and its dead and destructive ideals, when they have both submitted not only their bodies to each other but also their spirits; when they have possessed the "immemorial magnificence of mystic, palpable, real otherness" (361) of each other.

Ursula's and Birkin's relationship is one of becoming together, even if that has no final conclusion, like their destination after leaving England. They both have had their embittering experiences before coming together and they realise that mutual self-sacrifice and sex only will not provide them with ultimate happiness. That is why they agree to marry and start a new relationship. They cut themselves off from everything except each other and the sources of their own beings. They are in love and as Birkin says, they possess "the freedom" that wholesome love is.

Gudrun and Gerald represent the opposite pole of the book. Gudrun is an artist. She is beautiful, confident, ironic, poignant, and pungent. After the first conversations with her sister about marriage to which she herself had shown reservations, she meets Gerald Crich, the rich, adventurous, physically splendid young man who is not only a mine-owner but a great and successful industrialist as well. For Gerald the ultimate standards of living were to be found in the society--perfect society:

> "So Gerald set himself to work, to put the great industry in order. In his travels, and in his accompanying readings, he had come to the conclusion that the essential secret of life was harmony. He did not define to himself at all what harmony was. The word pleased him, he felt he had come to his conclusions.

> And he proceeded to put his philosophy into practice by forcing order in the established world, translating the mystic word harmony into the practical word organisation." (256)

This is how he approaches life and people. This "organisation" brings forth mechanised existence and the people who work in his mines are nothing but puppets in his hands whom he can toss around as he wishes. He kills the mining society through his strict and orthodox intellectuality and his "harmony" which he cannot really conceive. His harmony is filled with emptiness and the moment that harmony and order is disrupted--mainly through his father's illness and slow death--he finds himself standing in an abyss. Gudrun comes to fill that void.

From the very first moment Gudrun is drawn to him physically. His physicality imposes itself on her. There is a dark, wild understanding between them. This understanding lasts as long as the physical need lasts. Once the latter is satisfied, Gerald becomes the great unknown again to Gudrun. And she wants to explore it, to know it and even to possess it:

> "When she opened her eyes again and saw the patch of lights in the distance, it seemed to her strange that the world still existed,

> that she was standing under the bridge resting her head on Gerald's breast. Gerald--who was he? He was the exquisite adventure, the desirable unknown to her." (374)

For the rest of the duration of their relation Gudrun approaches Gerald as one would approach the tree of knowledge--something that is "perfect, foreign and dangerous." To her he represents the fruit of the forbidden tree and she is thrilled by the fact that she can touch it and possess it. The knowledge would fill her and she would not have to blunder in life anymore. Too late would she realise that the fruit is rotten and its rottenness contagious, and would fill her not with knowledge but with deadliness, as he had filled the country workmen before.

In love as in business, Gerald is selfish, efficient, unemotional, and ruthless. Unlike Ursula's and Birkin's, their relationship is purely physical and therefore dead and unproductive. Actually it is his father's death that brings them together and he brings to her not only his disease but also the clay of his father's grave. Gerald suffers from an inner corruption and it is in this snare that Gudrun falls. Their direction is towards death; their relation one of becoming apart, as opposed to Ursula's and Birkin's coming together. It is a drama of disintegration. Gerald cannot love, he only needs Gudrun to comfort him and soothe him in his moments of failure, fear and uncertainty, like a mother. Gudrun provides him with this care but always with a kind of nausea, because he is not a man, really, but a frightened child. Ultimately he does not satisfy her, as Paul had not satisfied Clara, and her earlier defensive measures turn gradually into offensive measures and she attacks him, ridicules him and finally jilts him, as her sister had done to Skrebensky. Because she always felt some kind of want within herself, because she is never really satisfied except perhaps in moments of excitement, she tries to make Gerald a puppet in her hands, exercising her will over him, condemning him and feeling sheer disgust at his sight. Gerald is a physical failure at the end; Gudrun is equally incapable of true love, and her relation with Gerald brings about the malicious, destructive and mocking side of her nature. She, in a way, becomes Gerald's killer. The conflict in their involvement reaches to its tragic climax in the scene on the Austrian mountains.

After their marriage, Ursula and Birkin decide to go on a tour to the continent together with Gudrun and Gerald. It is here that the true image of their relation dawns on Gudrun and she leaves him. Both Gudrun and Gerald fail to realise the kind of relation that Ursula and Birkin achieve--a mysterious polarity. Gerald believes that marriage is complying with the social orders and as a result refuses to marry Gudrun. She herself does not intend to get married. Marriage to her is submission and loss of freedom:

> "With the ordinary man, who has his life fixed in one place, marriage is just impossible. There may be, and there *are*, thousands of women who want it, and could conceive of nothing else. But the very thought of it sends me *mad*. One must be free, above all, one must be free. One may forfeit everything else, but one must be free--one must not become 7 Pinchbeck Street-or Summer Drive-or Shortlands. Noman will be sufficient to make that good--no man! To marry, one must have a free lance or nothing, a comrade-in-arms ..." (422)

Actually, it is the idea of becoming Mrs. Gerald Crich and living in Shortlands that initiates this disgust. Because deep inside she knows that Gerald would never be a "comrade-in-arms." He would always depend on her altogether and forever, and she would have to take the humiliation and try to establish herself without roots, for Gerald himself had no roots. She is seen at the end accepting the fact that she is "one of life's outcasts, one of the drift-ing lives that have no root." (424) She is called a "born mistress", as Gerald is a "born lover". (419) Gudrun cannot become his devoted wife, nor can she even totally belong to him. The sexual entanglement, therefore, is not a complete one, and in the final scene Gudrun fights Gerald off and he is killed in the freezing snow. It is, as Graham Hough calls it, "the climax of a process of disintegration that has been indicated all along."[7]

Gudrun unites herself with Loerke, the German sculptor. He is a self-made man and she is fascinated by him and repels Gerald, Birkin and Ursula. Just before his death, Gudrun forces Gerald to admit that there really was no love between them, only lust; and instead of tenderness a wish to kill each other. By uniting herself with Loerke, Gudrun makes the same mistake she made when she stuck with Gerald. The two men are not really different. They both are inhuman instruments, tending to create a perfect, pure society which is dead and without charm. For both, the machine is their ideal, and if Gudrun was appalled seeing

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[7] The Dark Sun, p. 84.

Gerald become a slave to the machine, we see her now fascinated that Loerke thinks that the machine should work a man instead of he the machine. She is also attracted to his early poverty-stricken life. Birkin's evaluation of Loerke sums up the secret of his charm to Gudrun, and even to a certain extent, Ursula:

> "He has the fascination of pity and repulsion for them, a little obscene monster of the darkness that he is." (481)

It is this "darkness" that attracts Gudrun as she was attracted before by Gerald's darkness before finding out its lucid horror. She wants to explore Loerke's darkness, not realising that is is worse and more corrupt than Gerald's, for if Gerald's corruption was to a degree limited, and there was a dead end to him; with Loerke the damage is more, because there is no limit to his corruption. He moves slowly and spreads his deadness all over, so that the person involved cannot realise the disease that has struck him. It is with this kind of fate that Gudrun prepares her future life, and with a tourist's enthusiasm dreams of Germany where she would go with Loerke. What awaits her is even more horrible than the "barren" tragedy of her cold and dead affair with Gerald.

The book is a superb portrayal of the problem of man's position in the community, man's desperate desire to become an individual and how to remain so, and the role of the woman in achieving this goal. The characters of the book are living in a doomed society and the only way of getting out is by breaking the social codes. Here there is no more hope of realising an ordinary life which Lawrence wrote about in The Rainbow. In Women in Love it is a desperate attempt at saving the individual--through love and tenderness--before the dark ages come again.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Lawrence never believed in the power of Fate in shaping man's destiny. The individual himself was responsible for his life and only a weak man would accuse Fate for the state of his affairs. In Kangaroo, where Somers, the principal character, reflects upon his experiences during the war and the Allied victory, Lawrence writes:

> "So, it was just Thomas Hardy's Blind Fate? No, said Lovat to himself, no ... The Fates lead on the willing man, the unwilling man they drag.
>
> The Fates? What Fates? It takes a willing man to answer. Man is not a creature of circumstances, neither is he the result of cause-and-effect throughout the ages, neither is he a product of evolution, neither is he a living Mind, part of the Universal Mind. Neither is he a complicated make-up of forces and chemicals and organs. Neither is he a term of love. Neither is he the mere instrument of God's will. None of these things.
>
> Man lives according to his own idea of himself. When circumstances begin really to run counter to his idea of himself,he damns circumstances. When the running-counter persists, he damns the nature of things. And when it still persists, he becomes a fatalist ...
>
> Whose fault is it? Fate's? Not at all. It is man's fault for persisting in some fixed idea of himself." (291)

Not fate nor even circumstances draw the picture of man's future. Lawrence's characters live according to their own idea of themselves. They mature accepting their troubles without any attempts of self-pity. Almost all his characters are passionate, and therefore are subject to impulsive and violent outbreaks of anger and passion, yet they do not thrust this violence at Fate or God, but at the "perversion and abuse of the Good,"[1] because of basic weaknesses. They know they are capable of better things but they cannot reach their goals without winning a decisive battle against their weakness, without growing up.

Hardy's "Blind Fate" crushed all attempts of his characters' self-seeking and shaping of their own ideas of themselves. His heroines, mostly, defy Fate and its workings but inevitably are cowed or destroyed.

Unlike Hardy, Lawrence's point of view is usually the woman's point of view. He gives the woman the right to reject the man who does not satisfy her, but the man does not have a say, except, perhaps in Sons and Lovers, in a feeble way. But Hardy's view on women is akin to Lawrence's. His women, too, are looking for a complete relationship. His women, too, reject those who cannot satisfy them. But because Hardy's point of view is more tragic than positive, he did not believe his free souls living in a doomed society could achieve happiness. In Lawrence this tragic sense is absent. The reason for this may be his belief in the ability of true love to provide real fulfilment in a sick society. It might also be a sentimental idealisation of life, and an imaginary future to which he pushes his characters where there is ideal life. Sometimes he recoils from the real world and his characters find exaltation in the world of the past, the dead and the gone, as Hardy's characters do. These false utopias, nevertheless, do not lessen the value of his books or his characters. "Lawrence is capable of transcending tragedy,"[2] says Graham Hough. His characters do not lose their personal integrity for one moment. They are alive in the real sense of the word, and they identify themselves with the energies of life, with the living, thriving, vigorous body and soul.

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[1] Harry T. Moore. The Intelligent Heart (London, 1960), p. 321.

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[2] The Dark Sun, p. 230.

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