

ROMANCE AND ROMANTICISM
IN THE FICTION
OF
THOMAS HARDY

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ABSTRACT

The intention of this study is to examine the use of non-realistic materials in the fiction of Thomas Hardy. Although on the surface Hardy's work appears to be in the realistic tradition, several of his prose fictions are really closer to romance, and all of them will, on examination, be found to contain at least some romance elements. In this study the term "romance" denotes a type of prose fiction which draws on non-realistic materials and which introduces situations that depart from the ordinary rules of probability.

Closely connected to Hardy's predilection for romance is his use of myth, folklore, ballad motifs, symbolic episodes and evocative settings. These very diverse techniques do not necessarily originate in romance. Some of them are more commonly associated with poetry than with prose fiction. But they do blend easily into the romance atmosphere. They help to make a unity, create a mood and establish a world which is unique in the nineteenth-century novel. To read Hardy properly, it is therefore necessary to suspend disbelief in a way we are not normally expected to do in a realistic novel, and to approach his work more as we would that of a poet.

Hardy was strongly influenced by the great Romantics, particularly by the Gothic aspects of their work. But he was also concerned with the attitudes of the nature poets -- especially Wordsworth's -- to man, God and nature. As an heir to the Romantics, Hardy grew up assuming

nature to be the reflection of a divine order. The loss of faith that overcame him as a young man eroded this assumption, but, as happens with many of us, the emotional side of Hardy could not easily be reconciled to what his intellect ascertained to be the truth. This ambivalence gives rise to the characteristic tension in his work between reason and emotion, between the real and the unreal, between man-made codes of behaviour and the more natural physical urges of human beings.

Hardy's intuitiveness is nowhere more evident than in his handling of the relations of the sexes. Hence his interest in the process of courtship. Above all, Hardy was impressed by the tremendous power of sexual desire and its tendency to deceive people and trap them in situations which thwart their ambitions and often doom them to unhappiness.

I have chosen to examine the foregoing motifs in detail, as they appear in a limited number of Hardy's works, rather than to skim superficially over the bulk of the fiction and poetry in what would inevitably become a tedious survey. The introductory chapter briefly considers Hardy's upbringing and interests; it then examines the non-realistic materials, particularly those from romance literature and from Romantic poetry, that appealed to Hardy's imagination. The next three chapters deal consecutively with Hardy's first three published novels -- Desperate Remedies, Under the Greenwood Tree and A Pair of Blue Eyes -- minor fictions, but indicative of Hardy's characteristic themes and techniques. Chapters V and VI discuss two neglected works

of Hardy's middle period -- A Laodicean and Two on a Tower. Chapter VII considers two shorter fictions -- "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" and "The Fiddler of the Reels". In an effort to show how the techniques derived from romance and Romanticism reached fruition in the Wessex novels, The Woodlanders has been chosen to complete the study.

Critics usually condemn Hardy's minor fictions; nevertheless it can be shown that they are entirely characteristic of the man, that they contain episodes that are worthy of our attention and that their relative neglect is unfortunate. This study is therefore an attempt, on a modest scale, to right a certain imbalance in Hardy studies and to reveal the major themes and techniques of a popular though, in regard to part of his achievement, a slighted writer.

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I
INTRODUCTION

1 [Several excellent studies have been made of Hardy's use of poetic techniques in the Wessex novels, but what it was exactly that he learned from romance and Romantic poetry has not been fully explored.]
Since critical attention tends to focus on the major fiction, the minor novels have often been set aside. Yet Hardy's characteristic methods are particularly obvious in these minor works. This study will therefore examine Hardy's use of romance and Romanticism in a selection of his fiction with special attention to such early or neglected novels as Desperate Remedies, Under the Greenwood Tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes, A Laodicean, Two on a Tower as well as in such shorter fictions as "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" and "The Fiddler of the Reels".

The following section comments briefly on Hardy's upbringing and personality in an attempt to account for the recurrence of certain motifs and themes in his fiction. Section 2 focuses on the romance tradition, singling out the patterns that Hardy was particularly fond of using. The impact of Romanticism on Hardy is discussed in Section 3. Section 4 argues that although Hardy had very definite ideas about the art of fiction, he did not care to make any meaningful distinction between romance and novel. Chapters II to VIII concentrate on individual novels and tales showing Hardy's characteristic methods and techniques at work.

1. Biographical Considerations

Thomas Hardy presents a curious paradox. Essentially he was a conservative, traditional man who was fond of the past and whose tastes in literature were decidedly romantic. But intellectually Hardy was modern; he was concerned with what was going on around him and determined to keep abreast of contemporary thought by a rigorous discipline of home study. He proved, in fact, to be unusually receptive to some of the more revolutionary documents of the nineteenth century.¹ He was therefore keenly aware of the deficiencies in the Romantic view of God, man and nature. Time and again Hardy mocks Wordsworth and shows the inadequacy of his philosophy to account for the real-life situations in which people find themselves.² His attack on Wordsworth and the mystical view of nature is at times so bitter that it would be tempting to regard Hardy as anti-Romantic were it not that elsewhere he alludes so admiringly to Wordsworth and the other Romantics.

The conflict between his fondness for the world of the past, which he saw as constantly retreating, and his awareness of the claims and realities of the present, produces the characteristic tension of his work. Most of Hardy's novels, many of his stories and poems are about time, change, the passing of the old and the coming of the new. His view of the past is invariably nostalgic, even elegiac, although he is usually sufficiently objective to be able to accept what is new. Typical of his attitude to change is the following journal entry:

'Went to Hatfield. Changed since my early visit. A youth thought the altered highway had always run as it did. Pied rabbits in the Park, descendants of those I knew. The once children are quite old inhabitants. I regretted that

the beautiful sunset did not occur in a place of no remiscences, that I might have enjoyed it without their tinge.'³

A casual reader might suppose this to be the comment of a middle-aged man; in fact Hardy was only twenty-six at the time. Many of his personal statements carry this note of venerable melancholia.

Further clues to the romantic and conservative sensibility of the man may be found in his reading. In general Hardy was an indefatigable and conscientious student of "the great poets". They are mentioned respectfully in the pages of his journal and are often quoted. But his real taste in literature was for the strange, the exotic and the fantastic. The wealth of allusion to pre-Romantic and Romantic poets and novelists clearly reveals his preference.⁴ In the third section of this chapter, I will try to show that his characters and plot situations very often have their source in Romantic literature.

Hardy's constant quotation from the Bible, from the Greek tragedians and from Shakespeare shows wide knowledge and genuine enthusiasm. He was thoroughly versed in Shakespeare's best-known tragedies, especially those with Gothic or occult elements, and in the romantic comedies, but was less attracted to the history plays and tragi-comedies. There are frequent allusions to epic literature -- the Iliad, the Odyssey, the Aeneid and Paradise Lost. Echoes of Milton's Adam, Eve and Satan are especially noticeable in Hardy's fiction.

There can also be no doubt of Hardy's partiality for ballad literature. He knew many ballads by heart and quotes frequently from them in The Life of Thomas Hardy and in the Wessex novels. He dili-

gently kept up with contemporary literature, but again his preferences are clear. As usual, poetry is highly rated and fiction brushed aside with mild or ironic dismissals.⁵ Hardy seems to have been most impressed by Browning, Swinburne and Tennyson, if one may judge by the frequency with which they are quoted. He often refers to Arnold and Mill, but of the novelists Hawthorne and George Eliot, who probably influenced him more than the thinkers, there is little or no direct acknowledgement.

[In order to understand better the direction he took, first in his reading and later in his writing, it is necessary to consider certain aspects of Hardy's upbringing and personality.] Socially and economically, Hardy's family was somewhat superior to the neighbouring agricultural workers, although it did not quite belong to the middle class of retired officers, merchants or teachers, and certainly not to the local gentry. Hardy's father was only a life-holder.⁶ During Hardy's boyhood his father's masonry and contracting business was in decline.⁷ The constant references to class barriers in The Life of Thomas Hardy and in the novels indicate that young Thomas was conscious of and acutely sensitive to his family's precarious social position. Though he could do nothing about its humble status and lack of means, he could take refuge from it in imaginative literature.

Hardy seems to have inherited his father's enthusiasm for music; in other respects his mother's influence upon him predominated. The portraits of Hardy's parents included in The Life confirm the impression made in the first chapter that Mrs. Hardy was the stronger

personality of the two. The boy relied on her for emotional security, and it was she who encouraged him in his pursuit of learning. It is interesting that Hardy's attachment to his mother is paralleled by his curious "fondness" for the lady of the manor, Julia Augusta Martin:

Moreover under her dignity lay a tender heart, and having no children of her own she had grown passionately fond of Tommy almost from his infancy -- he is said to have been an attractive little fellow at this time -- whom she had been accustomed to take into her lap and kiss until he was quite a big child. He quite reciprocated her fondness.⁸

This feeling for Mrs. Martin is perhaps the earliest manifestation of Hardy's fascination with active, prominent, aristocratic women, mysterious powerful beings who, temporarily at least, could carry him into a brighter, more glamorous world. Perhaps in part it explains his marriage to the socially superior Emma Lavinia Gifford, whom he associated with the remote, romantic land of Cornwall.

It is surely significant too that young Hardy sought to remain a child:

Reflecting on his experiences of the world so far as he had got, he came to the conclusion that he did not want at all to be a man, or to possess things, but to remain as he was, in the same spot, and to know no more people than he already knew.⁹

Essentially this is another expression of Hardy's desire to avoid the realities of his situation in life. At this early stage it expresses itself passively, though as he matured Hardy took active steps to better himself educationally and socially. In short, The Life provides evidence of both a conscious and an unconscious desire to escape the disadvantages of his birth and upbringing. Hardy's fiction tends to support this conclusion. Frequently in his works a poor young man

falls in love with a socially superior young woman. Such is the case in early novels and tales like The Poor Man and the Lady (1868), Desperate Remedies (1871), Under the Greenwood Tree (1872), A Pair of Blue Eyes (1873), Far from the Madding Crowd (1874) and An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress (1878). The youth soon realizes that he is socially unacceptable to the young woman's parents and that in his present condition he will ultimately be an embarrassment to the woman herself. Usually he leaves home to improve his prospects by work or study. He is generally successful in these enterprises, though he does not always win his lady.¹⁰

To the young Hardy, conscious of his talents and fond of learning, it must have seemed unfortunate that he had been born into a family that had greatly declined from its former high status.¹¹ Hardy's ambitions for an education had been fostered by his mother, but the family's lack of means made it impossible for his parents to allow him to continue at school. Hardy apparently concluded that education was the best means of raising himself and realizing his talents. Like young Jude Fawley he systematically, almost obsessively, carried on a long and rigorous programme of self-education. The young men of Hardy's early novels and tales usually seek to escape their class and some, like Stephen Smith in A Pair of Blue Eyes, try to conceal their origins. The connection between Hardy's personal experience and the kind of fiction he wrote is close, despite his claims to be the least autobiographical of novelists.

On the whole Hardy led a routine and conventional life. Al-

though he frequently disclaims interest in social climbing, it seems clear from the autobiography and from observers' accounts of him, that throughout his life Hardy made special efforts to associate with titled or prominent people, especially women.¹² Yet he was not by nature a gregarious person. The impression obtained from the journal and letters is that Hardy was reserved, repressed and inhibited. He confesses, for example, to a lifelong aversion to touch:

He loved being alone, but often, to his concealed discomfort, some of the other boys would volunteer to accompany him on his homeward journey to Bockhampton. How much this irked him he recalled long years after. He tried to avoid being touched by his playmates. One lad, with more insight than the rest, discovered the fact: 'Hardy, how is it that you do not like us to touch you?' This peculiarity never left him, and to the end of his life he disliked even the most friendly hand being laid on his arm or his shoulder. Probably no one else ever observed this.¹³

He was extraordinarily secretive about his private life. He suppressed the nature of his relationship with Tryphena Sparks¹⁴ and other women. He says almost nothing of the circumstances of his marriage to Emma and very little of his later relationship to her. Yet he was certainly unhappy with his wife and, in fact, seemed to prefer the dead to the living Emma. In the past, Hardy's biographers tended to assume that it was Emma's deficiencies that caused the breakdown of the marriage.¹⁵ Recent biographers, however, have shown greater awareness of Hardy's failures as a husband.¹⁶

Despite the veneer of the well-bred gentleman there are odd aspects to Hardy's character. The Life of Thomas Hardy is filled with anecdotes of a grotesque and macabre nature, such as the following:

One summer morning at Bockhampton, just before he sat down to breakfast, he remembered that a man was to be hanged at eight o'clock at Dorchester. He took up the big brass telescope that had been handed on in the family, and hastened to a hill on the heath a quarter of a mile from the house, whence he looked towards the town. The sun behind his back shone straight on the white stone facade of the gaol, the gallows upon it, and the form of the murderer in white fustian, the executioner and officials in dark clothing and the crowd below being invisible at this distance of nearly three miles. At the moment of his placing the glass to his eye the white figure dropped downwards, and the faint note of the town clock struck eight.

The whole thing had been so sudden that the glass nearly fell from Hardy's hands. He seemed alone on the heath with the hanged man, and crept homeward wishing he had not been so curious. It was the second and last execution he witnessed, the first having been that of a woman two or three years earlier, when he stood close to the gallows.¹⁷

The first execution referred to was that of Martha Brown, hanged in August 1856 for the murder of her husband. It must have left an indelible impression on Hardy, for he mentions the incident in letters and reminiscences and incorporates it into his fiction and poetry.¹⁸

Hardy probably did not witness any more public executions yet his infatuation with death remained. As a mature man he was an indefatigable mourner at funerals of the great¹⁹ and a fascinated recorder of grisly titbits:

'Dr. and Mrs. Brine . . . came to tea. Brine says that Jack White's gibbet (near Wincanton) was standing as late as 1835 -- i.e. the oak-post with the iron arm sticking out, and a portion of the cage in which the body had formerly hung. It would have been standing now if some young men had not burnt it down by piling fag-gots round it one fifth of November.'²⁰

One senses a note of disappointment in the plaintive final sentence.

F. B. Pinion and Evelyn Hardy have singled out Hardy's strange persistence in recounting, before the sensitive teen-age daughter of one of his guests, the repulsive details of the execution of Mary Channing in

1705 for the murder of her husband.²¹ Apparently Hardy discovered a perverse pleasure in dwelling on the punishment of a young woman for a notorious crime. The incident may have been all the more interesting to him because the murderess was a real-life femme fatale.

In the first chapter of The Romantic Agony Mario Praz quotes from Shelley's "On the Medusa of Leonarda da Vinci" and comments:

In these lines pleasure and pain are combined in one single impression. The very objects which should induce a shudder -- the livid face of the severed head, the squirming mass of vipers, the rigidity of death, the sinister light, the repulsive animals, the lizard, the bat -- all these give rise to a new sense of beauty, a beauty imperilled and contaminated, a new thrill. . . . This glassy-eyed, severed female head, this horrible, fascinating Medusa, was to be the object of the dark loves of the Romantics and the Decadents throughout the whole of the century.

For the Romantics beauty was enhanced by exactly those qualities which seem to deny it, by those objects which produce horror; the sadder, the more painful it was, the more intensely they relished it.²²

Hardy shares the same dark love, the same romantic sensibility. Like the Romantics, he allowed aspects of his own personality to become aesthetic principles. "'To find beauty in ugliness is the province of the poet'",²³ he once asserted.

Hardy's curious perversity may partly explain his admiration for Swinburne's poetry; although he may have been unaware of it, he seems to have shared in Swinburne's fascination with the femme fatale, the negative anima, who deceives, ruins or destroys the unwary male: such are Elfride, Bathsheba, Eustacia, Felice Charmond, Arabella -- even Tess and Sue in some of their traits. In a letter to Lady Hester Pinney, written in 1926, Hardy describes the execution of Martha Brown, which had taken place seventy years before: "I remember what a fine

figure she showed against the sky as she hung in the misty rain, and how the tight black silk gown set off her shape as she wheeled half-round and back."²⁴ Poe once said that "the death of a beautiful woman is unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world".²⁵ Hardy might well have substituted "execution" for the word "death", and agreed with him.

There are a number of ladies in Hardy's fiction -- Miss Aldclyffe, Elfride, Fanny Robin, Lucetta Templeman, Lady Constantine, Felice Charmond, Eustacia and Tess, to say nothing of the women in his tales and novellas -- who fall victim to illness, melancholy, heart-break and violent death. Praz observes:

Beauty and poetry, therefore, can be extracted from materials that are generally considered to be base and repugnant, as, indeed, Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans knew long before this, though they did not theorize about it. On the other hand, the idea of pain as an integral part of desire is a different matter, and has a certain novelty.²⁶

In Hardy's genteel era there were, indeed, readers who found his subject matter distasteful. It is not necessary today to defend his choice of material, but it is worth stressing that Hardy's success in fiction springs from his ability to create beauty and poetry out of the bizarre and Gothic elements commonly found in the prose and verse of the Romantic period.

For Hardy the fascination with pain seems to have involved a kind of sexual transference. Repressed and frustrated in his private life, he found pleasure in the horrible, the cruel and the painful. This is obvious in the journals, but may be seen in the fiction too,

particularly in the short stories, many of whose plots turn on violence, illness and death. There are also a number of bizarre scenes in Hardy's fiction with strong sexual implications: voyeurism in A Laodicean, the necrophilia of "Barbara of the House of Grebe", the near lesbianism of Desperate Remedies²⁷ and The Woodlanders,²⁸ the epicene heroine and the obsession with cousin marriage in Jude the Obscure, the imputed bigamy in Two on a Tower, and Jocelyn Pierston's seeming impotence in The Well-Beloved. Hardy's tastes and interests were not grossly unnatural or abnormal. They are shared by many, but they do indicate an affinity with some of the Romantics and nineteenth-century decadents. This may not explain the kind of fiction that Hardy wrote, but it does suggest something about his imagination and the kind of subject matter he would naturally use in his fiction.

2. Hardy and the Romance Tradition

In a notebook entry for June 16, 1875, Hardy quotes Schlegel's dictum that "the deepest want and deficiency of all modern art lies in the fact that the artists have no mythology".²⁹ Though Hardy makes no comment on the quotation it is evident from this, from his reading tastes and from the attacks he makes on the naturalist school in "The Science of Fiction" that his own bent in literature was towards the realms of myth, romance and poetry. Indeed, Hardy's success in the novel largely stems from the use he made of materials drawn from prose romance and Romantic poetry. In this section I shall attempt to determine the nature of romance and show which of its elements Hardy incorporated into his novels.

Since romance is more a mode or a quality than a genre, it can appear in poetry, drama, or prose fiction. It tends to remove the reader from the world of everyday -- either in space or in time. Usually romance is based less on the observed realities of daily life and more upon an imaginative world created by the author. It is an ancient form of literature that abounds in traditional motifs and patterns, and therefore includes elements of ritual, myth, the idyllic or pastoral, fantasy, fairy tale, the occult, melodrama, sensation, adventure or simply a set of experiences which ordinarily do not occur to the average person. Consequently romance is associated more with the poetic and symbolic than is the realistic novel, which is attached to the here and now. According to Northrop Frye, myth

is one extreme of literary design; naturalism is the other, and in between lies the whole area of romance, using that term to mean . . . the tendency . . . to displace myth in a human direction and yet, in contrast to "realism", to conventionalize content in an idealized direction.³⁰

We can, therefore, expect to find that prose romance will contain elements of both myth and realism.

Romances tend to be set in a past which is idealized or affectionately regarded. To quote Frye once again: "The perennially child-like quality of romance is marked by its extraordinarily persistent nostalgia, its search for some kind of imaginative golden age in time or space."³¹ The characters in a romance may be stylized, even somewhat allegorical.³² But since the end of the eighteenth century, romance writers have generally tried to present their characters realistically, whatever the underlying mythic or archetypal patterns of their

work might be. Hardy, of course, is not a pure romance writer, but it is the intention of this study to focus on the romance and non-realistic elements of his fiction which, in contrast to the attention given to Hardy's realistic side, have not been sufficiently explored.

Romance is almost as old as literature itself. It is to be found both in the Bible and in the literature of ancient Greece. However, most critics regard romance as an offshoot of the epic. As the recounted adventures become more marvellous and less strictly martial, and with the introduction of women into the action, the early sagas and epics develop into the popular heroic romances of the Middle Ages. These metrical romances contain ritual, myth, fantasy, fairy tale and the supernatural; the central episode is usually a knightly quest or journey in which the hero attempts to achieve honour or win a lady by succeeding in his adventure. This motif persists into later romance and may be found even in the novels of Hardy. The poor young man who dauntlessly sets off into the world in order to make himself worthy of a socially unattainable lady is a frequent character in Hardy's prose fiction, notably in "The Waiting Supper", "Barbara of the House of Grebe", A Pair of Blue Eyes and An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress (the quest motif of which had been adapted from Hardy's early unpublished novel The Poor Man and the Lady). In these fictions the obstacle to the marriage of the young hero and heroine is generally a tyrannous or ambitious father. The chivalric pattern is especially ob-

vious in A Pair of Blue Eyes. After Stephen Smith leaves England a worthier suitor for Elfride's hand appears, appropriately named Knight. By comparison, Smith is indeed a squire of low degree and Knight has little difficulty in winning his lady.

A popular motif in heroic romance was the deliverance of the maiden from an ogre or a monster. In The Mayor of Casterbridge, Henchard saves Lucetta and Elizabeth-Jane from a bull. In An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress Egbert Mayne rescues Geraldine Allen-ville from the threshing-machine; the names, with their vaguely chivalric connotations, reveal the novella's archetypal motif and Hardy's ironic intentions. A similar episode occurs in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. This time the maiden refuses to allow herself to be delivered from the machine by Alec d'Urberville, for she knows that he is not her true knight. The stock situation of the woman in distress which occurs in this novel, in Desperate Remedies, in Far from the Madding Crowd and elsewhere can be traced back to mediaeval romance.

It is obvious that Hardy's fiction contains a great deal of material that originates in Gothic romance, but Hardy was probably also directly influenced by the poets and dramatists of the English Renaissance who inspired the later Gothic novelists. Some critics have suggested that the origins of eighteenth-century Gothic literature may be traced back to Spenser's fascination with wicked hermits (Archimago), fatal women (Duessa, Acrasia), persecuted maidens (Florimell, Amoret), haunted castles (House of Busyrane) and the like.³³ There is evidence that Hardy knew Spenser's poetry quite well.³⁴ He may have enjoyed the

"Gothic material" in the Faerie Queene, but, as we shall see, the indications are that he was more impressed by Spenser's use of the pastoral. Another critical commonplace is that the Gothic writers drew inspiration from Elizabethan and Jacobean drama.³⁵ Given Hardy's interest in the sensational, it is not surprising to find that he was attracted to Webster³⁶ and Ford³⁷ and that he was particularly impressed by Shakespearean tragedy. Judging by the number of quotations, Hardy's favourite tragedies were Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear and Romeo and Juliet. He began to read them as a boy of twelve: "At this age Thomas also loved reading . . . Shakespeare's tragedies for the plots only, not thinking much of Hamlet because the ghost did not play his part up to the end as he ought to have done."³⁸ Clearly what initially attracted the young Hardy in Shakespeare were the supernatural elements. In adapting tragic structures to the novel form, Hardy was in all probability guided as much by Shakespeare as by the Greek tragedians. The use of comic yokels as a chorus or commentary on the action of the Wessex novels seems more Shakespearian than Greek.

The most original use of romance in the Renaissance was made by Elizabethan dramatists, notably by Shakespeare. The features of Shakespearian romantic comedy have been described by Northrop Frye.³⁹ Usually a group of characters temporarily abandon courtly society for a world that is remote, exotic and unreal. The new setting is very often natural and the mood idyllic or pastoral; the virtuous characters appear ennobled. Evil is not excluded, but it is controlled by mysterious or magic forces. Consequently the audience is never seriously in

doubt as to the outcome, and the play rolls inevitably towards its predetermined cheerful ending of reconciliation -- invariably symbolized by the marriage of the young hero and heroine and their friends.

These romantic comedies abound in myth and fantasy; the scenes are richly symbolic and the situations archetypal. The audience is made to feel that it has witnessed a significant, almost a religious spectacle; it returns to the real world, along with the characters, somehow enlightened, or at least awed, by the wonders it has seen. In general, the plays are an elaborate tribute to young love, life, union and fertility.

Though several critics have noted the similarity between Hardy's comic yokels and Shakespeare's, few of them have discussed Hardy's adaptation of Shakespearian comic romance to his novels.⁴⁰ It is not by chance, however, that he makes frequent allusions to romantic comedies such as As You Like It, Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice and The Tempest.

While Hardy sometimes quotes from these plays for decorative effect, his references more often create mood, suggest theme and deepen implications. Thus, in Under the Greenwood Tree the title, with its allusion to As You Like It, implies that we are entering a pastoral world that never was, in which the laws that usually govern courtship and marriage are set aside, and young love is allowed to triumph over class considerations and parental opposition. Hardy's creation of idyllic settings separated from the real world in which love is allowed to flourish may also be found in Two on a Tower, "The Romantic

Adventures of a Milkmaid", The Woodlanders and Tess of the d'Urber-villes, and will be discussed in later chapters.

Hardy evidently found Shakespeare's boyish heroines attractive, for there is more than one imitation of them in the stories and novels. By and large Hardy's maidens are intelligent, active women quite prepared to seek out a mate if necessary. This is true of Bathsheba, Ethelberta, Lady Constantine, Eustacia and Arabella. At the same time, there is often a sexual ambiguity in them partly suggested by the masculine element in their names -- Paula, Ethelberta, Marty, Elfride. Eustacia, Sue and the heroine of "The Distracted Preacher" at one point dress in men's clothing like Shakespearian heroines. Primarily, however, it is the use of ritual and myth in an idyllic natural setting that links Hardy to Shakespeare. The harvest suppers, the sheep shearing, the weddings, the formal gatherings -- these ritualistic, almost religious observances seem to belong to the millennial world of Shakespearian romance.

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries French prose romances based on the legendary exploits of the heroes and heroines of the past dominated popular literature. But the form had ceased to develop, and with the advent of the novel in the 1740s fell into decline. While most eighteenth-century critics believed romance and novel to be antithetical and separate, Horace Walpole, the author of The Castle of Otranto (1764), believed he could profitably combine them into a new form of fiction. The result is what is loosely called the Gothic novel, but since this form has little to do with realistic rep-

resentation of the actual world it is more accurately known as the Gothic romance.

Hardy was familiar with some of the Gothic writers and their followers. He appears to have read Radcliffe⁴¹ and Lewis.⁴² Certainly he knew the later Gothicists Mary Shelley⁴³ and Hawthorne,⁴⁴ as well as the sensational mystery writer Wilkie Collins.⁴⁵ But it is more than likely that he acquired his taste for the Gothic through the ballads, the Romantic poets and from writers like Shakespeare, Bunyan, Scott, Ainsworth and Dumas père, whom he read in his childhood.⁴⁶

At any rate, the gloomy, mysterious houses, mansions, churches and castles of Gothic romance, with their mouldy furnishings and sinister portraits, provide the theatrical backdrop for many of the novels and tales in the Hardy canon. His architectural interests and training must have impressed upon Hardy the appropriateness of Gothic architecture, with its ready-made power to evoke the heavier emotional moods of awe, pathos, melancholy, terror and horror, as a setting for his fiction of sensation and melodrama. Almost every one of his novels has a graveyard scene. There are corpses, charnel objects and characters who return from death. Much of the action in Hardy's novels takes place at night or during a storm. Omens, portents, superstitions and prefigurative symbols cause uncertainty and ambiguity. In the Gothic romance the supernatural always appears to be present, although sometimes, as at the end of Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, there is a rational explanation for everything. But Hardy employs the supernatural ambiguously: an unnatural or curious incident occurs, and Hardy, like Scott

or Hawthorne, leaves it to the reader to decide whether it is to be explained by natural causes, chance or supernatural intervention.

Gothic novels have complex plots which proceed at a rapid pace. They employ suspense and tension, coincidence and deus ex machina intervention, devices which proved to be attractive to the Victorian serial writers, and which abound in Hardy's Desperate Remedies, A Laodicean, The Return of the Native, Far from the Madding Crowd and The Mayor of Casterbridge. The persecuted maiden, central to the early Gothic romances, turns up, somewhat modified, in Cytherea Graye, the heroine of Desperate Remedies, in Fanny and Bathsheba of Far from the Madding Crowd, and in the heroines of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and "Barbara of the House of Grebe". There is also a similarity between Aeneas Manston, Captain de Stancy, Alec d'Urberville and the dark, melancholy villain-heroes of the Gothic novelists and their followers.⁴⁷ But presumably Hardy was most impressed by the potential symbolic and poetic force of the Gothic romance and its underlying eroticism. This may be seen in Chapter LII of Tess of the d'Urbervilles, where Tess is startled to find Alec stretched out on a slab in Kingsbere Church. It is a powerfully evocative scene which implies that Alec will achieve his longed for sexual "death" with Tess, as well as a literal death which he does not foresee.

Hardy was strongly influenced by Sir Walter Scott, the greatest of the English romantic novelists, himself an admirer of the Gothic school. Scott's romances -- with their close attention to detail, their historical themes and regional settings -- were a new departure

in fiction of the early nineteenth century. Hardy certainly learned much from Scott but, characteristically, was loath to admit it. Hardy claimed "that he preferred Scott the poet to Scott the novelist, and never ceased to regret that the author of 'the most Homeric poem in the English language -- Marmion' -- should later have declined on prose fiction."⁴⁸ However, as Weber has observed,⁴⁹ Hardy quotes more frequently from the Waverley novels than he does from Scott's poems and, significantly, Hardy praises Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor as "an almost perfect specimen of form, which is the more remarkable in that Scott, as a rule, depends more upon episode, dialogue, and description, for exciting interest, than upon the well-knit interdependence of parts."⁵⁰ The praise is sincere, for Hardy has imitated Scott's methods. It is interesting that he chooses to single out The Bride of Lammermoor, which is among the least historical and the most Gothic of Scott's works. Scott and Hardy are both concerned with the conflict between a romantic past and a prosaic present. Though Hardy probably found Scott's nostalgic view of the past congenial, in the above quotation he puts the main stress on form. Like several Hardy novels, The Bride of Lammermoor has a basically tragic structure, and ends pessimistically. Gothic elements such as mysterious ruined buildings, sinister portraits which appear to move, graveyard scenes, violence, sensation and melodrama abound in both authors. Like Scott, Hardy takes pains to describe the land, to research the social and political background and to authenticate local custom. The tragic sections often stand in contrast to the humour of the peasants, who speak in the local

vernacular and who usually act as a chorus. Several of the situations in Scott's novel are similar to those found in Hardy's: Ravenswood saves Lucy and her father from an enraged bull and as a result the two fall in love. In A Pair of Blue Eyes Elfride's rescue of Knight from the "Cliff Without a Name" also serves to draw the couple together. In An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress Egbert Mayne's attachment to Geraldine dates from the time he rescues her from the threshing machine. As previously noted, these motifs are common in mediaeval romance. The drowning of Eustacia in the weir resembles Ravenswood's death in the quicksands of Kelpie's Flow. Both are tragic figures crossed in love. To an extent, Scott's novel follows the pattern of Romeo and Juliet. Perhaps Hardy learned from Scott to adapt Shakespearian tragic patterns to the Wessex novels, but Hardy's adaptation of Shakespearian tragedy is more subtle than Scott's. Hardy will use Shakespeare's techniques, but rarely imitates his plots.

The Bride of Lammermoor has several points of similarity to Tess of the d'Urbervilles: Lucy and Tess are both variants of the persecuted maiden. The comparison of Lucy to a wounded deer⁵¹ is of the same kind as the animal imagery associated with Tess, and calls to mind the myth of the white hart mentioned at the beginning of the second chapter of Tess of the d'Urbervilles. The drops of blood which fall on Lucy Ashton's robes⁵² bode ill, just as the drops of blood on Tess's white dress are a symbolic anticipation of her death at the end of that novel. The legendary fountain in The Bride of Lammermoor, the "white" witch (blind Alice), and the "black" witch (Dame Gourlay), could

belong equally to the world Hardy evokes in his great Wessex novels.

A number of the above mentioned elements may have come to Hardy via James Grant, G. P. R. James and Harrison Ainsworth, popular imitators of Scott's historical romances whose work Hardy delighted in as a boy.⁵³ While Hardy seems to have lifted the storm scene, the Turpin episodes and possibly several other things from Ainsworth's Rookwood for use in Far from the Madding Crowd, in general it appears that Ainsworth's effect on Hardy was superficial rather than profound. Hawthorne provides yet another example of a writer who effectively employs regional settings and partially historical themes. There is some indication too, as will be shown in the discussion of A Laodicean in Chapter V, that Hardy may have been attracted by Hawthorne's use of allegory. In his growing tendency to become the historian of Wessex, Hardy could also have been following the example of the Dorset poet William Barnes, who wrote about humble folk in the local Dorset dialect. Admittedly it is difficult to pin down these influences, but in summary Hardy's regionalism and tempered historicism, as well as certain of his techniques seem to derive mainly from Scott.

As a term, "historical romance" implies the merging of two formerly distinct modes -- fact and fiction, the realistic and the imaginative. In the eighteenth century, novel and romance were regarded as quite separate forms, as is implied in Clara Reeve's distinction:

The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things. -- The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. -- The Novel gives a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves;

and the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses, of the persons in the story, as if they were our own.⁵⁴

At the end of the eighteenth century, however, the first historical novels foreshadow the merging of romance and realism which characterize the nineteenth-century novel as practised by Scott and his imitators;⁵⁵ this tradition was passed on to Hardy.

While his indebtedness to romance can hardly be overestimated, Hardy was also partial to oral forms of literature -- folk tale and ballad. We find them mentioned or recorded time and again in the journals and effectively introduced into the pages of the Wessex novels and stories. The following entry is a typical example of the kind of folk tale that Hardy delighted in:

'Heard a story of a farmer who was "over-looked" (malignly affected) by himself. He used to go and examine his stock every morning before breakfast with anxious scrutiny. The animals pined away. He went to a conjuror or white witch, who told him he had no enemy; that the evil was of his own causing, the eye of a fasting man being very blasting: that he should eat a "dew-bit" before going to survey any possession about which he had hopes.'⁵⁶

Hardy uses "over-looking" as a plot device on several occasions, but nowhere more centrally than in "The Withered Arm", a story which he had completed about a month before the above journal entry. Here it is the supernatural element that has caught Hardy's attention; elsewhere he reveals his fondness for comic or ironic folk tales, particularly those bearing on the relations of the sexes.

Donald Davidson has argued that a Hardy novel "is an extension

in the form of a modern prose fiction, of a traditional ballad or an oral tale".⁵⁷ Although the ballad often has its origin in the matter of everyday life, the treatment of an episode in a ballad is usually non-realistic. Certainly sections of Hardy's novels, many of his poems and several of his stories, evoke the ballad world of mystery, supernatural phenomena, passion and violence which are closely linked to the Gothic. The ruined maid motif, so common in the ballads, is an especial favourite of Hardy's.

The critic Elliott B. Gose points out that elements of the fairy tale, initially a distinct form like the romance, are often evident in the nineteenth-century novel,⁵⁸ although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between fairy tale and romance. Yet fairy tale, as the term implies, tends to include mysterious otherworldly figures, frequently in combination with a transformation or changeling topos. While it is possible to point to fairy tale elements in certain of Hardy's stories and novels -- the mysterious Man Who Had Failed in "Our Exploits at West Poley", or the reddleman in The Return of the Native -- the most striking examples of Hardy's adaptation of the fairy tale occur in "Fiddler of the Reels" and "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid", in which the mysterious strangers who dominate the action are seemingly of supernatural origin. Again, Hardy's ability in "Fiddler of the Reels" to fit a ballad or fairy tale into the realistic atmosphere of the Great Exhibition of 1851 is impressive.

Folk tales, ballads and fairy tales do not, strictly speaking, belong to the world of romance, but in the desire to make his tale

worth the telling, Hardy was prepared to draw on any non-realistic material. In many respects a mythopoeic writer, Hardy naturally sought to create the ambience of romance, in the widest sense of the term, when he turned to fiction writing.

3. Hardy and the Romantics

Hardy owed a great deal to the English Romantic poets and their followers. It is obvious from allusions in The Life of Thomas Hardy as well as in the novels and stories that Hardy's favourite poets were Shelley, Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge and Keats. There are also numerous references to such pre-Romantic poets as Burns, Chatterton, William Collins, Cowper, George Dyer, Gray, James Thomson and Edward Young, to such minor poets of the Romantic period as Thomas Campbell and Thomas Hood, to the American Romantics Poe and Whitman, and to Hardy's contemporaries -- Tennyson, Swinburne and Rossetti -- who exhibit Romantic or late Romantic characteristics.⁵⁹ Hardy's indebtedness to the Romantics is evident in three principal areas -- critical theory, treatment of nature and the creation of character.

Michael Millgate has argued that Hardy's adaptation of the romance form was directly influenced by Hawthorne.⁶⁰ This is a useful suggestion, though one which cannot easily be proved. Hardy's view of the story-teller's art strongly resembles the critical formulations of his pre-Romantic and Romantic predecessors. Take, for example, the following well-known statement on fictional theory which appears in The Life of Thomas Hardy under the entry for July 1880:

'The real, if unavowed, purpose of fiction is to give pleasure by gratifying the love of the uncommon in human

experience, mental or corporeal.

'This is done all the more perfectly in proportion as the reader is illuded to believe the personages true and real like himself.

'Solely to this latter end a work of fiction should be a precise transcript of ordinary life: but,

'The uncommon would be absent and the interest lost. Hence,

'The writer's problem is, how to strike the balance between the uncommon and the ordinary so as on the one hand to give interest, on the other to give reality.

'In working out this problem, human nature must never be made abnormal, which is introducing incredibility. The uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters; and the writer's art lies in shaping that uncommonness while disguising its unlikelihood, if it be unlikely.'⁶¹

As Hardy defines it, the problem is to use the imagination to create interest without offending the reader's readiness to believe in the action. Hardy thought that considerable liberty could be taken with the plot in a novel, provided that the characters were credible: "after all it is not improbabilities of incident but improbabilities of character that matter".⁶² In his preface to the second edition of The Castle of Otranto, Horace Walpole says much the same thing about his own technique:

Desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions. He had observed, that in all inspired writings, the personages under the dispensation of miracles, and witnesses to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character: whereas in the productions of romantic story, an improbable event never fails to be attended by an absurd dialogue. The actors seem to lose their senses the moment the laws of nature have lost their tone.⁶³

Though Walpole was unable to achieve his stated intention, his

followers attempted to practise what he had preached. In her preface to The Old English Baron (1778), Clara Reeve adopts Walpole's critical terminology. She praises his "attempt to unite the various merits and graces of the ancient Romance and modern Novel", and argues that

to attain this end, there is required a sufficient degree of the marvellous, to excite the attention; enough of the manner of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart in its behalf.⁶⁴

Essentially this is the view put forward some years later by Coleridge in Chapter XIV of Biographia Literaria. He speaks there of two cardinal points of poetry, the first "a faithful adherence to the truth of nature" and the second "the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination". Coleridge then proposed the composition of a series of poems in which

the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real.

Coleridge adds that his endeavours were to be

directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief.⁶⁵

Coleridge is distinguishing between Wordsworth's poems, which adhere to the truth of nature, and his own, which employ supernatural "incidents and agents". Hardy appears to admit to Coleridge's influence on himself in his journal entry for February 23, 1893 where he argues that:

A story must be exceptional enough to justify its telling. We tale-tellers are all Ancient Mariners, and none of

us is warranted in stopping Wedding Guests (in other words, the hurrying public) unless he has something more unusual to relate than the ordinary experience of every average man and woman.

'The whole secret of fiction and the drama -- in the constructional part -- lies in the adjustment of things unusual to things eternal and universal. The writer who knows exactly how exceptional, and how nonexceptional, his events should be made, possesses the key to the art.'⁶⁶

The distinctions between romance and novel formulated by Walpole and Reeve were carried over into early nineteenth-century prose fiction by Sir Walter Scott. Thus, in his 1824 Essay on Romance, Scott defined romance as "a fictitious narrative in prose or verse; the interest of which turns upon marvellous and uncommon incidents". He contrasts this to the novel, which is "a fictitious narrative differing from the Romance, because the events are accommodated to the ordinary train of human events, and the modern state of society".⁶⁷ But Scott goes on to argue that "there may exist compositions which it is difficult to assign precisely or exclusively to the one class or the other; and which, in fact, partake of the nature of both".⁶⁸ In his introduction to Walpole's Castle of Otranto, Scott employs phrasing very similar to Reeve's. He notes that Walpole was able

to unite the marvellous turn of incident and imposing tone of chivalry, exhibited in the ancient romance, with that accurate display of human character and contrast of feelings and passions which is, or ought to be, delineated in the modern novel.⁶⁹

Similar distinctions between romance and novel are made by Hawthorne in his preface to The House of Seven Gables (1851):

When a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel. The latter form of composition is pre-

sumed to aim at a very minute fidelity, not merely to the possible, but to the probable and ordinary course of man's experience. The former -- while, as a work of art, it must rigidly subject itself to laws, and while it sins unpardonably so far as it may swerve aside from the truth of the human heart -- has fairly a right to present that truth under circumstances, to a great extent, of the writer's own choosing or creation.⁷⁰

But Hawthorne too sees that romance need not always be separate from the novel and, indeed, that there might be advantages for the writer in combining them:

The point of view in which this tale comes under the Romantic definition lies in the attempt to connect a bygone time with the very present that is flitting away from us. It is a legend prolonging itself, from an epoch now gray in the distance, down into our own broad daylight.⁷¹

During the nineteenth century several novelists attempted to combine the technique of the romance with that of the novel. A combination was effected not only by Scott and Hardy, but by such widely different authors as Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope and Robert Louis Stevenson. Here for example, is Dickens' justification of fantasy:

It does not seem to me to be enough to say of any description that it is the exact truth. The exact truth must be there; but the merit or art in the narrator, is the manner of stating the truth. . . . in these times, when the tendency is to be frightfully literal and catalogue-like -- to make the thing, in short, a sort of sum in reduction that any miserable creature can do in that way -- I have an idea (really founded on the love of what I profess), that the very holding of popular literature through a kind of popular dark age, may depend on such fanciful treatment.⁷²

Anthony Trollope also calls for a combination of realism and romance in the novel, but the term he uses is "sensational":

Among English novels of the present day, and among English novelists, a great division is made. There are sensational novels and anti-sensational, sensational novelists and anti-sensational; . . . All this is, I think, a mistake,

-- which mistake arises from the inability of the imperfect artist to be at the same time realistic and sensational. A good novel should be both, and both in the highest degree. If a novel fail in either, there is a failure in Art. Let those readers who believe that they do not like sensational scenes in novels think of some of those passages from our great novelists which have charmed them most: -- of Rebecca in the castle with Morton; of the mad lady tearing the veil of the expected bride, in Jane Eyre; . . . Will any one say that the authors of these passages have sinned in being over-sensational? . . . No novel is anything, for purposes either of comedy or tragedy, unless the reader can sympathize with the characters whose names he finds upon the page. Let an author so tell his tale as to touch his reader's heart and draw his tears, and he has, so far, done his work well. Truth let there be, -- truth of description, truth of character, human truth as to men and women. If there be such truth, I do not know that a novel can be too sensational.⁷³

Hardy would have had no difficulty in agreeing with such statements. Like Dickens and Trollope, he was ready to blend the fanciful and the sensational with the novel of contemporary life. He merely carried the tendency a step further, and brought folk lore, fairy tale, romance, ritual and myth into the otherwise realistic realm of the novel. As Hardy expresses it he

had mostly aimed at keeping his narratives close to natural life and as near to poetry in their subject as the conditions would allow, and had often regretted that those conditions would not let him keep them nearer still.⁷⁴

In another context he remarks of himself: "Thomas Hardy was always a person with an unconscious, or rather unreasoning, tendency, and the poetic tendency had been his from the earliest."⁷⁵ From the standpoint of a late nineteenth or early twentieth-century critic, Hardy's resolute stand against realism may seem conservative or even old-fashioned. But from a late twentieth-century perspective Hardy may be viewed as one who prepared the way for modern practitioners of the novelist's

art by his unusual blend of poetry with prose fiction.

More than any other nineteenth-century English novelist, Hardy was concerned with the relationship between man and nature. Directly or indirectly his interest in the problem derives from the Romantics, particularly (as frequent allusions and quotations make clear) from Wordsworth. Though Hardy was fascinated by nature, he could not share the confidence of Rousseau and Wordsworth in its benignity. It is possible that Hardy knew country life too well to be able to sentimentalize it, or that his views were transformed by his early reading of Darwin. But more than likely his reaction against Romanticism was akin to that of other Victorian writers who, having grown up on Romantic literature, felt the need to define their positions and assert their own intellectual independence by rebelling against its doctrines or attacking its extravagances and excesses.⁷⁶

John Holloway and Irving Howe⁷⁷ have pointed out that Hardy's attitude to nature is not entirely consistent, but that generally speaking, he conceives of it as "an organic whole, and its constituent parts, even the inanimate parts, have a life and personality of their own".⁷⁸ This is a significant observation, but it neglects the possibility that Hardy's view of nature changed during the quarter century that he was writing fiction. The limited scope of this study does not permit a full scale exploration of this problem. The section that follows will, therefore, simply comment briefly on Hardy's developing attitude to nature in order to reveal the extent to which he was affected by the Romantics. A more detailed examination of Hardy's use of nature will

be attempted in the chapters dealing with individual novels.

The Wordsworthian influence is quite noticeable at the beginning of Hardy's literary career. In Under the Greenwood Tree, the most Wordsworthian of his novels, Hardy alludes to "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" to suggest the reciprocal relationship existing between man and nature in old Wessex. The comic atmosphere of the novel is very different from the serious tone Wordsworth generally adopts in his poems, but Hardy, like Wordsworth, respects humble country folk and extols the life lived close to nature.

The several allusions to the "Immortality Ode", "To The Cuckoo" and "Ode to Duty" in A Pair of Blue Eyes suggest that Hardy's interest in Wordsworth remained constant. In the well-known episode on the cliffs, Elfride and Knight confront a hostile "cosmic agency" that actively seeks their destruction. This figure was adumbrated in Desperate Remedies: the fire that destroys the Three Tranters Inn is fanned by an autumn wind described as a "treacherous element" that "knew there had arisen a grand opportunity for devastation".⁷⁹ Seemingly quite the opposite of Wordsworth's benevolent "presence", Hardy's malevolent spirits are actually the other side of the Wordsworthian coin. In short, in these two early novels, nature is a living organism or personified force, inimical rather than sympathetic to man.

In his next novel, Far from the Madding Crowd, Hardy at times seems to return to the benign Romantic view of nature adopted in Under the Greenwood Tree. Gabriel Oak has some of the tenderness, resolution and strength of Wordsworth's Michael. There is also in this novel a

brief personification of nature as a genial mother figure: "By one of those whimsical coincidences in which Nature, like a busy mother, seems to spare a moment from her unremitting labours to turn and make her children smile, the girl now dropped the cloak."⁸⁰ But the general tone of the book is more ironic than idyllic. The prevailing attitude to nature is seemingly that of the peasant or farmer; nature can be destructive and hostile as often as it is beneficent. At one point, proximity to nature soothes Bathsheba's troubled spirit;⁸¹ at another, a violent storm threatens to ruin her haystacks.⁸² Yet Gabriel Oak shows that if man employs foresight, skill and industry he can cope with the challenges of nature. Essentially nature provides a moral norm: if man can submit to nature's stern discipline and pass her tests, he will prevail; but if, like Troy, he seeks to evade the yoke, his weakness of character will sooner or later be exposed.

There are almost no references to Wordsworth in the fiction Hardy published between 1875 and 1886. Instead, in The Return of the Native (1878), he develops a view of nature which reflects the scientific thought of his own age. He frequently alludes to past and present forms of animal and human existence, which he contrasts to the permanence of the Heath. Though evolutionary motifs are not stressed in the novel, Hardy does appear to be portraying Egdon Heath as an indirect environmental influence on the lives of his characters. In this respect The Return of the Native anticipates at least one of the ideas of the naturalist movement of the late nineteenth century.⁸³ This, however, does not seem to be Hardy's main purpose. Egdon Heath is presented as a powerful, unchanging but essentially neutral personality

which contrasts with the ephemerality and insignificance of man. By presenting the heath in this way Hardy heightens the pathos of the human situation. The Return of the Native is the furthest Hardy allowed himself to go in attributing personality to natural objects.

In other fictions of his middle period Hardy does from time to time employ the pathetic fallacy to suggest that nature is a living presence or organism, but he does not elsewhere develop a natural object so as to make it virtually a character in a novel. Nature is presented as essentially indifferent to the activities of man, and Hardy largely ceases to dramatize their interrelationship.⁸⁴ His characteristic preoccupation with the decline of rural England now becomes more prominent.

Towards the end of his career as a novelist allusions to Wordsworth reappear. Usually such echoes are ironic or satiric, as in Jude the Obscure. Young Jude, for example, feels a "magic thread of fellow-feeling" that unites "his own life" with that of the rooks he is hired to frighten away from the corn.⁸⁵ But almost immediately, Jude's Wordsworthian reciprocation with nature is interrupted by the sharp thwack of reality from the implement of the angry farmer. Somewhat later, in the same vein, Hardy alludes to Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode" to suggest the naiveté of Jude's childish hope of obtaining books from Physician Vilbert. Jude

smiled with that singularly beautiful irradiation which is seen to spread on young faces at the inception of some glorious idea, as if a supernatural lamp were held inside their transparent natures, giving rise to the flattering fancy that heaven lies about them then.⁸⁶

Hardy contrasts the Romantic notion of the sacredness of childhood with

the reality of the abuse of children by unscrupulous adults.

The bitterest references to Wordsworth, however, are to be found in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. The Edenic setting of the Vale of Blackmoor is described in language that echoes the opening section of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey": "the fields are mere paddocks, so reduced that from this height their hedgerows appear a network of dark green threads overspreading the paler green of the grass."⁸⁷ But the apparently ideal nature of the landscape stands in strong contrast to the previous scene in which a slightly inebriated John Durbeyfield lolls on a daisy bank indulging himself in daydreams of his noble family "skil-lentons". It is interesting to note that in Hardy's allusion to the same passage from "Tintern Abbey" at the beginning of Chapter II of Under the Greenwood Tree the ironic note is absent. A little further on in Tess, Hardy refers explicitly to Wordsworth's "Lines Written in Early Spring" to show that Durbeyfield's children, far from sharing in the divine scheme are, in fact, the hapless victims of their shiftless parents. Hardy now waxes indignant that Wordsworth dares to assert faith in "Nature's holy plan".⁸⁸ Yet the conflict Hardy observes between nature and the social law of man is close to the theme of Wordsworth's poem -- the harmony and order of nature contrasted to what "man has made of man".

Unlike Wordsworth, Hardy cannot, at least in his fiction, maintain any belief in God or even in a principle of order in the universe. Nature is aloof. As Howe puts it, Hardy "found it hard, as must anyone raised in the shadow of Christianity, to accept a world stolidly indifferent to mankind".⁸⁹ Perhaps this explains his frequent refer-

ences to "Tintern Abbey" and the "Immortality Ode", poems in which Wordsworth sets down in memorable phrases his conception of the spiritual world that lies about us. Though intellectually Hardy concluded that there was no God, emotionally he still felt the need for faith. Hence the constant allusions to Wordsworth attended by indignant criticism. To quote Howe once again: "A post-Romantic [Hardy] remained enthralled by romanticism".⁹⁰

Much of Hardy's power is derived from his descriptive nature passages. A landscape or natural description is never just an impersonal, neutral setting; it invariably carries an emotional weight for Hardy. This is also true of the use of nature for characterization, structural and symbolic purposes in his work. Indeed, the symbolic passages are frequently the most significant episodes of a Hardy novel. Certainly they are among the most original aspects of his technique, for several of the other ways in which Hardy employs nature can be found elsewhere in nineteenth-century fiction.⁹¹ Though he at first used symbolic effects in a rather forced and obvious manner, Hardy gradually learned to combine them with natural description so that they seem to arise spontaneously out of the circumstances and setting. The emotional impact of these scenes is such as to carry us over the improbabilities of particular situations and to make us believe in the characters, their feelings and the reality of their existence in the Wessex setting.

Hardy's debt to the Romantics is also obvious in his characterization. Again and again in his fiction we meet mature or experienced

men of dark complexion like Aeneas Manston, Damon Wildeve, Captain de Stancy, Sergeant Troy, Baron Von Xanten, Henchard, Fitzpiers, Alec d'Urberville and Mop Ollamoor. They are usually men of great physical charm or commanding personality and invariably have strong sexual impulses. Perhaps they initially succeed in winning the lady, but often they exceed themselves and are replaced in the lady's affections by Hardy's poetical, decent young men. Some, Manston and Alec for example, are in danger of becoming mere stock villains, yet their vibrant sexuality holds the interest of the reader. It would be hard to imagine a Hardy novel without them. Clearly Hardy's conception of the villain-hero owes something to the Gothic romancers, Scott and his followers.

There is also a debt to Byron. Most of Hardy's allusions to and quotations from Byron in the autobiography and in his fiction are taken from Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. In 1887 Hardy wrote:

Byron's Childe Harold will live in the history of English poetry not so much because of the beauty of parts of it, which is great, but because of its good fortune in being an accretion of descriptive poems by the most fascinating personality in the world -- for the English -- not a common plebeian, but a romantically wicked noble lord. It affects even Arnold's judgement.⁹²

Hardy too found Byron's "wicked noble lord" attractive: most of Hardy's own villain-heroes are of relatively high station; they are gloomy, mysterious men who are often concealing a past disgrace. The influence of the Byronic hero is most obvious in Baron Von Xanten ("The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid"), and Captain de Stancy (A Laodicean).

Although Hardy quotes Don Juan only once,⁹³ he must have found Byron's satirical stance akin to his own early social views, which find

expression in the urban satire of several novels beginning with The Poor Man and the Lady. Hardy was also acquainted with Manfred.⁹⁴ Faustian elements in *de Stancy*, *Henchard* and *Fitzpiers* may owe something to Hardy's reading of Byron, though he could have imbibed his Faustianism directly from Goethe's Faust, which he knew in English translation,⁹⁵ or from other sources.

The complement to the Hardeian villain is the femme fatale or fatal woman, a prominent figure in English nineteenth-century literature. This lady was not invented by the Romantics: The Bible includes Eve, Delilah and Judith among other figures of this type; in Homer's Odyssey there are the Sirens, Circe and the nymph Calypso. She turns up in mediaeval literature, in the ballads, in Spenser and in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. With the exception of Lewis' *Matilda*, the English Gothic prose romances do not include the femme fatale within their range of characterization. The Romantics apparently discovered her in the ballads and in mediaeval romance. She appears, for example, in Coleridge's "Christabel", Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" and "Lamia", and in the works of continental and American Romantics.⁹⁶ She is also the subject of several of Swinburne's poems to which Hardy alludes. Generally the fatal woman is pale, dark-haired, full-bodied and passionate. Very often, as with Lewis' *Matilda*, she is in reality a demon or succuba who tries to ensnare the souls of men by means of sexual attraction. In Scott's work the dark ladies fail to realize their goals, or are thwarted in love. Gentlemen, particularly if they are virtuous and knightly, ultimately prefer blondes. Byron's amorous,

dark women usually meet a tragic fate.

Eustacia, Lucetta Templeman and Felice Charmond have something foreign about them; they do not succeed in love and die disgracefully or violently. Blondes once again are triumphant. Lady Constantine (Two on a Tower), has both negative and positive aspects -- rather like the Jungian anima. A forceful, motherly, older woman, she endangers Swithin's career while at the same time seeking to advance it. There are further variations on this type: for Alec d'Urberville, Tess is fatal; Elfride (A Pair of Blue Eyes), is associated with "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"⁹⁷ and regarded as Eve the temptress by Knight.⁹⁸ But again, both Tess and Elfride are thwarted in love and die. Between them, Sue Bridehead and Arabella Donn are fatal for Jude; Bathsheba inadvertently destroys Farmer Boldwood and Mrs. Newberry threatens to undermine the sanctity of Reverend Stockdale in "The Distracted Preacher".

Hardy makes several allusions to or quotations from "La Belle Dame Sans Merci",⁹⁹ suggesting perhaps that his temptress motif derives in part from Keats. But the influence of Swinburne's femme fatale is unmistakable. Though Swinburne is not an early Romantic, Mario Praz has pointed out¹⁰⁰ that Swinburne's tendency to carry certain Romantic poses and concerns to an extreme, indicates an affinity with his illustrious predecessors. Hardy was a great admirer of Poems and Ballads from the time of its publication in 1866. The frequent reference to "Anactoria", "Faustine", "Fragoletta", "Aholibah" as well as to the earlier Atalanta in Calydon (1865), show that more than anything else in Swinburne it was the latter's curious depiction of women that fasci-

nated Hardy. Particularly revealing is the following comment of Hardy's: "We dined at Walter Pater's. Met Miss ____, an Amazon, more, an Atalanta, most, a Faustine. Smokes: handsome girl: cruel small mouth: she's of the class of interesting women one would be afraid to marry."¹⁰¹ Atalanta and Faustine are heroines of two of Swinburne's poems, which Hardy several times refers to. The "cruel small mouth" evokes exactly the predatory vampire quality which fascinated Swinburne and other late Romantics. It is noteworthy that Hardy met the lady in question at Walter Pater's. Assuming that Pater was not in the habit of deliberately alarming the more timid of his male guests, it seems reasonable to suppose that some sort of association of ideas was taking place in Hardy's mind.

Praz has shown that Pater's famous description of La Gioconda owes a good deal to Swinburne's insistence on the presence of the femme fatale in Italian painting.¹⁰² There is no evidence to indicate that Hardy's private life bore any similarity to Swinburne's; but, as previously noted, Hardy found the death of a beautiful woman a fascinating subject; he frequently reveals his attraction to women with strong personalities, usually more sophisticated than or socially superior to himself, and this predilection finds constant expression in the heroines, virtuous and otherwise, in his fiction.

Though Hardy read Poems and Ballads at the time of its publication, before any of his own work had appeared, unmistakable allusions to Swinburne's poetry appear mainly in Hardy's late fiction -- The Woodlanders (1887), Tess of the d'Urbervilles (1891), The Well-Beloved (1892),

Jude the Obscure (1895) -- about the time that Hardy had begun to meet Swinburne socially.¹⁰³ In The Woodlanders, for example, Fitzpiers, on his way to a tryst with Felice Charmond, is compared to Tannhäuser. Hardy probably came across the story of Venus and Tannhäuser in Wagner's opera of 1845 and again in Swinburne's "Laus Veneris", published in Poems and Ballads. More than likely the name Felice is adapted from "Félice", another Swinburne poem from the same volume celebrating a femme fatale. But as frequently happens in Hardy's treatment of these situations, it is the lady, not the man, who is ultimately destroyed.

The Well-Beloved too reveals Swinburne's influence. This is evident in the title (seemingly taken from a phrase Swinburne uses in Atalanta in Calydon of 1865), in the allusions to Swinburne's poetry, and in the central idea of the novel -- "the theory of the transmigration of the ideal beloved one, who only exists in the lover, from material woman to material woman".¹⁰⁴ Hardy's statement of the theme strongly resembles an explanatory comment made by Swinburne on "Faustine":

Whatever of merit or demerit there may be in the verses, the idea that gives them such life as they have is simple enough: the transmigration of a single soul, doomed as though by accident from the first to all evil and no good, through many ages and forms, but clad always in the same type of fleshly beauty.¹⁰⁵

Hardy freely acknowledged his borrowing of Swinburne's notion in a letter he wrote to him in 1897:

'I must thank you for your kind note about my fantastic little tale [The Well-Beloved], which, if it can make, in its better parts, any faint claim to imaginative feeling, will owe something of such feeling to you, for I often thought of lines of yours during the writing; and indeed, was not able to resist the quotation of your words now

and then.¹⁰⁶

Presumably both Swinburne and Hardy were attracted by the Shelleyan concept of "one shape of many names", and no doubt Hardy respected Swinburne for his courage in attacking religious doctrines. This is reflected in Sue's fondness for the anti-Christian "Hymn to Proserpine" twice mentioned in Jude the Obscure. Hardy would have sympathized with Swinburne's rebellion against Victorian middle-class conventions and proprieties, especially those surrounding human sexuality. Perhaps too Swinburne's philosophy of the Will advanced in "Hertha" had some impact on Hardy. But these influences are rather more difficult to pinpoint and perhaps ultimately irrelevant to an understanding of Hardy's artistry.

Unlike the Gothic novelists, Hardy did not as a rule make his dark villains the protagonists of his fiction.¹⁰⁷ The hero is most likely to be a slim young man, naive, poetical, of relatively humble country origin, hesitant and sexually rather passive. He often bungles his courtship of the lady or, having won her, fails to hold her. At the time we meet him he may well be attempting to establish himself in a profession. For several of these young men -- Will Strong (The Poor Man and the Lady), Stephen Smith (A Pair of Blue Eyes), Edward Sprin-grove (Desperate Remedies), and George Somerset (A Laodicean) -- their profession is architecture. It is possible that to some extent these characters are surrogates for Hardy himself; perhaps they are even self-satires, for often they provide an amusing and ironic contrast to the powerful, sensual villains or the practical, active heroines.

These figures resemble Shelley's poet-heroes. While Hardy was not strongly influenced by Shelley's philosophy or by his political and social ideas, there is considerable evidence in the autobiography, poetry and in the many quotations in the fiction that Hardy greatly admired Shelley's poetry and that he was fascinated by Shelley's personality.¹⁰⁸ In some respects Hardy found Shelley's attitude to love compatible with his own, for he drew heavily on Shelley's principal character-types in creating the heroes and heroines of many of his own novels.

Though not as well-known as the Byronic hero, the main features of the Shelleyan protagonist are sufficiently distinct. In poems like "The Indian Serenade", "The Sensitive Plant", Prometheus Unbound and Adonais, the speaker, or central character, is weak or helpless and in need of the support, assistance or love of a more active, powerful female, sometimes a goddess in her maternal aspect. In Laon and Cythna, the early version of The Revolt of Islam, Laon's helpmate and beloved companion is his sister Cythna; in Epipsychidion the narrator less explicitly refers to the idealized lady as "sister". Shelley's notion of the search for the soul-mate, the lady of one's dreams, can be clearly seen in Epipsychidion and in Alastor. In the latter poem the lady appears to the poet-hero in his sleep.¹⁰⁹ With the exception of "The Indian Serenade", Hardy quotes or frequently alludes to all the above poems. It is hardly necessary to add that the poetical search for the soul-mate was carried on by Shelley in real life, sometimes to Mary's dismay. His fascination with these aspects of Shelley's life and art may well indicate a vicarious identification on Hardy's part.¹¹⁰

At any rate, a reader familiar with several of Hardy's works cannot fail to remark the presence of at least two kinds of male hero. The first is usually young, pale, gentle, dreamy and attracted to literature. Though not without talent he is somewhat impractical and indecisive, and tends to be easily discouraged or defeated. The second figure, whose characteristics may overlap the first, is slightly older, more forceful, usually having an established social or professional position. He is highly idealistic and sometimes naive about women.

The first group is composed of somewhat pallid characters invariably overshadowed by the colourful villains or by the active, forceful women with whom they are matched. The second group is more interesting. These men appear to dominate their women, though in fact they easily become their worshipers. Very often the woman proves to be the aggressive or initiating figure. Thus sooner or later Geraldine Allenville (An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress), Eustacia (The Return of the Native), Lizzy Newberry ("The Distracted Preacher"), Paula Power (A Laodicean), Lady Constantine (Two on a Tower), Ella Marchmill ("An Imaginative Woman") actively seek out and pursue their men or, as in the case of Grace Melbury (The Woodlanders), visit the man in his dreams.

The Shelleyan heroine is less clearly defined, perhaps because in Shelley's poetry she tends to be only dimly perceived through the highly partial eyes or imaginings of the male narrator. She may take the form of a powerful female deity as in Queen Mab, Prometheus Unbound, or "Adonais", a motherly figure as in "The Sensitive Plant", or a sister as in Laon and Cythna. More typically in Alastor, "The Indian Serenade", Epi-

psychidion, "One Word Is Too Often Profaned" she is the veiled lady, the soul-mate or anima whom the poet first meets in his dream and thereafter pursues.

Such wraith-like spirits lack sufficient body to serve as flesh-and-blood heroines. Hardy adds concrete detail to adapt them to the world of his fiction. Nonetheless, Grace Melbury and Avic Caro (The Well-Beloved) are recognizably Shelleyan dream-ladies. In their "etereal", sisterly qualities Ella Marchmill and Sue Bridehead (Jude the Obscure) are also somewhat Shelleyan. The imagery of brightness associated with Shelley's women very often seems to imply in Hardy that they give off light but little warmth.¹¹¹ There are also motherly, protective ladies like Lizzy Newberry, Lady Constantine and, in a somewhat different sense, Tess. These women are in most respects quite different from one another. But their Shelleyan lovers tend to idealize them in the same way, thus losing sight of their individual qualities. For example, Shelley's concept of "one shape of many names",¹¹² which describes Jocelyn Pierston's ideal, is also central to Angel Clare's perception of Tess: "She was no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman -- a whole sex condensed into one typical form. He called her Artemis, Demeter, and other fanciful names half teasingly, which she did not like".¹¹³ Like other Hardeian idealists, Angel brushes reality aside. He thinks of Tess as a goddess and tries to make her conform to his preconceived notion of her. Thus Hardy's female characters appear Shelleyan mainly because their lovers adopt Shelleyan stances.

It is not surprising to find the femme fatale in Shelley's po-

etry. If woman can move man to virtue and happiness, she can also lead him to evil and distress. This negative anima appears in Alastor, and also in Epipsychidion, in a passage where the poet describes his pursuit of the false ideal:

And towards the lodestar of my one desire
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light.¹¹⁴

Presumably struck by the fatality implied in these lines Hardy twice quoted them, once as an epigraph to a chapter in An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress and later, more effectively, in The Woodlanders, where Fitzpiers recites them as he rides off for his tryst with Felice Charmond.

The notion that love is a delusion to be inevitably followed by a grim awakening into the world of reality is by no means confined to Shelley. Yet Shelley's rather cynical poem "When the Lamp Is Shattered" must also have struck a responsive chord in Hardy, for we find it quoted or alluded to in no less than four novels.¹¹⁵ In every case, it carries thematic significance.

Needless to say, Hardy does not entirely sympathize with his Shelleyan idealists, nor is he a follower of Shelley's Platonic philosophy. Hardy may treat the discrepancy between the idealized image and the real woman tragically as in The Return of the Native and Tess of the d'Urbervilles, pathetically as in A Pair of Blue Eyes, or satirically as in The Well-Beloved, but in his handling of Shelleyan situations, as in his treatment of Wordsworthian material, Hardy once again reveals himself to be critical of the romantic view of life.

Most of Hardy's heroines are not Shelleyan. Some of them -- often the fair-haired or blue-eyed girls of country origin who are paired with the mild, young men -- have something in common with the persecuted maidens of Gothic romance, or the heroines of Scott. Hardy may have adapted Scott's dramatic technique of working with character opposites. In Waverley, for example, Scott contrasts the dark, forceful, passionate Flora MacIvor with the fair, retiring Rose Bradwardine. A similar pattern may be found in Hawthorne's Marble Faun, where innocence and experience are presented in terms of complexion and personality opposites.¹¹⁶ Hardy too contrasts gentle, sensitive maidens with aggressive, alluring, more worldly women (Thomasin - Eustacia, Elizabeth-Jane - Lucetta, Sue - Arabella) and pits his diffident youths against the men of experience (Springrove - Manston, Somerset - de Stancy, Angel - Alec). Sometimes the two patterns co-exist in the same novel: in The Woodlanders, Giles is in rivalry with Fitzpiers, while Grace is played off against Marty South on the one hand and Felice on the other.

Hardy's method of characterization is, however, fundamentally simple. He tends to fit his men and women into a pattern repeated from novel to novel. Unfortunately, there is little variety in the young male protagonists and they are, on the whole, too pallid to capture the reader's imagination. Their female equivalents are much more sensitively conceived and a few of them are among the finest character creations in English fiction. It is perhaps our feeling for their contradictions and ambiguities which most convinces us of their humanity.

Paradoxically, Hardy is also generally successful in creating memorable characters from the fatal men and women he adapted from Romantic poetry and fiction, even though we are not always convinced of the reality of their emotions. As Frye remarks:

The essential difference between novel and romance lies in the conception of characterization. The romancer does not attempt to create "real people" so much as stylized figures which expand into psychological archetypes. It is in the romance that we find Jung's libido, anima, and shadow reflected in the hero, heroine, and villain respectively. That is why the romance so often radiates a glow of subjective intensity that the novel lacks, and why a suggestion of allegory is constantly creeping in around its fringes.¹¹⁷

Hardy's characters do, indeed, inhabit a middle territory between myth and the novel. The mythic resonance they possess often compensates for their lack of verisimilitude; moreover, they seem to be quite at home in the romantic atmosphere that Hardy creates. It is a curious feature of Hardy's writing that he is frequently able to draw such differently conceived figures into the world of his novels.

4. Hardy's Attitude to Novel Writing

Hardy himself did not consider it important to make critical distinctions between romance and novel. In the General Preface to the 1912 Wessex edition of his collected works he groups his novels and stories into four categories. Nine of them -- Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Far from the Madding Crowd, Jude the Obscure, The Return of the Native, The Mayor of Casterbridge, The Woodlanders, Under the Greenwood Tree, Life's Little Ironies and Wessex Tales -- are termed "Novels of Character and Environment". Five -- A Pair of Blue Eyes, The Trumpet-Major,

Two on a Tower, The Well-Beloved and A Group of Noble Dames -- are called "Romances and Fantasies". There are three "Novels of Ingenuity" -- Desperate Remedies, The Hand of Ethelberta and A Laodicean -- and one "Mixed Novel" -- A Changed Man. These distinctions, unfortunately, are not very enlightening. Under the Greenwood Tree is surely no closer to the realistic novel than is A Pair of Blue Eyes, nor does it appear to have more to do with character and environment. Two on a Tower is not noticeably more romantic or fantastic than A Laodicean, and indeed in the 1896 preface Hardy implies that the latter is a romance. His categories cannot therefore be regarded as providing particularly valuable critical distinctions. One suspects that Hardy was attempting to disguise an unevenness in his work. The best of his fiction he termed "Novels of Character and Environment". What he felt apologetic for or defensive about he listed as "Romances and Fantasies". In the "Novels of Ingenuity" and in the one "Mixed Novel" he buries some of the most unsuccessful of his fictions. His categories seem therefore to serve the purpose of disarming criticism.

What is more to the point is Hardy's overall tendency to bring non-realistic elements into his prose fiction, whether these be romance, folklore, fantasy, fairy tale, ritual, or myth. Such material can be found throughout Hardy's work regardless of his formal categories, from the earliest to the latest. In his critical comments Hardy tends to make a firm distinction between poetry and prose. Only the former is worthwhile; the novel he seemingly regards as an ephemeral and inferior form. It might serve to earn his living and to place

his name before the public, but to establish a lasting reputation as a man of letters he felt the need to leave behind a significant body of poetry. His prose style, awkward as it may sometimes be, often reveals the technique of the poet. Hardy was able to see that the attitudes to nature, the character types, settings and the use of symbol which he found in Romantic poetry were adaptable to prose. He excelled likewise in isolating the poetic elements in earlier prose romance and folklore and bringing them into the novel. He was not fully aware that it was his particular genius to bridge the realms of poetry and prose, blending the novel's circumstantiality with the emotional rhythms of the lyric. The offspring of this union -- the poetic or lyrical novel -- was to become, in the hands of Hardy's successor and admirer, D. H. Lawrence, a major force in twentieth-century fiction.

II

DESPERATE REMEDIES

There has been little written about the content of Desperate Remedies, perhaps because Hardy's characteristic theme of rural decline and his usual fascination with folk culture are both absent. Instead, the critics have concentrated on technique and imagery, or on the sensational and complicated plot which Hardy employs to maintain the interest of his readers.

Desperate Remedies is largely concerned with mating and marriage.¹ The novel begins with a brief account of the unhappy termination of Ambrose Graye's love for Miss Aldclyffe. Later on we discover that she felt obliged to renounce her lover because in the previous year she had had an illegitimate child by her cousin. Eventually Ambrose Graye makes a marriage of convenience which leaves him unhappy and unfulfilled. Miss Aldclyffe never marries; her strong sexual drives, constantly repressed, emerge in a strange form. Initially then, Hardy makes a distinction between sexual attraction, which he implies is fleeting and therefore unreliable, and love which, because it is permanent, constitutes the only real basis for marriage. Hardy later rethought this rather naive view of mating, but as late as Tess of the d'Urbervilles he continues to distinguish between sexual attraction and love.

While it is important to recognize the theme of Desperate Reme-

dies, it is Hardy's treatment of his material, drawn from romance literature and from romantic poetry, that gives the book its power. For this reason Hardy's novels often seem closer to the world of the romance than to the world of the realistic novel. Hardy seems to have been aware that he did not write quite like the established novelists, and to have felt rather apologetic and defensive about this. In the subtitle, in the preface and in his comments in The Life of Thomas Hardy he refers to Desperate Remedies as a novel, yet chooses for epigraph a passage from Scott's introduction to The Monastery: 'Though an unconnected course of adventure is what most frequently occurs in nature, yet the province of the romance-writer being artificial, there is more required from him than a mere compliance with the simplicity of reality'.² Hardy considered himself to be a writer of novels, but here, as elsewhere, he allies himself with the followers of the Gothic school, cautiously claiming the right to go beyond the world of reality into the realm of the "artificial". He makes the same apology in the passage from the General Preface to the Wessex Edition where he remarks that the "Novels of Ingenuity" (among which he classifies Desperate Remedies) "show a not infrequent disregard of the probable in the chain of events" and deprecatingly refers to the "artificiality of their fable".³

No doubt the Gothic elements in Desperate Remedies partly account for its power; since this aspect of the technique has been thoroughly discussed by several critics⁴ it is unnecessary to repeat their findings here. The same is true of the sensationalism, melodrama and

detective elements presumably derived from Wilkie Collins.⁵ What perhaps has not been sufficiently stressed is that the Victorian sensation novel and detective story both developed from Gothic romance.⁶

In Hardy's mind the sensational and the Gothic were not separate modes. Hardy could take a leaf out of Collins' book as easily as he could take one from Scott, Ainsworth or the earlier Gothic writers. He was not interested in producing more murder mysteries; yet violence, suspense, sensation and melodrama with the ensuing emotions of shock, terror and horror are to be found throughout Hardy's fiction. Such elements are associated more closely with romance than with the realistic novel. Like Dickens and Collins, Hardy attempted to fit his improbabilities into a contemporary setting, but because his brand of sensationalism frequently touched on the forbidden area of sex, Hardy was criticized by reviewers and editors who supposed themselves to be the upholders of decorum, decency and verisimilitude.

Hardy tried to work out a rationale for his fiction of sensation:

A "sensation-novel" is possible in which the sensationalism is not casualty, but evolution; not physical but psychical. . . . The difference between the latter kind of novel and the novel of physical sensationalism -- *i.e.* personal adventure, etc., -- is this: that whereas in the physical the adventure itself is the subject of interest, the psychical results being passed over as commonplace, in the psychical the casualty or adventure is held to be of no intrinsic interest, but the effect upon the faculties is the important matter to be depicted.⁷

This formula certainly does not describe Desperate Remedies and is not altogether appropriate to his other fictions. It would seem that Hardy's earlier insistence that "the uncommonness must be in the events,

not in the characters"⁸ is a good deal closer to his actual practice.

Hardy's partiality for the Gothic and the sensational is clear enough, but his tendency to base the structures of his novels on romance needs further discussion. At first, in Desperate Remedies, Hardy may have worked unconsciously; later on, he appears to have become more aware of his predilection for myth, romance and fairy tale, and to have consciously introduced such elements.

In a mediaeval romance of the kind imitated by Spenser in Book I of the Faerie Queene, the main task is usually to quell a dragon that suddenly and mysteriously begins to ravage a distant kingdom. Since the coming of the dragon is customarily linked to a moral lapse on the part of the king, the latter is totally unable to defeat the monster. Accordingly he sends a messenger, sometimes his daughter, to enlist the services of a pure knight. In Spenser's account the knight is inexperienced and gauche. After various adventures along the way, designed to test his worth, the knight arrives in the land, kills the dragon in a fierce battle, rescues the captive maiden(s), releases the royal family besieged in the castle and, for reward, marries the princess. The kingdom once again flourishes and the couple live happily ever after. In the Gothic romances, which also feature the damsel in distress, there is no longer an ineffective king. The persecuted maiden is still vulnerable, however, because her father is dead, absent or obtuse to her danger.⁹

A similar romance pattern may be found in Desperate Remedies. There, the central problem is the presence of the animalistic Aeneas

Manston (161), whose sudden arrival from the outside world throws the estate at Knapwater into turmoil. His appearance is not fortuitous. He comes because he has been summoned by his mother, Miss Aldclyffe, who has never openly and justly dealt with her past. Since Miss Aldclyffe has no husband and her father has recently died, there is no longer anyone to oppose Manston's presence. Cytherea, whom Miss Aldclyffe views as a daughter (89-97), is offered almost as a sacrificial figure to Manston. Like the heroines of Gothic romance, Cytherea too is without a father. Her natural protector should be her brother Owen, but his mysterious lameness only makes matters worse. His role is analogous to that of the ineffective fathers in Walpole's Castle of Otranto, Coleridge's Christabel and LeFanu's "Carmilla". Cytherea is therefore at the mercy of her tormenter. At this point, Edward Springle, a character who has hitherto acted weakly, steps in as the hero who pursues Manston,¹⁰ defeats him in a climactic struggle and releases the heroine. Having finally proved himself worthy, he marries Cytherea, who now becomes the heiress, and the two of them inherit the estate (452).

Certain situations and images in the novel support this view of its romance structure. At the beginning of the book Cytherea and Owen move through an arid landscape (18-19), on the way from their initial state of childish innocence towards the world of experience in which Manston will be the central figure; after Manston's death Cytherea returns to Edward, thereby achieving a kind of higher innocence. The main purpose of the scene in which Miss Aldclyffe invades Cythe-

rea's bed (89-97), though it does have lesbian undertones, is to emphasize Miss Aldclyffe's pathetic wish for Cytherea to be a daughter to her. Her plot to marry her son to Cytherea may be viewed first as a symbolically incestuous and therefore immoral action, and second, in romance terms, as an attempt on the part of the reigning monarch to expiate guilt (without clearing the moral pollution) by offering up the virgin to the threatening monster. In his discussion of the significance of mediaeval quest-romances Northrop Frye argues¹¹ that the dragon is actually the leviathan, the mythical sea-beast described in the Bible. This perhaps explains why, as we shall see, Manston is associated with damp places and water creatures.

The mythic pattern sketched out here was perhaps not consciously developed by Hardy, since it does not fully tie in with the other mythic elements and images which seem to have been deliberately inserted. Take, for example, the allusions to the Aeneid: Hardy refers several times to Miss Aldclyffe's "majestic" bearing (59), or "queenly" beauty (2, 74, 77). Michael Millgate has observed¹² that though at first Manston appears to be playing Aeneas to Miss Aldclyffe's Dido, her given name, Cytherea (Venus), hints that she is in fact his mother. At least three quotations from Virgil are to be found in the novel (251, 350, 395), but only the first develops the parallel to the Aeneid. The stress on Miss Aldclyffe's queenliness, masculinity (59, 215) and imperiousness (58, 97) tends rather to support the view that her role is analogous to that of the aged kings of mediaeval romance who allow moral corruption to enter their kingdoms.

The myth of Satan is more fully worked into the theme and imagery of the book. These allusions center primarily on Manston. To begin with, he is "a mysterious stranger" (151), tall (145), dark-eyed (154), "handsome" (150) with a "wonderful, almost preternatural, clearness of . . . complexion" (150), set off by lips that "were full and luscious to a surprising degree, possessing a womanlike softness of curve, and a ruby redness" (150). Thus far he looks like a typical Victorian villain, an adumbration of Alec d'Urberville. His mysterious origin, secret crime, powerful personality (154-155), great intellect (395), fiery nature (427) and "susceptibility of heart where feminine beauty was concerned" (150) point up his resemblance to the Gothic and Byronic villain-heroes. More specifically he has Satanic attributes. He is one who will "kick against the pricks; the last man in the world to put up with a position because it seemed to be his destiny to do so; one who took upon himself to resist fate with the vindictive determination of a Theomachist" (150). He stares into lightning (154),¹³ counts himself as one of the damned (403) and proceeds in a cunning way to win Cytherea for his wife (244-245, 254).

By comparison, Cytherea is an innocent (93). She and Edward are likened to Adam and Eve in Eden before the Fall (33, 43, 44), unaware of the deceptions being practised against them. It is significant that Edward proposes to Cytherea while they are afloat on the bay (50-51), a setting suggestive of freshness and life, while Manston's suit is characteristically urged first in a "marshy", "overgrown" meadow (254-255), reminiscent perhaps of the unweeded garden described in

the first of Hamlet's soliloquies; later he proposes to her in a dank, decaying church (260). These settings strongly evoke a post-lapsarian world of sin, decay and decadence, a fitting environment for Manston with his water-creature associations.

The physical resemblance of Manston to his mother is carried over into the novel's imagery. Miss Aldclyffe first appears to Cytherea as "a tall black figure standing in the midst of fire" (59). To make the likeness more explicit she is further described as "proud as a lucifer" (68). It is evident that Manston's passionate nature too is at least partly hereditary. In attempting to save Cytherea from Manston, Edward must struggle against Miss Aldclyffe, just as Beowulf found that Grendel, the creature of the marshes, was seconded by his witch-like dam. At times Miss Aldclyffe appears to take delight in tormenting Cytherea like the cruel stepmother of fairy tale. It is perhaps because of such mythic associations that Miss Aldclyffe is a memorable character.

The general plot situation of a pure maiden rescued from a villain by a young hero who subsequently marries her is archetypal. It resembles St. George's deliverance of the princess and her family from the besieging dragon. Myths which feature the rescue of a lady are usually followed by a return to prosperity and often by a revival of vegetation. It is not by chance that the poetical Edward Springgrove is associated with spring, fertility and fruitfulness. Cytherea thinks of Edward when she hears the words of the first psalm:

Like some fair tree which, fed by streams,
 With timely fruit doth bend,
 He still shall flourish, and success
 All his designs attend. (240)

Symbolically, Cytherea's marriage to Edward and their subsequent inheritance of the estate promises a new era of good order and fruitfulness. The novel ends like a Shakespearian romance: the wicked are punished and the lovers are united in marriage on Midsummer Night (446), a day sacred to love and lovers. We might well expect to find various hints of fertility: "'Maybe she'll fill out now.' 'True -- 'tis nater's law, which no man shall gainsay'" (448). In particular, the comment by Clerk Crickett that "now instead o' death there'll be increase of life" (449) seems to be a direct attempt to link the book with the traditional romance motifs of the revival of life and fertility in a previously barren land. To some extent these motifs may be found in the early Gothic romances. There too the maiden is usually rescued, though not necessarily by her lover; subsequently she marries the young man of her desire.¹⁴

Evidently Hardy derived his contrasting character types from Gothic and Romantic literature. Cytherea is a fair-haired (8), pure maiden pursued by a dark, evil, libidinous older man,¹⁵ an amalgamation of the Gothic, the Byronic and the Satanic. The persecuted maiden is a common figure in Gothic and nineteenth-century fiction,¹⁶ apparently the product of the sexual repression and consequent sadistic fantasies of the period. To add to her troubles Cytherea is pressured by Owen and tormented by Miss Aldclyffe. Curiously, the more they afflict

her, the more docile (100) and subservient she becomes. Hardy explains Cytherea's conduct by another generalization about the nature of women. He speaks of woman's "exercise of an illogical power entirely denied to men in general -- the power not only of kissing, but of delighting to kiss the rod by a punctilious observance of the self-immolating doctrines in the Sermon on the Mount" (240). The "rod" makes its appearance again in Cytherea's nightmare on the eve of her wedding:

During the dilemma she fell into a troubled sleep, and dreamt that she was being whipped with dry bones suspended on strings, which rattled at every blow like those of a malefactor on a gibbet; that she shifted and shrank and avoided every blow, and they fell then upon the wall to which she was tied. She could not see the face of the executioner for his mask, but his form was like Manston's.
(268)

The lines hint that Manston's relentless pursuit of Cytherea is sadistic and that he is, in fact, a murderer. But these are not the only passages in the book to suggest that Cytherea's sufferings are brought on by her inherent masochism.

Cytherea Graye stands in contrast to Cytherea Aldclyffe. This is suggested by their names and by the very different ways in which the two women handle their love affairs. Both women have beauty, but where Cytherea Graye is young, meek, feminine and fresh, Miss Aldclyffe is old (as her name suggests), tyrannical, masculine and endowed with only an autumnal beauty (59). In contrasting the two women, Hardy is apparently creating a nature-versus-art antithesis. After helping the older woman to prepare for the night, Cytherea retires to her own room to undress:

To look in the glass for an instant at the reflection of her own magnificent resources in face and bosom, and to

mark their attractiveness unadorned, was perhaps but the natural action of a young woman who had so lately been chidden whilst passing through the harassing experience of decorating an older beauty of Miss Aldclyffe's temper. (86)

Cytherea is usually presented as natural and artless; Miss Aldclyffe, however, requires considerable attention before she can venture into public.

Manston is very different from Edward Springrove, the first of Hardy's pale, retiring, bookish young men of country origin. Manston is cunning, forceful and determined; initially Edward appears to be mild, hesitant, lacking in direction and uncertain of himself. Evidently Hardy first conceived of him as a kind of Shelleyan idealist. Edward's father, for example, fears that his son will "die poor and despised . . . through his seeing too far into things -- being discontented with makeshifts -- thinking o' perfection in things, and then sickened that there's no such thing as perfection" (147). Hardy does not develop the political side of his Shelleyan protagonist, though he appears to have done so in the character of Will Strong, the hero of The Poor Man and the Lady.¹⁷ At this stage, Edward is presented as effeminate and ineffectual. Central to Hardy's Shelleyan heroes is the search for a soul-mate.¹⁸ Hardy tells us that Edward for years had been yearning "for somebody wanting, he scarcely knew whom. Echoes of himself, though rarely, he now and then found" (200-201). This is similar to the vision of Shelley's Alastor poet who dreams of "a veiled maid" whose "voice was like the voice of his own soul".¹⁹

But the indefinable helpmate to the remoter sides of himself still continued invisible. He grew older, and

concluded that the ideas, or rather emotions, which possessed him on the subject, were probably too unreal ever to be found embodied in the flesh of a woman. Thereupon, he developed a plan of satisfying his dreams by wandering away to the heroines of poetical imagination, and took no further thought on the earthly realization of his formless desire, in more homely matters satisfying himself with his cousin. (201).

Edward is in danger of losing touch with physical reality. Though there are rich thematic possibilities in having for protagonist a man who is searching for an ideal woman, Hardy does not carry the idea further. His problem was that a weak Edward would not be a match for the vigorous Aeneas Manston. Accordingly, Hardy quietly dropped the intellectual, dithering, passive side of Edward's nature and discovered instead an innate forcefulness in him. Awkward as the transition is, it is hardly noticed while reading the novel. Hardy remained impressed by the strong dramatic contrast between Byronic villain and Shelleyan hero and used it to good effect in most of his later novels.

Several of Hardy's major male characters -- notably Fitzpiers, Angel, Jocelyn Pierston and Jude -- either make significant quotations from Shelley or seek an ideal woman. The frequent recurrence of these Shelleyan figures suggests that Hardy felt a strong kinship with them; yet he was capable of treating his Shelleyan heroes lightly and even at times satirically. That is to say, Hardy could sympathize with their attempts to find the perfect mate, while recognizing that such a woman could not exist. The passages cited above show that Hardy was aware of the possibilities in the situation as early as Desperate Remedies,²⁰ but was either unready to develop it, or felt that it was inappropriate to the kind of book he was then engaged in writing.

Desperate Remedies is the first of Hardy's published fictions to concern itself with nature. Favourable critical reaction to this aspect of the book²¹ induced him to provide a very full treatment of nature in his next work, Under the Greenwood Tree. Thereafter the rural setting is a prominent feature in most of his novels.

Hardy's intention of heightening emotions by linking them to atmospheric effects is proclaimed at the beginning of Desperate Remedies. As she recovers from the faint brought on by the sight of her father dropping to his death, Cytherea

caught sight of the south-western sky, and, without heeding, saw white sunlight shining in shaft-like lines from a rift in a slaty cloud. Emotions will attach themselves to scenes that are simultaneous -- however foreign in essence these scenes may be -- as chemical waters will crystallize on twigs and wires. Ever after that time any mental agony brought less vividly to Cytherea's mind the scene from the Town Hall windows than sunlight streaming in shaft-like lines. (11)

Though there is no follow-up to the assertion made in the last line, Hardy's recognition that natural scenery can act as an objective correlative to emotion may be observed elsewhere in Desperate Remedies.

The first major scene to employ a natural background occurs at the time of Edward's avowal of his love for Cytherea while they are rowing on Budmouth Bay. The calm beauty of a July afternoon provides a sense of harmony and appropriateness as Edward kisses Cytherea:

It was the supremely happy moment of their experience. The 'bloom' and the 'purple light' were strong on the lineaments of both. Their hearts could hardly believe the evidence of their lips.

'I love you, and you love me, Cytherea!' he whispered. She did not deny it; and all seemed well. The gentle sounds around them from the hills, the plains, the distant town, the adjacent shore, the water heaving at their side,

the kiss, and the long kiss, were all 'many a voice of one delight,' and in unison with each other. (51)

The second line of the quotation reminds us that both Edward and Cytherea are identified with nature; the last line implies that the act of love is natural in such a setting. The general cast of the scene is Shelleyan as the quotation from "Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples" reveals. The boat floating in the bay, the luxuriant weeds on the sea-bed viewed through the transparent waters and the mood of Arcadian innocence resembles passages in several of Shelley's poems.²² In the last two pages of the book, after all the evil has been purged away, the scene is amusingly re-enacted. Edward and Cytherea have in effect returned to their lost paradise.

Cytherea's naturalness is frequently stressed. Hardy compares her to a bird (51, 53, 252, 426), to a lamb (285), to a reed (96, 267), to a flower (7, 438) in much the same way that he later characterizes Fancy Day, Elfride, Bathsheba, Tess and his other heroines. Her freshness and artlessness contrast with the overripeness and cunning characteristic of Manston. The first of Manston's advances to Cytherea takes place in the old manor-house enveloped in Gothic gloom and decay (65-66, 114). Later he asks for her love in the "overgrown" meadow close by "the ruinous foundations of an old mill" (254), and makes his final proposal in the village church:

Everything in the place was the embodiment of decay: the fading red glare from the setting sun, which came in at the west window, emphasizing the end of the day and all its cheerful doings, the mildewed walls, the uneven paving-stones, the wormy pews, the sense of recent occupation, and the dank air of death which had gathered with the evening, would have made grave a lighter mood than Cytherea's was then. (260)

Decay and death are qualities of Manston himself. In A Laodicean the de Stancys, too, are linked with decay, but there Hardy succeeds in making the imagery support his theme of the moral decadence infecting the English aristocracy and bringing on their downfall. Here the imagery is used simply to present character, not to develop theme. The sunny Shelleyan water scenes are played off against the gloomy Gothic settings on land. At this stage in his career Hardy's use of material from Romantic literature may seem too obviously derivative. In his later work romantic materials are used more subtly.

Hardy also associates Manston with dampness. As he strolls gloomily through the "dark and dreary" fields, Manston passes by a turnip patch: "the large leaves of the crop struck flatly against his feet at every step, pouring upon them the rolling drops of moisture gathered upon their broad surfaces" (164). Manston's luxuriant rankness is again stressed in the courtship scene by the ruined mill:

Between grey and half-overgrown stonework -- the only signs of masonry remaining -- the water gurgled down from the old mill-pond to a lower level, under the cloak of rank broad leaves -- the sensuous natures of the vegetable world. (254)

Manston is a part of that sensuous nature. His decadence threatens to overwhelm Cytherea's natural innocence:

The stillness oppressed and reduced her to mere passivity. The only wish the humidity of the place left in her was to stand motionless. The helpless flatness of the landscape gave her, as it gives all such temperaments, a sense of bare equality with, and no superiority to, a single entity under the sky.

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There was the fragment of a hedge -- all that remained of a

'wet old garden' -- standing in the middle of the mead, without a definite beginning or ending, purposeless and valueless. It was overgrown, and choked with mandrakes, and she could almost fancy she heard their shrieks. (254-255)

It is a sign of evil portent for a person to hear the shrieks of a mandrake; Hardy may therefore be hinting that evil may yet befall Cytherea. Alternatively, he may be implying that Cytherea is like the tortured mandrake, about to be pulled from her natural habitat by the vicious Manston.

These quotations indicate further the constant association of Manston with what is wet, damp, dank or humid. Such passages suggest his kinship with the demonic dragon of romance. He lives, appropriately enough, in the old manor-house close by a cold, dark waterfall (148), which looks like a den or lair. It is clearly a place of death:

She began to fancy what the waterfall must be like at that hour, under the trees in the ghostly moonlight. Black at the head, and over the surface of the deep cold hole into which it fell; white and frothy at the fall; black and white, like a pall and its border; sad everywhere. (98)

These water passages, with their hints of stagnation and death, stand in sharp contrast to the joyous scenes on the bay (50-51), and later on the lake (453-454), in which human love is seen to be in harmony with nature. The waters which support Cytherea and Springrove are warm, calm and transparent. Symbolically they represent the fountains of reviving life and love.

The freezing rain that falls on the eve of Cytherea's wedding to Manston carries the same associations as the waterfall imagery. Though crude and over explicit, the episode is characteristic of Hardy's early attempts to use nature symbolically. Cytherea awakes in the

morning to find the trees bent under the weight of the ice:

'I never could have believed it possible,' she thought, surveying the bowed-down branches, 'that trees would bend so far out of their true positions without breaking. . . .

'Or that I could so exactly have imitated them,' she continued. 'On this morning I am to be married -- unless this is a scheme of the great Mother to hinder a union of which she does not approve. Is it possible for my wedding to take place in the face of such weather as this?' (269)

The incident, which is rather melodramatically handled, serves Hardy in several ways: in the first place, the icy roads make any movement outside impossible, thus raising Cytherea's hopes that the marriage won't take place. The result is an injection of suspense which is not inappropriate to a mystery story. Secondly, the distortion of the boughs and the subsequent breakage of several of them evokes a sense of something horribly unnatural in the proposed union. This serves as a portent or warning to Cytherea to shun marriage with Manston. Thirdly, the episode can be interpreted symbolically: Cytherea is the branch that has bent submissively from its true shape before the combined will of Manston, Miss Aldclyffe and her brother, but if bent too much she will break under the burden. This can be linked to the reed imagery that describes Cytherea (96, 267). The comparison reminds us, on the one hand, of her essential naturalness and resilience and, on the other, of her masochistic tendency to "kiss the rod". Finally, the passage raises the question of the relation of man to nature. Seemingly a friendly Mother Nature (269) is attempting to warn its child against an unnatural act. This impression is at one with the sense of a benevolent nature that emerges in Under the Greenwood Tree. But it is in apparent contradiction to an earlier passage in Desperate Remedies. Curtis C.

Smith has observed²³ that nature which "does few things directly" (195) unleashes the wind, a dangerous and irresistible enemy (198), against the sleeping inhabitants of the Three Tranter's Inn: "It truly seemed as if the treacherous element knew there had arisen a grand opportunity for devastation" (194). In short, nature can be hostile or indifferent to some, while playing favourites with others. The book fails to take a consistent view, and Hardy realized in the end that he could not have it both ways. Accordingly, nature is benevolent in Under the Greenwood Tree, but in subsequent novels, beginning with A Pair of Blue Eyes (1872-73), it tends to be indifferent or even malevolent to man. Once again Desperate Remedies reveals Hardy experimenting with certain fictional materials, but not always succeeding in fitting them together.

In another significant passage Hardy presents an image that he was later to use more effectively in The Return of the Native. Brooding over his continued rejection by Cytherea, Manston happens to glance into a barrel of rainwater:

The reflection from the smooth stagnant surface tinged his face with the greenish shades of Correggio's nudes. Staves of sunlight slanted down through the still pool, lighting it up with wonderful distinctness. Hundreds of thousands of minute living creatures sported and tumbled in its depth with every contortion that gaiety could suggest; perfectly happy, though consisting only of a head, or a tail, or at most a head and a tail, and all doomed to die within the twenty-four hours. (245)

The water creatures lead a brief, but sensuous and joyous existence. Manston, who stands for present pleasure, identifies with them: "Damn my position! Why shouldn't I be happy through my little day too? Let the parish sneer at my repulses, let it. I'll get her, if I move heaven and earth to do it!" (245) Evidently unconcerned with the life

of the spirit, Manston would embrace a transient existence, provided it contained carnal pleasure. Ironically, in the end, he fails to get what he wants and commits suicide to escape the gallows. Since Manston is consistently associated with water, his present identification with the inhabitants of the barrel seems highly appropriate. Manston is a kind of repulsive green fish in a stagnant pool.

This interpretation is supported by the curious remark on the same page that,

the inexperienced Cytherea had, towards Edward in the first place, and Manston afterwards, unconsciously adopted bearings that would have been the very tactics of a professional fisher of men who wished to have them each successively dangling at her heels. (245)

On the face of it, Hardy suggests that for men like Springrove and Manston, Cytherea is unwittingly a femme fatale.²⁴ Like the fisherman to the fish, Cytherea turns out to be literally fatal to Manston.

In The Return of the Native Mrs. Yeobright, too, observes the "innumerable obscure creatures . . . wallowing with enjoyment" in a stagnant pool.²⁵ There Hardy is able to relate the episode to the fate of man -- doomed to live briefly and discontentedly amidst a nature which, though permanent, remains brutal and unthinking. Desperate Remedies, however, lacks a consistent view of man's relation to his world: Hardy does not succeed in relating his developing philosophy of nature to his theme.

Despite these weaknesses, Hardy is able to use poetic techniques on occasion with excellent effect. The best example is the incident of Cytherea's first meeting with Manston, when she accepts his invitation

to take shelter from the rain in the old manor-house. In the melodramatic scene that follows, Manston plays the organ while lightning flashes around him:

The power of the music did not show itself so much by attracting her attention to the subject of the piece, as by taking up and developing as its libretto the poem of her own life and soul, shifting her deeds and intentions from the hands of her judgment and holding them in its own.

She was swayed into emotional opinions concerning the strange man before her; new impulses of thought came with new harmonies, and entered into her with a gnawing thrill. A dreadful flash of lightning then, and the thunder close upon it. She found herself involuntarily shrinking up beside him, and looking with parted lips at his face.

He turned his eyes and saw her emotion, which greatly increased the ideal element in her expressive face. She was in the state in which woman's instinct to conceal has lost its power over her impulse to tell; and he saw it.

(154)

To understand the effect on Cytherea we must bear in mind that she is presently disillusioned with Edward, whom she feels has acted weakly and trifled with her love. The dark, powerful, resolute, passionate Manston is everything that Springrove is not. Clearly Hardy is using the episode to dramatize Manston's ascendancy over Cytherea's spirit. The basis of that power is the physical attraction each feels for the other, strongly suggested in the sexual metaphors of the second paragraph.²⁶

Cytherea's submissive reaction to Manston anticipates the sword-play scene in Far from the Madding Crowd in which Troy virtually mesmerizes Bathsheba in a phallic display of his naked sword. Bathsheba, of course, is swept off her feet and marries Troy, only to discover later on that the man she really needs is the countrified but steadfast Oak.²⁷ Hardy was to use music as a symbol of sexual arousal a second

time in "The Fiddler of the Reels". Once again the musician is a mysterious, dark stranger with demonic characteristics contrasted to a passive, rational, domesticated man of plebeian origins.

Cytherea's physical attraction to Manston is awakened when he touches part of her clothing (151). Hardy employs the same motif in one of the courtship scenes:

He came so close that their clothes touched. 'Will you try to love me? Do try to love me!' he said, in a whisper, taking her hand. He had never taken it before. She could feel his hand trembling exceedingly as it held hers in its clasp. . . . How truly pitiful it was to feel his hand tremble so -- all for her! Should she withdraw her hand? She would think whether she would. (254)

Though the idea is good, the execution is too explicit and repetitious to be fully effective. Hardy handles the device more subtly in Far from the Madding Crowd. In that novel the entanglement of Troy's spur in Bathsheba's gown symbolizes the beginning of their sexual entanglement.²⁸ Hardy, by that time a good deal more sure of himself, no longer feels the need to philosophize on the nature of woman's relation to her clothes. Heavy-handed though they may be, the sexual motifs in Desperate Remedies are certainly linked to one of the controlling ideas -- that physical attraction alone is a poor basis for marriage. Unfortunately it is not completely clear why Cytherea prefers Edward. Hardy suggests that his hero and heroine are basically compatible, yet at this stage of his career he is unable to do more.

In the preface to Desperate Remedies Hardy observed that the novel was written "at a time when he was feeling his way to a method", and then added that, "some of the scenes, and at least one or two of

the characters, have been deemed not unworthy of a little longer preservation" (v). There is no consistent philosophic view lying behind the book; plot and imagery are not fully integrated into theme. The means used to present the characters are forceful, but Hardy does not seem to be able to enter into their minds and personalities deeply enough to persuade us that they are fully human. Thus Manston, though memorable, is not convincing. Curiously it is Miss Aldclyffe who emerges as the most compelling character in the book -- partly because Hardy presents her strange behaviour to us without the laboured explanations he sometimes deems necessary for the others, and partly because we feel the pathos of her situation.

Desperate Remedies is inferior to the Wessex novels; but in its characterization, plot situations and use of nature it differs in degree rather than kind. The devices that give the Wessex novels their power are present in Desperate Remedies though employed in a crude, blatant or unsophisticated manner. The book remains interesting, however, and not merely because it shows the main elements of Hardy's art present in this his first published novel.

As we have seen, Hardy is not always able to develop his imagery consistently and link it to his theme; yet an underlying mythic pattern does emerge which gives Desperate Remedies shape and resonance. / Its origin may be traced back to myth and early romance, though it is unlikely that Hardy was consciously drawing on these sources; given his knowledge of the Gothic and post-Gothic novel, the structure must have come readily to mind. At any rate it is the mythic and symbolic elements which give the novel the power that even the early reviewers

felt. What Hardy had not thought to do in his first two attempts at novel writing was to apply the patterns and techniques of romance to the rural world which he knew so well. This he was to do in his next work, Under the Greenwood Tree.

III

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE

Under the Greenwood Tree is the first of Hardy's published fictions to reveal clearly the tension he perceives between old and new, romantic and anti-romantic, and to root this conflict firmly in a rural setting. With its heavy admixture of elements from pastoral poetry, Shakespearian romantic comedy and Wordsworthian nature lore, Under the Greenwood Tree is anything but realistic, although in theme, setting and characterization it has always been regarded as one of the Wessex novels.

Curiously, it was with some difficulty that Hardy found his way to the rural theme which characterizes his best work. In The Poor Man and the Lady he had concentrated on the city, and in Desperate Remedies he had indulged his penchant for the sensational, but without being able to attract much popular attention. It was the nearly unanimous praise of the Victorian editorial readers and reviewers for his handling of the country scenes in his first two works,¹ together with Hardy's own determination to succeed as a novelist, that prompted him to write a wholly rural tale.

Hardy sent the manuscript of Under the Greenwood Tree to Macmillan, before following it up with a letter:

I have sent by railway the manuscript of a tale called 'Under the Greenwood Tree'.

It is entirely a story of rural life, and the attempt has been to draw the characters humorously, without caricature. General reasons have induced me to try my hand on a story wholly of this tone -- one reason being some reviews of a late novel of mine -- (in its leading features of a different nature from the present). In that story the rustic characters and scenery had very little point, yet to my surprise they were made very much of by the reviews. The Athenaeum said 'the characters are often exceedingly good . . . the parish clerk "a sort of Bowdlerized rake" who refers to the time "before he took orders" is really almost worthy of George Eliot . . . We see no reason why the author should not write novels but little, if at all inferior to the best of the present generation.'²

In mentioning the Athenaeum reviewer's favourable comparison of himself to George Eliot, Hardy was reminding Macmillan of the vogue for rural fiction created by Eliot. In the earlier Desperate Remedies (1871), Hardy had tried to ride the wave of popular enthusiasm for mystery-thrillers developed by Wilkie Collins. There is nothing reprehensible in Hardy's attempts to size up the market, especially after his failure to reach the public with his first two works of fiction. It is interesting, however, that the Victorian editorial readers and reviewers had to prod him into writing on the subject he obviously knew best, but was reluctant to tackle. Clearly Hardy and his readers owe a debt of thanks to the perspicacity of these early critics.

With his third fiction Hardy succeeded. The reviewers of Under the Greenwood Tree responded well to his treatment of rural setting and rustic characters. The Athenaeum was pleased that Hardy had "worked principally that vein of his genius which yields the best produce, and wherein his labours result in more satisfaction to his readers than did his explorations into the dark ways of human crime and folly".³ The Pall

Mall Gazette noted Hardy's subtitle "a rural painting of the Dutch school", and complimented him for his "very carefully executed painting".⁴ Writing in the Saturday Review, Hardy's friend and mentor, Horace Moule, found "the author's mention of the Dutch school upon his title-page "entirely justified and concluded that the book was filled with keen observation, and with the genuine air of the country breathing throughout it".⁵ However, the reviewers said nothing of Hardy's theme. Moule was no doubt correct in pointing out Hardy's "truthfulness", "keen observation" and faithful representation of characters, but he and his colleagues passed over the romantic, imaginative aspects of the book. In the autobiography Hardy insisted that he had

invented the personages, incidents, manners, etc., never having seen or heard the choir as such, they ending their office when he was about a year old. He was accustomed to say that on this account he had rather burlesqued them, the story not so adequately reflecting as he could have wished in later years the poetry and romance that coloured their time-honoured observances.⁶

According to the view expressed here, Under the Greenwood Tree was less a realistic description of country life than an imaginative construction of a world of "poetry and romance", a "pastoral story", as he termed it in his second letter to Macmillan.⁷ Hardy did not seem to be aware of the contradiction offered by his subtitle, which implies that the novel will be strongly realistic, and by the remark he made in the 1896 preface that his "story" was "intended to be a fairly true picture, at first hand, of the personages, ways, and customs which were common among such orchestral bodies in the villages of fifty or sixty years ago" (v-vi). There is, of course, the attention to detail that we associate

with a realistic novel, but the charm of Under the Greenwood Tree is at least partly attributable to its fanciful and poetic elements.

Michael Millgate has touched on this aspect of Under the Greenwood Tree in his discussion of its relationship to Shakespeare's As You Like It.⁸ Millgate comments on the Arcadian atmosphere of Mellstock and describes the book as "a kind of woodland pastoral, moving in time with the procession of the seasons".⁹ His point is well taken, although there is still more to be said about its relation to Shakespearian romance.

In Shakespearian romantic comedy the characters move from a society governed more or less realistically by rational calculations to reside for a time in what is often called "the green world", usually a vague or distant region governed by laws quite different from those to which the characters have been accustomed. This realm, in which much of the action of a romantic comedy occurs, may be dreamlike, fantastic, idyllic, or primitive, but it is almost always closer to nature than the original world that the noble characters had inhabited.

Mellstock resembles Shakespeare's green world. Admittedly Hardy's characters do not change their geographical locale, but there is a similar contrast implied between an innocent Arcadian natural setting and the encroaching modern, industrial world of Victorian England. In Under the Greenwood Tree Hardy sets up the first of his conflicts between a machine-oriented force and the immemorial, rural society. The organ, which is to be brought into the community, serves the same function as the new-fangled agricultural implements introduced in An Indis-

cretion in the Life of an Heiress, The Mayor of Casterbridge and Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Though rural society is weaker, Hardy implies in Under the Greenwood Tree that it represents a better, more harmonious and integrated way of life than the efficient, semi-urban one which is destined to replace it.

The separation of Under the Greenwood Tree into low and high comedy constitutes another resemblance to As You Like It. While the choir provides a coarse, earthy humour, especially when Thomas Leaf is included, Dick's courting of Fanny gives rise to a more dignified form of comedy. The obstacles in their courtship are set aside, and Dick and Fanny are allowed to succeed in a way that probably would not have been possible for them in real life.¹⁰ At the end of Under the Greenwood Tree, as at the end of a Shakespearian comedy, young love triumphs, the opposing factions are reconciled and the romance ends in a symbolic marriage feast and dance. The closing lines, "'Tippiwit! swe-e-et! ki-ki-ki! Come hither, come hither, come hither!'"¹¹ are from the same song alluded to in the title of the book. It is an invitation to love and serves to remind us of the theme constantly celebrated at the end of Shakespeare's romantic comedies -- union and fertility.¹²

The neatness with which Hardy has tied his tale into the seasonal cycle to serve thematic as well as structural ends has not received much critical attention.¹³ The same technique may be found in Hardy's other novels, particularly The Woodlanders, a later novel that has much in common with this early romance. Under the Greenwood Tree begins in "Winter" and then moves through "Spring", "Summer" and "Autumn". But

Hardy skips the next winter season, choosing to hold the final wedding scene the next spring. The five parts of the book resemble the five act structure of a Shakespearian comedy, which often begins with a meeting between a young man and woman, describes their falling in love, raises complications, works out a solution to the obstacles before them and ends in a marriage celebration.

A comparison of Under the Greenwood Tree with As You Like It reminds us that both romances are variants of the pastoral. Under the Greenwood Tree deals sympathetically and nostalgically with a rural life of the recent past¹⁴ which is regarded as simpler, more natural and therefore preferable to the sophisticated, alien society which is replacing it. Far from the Madding Crowd, The Woodlanders and other Wessex novels also contain pastoral elements, but only in Under the Greenwood Tree is country life largely presented as innocent and good, and only here does Hardy rigorously avoid the tragic.

With the wisdom of hindsight, Hardy depicted rural society as inherently weak. On the face of it, the Mellstock villagers would prefer to keep the choir and their old ways. They are opposed only by Parson Maybold, Shiner the churchwarden and, somewhat ambiguously, by Fancy Day. Yet they are defeated. The authority and prestige of a higher social class and a superior education is seemingly enough to make the villagers capitulate. Despite Fancy's marriage to Dick, there is no suggestion that Fancy will now relinquish the organ in order to restore the choir.

A sense of the ultimate inadequacy of pastoral life is not incom-

patible with praise for its simplicity and virtue. Spenser, for example, demonstrates its vulnerability in Book VI, Cantos ix to xi, of the Faerie Queene. When Calidore, the aristocratic knight of Courtesy, sojourns in the pastoral world in order to woo a country girl, he ultimately brings destruction to the inhabitants of that world.¹⁵ This is analogous to a recurring plot situation of Hardy's fiction: the disruption of a rural community that results when a better educated, more experienced or socially superior man from the outside courts a village maiden. In A Pair of Blue Eyes and Far from the Madding Crowd, for example, Knight and Troy find it comparatively easy to overcome their more humble rivals. Plot complications of this kind are adumbrated in Desperate Remedies and in Under the Greenwood Tree. In the latter, Parson Maybold, the outsider, would normally have had little trouble in displacing the rustic suitors, Dick and Shiner, but the comic tone does not permit a pathetic or tragic denouement. Dick and Fancy are united at the end, and we hear no more of Parson Maybold.

The suggestion that man is at his happiest and best in a state of nature does not come solely from the pastoral tradition. As previously noted,¹⁶ Hardy had been greatly impressed by the romantic poets, and his attempt to come to terms with their attitude to nature is obvious in many of his works.

One of the key elements in the Romantic view of nature is the extension of the pathetic fallacy. As a form of metaphor it is as old as literature. But during the Romantic period the pathetic fallacy goes beyond mere personification to become a key image in the spiritualiza-

tion of nature as a beneficent force. This may be seen in the lines from Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey":

. . . Well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Hardy was never able to accept such a view. Take the opening paragraph of Under the Greenwood Tree:

To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the fir-trees sob and moan no less distinctly than they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; the beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall. And winter, which modifies the note of such trees as shed their leaves, does not destroy its individuality.

On a cold and starry Christmas-eve within living memory a man was passing up a lane towards Mellstock Cross in the darkness of a plantation that whispered thus distinctively to his intelligence. (3)

Hardy's first concern is to establish the natural setting; the effect of the pathetic fallacy is to imply, as do the Romantic poets, that nature, or parts of it, have a distinctive personality. By individualizing the trees, Hardy implies the existence of an interrelationship between man and nature appropriate to the pastoral setting of his romance, and suggests the sensitivity and discrimination of Dick, whose stature must be sufficiently elevated if his subsequent winning of Fancy Day is to be at all credible. In this passage Hardy goes further than Wordsworth's simple personification of the daffodils, "tossing their heads in sprightly dance",¹⁷ but he refrains from spiritualizing nature in the way that Wordsworth does in "Tintern Abbey". The pathetic fallacy does, however, assist in establishing an underlying mood which harmonizes with the

idyllic and pastoral quality of his romance.

The Romantic view that a reciprocal relationship between man and nature is both possible and desirable seems to be implied in the following passage from Under the Greenwood Tree:

It was a long low cottage with a hipped roof of thatch having dormer windows breaking up into the eaves, a chimney standing in the middle of the ridge and another at each end. The window-shutters were not yet closed, and the fire- and candle-light within radiated forth upon the thick bushes of box and laurestinus growing in clumps outside, and upon the bare boughs of several codlin-trees hanging about in various distorted shapes, the result of early training as espaliers combined with careless climbing into their boughs in later years. The walls of the dwelling were for the most part covered with creepers, though these were rather beaten back from the doorway -- a feature which was worn and scratched by much passing in and out, giving it by day the appearance of an old keyhole. Light streamed through the cracks and joints of outbuildings a little way from the cottage, a sight which nourished a fancy that the purpose of the erection must be rather to veil bright attractions than to shelter unsightly necessities. (7)

In the radiation of fire-light from cottage to garden, the author implies that the natural setting has been humanized by man. Conversely, the creepers that almost swallow up the cottage suggest human submergence in the natural life. Man and nature interact in a harmonious relationship. We have, then, something akin to the reciprocation between the human and the natural which characterizes much of Wordsworth's poetry. This may be seen in the introductory verse paragraph from "Tintern Abbey":

. . . Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view

These plots of cottage ground, these orchard tufts,
 Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
 Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
 'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
 These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
 Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,
 Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
 Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!

These lines portray country folk as an integral part of the landscape and show the harmonious interaction of man and nature. They imply the theme of the poem -- the beneficent effects of nature on man. In part, this is the message of Under the Greenwood Tree: man was content in rural Wessex of the 1830s (or '40s); his pleasures were simple and his culture, rooted in country traditions, was rich and significant to him.

The description of Grandfather William also seems to reflect Hardy's reading of Wordsworth. The old man is closely associated with nature:

WILLIAM DEWY -- otherwise grandfather William -- was now about seventy; yet an ardent vitality still preserved a warm and roughened bloom upon his face, which reminded gardeners of the sunny side of a ripe ribstone-pippin; though a narrow strip of forehead, that was protected from the weather by lying above the line of his hat-brim, seemed to belong to some town man, so gentlemanly was its whiteness. His was a humorous and kindly nature, not un-mixed with a frequent melancholy; and he had a firm religious faith. (15)

Old Dewy makes most of the crucial decisions of the choir.¹⁸ At the same time he is the moral authority in the family: his insistence that the dancing not begin until Christmas Day is over is accepted by the assembled guests and family at the tranter's home:

Though Reuben and his wife ruled on social points, religious questions were mostly disposed of by the old man, whose firmness on this head quite counterbalanced a certain weakness in his handling of domestic matters.(47)

The domestic weaknesses, whatever they may be, are not apparent in the book. On the contrary, Grandfather William emerges as a figure of considerable stature. He symbolizes the dignity and virtue of the old rural life:

Some of the youthful sparkle that used to reside there animated William's eye as he uttered the words, and a certain nobility of aspect was also imparted to him by the setting sun, which gave him a Titanic shadow at least thirty feet in length, stretching away to the east in outlines of imposing magnitude, his head finally terminating upon the trunk of a grand old oak tree. (73)

The exaltation of an old man of humble origin and the persistent natural imagery used to describe him recall Wordsworth's leech gatherer in "Resolution and Independence", a poem Hardy knew well.¹⁹ Wordsworth compares the old man to "a huge stone" or a great sea beast. In his dignity and "lofty utterance" the leech gatherer makes a strong moral impact. To the poet he seemed "like a man from some far region sent,/ To give me human strength, by apt admonishment" (111-112). Hardy, like Wordsworth, identifies certain of his characters with nature and provides them with a symbolic and thematic role.

Although he was initially attracted by Wordsworth's view of man and nature, Hardy's intellectual allegiance was more to the thought of the later nineteenth century. His firsthand knowledge of country ways combines with the rational side of his temperament to make him doubt the validity of the romantic nature cult. This skepticism takes the form of a recurring irony and satire which he employs to prevent undue sentimentalizing of his characters' relation to their natural environment.

Several critics have emphasized the realistic and factual aspects of Under the Greenwood Tree,²⁰ and have shown how Hardy drew on personal knowledge and experience to describe the Dewy household, the rural customs and festivals, the change of seasons, the sound of the trees and other facets of life in Mellstock. Realistic treatment is, however, consistent with the Romantic view of nature, which stressed accurate observation of external objects while casting upon them "the light that never was". The subtitle, "a rural painting of the Dutch school", apparently derives from George Eliot's resolve in Adam Bede (1859), to tell her "simple story, without trying to make things better than they were".²¹ On the same page, Eliot goes on to state:

It is for this rare, precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings, which lofty-minded people despise. I find a source of delicious sympathy in these faithful pictures of a monotonous homely existence, which has been the fate of so many more among my fellow-mortals than a life of pomp or of absolute indigence, of tragic suffering or of world-stirring actions. I turn, without shrinking, from cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot, or eating her solitary dinner, while the noonday light, softened perhaps by a screen of leaves, falls on her mob-cap, and just touches the rim of her spinning-wheel, and her stone jug, and all those cheap common things which are the precious necessities of life to her -- or I turn to that village wedding, kept between four brown walls, where an awkward bridegroom opens the dance with a high-shouldered, broad-faced bride, while elderly and middle-aged friends look on, with very irregular noses and lips, and probably with quart-pots in their hands, but with an expression of unmistakable contentment and good will.

This is no doubt a fair statement of George Eliot's intentions, though it might be argued that figures like Dinah Morris and Adam Bede do not escape the idealizing hand of their author. In any case, it does not quite apply to Mellstock where things are made out to be somewhat bet-

ter than they were. Nevertheless, Hardy's realism does have the effect of undercutting any tendency he might have to fall into nostalgia.

Mrs. Dewy's comments on her husband's family weakness provides an illustration of this:

'If any of the girls should turn after their father
'twill be a bad look-out for 'em, poor things! None of
my family was sich vulgar sweaters, not one of 'em. But,
Lord-a-mercy, the Dewys! I don't know how ever I cam'
into such a family!' (45)

In this and other deft touches Hardy acknowledges the coarseness of rural life. The treatment for the most part is humorous, but the effect subtly reminds the reader that Mellstock is not, after all, Arcadia.

Nor is Mellstock immune from class consciousness, snobbery and social climbing. Geoffrey Day is perhaps the worst offender in these matters. When Dick requests Fancy's hand in marriage, Geoffrey's reply is that Dick lacks the social status:

'D'ye know what her mother was?'

'No.'

'A teacher in a landed family's nursery, who was foolish enough to marry the keeper of the same establishment; . . . d'ye think Fancy picked up her good manners, the smooth turn of her tongue, her musical notes, and her knowledge of books, in a homely hole like this?'

'No.'

.
'Well, and do ye know what I live in such a miserly way for when I've got enough to do without it, and why I make her work as a schoolmistress instead of living here?'

'No.'

'That if any gentleman, who sees her to be his equal in polish, should want to marry her, and she want to marry him, he shan't be superior to her in pocket. Now do ye think after this that you be good enough for her?'

'No.' (163-164)

The scene is treated satirically: Geoffrey after all married a teacher just as Dick wishes to do. Apparently Dick is also subject to class

consciousness; otherwise he would not so meekly have accepted Geoffrey's pretensions. Fancy echoes her father's teaching: "And I love you always; and those times when you look silly and don't seem quite good enough for me, -- just the same, I do, Dick!" (139) She wishes to bring the organ and other innovations into the community not because they can be shown to be an improvement over the old ways, but because she will be the centre of attention, or because she is affected by the Victorian middle-class concern with gentility and respectability:

The propriety of every one was intense, by reason of the influence of Fancy, who, as an additional precaution in this direction had strictly charged her father and the tranter to carefully avoid saying 'thee' and 'thou' in their conversation, on the plea that those ancient words sounded so very humiliating to persons of newer taste; also that they were never to be seen drawing the back of the hand across the mouth after drinking -- a local English custom of extraordinary antiquity, but stated by Fancy to be decidedly dying out among the better classes of society. (206-207)

Again, the effect here is comic and satiric, but in the later novels and stories, snobbery and class barriers have a destructive impact on Hardy's protagonists.

Another way in which Hardy undercuts the idyllic quality of Under the Greenwood Tree is by an anti-heroic presentation of Fancy and Dick. In what must surely be one of the most original introductions of a heroine in fiction, Hardy introduces Fancy through a comparison of her boot to Geoffrey's last:

'Now, neighbours, though no common eye can see it,' the shoemaker went on, 'a man in the trade can see the likeness between this boot and that last, although that is so deformed as hardly to recall one of God's creatures, and this is one of as pretty a pair as you'd get for ten-and-sixpence in Casterbridge. To you, nothing; but 'tis father's voot and daughter's voot to me, as

plain as houses.' (19)

This amusingly deflates Dick's "delicate feeling" that he had no right to inspect the boot "without having first asked the owner of the foot's permission" (19). Hardy's method of advancing Fancy's charms while insisting on her faults is sustained throughout the book. Pretty she is, but as Elias Spinks reminds Dick, "A very good pink face, as far as that do go. Still, only a face, when all is said and done" (21).

In the following passage Hardy implies that Fancy's decision to conceal her reaction to Maybold's proposal is unworthy: "'I wonder!' said Fancy, looking into vacancy with those beautiful eyes of hers -- too refined and beautiful for a tranter's wife; but, perhaps, not too good" (201). Since Hardy does not permit Dick to discover her secret there can be no crisis. But in A Pair of Blue Eyes and Tess of the d'Urbervilles the heroine's lack of candour poisons her relations with her lover. Beginning with Desperate Remedies the motif of the unconfessed secret runs through Hardy's fiction.

Though Dick is morally superior to Fancy, Hardy handles him in the same anti-heroic manner:

· Having come more into the open he could now be seen rising against the sky, his profile appearing on the light background like the portrait of a gentleman in black cardboard. It assumed the form of a low-crowned hat, an ordinary-shaped nose, an ordinary chin, an ordinary neck, and ordinary shoulders. What he consisted of further down was invisible from lack of sky low enough to picture him on.
(4-5)

In the first paragraphs of Under the Greenwood Tree Hardy suggested Dick's sensitivity to nature, yet on the very next page he undermines

the impression of Dick's special qualities by stressing his commonness. Like most lovers Dick insists on idealizing his sweetheart. He views her as a "lively goddess" (56), and ignores any hints that she may be less an angel than a woman. In the nutting episode, however, he is vouchsafed a glimpse of Fancy's real nature:

Probably, Miss Fancy Day never before or after stood so low in Mr. Dewy's opinion as on that afternoon. In fact, it is just possible that a few more blue dresses on the Longpuddle young men's account would have clarified Dick's brain entirely, and made him once more a free man. (151)

But when Fancy appeals to him he thrusts the unpleasant truth aside:

It is scarcely necessary to add that Dick renounced his freedom there and then, and kissed her ten times over, and promised that no pretty woman of the kind alluded to should ever engross his thoughts; in short, that though he had been vexed with her all such vexation was past, and that henceforth and for ever it was simply Fancy or death for him. (153)

Underlying the comedy lies the authentic Hardy note of sexual pessimism. Fancy has caught Dick. She is what we would call today a manipulator, for she would rather exploit Dick's unreal notions of her true character for her own ends than admit her faults and confront him on an equal basis. When Geoffrey speaks satirically of wives, "Fancy seemed uneasy under the infliction of this household moralizing, which might tend to damage the airy-fairy nature that Dick, as maiden shrewdness told her, had accredited her with" (101), Dick disregards Geoffrey's strictures. He is certain that his relationship to his future wife could never be prosaic:

Dick wondered how it was that when people were married they could be so blind to romance; and was quite certain

that if he ever took to wife that dear impossible Fancy,
 he and she would never be so dreadfully practical and un-
 demonstrative of the Passion as his father and mother were.
 The most extraordinary thing was that all the fathers and
 mothers he knew were just as undemonstrative as his own. (61)

Here the humour has an ironic edge. Dick's naiveté is contrasted with the unromantic views of his parents and the members of the choir.

Eventually, he will come to see things as they do. When Dick asks his father whether he thinks Fancy has the makings of a good wife, Reuben replies:

'Ay, good; she's good enough. When you've made up
 your mind to marry, take the first respectable body that
 comes to hand -- she's as good as any other; they be all
 alike in the groundwork; 'tis only in the flourishes
 there's a difference. (112)

Hardy satirizes the romantic view of life by juxtaposing Dick's conception of Fancy with the more knowing perceptions of the married. Ironically, as he begins to see himself as Fancy's husband, Dick unconsciously adopts the matter-of-fact behaviour he formerly despised. As Millgate observes "Dick, his romantic feelings already giving way to practical good sense, arrives late because he has paused to hive a swarm of bees".²² Love indeed triumphs in Hardy's romance, but reality is not far behind. Like Dick and Fancy, the bees are about to adopt a new home. The swarming too is part of the "rustic wedding rite" that concludes the book, a culmination of Hardy's "realistic pastoral".²³

The presence of illness, misfortune and death also works against the notion that all is for the best in this best of all pastoral worlds. Indeed death obtrudes even on festive occasions. Asked about the health of his daughter, Mr. Penny replies:

'But she'll be worse before she's better, 'a b'lieve.'

'Indeed -- poor soul! And how many will that make in all, four or five?'

'Five; they've buried three. Yes, five; and she not much more than a maid yet. She do know the multiplication table onmistakable well. However, 'twas to be, and none can gainsay it.' (10)

Reuben recalls an old neighbour: "The husbird of a feller Sam Lawson

-- that ever I should call'n such, now he's dead and gone, poor

heart!" (11) Music has one association for the young, another for the old:

'Spaking of being moved in soul,' said Mr. Penny, 'I shall never forget the first time I heard the "Dead March." 'Twas at poor Corp'l Nineman's funeral at Casterbridge. It fairly made my hair creep and fidget about like a vlock of sheep -- ah, it did, souls! And when they had done, and the last trump had sounded, and the guns was fired over the dead hero's grave, a' icy-cold drop o' moist sweat hung upon my forehead, and another upon my jawbone. Ah, 'tis a very solemn thing!' (57)

With the dubious exception of Thomas, the rest of Mrs. Leaf's children either miscarried or died in infancy:

'What was his age when 'a died?'

'Four hours and twenty minutes, poor Jim. 'A was born as might be at night; and 'a didn't last as might be till the morning. No, 'a didn't last. Mother called en Jim on the day that would ha' been his christening-day if he had lived; and she's always thinking about en. You see, he died so very young.' (77)

Fancy's real mother is dead. Late in the action Dick departs to attend the funeral of his young friend, Jack, dead of consumption. The tone in several of these passages is grotesquely comic rather than satiric. Probably, Hardy wishes to dramatize the villagers' stoic acceptance of death as a part of life, and show the ability of rural tradition to make a unity of past and present. Nevertheless, a cer-

tain dark quality lies beneath the surface of Hardy's romance.

This is common in pastoral literature,²⁴ though normally the realistic aspects of life are subordinated to an optimistic or at least tranquil conception of existence. The prevailing comic tone of Under the Greenwood Tree does not permit the reader to take alarm at the potential threats to Dick's and Fancy's well-being, yet it would have been compatible with Fancy's character for her to have jilted Dick. (In "The Son's Veto" of 1891, Sophy lives to regret having chosen the vicar over the gardener.) Instead of having the choir accept their dissolution gracefully, Hardy could easily have stressed their resentment, and shown how the incident soured the relations between parson and congregation.

The word "melancholy" frequently recurs. There are many references to "fortune", "fate" and "doom"; "'twas to be" (10), is as much a choric utterance in Under the Greenwood Tree as it is in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. It is taken for granted that the romance will not long outlive the wedding. In short, we need not search far to discover the pessimistic Hardy of the later fiction lurking below the placid surface of his early pastoral novel.

Since his intention was to win an audience and launch himself on a literary career, Hardy was anxious to avoid anything that might distress his readers or provoke the critics. This seems to be the implication in the 1912 preface:

In rereading the narrative after a long interval there occurs the inevitable reflection that the realities out of which it was spun were material for another kind of study of this little group of church musicians than is

found in the chapters here penned so lightly, even so farcically and flippantly at times. But circumstances, would have rendered any aim at a deeper, more essential, more transcendent handling unadvisable at the date of writing. (viii)

Perhaps in treating his subject matter comically Hardy was working somewhat against his natural inclination. Once he had acquired a readership, he allowed his partiality for the pathetic and the tragic more scope, and the comic side of his genius, though ever present, became secondary.

Critical discussions of the theme of Under the Greenwood Tree²⁵ have tended to focus on the defeat of the traditional rural way of life by the forces of modernism. The full impact of the struggle is, as we have seen, muted because of the submissive attitude of the choir. Although the sting of their defeat is glossed over in the excitement of the final wedding scene, it is clear that something precious has been lost. Hardy spelled out the significance of his theme some years later in the 1896 preface:

This story of the Mellstock Quire and its old established west-gallery musicians, with some supplementary descriptions of similar officials in Two on a Tower, A Few Crusted Characters, and other places, is intended to be a fairly true picture, at first hand, of the personages, ways, and customs which were common among such orchestral bodies in the villages of fifty or sixty years ago.

One is inclined to regret the displacement of these ecclesiastical bandsmen by an isolated organist (often at first a barrel-organist) or harmonium player; and despite certain advantages in point of control and accomplishment which were, no doubt, secured by installing the single artist, the change has tended to stultify the professed aims of the clergy, its direct result being to curtail and extinguish the interest of parishioners in church doings. Under the old plan, from half a dozen to ten full-grown players, in addition to the numerous more or less grown-up

singers, were officially occupied with the Sunday routine, and concerned in trying their best to make it an artistic outcome of the combined musical taste of the congregation. With a musical executive limited, as it mostly is limited now, to the parson's wife or daughter and the school-children, or to the school-teacher and the children, an important union of interests has disappeared. (v-vi)

Like the thresher or combine, the organ is a modern implement which allows one person to perform more efficiently the work of several. In short, the old order, with its tradition of vigorous participation, is to be replaced by a passive spectator culture similar to our own. The changeover is a serious blow to the vitality and integrity of the rural way of life. Hardy may not have seen the full dramatic potential of this theme till somewhat later than the composition of Under the Greenwood Tree; he does not again focus on the change from old to new until A Laodicean of 1881, and only in "The Dorsetshire Labourer" of 1883 does he give full expression to the tragic implications of the conflict.

Be this as it may, Under the Greenwood Tree certainly reveals Hardy's feelings of regret for what is being lost and his appreciation of what was worthwhile in a dying tradition. Not the least praiseworthy of the old values was a strong sense of community. The members of the choir receive no financial reward for their efforts. They feel it to be part of their duties as official church choir to carol their neighbours on Christmas Eve. Though Farmer Shiner is rude to them, Reuben invites him to his party the next day in the consciousness that Shiner is part of the community. The feeble-minded Thomas Leaf is included in the social and business activities of the choir, and later Geoffrey Day welcomes him to the wedding festivities. Even Enoch, the closest

we get to the delinquent in Arcadian Mellstock, is not ostracized by the villagers, for Dick invites him to join the wedding party. Parson Maybold may find his parishioners neglectful of the letter of church observances, but it is clear that in their compassion, charity and good will the Mellstock villagers possess the fundamental Christian virtues.

Women, courtship and marriage provide the second major theme in Under the Greenwood Tree which links that novel with Hardy's other fictions. Here again the playfully anti-romantic tone of the book is much in evidence. Hardy's male characters appear to be afflicted by a stock comic perplexity when it comes to women: "The littler the maid, the bigger the riddle, to my mind", Mr. Penny observes (93). Implied in this and other such comments is the notion that woman is a being apart from man and, though not ultimately unknowable, different enough to cause considerable confusion to the inexperienced. Fancy makes some attempt to enlighten Dick by such admissions as: "'I like to hear you praise me in that way, Dick,' she said, smiling archly. 'It is meat and drink to a woman'" (176). It is obvious from the ending that she is not going to reveal all her cards, but the last lines do not necessarily bode ill for Dick. While it is true that he may never fully know or understand Fancy, he at least is no longer an idolatrous lover. In going alone to do the nutting Dick shows that he can be firm with Fancy, and his pause to hive the bees on his wedding day indicates that in future Fancy and romance will not come before the practicalities of life. He has begun the unavoidable movement towards the unromantic view of women and marriage held by his seniors. Dick may not be hap-

pier than other husbands, but he probably will not be unhappier.

For the Mellstock villagers love is an inevitable folly: "'t may as well come early as late s'far as I know. The sooner begun, the sooner over; for come it will'" (75). They take the almost fatalistic attitude that young people will fall in love and marry with very little thought as to whether or not the object of their affections has the makings of a good spouse. Reuben may feel that his son would be better off without Fancy (114-115), but when Dick pointedly asks for his father's opinion of her, Reuben replies that "she's good enough" (112). The villagers have found, curiously, that when the romance wears off young people usually settle down to become acceptable wives and husbands, and this will almost certainly be true of Fancy and Dick: "'Well, 'tis humps and hollers with the best of us; but still and for all that, Dick and Fancy stand as fair a chance of having a bit of sunsheen as any married pair in the land'" (209).

Earlier Dick was dismayed at the absence of any sign of romantic passion in his parents, and was quite incapable of seeing other aspects of their relationship. At the end of the tranter's Christmas party Reuben notices that Ann is tired and advises her to go directly to bed: "There, you must be wearied out, 'tis true. I'll do the doors and draw up the clock; and you go on, or you'll be as white as a sheet to-morrow" (61). Reuben's thoughtfulness and consideration may be as important as the missing romance. In return, Ann shows a good deal of tolerance of and forbearance for Reuben's faults.

There is much rueful male satire of women in Under the Greenwood

Tree; we hear frequently, for example, of female vanity. In Far from the Madding Crowd, Bathsheba's vanity nearly ruins her life, but in Under the Greenwood Tree the comments on the nature of women seem to belong more to the characters than to the author. In any case, they are subordinated to the comic spirit of the romance.

Those aspects of Under the Greenwood Tree that apparently belong to the realistic novel -- individual characterization, accurate observation of detail based on the author's familiarity with Wessex life, realistic treatment of country manners and customs -- are present, but should not be overstressed. Despite his comments in the 1896 preface, we cannot conclude that Hardy's principal aim is a meticulously faithful portrayal of the life of old, and that Under the Greenwood Tree is in a strict sense "a rural painting of the Dutch school". The idyllic, romantic and poetic elements seem, on analysis, to predominate. Hardy certainly felt strongly about village life and regretted its demise, but he has idealized and ennobled old Mellstock. "The Dorsetshire Labourer", or even novels like The Mayor of Casterbridge and Tess of the d'Urbervilles, despite the frequent improbability of their action and the use of myth and romance, present a more objective picture of Wessex than Under the Greenwood Tree attempts to do. Essentially, Under the Greenwood Tree is a romance.

Hardy skilfully employs irony and satire to control nostalgia and sentiment. He is able to keep the tragic and pathetic in happy subordination to the comic, just as he compels the realistic to give way to the romantic and idyllic. The tension between these poles is

fruitful, permitting a subtle variety of responses to the issues of rural life. Though an early and, in some ways, experimental work, Under the Greenwood Tree is a sophisticated piece of writing. It is true that Hardy was not aiming as high as he was to do later, but his ability to handle diverse materials and maintain an even tone is more nearly realized here than in some of his more ambitious works of prose fiction.

In A Pair of Blue Eyes, the novel that followed Under the Greenwood Tree by just a few months, Hardy temporarily abandoned the mode of pastoral romance in favour of a serious analysis of the relations of the sexes based to a considerable extent on his own experiences, and firmly set in contemporary England. Though Hardy was prepared to take a new approach to this material, he continued to employ some of the techniques that he had tried out in his two earlier novels: the melodrama, symbolic settings and actions he had found congenial in Desperate Remedies, together with the rustic humour, and conscious linking of man and nature that had proved effective in Under the Greenwood Tree. It was commendable on Hardy's part that instead of resting content with the previous formulas he would try in his new novel for a greater profundity of theme and a more artistic means of expression; however, the attempt to combine the disparate elements was to prove awkward in A Pair of Blue Eyes and is not always smoothly handled even in his later fiction.

IV

A PAIR OF BLUE EYES

Though not as perfect a literary work as Under the Greenwood Tree, A Pair of Blue Eyes is more ambitious. In it Hardy attempts to combine the melodramatic plot, suspense and action of Desperate Remedies with some of the rural comedy of Under the Greenwood Tree. The interest in nature discernible in his previous books now undergoes a radical development. Hardy uses autobiographical materials more than in any of his previous published fictions, keeping them under control by means of irony and comedy. At the same time A Pair of Blue Eyes (1872) is the first of his published novels to approximate a tragic structure. It is not classified as one of the Wessex novels because it is different from these in setting and in the quality of Hardy's achievement, but A Pair of Blue Eyes is closer to the mature Hardy than anything he had so far written.

The press notices were good. Horace Moule wrote that it was "one of the most artistically constructed among recent novels".¹ Although the reviewer of the Pall Mall Gazette thought A Pair of Blue Eyes somewhat inferior to Under the Greenwood Tree he observed that it "exhibited a greater power of mental analysis and knowledge of the working of human nature".² John Hutton, who had earlier been responsible for the scathing attack on Desperate Remedies in The Spectator,

seemed pleased that Hardy had learned to avoid objectionable incidents and scenes. He described A Pair of Blue Eyes as

a really powerful story, well proportioned in its parts, of varied and deep interest, yet not too harrowing for pleasure, relieved by exquisite touches of word-pictures and supported by characters not too numerous to crowd the stage and divert us from an attentive study of the three central figures.³

These reviewers remarked on the novel's dramatic technique and tragic ending and praised Hardy for his characterization of Elfride; John Hutton and Coventry Patmore, a somewhat later admirer,⁴ were struck by the book's poetic qualities. Hardy had always taken the critics' strictures to heart and tried to follow their advice. He now had reason to expect that he could eventually succeed as a professional writer.

Hardy, of course, was pleased with his success, particularly since the book was associated in his mind with the courtship of his first wife, Emma Gifford. In later years, however, he was ready to acknowledge its faults:

In its action it exhibits the romantic stage of an idea which was further developed in a later book.⁵ To the ripe-minded critic of the present one an immaturity in its views of life and in its workmanship will of course be apparent. But to correct these by the judgment of later years, even had correction been possible, would have resulted, as with all such attempts, in the disappearance of whatever freshness and spontaneity the pages may have as they stand.
(vi-vii)

This sense of its weakness may have contributed to his decision not to include it among the "Novels of Character and Environment". In the "General Preface to the Novels and Poems" written for the 1912 Macmillan edition, Hardy placed A Pair of Blue Eyes, among his "Romances and Fantasies". Why he did so is not altogether clear.

While Hardy explains that the "Novels of Character and Environment" can "claim a verisimilitude in general treatment and detail"⁶ and that the "Novels of Ingenuity" reveal "a not infrequent disregard of the probable in the chain of events, and depend for their interest mainly on the incidents themselves",⁷ he avoids any awkward elucidation of the terms "romance" or "fantasy" by disingenuously stating his classification to be "a sufficiently descriptive definition".⁸ It is difficult to accept the implication that A Pair of Blue Eyes contains more fantasy than, say, The Return of the Native or more romance than Under the Greenwood Tree and Far From the Madding Crowd. Hardy's comment in the autobiography that A Pair of Blue Eyes is classed "among his Romances and Fantasies as if to suggest its visionary nature"⁹ does not greatly clarify his meaning; it does, however, carry a hint that Hardy may have been using the term in a personal rather than literary sense.

The word "fantasy" is especially puzzling. If we take it in the modern sense of the deliberate introduction of an unreal setting or incredible characters, it is apparent that A Pair of Blue Eyes contains very little fantasy. Hardy may have had in mind the older meaning, fancy or imagination, but again it would be difficult to argue that A Pair of Blue Eyes shows more imagination than other Wessex novels. Apparently Hardy's conception of fantasy is once again idiosyncratic.

Hardy's intentions may be better revealed by his frequent references to setting in the prefaces and in the Life. In the 1895 preface, for example, he stresses what we might call the poetic aspects of the

book. He declares Cornwall to be "pre-eminently . . . the region of dream and mystery" (vi). He speaks of "the wild and tragic features of the coast" (v), which "lend to the scene an atmosphere like the twilight of a night-vision (vi). Hardy thought of Cornwall as the "vague romantic land of 'Lyonnesse'",¹⁰ the traditional setting of the legendary exploits of King Arthur and his knights. That this association lies behind the 1895 preface is indicated by such poems as "When I Set Out for Lyonnesse", which combine Hardy's sense of the loneliness and wildness of the Cornish landscape, the mystery and magic of Arthurian romance and the incidents of his real-life courtship of Emma. This combination again bore fruit in The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall, written some fifty years after his first visit to the region. In A Pair of Blue Eyes Hardy was not altogether successful in integrating the courtship motif with Arthurian imagery but, as we shall see, his effort to do so is still traceable in the book.

When Hardy employs the word "romantic" in connection with A Pair of Blue Eyes and its Cornish setting, it is usually in two senses. At times he appears to be referring to what is distant, mysterious or legendary, as in "this vague romantic land of 'Lyonnesse'". Elsewhere in the Life he uses the word in the layman's sense of having to do with love and courtship, as, for example, when he writes that the St. Juliot Church was "associated with what was romantic in his life".¹¹ Further evidence that for Hardy the courtship of Emma was linked to the specific setting of Cornwall may be seen in the poems written about Emma after her death. Interestingly, in the account of her first meet-

ing with Hardy, written in 1911, Emma's use of the word "romantic" is similar to her husband's:

'St. Juliot is a romantic spot indeed of North Cornwall. It was sixteen miles away from a station then, [and a place] where the belief in witchcraft was carried out in actual practice among the primitive inhabitants. Traditions and strange gossipings were the common talk . . . indulged in by those isolated natives of a parish where newspapers rarely penetrated.¹²

'Scarcely any author and his wife could have had a much more romantic meeting, with its unusual circumstances in bringing them together from two different, though neighbouring counties to this one at this very remote spot, with a beautiful sea-coast, and the wild Atlantic Ocean rolling in.¹³

Many sections of the book, particularly those dealing with Elfride and Knight, are treated realistically. It is therefore natural to think of A Pair of Blue Eyes as a conventional novel. Yet without ever defining his meaning or even using the term consistently, Hardy frequently refers to it as a "romance". In his 1912 preface, for example, it is thus described, apparently to underline the distinction he makes in the General Preface between "Romances" and "Novels of Character and Environment". When, in The Life, he writes specifically of A Pair of Blue Eyes he again calls it a "romance",¹⁴ though when speaking more generally he terms it a "novel".¹⁵ Since Hardy also regards the story of Tristan and Iseult (the subjects of his poetic drama The Famous Tragedy of the Queen of Cornwall) as a "romance",¹⁶ we might suppose that for Hardy material connected with Arthurian legend falls into the romance category. But the term cannot be so narrowly restricted: The Trumpet-Major, Two on a Tower, The Well-Beloved and A Group of Noble Dames have nothing to do with Lyonesse; yet they are still cate-

gorized as "Romances and Fantasies". Though Hardy evidently did not ascribe a very precise meaning to his terms, he seemed to feel there was something in A Pair of Blue Eyes that went beyond the kind of verisimilitude usually associated with the novel. It is in the underlying pattern of the book that these romance elements may most clearly be seen.

Despite the frequent allusions to Shakespearian romantic comedy, the structure and technique of A Pair of Blue Eyes owe more to mediaeval romance than to Shakespeare. In fact, the book's plot is a parody of mediaeval romance. In the initial episode Stephen Smith, a young man of humble origin, courts a lady of higher social position. Slowly he takes on the attributes of a courtly lover. Conscious of the difference in social rank he looks up to Elfride, literally and figuratively.¹⁷ She gives him tasks to perform which she describes as "knight service" (58). Stephen comes to idolize her, calls her his "queen" and vows to die for her (61). For Elfride it is "a proud moment She was ruling a heart with absolute despotism for the first time in her life" (61). Though approachable enough, she turns out to be ultimately unattainable, partly because of her father's social prejudices and partly because Stephen is not man enough for her, an insufficiency symbolized by her ability to defeat him in chess. Stephen, the squire of low degree, is soon replaced by a more formidable opponent appropriately named Knight. Knight soon proves his valour by vanquishing the lady in another series of chess games which become, for Elfride at least, a sexual battleground. Knight also demonstrates his chivalric

powers by rescuing the damsel from her distress on the parapet of the tower (182-185). Elfride's attitude to Knight now becomes the reverse of her attitude to Stephen: "She had, indeed, given up her position as queen of the less to be vassal of the greater" (351). To be true to his role, Knight should have responded "by becoming the protector and guide of such a trusting creature" (334). Elfride indeed begs him to be "a strong tower for me against the enemy" (356), only to witness a few moments later the collapse of the same tower. Fastidiousness and priggishness mar Knight's gallantry and eventually cause him to lose the prize to another knight, Lord Spenser Hugo Luxellian. By comparing his characters with the heroes and heroines of romance, Hardy deepens the ironic impact of the novel.

Hardy had thought of naming the book Elfride of Lyonesse,¹⁸ but this would have implied a closer relation to Arthurian material than he wished, and so this title was rightly discarded. He does, however, present Elfride as the author of a work entitled The Court of King Arthur's Castle: A Romance of Lyonesse. Like the chess game device, Elfride's authorship suggests her mental superiority to Stephen, at the same time demonstrating her shallowness by comparison with Knight. In his critical review of Elfride's romance, Knight implies that her knowledge of life is drawn from books rather than experience. The same idea is expressed in Parson Swancourt's hint in the opening pages that Elfride's ability to deal with the practical aspects of life has been impaired by "reading so many of those novels" (3). It is interesting that in the first chapter of the serial version Hardy introduced Elfride

in the act of reading a romance.¹⁹ The effect is strongly satirical. He subsequently deleted this passage, probably because he wanted his readers to sympathize with Elfride, not scorn her.

In his summary of the significance of Hardy's revisions, Millgate speculates that the novel "may originally have been -- particularly in view of its first title, "A Winning Tongue Had He' . . . -- of almost ballad-like simplicity of outline."²⁰ To support his argument, Millgate notes that the manuscript version of Elfride's song in Chapter III was originally a ballad entitled "The Banks of Allan Water"²¹ which begins with a meeting between a maiden and a soldier with "a winning tongue". Later on, Hardy replaced "The Banks of Allan Water" by Shelley's "When the Lamp is Shattered", a melancholy poem of forsaken love which enabled Hardy to include a more explicit forewarning of dire consequences while removing the vulgar seduction motif. As Millgate points out, Hardy shifted the lines of the ballad to Far from the Madding Crowd where they comment significantly on Bathsheba's relationship to Sergeant Troy.²² In effect, these revisions to the first part of the book permit Hardy to bring out the pathetic aspects of Elfride's situation in the later sections.

The many literary quotations and allusions in A Pair of Blue Eyes help to create its romance atmosphere. A significantly large number have been taken from Romantic and pre-Romantic poets and novelists as well as from the romantic comedies of Shakespeare. Many of them are specifically related to theme, plot and characterization. Several allude sentimentally to lovers' meetings and partings; some evoke the

gloomy mood of the graveyard school, still others refer to the transience of love and life. In general, they create a mood of pathos.

Additional evidence supports the view that Elfride belongs more to the world of romance than to the world of the ballad. A Pair of Blue Eyes makes heavy use of settings, descriptions and devices of the kind found in Gothic romance. Take, for example, the tower which figures so prominently in the plot and imagery:

The lonely edifice was black and bare, cutting up into the sky from the profile of the hill. It had a square mouldering tower, owning neither battlement nor pinnacle, and seemed a monolithic termination, of one substance with the ridge, rather than a structure raised thereon. Round the church ran a low wall; overtopping the wall in general level was the graveyard; not as a graveyard usually is, a fragment of landscape with its due variety of chiaro-oscuro, but a mere margin against the sky, serrated with the outlines of graves and a very few memorial stones. Not a tree could exist up there: nothing but the monotonous gray-green grass. (21)

The crumbling mediaeval architecture featured in Gothic romances frequently symbolizes the decay of such traditional authoritarian institutions as the family, church and aristocracy. There is evidence in the feudal imagery of Tess of the d'Urbervilles and in the destruction of Stancy Castle at the end of A Laodicean that Hardy employed Gothic imagery for similar purposes. In A Pair of Blue Eyes the collapse of the ancient tower of Endelstow Church may symbolize the moral collapse of England's traditional religious structure: Parson Swancourt insensitively anticipates the construction of a new tower "in the newest style of Gothic art, and full of Christian feeling" (357). Despite this ironic thrust, Hardy does not develop the theme of the passing of the old and the coming of the new in A Pair of Blue Eyes as he did in

Under the Greenwood Tree.

Several dramatic confrontations take place in the graveyard and in the Luxellian family vaults. The latter may indeed owe something to the graveyard scenes in Hamlet or in Romeo and Juliet, but they also resemble the tomb scenes in Ainsworth's Rookwood.²³ The deranged widow Mrs. Jethway stalks Elfride in life and death like a restless ghost in a Shakespearian tragedy or a Gothic romance.²⁴ From one point of view Elfride seems to be a romance heroine persecuted by male oppressors as, for example, when the powerful Knight bullies her into confession. Her plight is similar to Cytherea's in Desperate Remedies and to Margery's in "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid". Such scenes are not without a hint of the sadistic relationship existing between villain-hero and persecuted maiden in the Gothic romances:

Elfride's docile devotion to Knight was now its own enemy. Clinging to him so dependently, she taught him in time to presume upon that devotion -- a lesson men are not slow to learn. A slight rebelliousness occasionally would have done him no harm, and would have been a world of advantage to her. But she idolized him and was proud to be his bond-servant. (349).

But from another point of view, Elfride is a femme fatale. It is owing to Hardy's talent for female characterization that he could allow an ambiguity, even a division, in Elfride's character, yet carry it off convincingly. Like the Jungian anima which can be beneficial to men by encouraging them to recognize and fulfill their deepest aspirations, Elfride initially has a positive impact on Smith and Knight. Inspired by his hope to marry her, Stephen pursues his career with great success. Her influence on Knight is even more salutary. Elfride

helps him to bring out long-suppressed emotions which permit him to become a more complete human being. On the other hand, her effect on men can be fatal, as it is on young Felix Jethway, or debilitating, as it later is on Smith and Knight. In this respect Elfride resembles such Hardy heroines as Cytherea, Bathsheba, Tess or Sue -- women whose emotional impact on men is strong enough to inspire some and ruin others.

Elfride's potentially sinister nature is suggested by her name, one of a number of Saxon names revived during the nineteenth century.²⁵ Elfride derives from "elf", the diminutive, mischievous sprite of woods, hills and fields. Some of the elves were helpful to mankind; but usually they were distinguished from fairies as more malignant. The elf maidens exploited their beauty to lure mortal men into peril.

Evidently Hardy connected Elfride's name to Emma Gifford. At the time of his first visit to St. Juliot, Hardy recorded in his journal: "Music in the evening. The two ladies sang duets, including 'The Elfin Call', 'Let us dance on the sands', etc."²⁶ The next day Hardy was sufficiently piqued to record Miss Gifford's behaviour during a stroll to Boscastle: "E. provokingly reading as she walked".²⁷ Perhaps, too, in the surname of Swancourt there are associations with Emma. In "The Going" the speaker mourns for

. . . she who above
By those red-veined rocks far West,
You were the swan-necked one who rode
Along the beetling Beeny Crest.²⁸

Like the elves, Hardy's heroine roams the fields and hills. On foot, or on horse, rain or shine, Elfride is part of the wild Cornish landscape. Like the elves she is small in stature; such phrases as "child-

like form" (298), "as small as an infant" (249), or "a slight girlish figure" (384) frequently recur. Elfride's personality also seems elfin. She is "impulsive, inconsequent" (116), and changeable, suggesting a flighty, even reckless character.

There is, moreover, a hint of sexual permissiveness about her. She is in the habit of riding alone through the countryside sometimes spending the night away from home (129). Perhaps her name is meant to remind us of the "elf-ride",²⁹ featured in such well-known ballads as "Thomas Rymer" and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". Like Lady Elfride Luxellian, her namesake and grandmother, who eloped with a singer, the present Elfride twice runs off to join a lover under circumstances damaging to her reputation.

Highly attractive as she is, Elfride fails to satisfy even one of her suitors. This aspect of her role as femme fatale finds expression in two allusions to Keats' "La Belle Dame". In the first of these, Elfride is on her horse looking down at poor Stephen, who is unable either to ride or to assist her to mount:

'Do I seem like La Belle Dame sans merci?' she began suddenly, without replying to his question. 'Fancy yourself saying, Mr. Smith:

"I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long,
For sidelong would she bend, and sing
A faery's song
She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;"
and that's all she did.' (59)

Elfride is the fairy lady, Stephen the frustrated lover who ends haggard and woe-begone on the cold hillside.

In the scene which occasions the second allusion to "La Belle

Dame Sans Merci" Elfride is again on horseback, Knight attending her on foot,³⁰ but Hardy now stresses the reversal of roles that has taken place:

She had, indeed, given up her position as queen of the less to be vassal of the greater. Here was no showing off now; no scampering out of sight with Pansy, to perplex and tire her companion: no saucy remarks on La Belle Dame sans Merci. Elfride was burdened with the very intensity of her love. (351)

Subsequent to his disillusion with Elfride, Knight's behaviour bears a closer resemblance to Keats' haggard lover than does the behaviour of Stephen; Knight, the deeper personality, is more profoundly affected. He is brought "to the verge of cynicism" (366). He feels trapped "like a bird in a springe" (380). In similar fashion to Keats' knight, he awakes from his "first dream of impossible things" (382), to find himself in a world where nature has gone dead:

The scene was engraved for years on the retina of Knight's eye: the dead and brown stubble, the weeds among it, the distant belt of beeches shutting out the view of the house, the leaves of which were now red and sick to death. (383)³¹

No longer able to work or create, he aimlessly sets forth to tour the Continent. Stephen is less powerfully affected. He is able to continue his career; but in the imagery of the closing lines of the novel: "And side by side they retraced their steps down the grey still valley to Castle Boterel" (435), Hardy hints that for both suitors life has become a wasteland.

Elfride's role as femme fatale is implied by other images in the novel. The epigraph to Chapter XXXIII: "O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery" is richly suggestive. In Isaiah 47:1-12 the Bibli-

cal writer stresses the exposure of Babylon's wickedness, the inefficacy of her enchantments and the inevitable retribution:

Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter
of Babylon, sit on the ground.

Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame
shall be seen.

But these two things . . . shall come upon thee in
their perfection for the multitude of thy sorceries,
and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast
said, None seeth me.

Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt
not know from whence it riseth.

In the Book of Revelation, Babylon is compared to a vain woman overly fond of adornment: "Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls" (Rev. 18:16). Primarily she is the "harlot" who sits upon "a scarlet covered beast" (Rev. 17:3). There is a superficial resemblance in all this to Elfride's love of finery, her showy horsemanship and the ultimate exposure of her relationship to Stephen. The epigraph does not of course refer to Elfride's real character; it refers rather to Knight's bitter view of her shortly after his receipt of Mrs. Jethway's letter.³² Actually the epigraph heads the chapter in which Knight, contemplating the ruins of the tower, comes upon the body of Mrs. Jethway. Presumably the collapse of the tower corresponds in Knight's mind to the overthrow of the idol he had made of Elfride's purity, which in turn is linked to the fall of Babylon and the smashing of its images described in Jeremiah 51:17, 18, 47. Primarily, the allusion serves to reveal the morbid state of Knight's mind.

Several of the images pertaining to Elfride are drawn together in Knight's priggish quotation of Milton: "Knight could not keep from his mind the words of Adam's reproach to Eve in Paradise Lost, and at last whispered them to himself -- 'Fool'd and beguiled: by him thou, I by thee!'" (356) Knight views himself as being, like Adam, an innocent, practised upon by the sly cunning of a woman under the sway of Satan. Eve, of course, is the original femme fatale, the cause of man's woes. Those familiar with elfin lore will recall that elves are traditionally the children of Eve. From Knight's point of view, literature seems to provide a helpful guide to the solution of life's problems. But the situation is heavily ironic, for the reader is able to see that Knight's literary knowledge only hinders his ability to cope with real human beings.

Though not fully worked into the pattern of the book other images evoke the Fall, or at least imply a movement from innocence to experience. Endelstow rectory, for example, is a little Garden of Eden isolated from the rest of the countryside:

The man who built it in past time scraped all the glebe for earth to put round the rectory, and laid out a little paradise of flowers and trees in the soil he had got together in this way, whilst the fields he scraped have been good for nothing ever since. (8)

The scene down there was altogether different from that of the hills. A thicket of shrubs and trees enclosed the favoured spot from the wilderness without; even at this time of the year the grass was luxuriant there. No wind blew inside the protecting belt of evergreens, wasting its force upon the higher and stronger trees forming the outer margin of the grove. (22)

To begin with, Elfride is very much the innocent: "at the age of nine-

teen or twenty she was no further on in social consciousness than an urban young lady of fifteen" (1). Hardy further suggests her lack of experience in the "Miranda-like curiosity and interest" (2) with which she greets Stephen, and in his emphasis on her childish form and personality. The abundant animal imagery, largely used to bring out the grace of her movements, implies a naturalness and kinship with nature. Stephen too is young and inexperienced (20). Hardy stresses his innocence and boyish good looks:

His complexion was as fine as Elfride's own; the pink of his cheeks almost as delicate. His mouth as perfect as Cupid's bow in form, and as cherry-red in colour as hers. Bright curly hair; bright sparkling blue-gray eyes; a boy's blush and manner; neither whisker nor moustache, unless a little light-brown fur on his upper lip deserved the latter title. (10-11)

Together Stephen and Elfride suggest Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, but it is not long before the worldly Parson Swancourt and the sophisticated Mrs. Troyton begin to initiate the young people into the ways of the world. In the process, both Elfride and Stephen grow in deceptiveness until finally they in turn practise on a new innocent, Henry Knight (300).

We might well wonder at Hardy's ability to reconcile the two aspects of Elfride's personality. But there is an underlying consistency. She is actually a well-meaning maiden whose very innocence leads her into actions that wound her lovers. She is both innocent and "vamp" at the same time. The real test, after all, is whether or not an author can make his characters convincing to the reader; Hardy succeeds in this, though a present day reader might well be exasperated

by the intrusive author's ponderous generalizations on what constitutes the eternal feminine.

If it is accurate to say that A Pair of Blue Eyes includes elements usually associated with both realism and romance, it is equally true that in its structure it approximates to a tragedy. The early reviewers had been quick to note the dramatic qualities of A Pair of Blue Eyes. Three of them -- Horace Moule, Havelock Ellis and the critic of the Pall Mall Gazette -- observed that Hardy was writing tragedy, though John Hutton and the Gazette reviewer found the final catastrophe much too sad. The objection of these two reviewers to Hardy's conclusion lends credence to the report that Tinsley's editor had tried to persuade Hardy to soften the ending.³³ It seems unfortunate that Hardy did not heed the advice.

Correct though they were in noting Hardy's dramatic technique, the assumption of the reviewers that he intended a tragedy is not well founded: Elfride is not a tragic heroine, nor Knight a tragic hero. She is altogether too weak and frail to be anything but pathetic. Knight, to a modern eye at least, seems so priggish and grotesquely inept in his dealings with Elfride as to lack heroic stature. The modern reader is likely to prefer Stephen over Knight. Though Hardy himself obviously felt that Knight was the better man, he must have sensed Knight's inadequacy as tragic hero, for he ends the novel ironically, rather than tragically. Knight suffers, yet he never recognizes his deficiencies, nor the inadequacy of his ideals, and is not therefore able to adjust his outlook. Learning that Elfride did not in fact have

sexual relations with Stephen, he decides to return to her. But his change of mind is too little and too late. His moral attitudes remain virtually intact. His punishment is deserved, yet Elfride and Stephen seem unjustly treated. Hardy aimed for an ironic denouement in keeping with the general tone of the book: hence the black comedy of the closing chapters. But the ending is too obviously contrived. Hardy's tendency to overplay his hand, evident in A Pair of Blue Eyes, was also to mar the endings of The Return of the Native, Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure.

As in his previous fictions, Hardy's major thematic concern is the nature of women, the relation of the sexes and mating or courtship. In Under the Greenwood Tree he had indulged in some mild satire of women. He decided to exploit the same device once again, though in a more subtle way, in A Pair of Blue Eyes. Elfride is seen primarily through masculine eyes: first by her father, then by her bedazzled lovers Stephen Smith and Henry Knight, and at a step further removed by the omniscient male narrator, presumably experienced enough to understand feminine character and the nature of the love experience. Accordingly, A Pair of Blue Eyes presents a predominantly male view of woman. Whatever Hardy's views on the subject of women may have been, the narrator, though he is indulgent to, and obviously fond of women, is inclined to be patronizing: "Women's ruling passion -- to fascinate and influence those more powerful than she -- though operant in Elfride, was decidedly purposeless" (215). Yet Hardy's treatment of Elfride does not seem to be unduly exaggerated or one-sided, for Hardy balanced it by the

ironic and satiric portraits of his three main male characters.

Elfride has youth, beauty, intelligence, resourcefulness, vitality and warmth. For most men, the narrator seems to be saying, this should be enough. Yet for the puritanical Henry Knight it is insufficient: he must have absolute purity, honesty and submission. But in Hardy's view, women are characterized by narcissism, vanity and general dishonesty in matters of love (300). The danger for a purist like Knight is that his pursuit of the ideal, if ruthlessly carried out, may lead to moral isolation, rigidity, prudery and ultimately to a repudiation of life itself. The omniscient narrator justifies Elfride's choice of Knight, but to the extent that Stephen dismisses the question of Elfride's purity, he is a more realistic and hence more satisfactory lover than his rival.

As it is with woman, so it is with the central experience that man enjoys with woman. Love itself is not pure. It necessarily involves emotions such as sexual desire, jealousy and, in Hardy's fictional world, dishonesty and subterfuge. Elfride, Stephen, Parson Swancourt and finally Knight himself employ deceit:

To wear a mask, to dissemble his feelings as he had done in their late miserable conversation, was such torture that he could support it no longer. It was the first time in Knight's life that he had ever been so entirely the player of a part. And the man he had thus deceived was Stephen, who had docilely looked up to him from youth as a superior of unblemished integrity. (413-414)

Love then is an imperfect even corrupting experience, but it is human and preferable to not loving at all.

Another problem arises from the different expectations that men

and women bring to love. As Elfride puts it to Stephen: "I fancy I see the difference between me and you -- between men and women generally, perhaps. I am content to build happiness on any accidental basis that may lie near at hand; you are for making a world to suit your happiness" (64). Elfride's remark seems to apply more to her experience with Knight than with Stephen.³⁴ While women take a pragmatic, spontaneous approach to love, the attitude of men is idealistic. They wish to make love fit their preconceptions.

Largely because of her romance with Stephen, Elfride matures, gains in experience and becomes a better judge of men. Her love for Stephen was the result of romantic fancy and physical attraction. Her love for Knight is more complex: there is greater social and intellectual compatibility, a background of shared crisis and, above all, Elfride's respect for the sheer weight and power of Knight's personality. The immature Elfride who appealed to Stephen might not have won Knight's love, nor known how to appreciate him. In short, Knight could gain by Elfride's greater emotional experience if he would refrain from judging it by narrow, moral principles.³⁵

There is something abject in Elfride's fondness for Knight. Totally dominated by him, she obliterates her own personality, individuality and independence:

She never once held an idea in opposition to any one of his, or insisted on any point with him, or showed any independence, or held her own on any subject. His lightest whim she respected and obeyed as law, and if, expressing her opinion on a matter, he took up the subject and differed from her, she instantly threw down her own opinion as wrong and untenable. (338)

Clinging to him so dependently, she taught him in time to

presume upon that devotion -- a lesson men are not slow to learn. A slight rebelliousness occasionally would have done him no harm, and would have been a world of advantage to her. But she idolized him, and was proud to be his bond-servant. (349)

We hear no more of her writing sermons, books, or even playing chess. Elfride may be punishing herself for what she conceives to be her guilt in abandoning Stephen and concealing the fact from Knight. If so, it is quite consistent that she would later on further punish herself by marrying Lord Luxellian in deference to the wishes of her father and step-mother.

Hardy's characterization of Knight adumbrates the idealist type, usually Shelleyan, that we meet in The Return of the Native, Tess, Jude and The Well-Beloved. The heroes of these novels are men who cannot come to terms with real women. Knight's moral integrity is admirable, yet there is a disagreeable aspect to his nature. Elfride's deference to his feelings and opinions brings out the worst in him: "Male lovers as well as female can be spoilt by too much kindness, and Elfride's uniform submissiveness had given Knight a rather exacting manner at crises, attached to her as he was" (340). The more she submits, the more he bullies. There is a sado-masochistic element in their love. Though Elfride, and perhaps the narrator himself, never realize it, she would be better off without him.

Hardy traces the progress of Knight's courtship of Elfride in considerable detail. The underlying assumption is that woman wishes to be conquered by a masterful male. It is Stephen's fault that he is too docile and gentle, too awed by Elfride's social position and cleverness:

"Directly domineering ceases in the man, snubbing begins in the woman"

(288). His failure to arrange successfully the marriage elopement is a case in point:

His very kindness in letting her return was his offence. Elfride had her sex's love of sheer force in a man, however ill-directed; and at that critical juncture in London Stephen's only chance of retaining the ascendancy over her that his face and not his parts had acquired for him, would have been by doing what, for one thing, he was too youthful to undertake -- that was, dragging her by the wrist to the rails of some altar, and peremptorily marrying her. Decisive action is seen by appreciative minds to be frequently objectless, and sometimes fatal; but decision, however suicidal, has more charm for a woman than the most unequivocal Fabian success. (140)

In the battle of the sexes Knight initially has the psychological advantage of immunity from Elfride's charms and scorn for her powers. Even before meeting her, he crushes Elfride in his review of her romance; she is defeated in every subsequent encounter. Piqued and humiliated she strives for his approval: "The longing for Knight's respect, which was leading up to an incipient yearning for his love, made the present conjuncture a sufficient one " (203). As the narrator sees it, the jump from desire to be well-thought of, to desire for love is short. But perhaps the two most decisive episodes are the tower and cliff adventures.

The first of these begins with a barely conscious attempt on Elfride's part to draw Knight's attention:

Elfride was rather wilful, by reason of his inattention, which she privately set down to his thinking her not worth talking to. Whilst Knight stood watching the rise of the cloud she sauntered to the other side of the tower, and there remembered a giddy feat she had performed the year before. (182)

While walking on the parapet she stumbles. Knight gallantly rescues her, but instead of whispering the words of endearment that might be expected to follow in a conventional romance he upbraids her for her folly. However, he does insist on carrying her in his arms from the tower and bandaging her wound. The result is typically Hardeian:

During his progress through the operations of wiping it and binding it up anew, her face changed its aspect from pained indifference to something like bashful interest, interspersed with small tremors and shudders of a trifling kind. (184)

Though they are not yet prepared to recognize it as such, both Elfride and Knight come to feel an increasing intimacy as a result of their physical contact and the stirring of new emotions.

The cliff episode is a more intense re-enactment of the tower scene. This time it is Elfride who saves Knight. The means she chooses seem natural or inevitable under the circumstances, but familiarity with Hardy's methods prompts the guess that he designed the fall from the cliff primarily to permit inclusion of the means of rescue instead of tailoring the means of rescue to resolve the incident. In Desperate Remedies Hardy had commented that women regard their clothing as an extension of their bodies.³⁶ Though this comment is not repeated in A Pair of Blue Eyes, Elfride's removal of her underclothing suggests a high degree of emotional intimacy with Knight. It is not difficult to imagine Knight's thoughts as he surveys Elfride after the rescue clad only in "her diaphanous exterior robe or 'costume'" (250). Since she has been thoroughly drenched by the rain no doubt little enough remains for Knight's imagination.³⁷ When, after the rescue, Knight and Elfride

fall into each other's arms, they do so with an emotion that is far stronger than anything that existed between Elfride and Stephen.

In other respects as well, A Pair of Blue Eyes anticipates issues that appear in Hardy's later fictions; notably his search for a standard of morality that can encompass both sexes. The idealistic Henry Knight rejects the double standard. He seeks instead to judge men and women by the same rules:

'Depend upon it, my dear girl, that a noble woman must be as honest as a noble man. I specially mean by honesty, fairness not only in matters of business and social detail, but in all the delicate dealings of love to which the licence given to your sex particularly refers.' (308)

To the twentieth-century male reader laboriously adjusting himself to the principle of sexual equality, Knight's intellectual position may seem startlingly modern rather than mid-Victorian. Though Hardy is apparently sympathetic to Knight's desire for a single moral standard, he does not agree that the matter is quite so straightforward. As he observes:

It is difficult to frame rules which shall apply to both sexes, and Elfride, an undeveloped girl, must, perhaps, hardly be laden with the moral responsibilities which attach to a man in like circumstances. The charm of woman, too, lies partly in her subtleness in matters of love. But if honesty is a virtue in itself, Elfride, having none of it now, seemed, being for being, scarcely good enough for Knight. (299-300)

On the question of honesty in human relations, the narrator is on the side of Knight. His criticism of Elfride is not that she has loved another, but that she is dishonest and deceptive. His disapproval is tempered by the recognition that her reluctance to confess is the result of weakness of character combined with overpowering love for Knight

and fear of his moral inflexibility. Knight will judge her conduct more harshly than he would a man's, and Elfride knows it.

Elfride is not loved or admired for her intelligence or for her intellectual accomplishments, but for her supposedly feminine characteristics -- her beauty, grace of movement, vivacity, emotional warmth and even perhaps for her vanity -- her wish to be admired, her love of ornament and so on. Yet if woman is made to be loved it is presumably inconsistent to object if she attracts men and engages in love-making. This, of course, never occurs to Knight. He takes pleasure in Elfride's supposed femininity, but inconsistently demands that she be as pure as his own bookish self. Hardy never says that Elfride should be untried and inexperienced. He takes it for granted that a pretty woman will not lack romantic occasions, however isolated her abode. His criticism is directed mainly against Knight. As Elfride sadly remarks (387), it would have been better had he loved before; she supposes perhaps that he might then have been bound by the logic of his own single standard. This is unlikely: Knight's taste for untried lips is not a matter of logic, however rationally he may present it.³⁸ It springs more from an underlying misogyny of which he is only dimly aware.³⁹ It is noteworthy that the other men in the novel -- Stephen, Lord Luxellian and even Parson Swancourt -- are not daunted by the thought that their ladies have known other lips. We must therefore conclude that Elfride was unfortunate first in falling in love with a man who in all probability would have failed to make her happy, and second in lacking the ability, even in retrospect, to recognize this.

The logic of the novel would seem to imply that in seeking to marry, a man should look for emotional compatibility. He should not expect to find an ideal, nor seek to force a woman into resembling his ideal; nor should he judge her by abstract moral standards. Since in both a physical and moral sense women are the weaker sex, the narrator implies, they should not be judged by narrow and rigorous male standards. Women need man's affection, not his criticism. In the end, Hardy apparently adopts a double standard of judgment, a standard that is charitable towards women, because it deems them inferior to men.

As in Desperate Remedies and Under the Greenwood Tree, Hardy once again introduces the motif of the unconfessed secret. On the face of it, mutual frankness before marriage seems to have much to recommend it. Hardy, at any rate, assumes that it is the natural goal to aim for. But what if the confession of one partner seems bound to wound the feelings or conflict with the moral principles of the other? Should the secret then be guarded? Sooner or later, Hardy implies, the truth will out. From this rather Victorian preoccupation, Hardy creates his moral dramas.

Perhaps it was because A Pair of Blue Eyes lay so close to his own experience and aspirations that the problem of class consciousness dominates the book to an extent unmatched by his earlier published work. We find in A Pair of Blue Eyes a basic situation of Hardy's fiction -- the poor young man who attempts to better himself in order to be worthy of the hand of the socially superior young lady -- a situation that, to some extent, parallels Hardy's own experience. In real life, Hardy as-

pired to the hand of a lady socially superior to himself, and although he denies it in The Life, there is every reason to suppose the match was opposed by her father.⁴⁰ Hardy's courtship of Emma was not so much an attempt by a romantically inclined author to make life imitate art, as a rather compulsive working out in real life, as in fiction, of an ambition to transform his unsatisfactory place on the social scale by marrying above himself.

In most cases Hardy invites the reader to feel sympathy for the young man who is trying to climb the social ladder. This is initially the case in A Pair of Blue Eyes, if only because Hardy presents the young lady's father as an unconscionable snob and fortune hunter. Hardy varies this rather hackneyed plot situation by showing that in the end Parson Swancourt was right to oppose the marriage, though he did so for the wrong reasons. Stephen assumes that social considerations are the principal obstacle to marriage with Elfride. In fact the obstacle is her rapid growth in emotional maturity. To the very end Stephen remains so conscious of class differences between himself and the others that he is unable to understand why he was jilted. Stephen then is not merely "boyish" in his apprehensions of reality; he is blinded by his own sense of social inferiority.

The anti-romantic slant of A Pair of Blue Eyes may be seen in Hardy's treatment of nature, which here undergoes a further development. As he did in Under the Greenwood Tree, Hardy employs detailed (though possibly heightened) natural descriptions of Cornwall to create an atmosphere appropriate to a love story:

Knight scented romantic occasions from afar, and foresaw that such a one might be expected before the coming night.

The journey was along a road by neutral green hills, upon which hedgerows lay trailing like ropes on a quay. Gaps in these uplands revealed the blue sea, flecked with a few dashes of white and a solitary white sail, the whole brimming up to a keen horizon which lay like a line ruled from hillside to hillside. Then they rolled down a pass, the chocolate-toned rocks forming a wall on both sides, from one of which fell a heavy jagged shade over half the roadway. A spout of fresh water burst from an occasional crevice, and pattering down upon broad green leaves, ran along as a rivulet at the bottom. Unkempt locks of heather overhung the brow of each steep, whence at divers points a bramble swung forth into mid-air, snatching at their head-dresses like a claw. (217)

The purpose of this description is to provide a setting for the courtship scene that follows. Again, an accurately observed landscape is greatly enhanced by simile and metaphor to evoke a romantic mood. In the last sentence the personified brambles and heather seem to hold them back, providing just the slightest of hints that Elfride is entering a situation incompatible with her betrothal to Stephen Smith.

The association of his characters with natural phenomena constitutes a second use of nature:

Knight could not help looking at her. The sun was within ten degrees of the horizon and its warm light flooded her face and heightened the bright rose colour of her cheeks to a vermilion red, their moderate pink hue being only seen in its natural tone where the cheek curved round into shadow. The ends of her hanging hair softly dragged themselves backwards and forwards upon her shoulder as each faint breeze thrust against or relinquished it. Fringes and ribbons of her dress, moved by the same breeze, licked like tongues upon the parts around them, and fluttering forward from shady folds caught likewise their share of the lustrous orange glow. (179-180)

Here as elsewhere in the novel, Elfride is pictured almost as if she were a part of the Cornish landscape. Such descriptions bring out El-

fride's natural freshness and vitality, the source of her great charm. In the closing lines of the above quotation the glow of the sun on Elfride arouses Knight to consciousness of her vibrant sexuality. A similar passage may be found at the beginning of the novel. The author describes Elfride's eyes:

These eyes were blue; blue as autumn distance -- blue as the blue we see between the retreating mouldings of hills and woody slopes on a sunny September morning. A misty and shady blue, that had no beginning or surface, and was looked into rather than at. (1-2)

These lines not only stress Elfride's affinity to nature; they suggest her physical beauty and something of her soft, elusive, yielding temperament.

Frequently Hardy links his characters to nature by a more explicit use of simile and metaphor. Elfride, for example, is compared to birds or other swift-moving animals as in the following passage:

"She then ran off from him through the pelting rain like a hare; or more like a pheasant when, scampering away with a lowered tail, it has a mind to fly, but does not. Elfride was soon out of sight" (250).

Similar imagery may be found in Under the Greenwood Tree where Fancy Day is likened to a "bright little bird" (107), or a "pet lamb" (138), and in Far From the Madding Crowd where Bathsheba is also likened to graceful and delicate animals and often to birds. The tone is different in each novel, but the similarity of imagery reminds us that these three heroines have a number of common characteristics. Where Hardy uses natural imagery it is invariably adapted to theme, character and setting. Consequently there is more natural imagery in a novel like

Under the Greenwood Tree, with its pastoral theme, than in Desperate Remedies, which has less to do with the land despite its rural setting.

Sometimes nature seems to influence or even direct the action. The following passage sets the scene for Elfride's elopement with Stephen:

One of the brightest mornings of late summer shone upon her. The heather was at its purplest, the furze at its yellowest, the grasshoppers chirped loud enough for birds, the snakes hissed like little engines, and Elfride at first felt lively. Sitting at ease upon Pansy, in her orthodox riding-habit and nondescript hat, she looked what she felt. But the mercury of those days had a trick of falling unexpectedly. First, only for one minute in ten had she a sense of depression. Then a large cloud, that had been hanging in the north like a black fleece, came and placed itself between her and the sun. It helped on what was already inevitable, and she sank into a uniformity of sadness. (120-121)

Here Hardy goes somewhat beyond a simple correlation of climate with emotions. Elfride, whom we have seen to be so closely associated with nature as to be almost a part of it, is directly affected by the sudden change in weather. While the sun shines she is cheerful and resolute in her decision to make a secret marriage with Stephen, but with the appearance of the black cloud she becomes sad and dubious of the propriety and wisdom of her decisions. Clearly nature influences her emotions. There are, of course, a great many instances in the novel of rain squalls alternating with sunshine, not all of which seem to be directly connected to Elfride's varying moods. However, in the first line of the novel Hardy reports that "Elfride Swancourt was a girl whose emotions lay very near the surface" (1). He thus prepares us for Elfride's changeability and apparent fickleness. It would therefore seem likely that a rather witty correlation is intended between her erratic behav-

iour and the climatic fluctuatio. characteristic of Hardy 's Cornwall. Again realistic natural descriptio 's used to make a poetic rather than a merely psychological statement -- with a consequent gain in power.

Hardy's most significant use of nature in A Pair of Blue Eyes is in the cliff episode. Like Wordsworth's "presence", Hardy's "cosmic agency" is also a development of the pathetic fallacy, but Hardy makes it abundantly clear that his emerging view of nature is quite the opposite of his Romantic predecessor's. The episode begins with the comment that

It is with cliffs and mountains as with persons; they have what is called a presence, which is not proportionate to their actual bulk. A little cliff will impress you powerfully; a great one not at all. It depends, as with man, upon the countenance of the cliff.

'I cannot bear to look at that cliff', said Elfride. 'It has a horrid personality, and makes me shudder. We will go.'

'Can you climb?' said Knight. 'If so, we will ascend by that path over the grim old fellow's brow'. (232)

In this interesting passage the narrator is cautious about attributing personality to a natural object. He merely refers to the cliff as a "presence", although his use of Wordsworth's term is significant. The characters, however, readily personify it. A little later Knight slips, and is in danger of falling. He hangs on desperately, waiting for Elfride to aid him. The narrator observes:

To those musing weather-beaten West-country folk who pass the greater part of their days and nights out of doors, Nature seems to have moods in other than a poetical sense: predilections for certain deeds at certain times, without any apparent law to govern or season to account for them. She is read as a person with a curious temper; as one who does not scatter kindnesses and

cruelties alternately, impartially, and in order, but heartless severities or overwhelming generosity in lawless caprice. Man's case is always that of the prodigal's favourite or the miser's pensioner. In her unfriendly moments there seems a feline fun in her tricks, begotten by a foretaste of her pleasure in swallowing the victim.

Such a way of thinking had been absurd to Knight, but he began to adopt it now. He was first spitted on to a rock. New tortures followed. (243)

In his great danger Knight comes to think of nature as an amoral, hostile, capricious force. Clearly the stance so far adopted belongs to the character rather than the author, but in the next paragraph the narrator concludes:

We are mostly accustomed to look upon all opposition which is not animate as that of the stolid, inexorable hand of indifference, which wears out the patience more than the strength. Here, at any rate, hostility did not assume that slow and sickening form. It was a cosmic agency, active, lashing, eager for conquest: determination; not an insensate standing in the way. (243-244)

Knight's attitude has now become the author's, yet the stance is temporary, for we hear no more about a malicious natural force in A Pair of Blue Eyes. The disaster is purely the result of human action, the fate of the characters being determined by themselves alone. Since the tone at this point is still lighthearted, and since nature is used to provide a suitable setting for young love, the comment seems melodramatic and unjustifiably intrusive. Presumably Hardy was tempted to introduce this inconsistency in order to heighten the effect of the cliff scene. He was evidently impressed by the extra power achieved from personifying nature, for we find him using the device again in later novels. But more often he pits his characters against an impersonal, malignant force usually called Fate or Destiny rather than Nature.

In Evolution and Poetic Belief Georg Roppen discusses the Darwinian aspects of Hardy's cliff scene. Yet nowhere does Darwin speak of a force actively hostile to man. The essence of Hardy's concept at this stage comes not from Darwin but from a totally inverted, but still recognizable Wordsworth. Instead of the benevolent or moral presence in nature we find "a cosmic agency, active, lashing, eager for conquest". In A Pair of Blue Eyes Hardy has carried his anti-Romanticism a step further; but his view of nature is still poetic, not scientific.

In depth of characterization, in theme and in the subtle irony that pervades the book, A Pair of Blue Eyes is a marked advance over Hardy's previous work. Yet by most accounts, including that of the author himself, it is held to be inferior to the Wessex novels. The principal problem is inconsistency of tone. As Millgate observes: "A Pair of Blue Eyes is fundamentally disrupted by persistent alterations of mode, by shifts in authorial attitude towards the characters and towards the reader, and by a general failure to establish functional relationships between disparate elements of the total fiction."⁴¹

There is indeed a good deal of tonal difference between the opening sections of the book and the increasingly tragic atmosphere that pervades the second half, between the low rustic comedy of William Worm and Robert Lickpan, characters who seem to belong to the world of Under the Greenwood Tree, and the satiric comedy of manners of Chapter XIV which one suspects Hardy culled from the discarded manuscript of The Poor Man and the Lady. The heavy atmosphere in the second half of the book and some of the stagey or melodramatic scenes resemble sections

of Desperate Remedies. We therefore need not be surprised to find Hardy acknowledging, in a discarded preface,⁴² a certain debt to Wilkie Collins' The Moonstone. The description of the Luxellian vaults and other Gothic settings are akin to passages in the romances of William Harrison Ainsworth. The narrator is unduly obtrusive. At times he sounds like an over-zealous cicerone intent on explaining all the points of interest, and at other times his comments on feminine psychology sound sententious or smug.

Hardy attempts to unify the book by a prevailing irony. It is applied good-humouredly towards Elfride and Stephen in the early stages of their romance, satirically towards Parson Swancourt and subtly in the gradual unveiling of Knight's unknightly behaviour. Hardy is therefore consistent in his decision to end A Pair of Blue Eyes ironically. But irony, too, has its varying tones; and the heavy, obvious treatment of the two last chapters is at variance with the mild irony that pervades the opening half of the novel. The progress of Knight's courtship of Elfride is laid out with the minute fidelity to detail found in a realistic novel. The melodramatic ending laden with coincidence belongs, however, to the world of romance. The shift from one mode to another is too abrupt and leaves the reader outraged by improbability rather than convinced by inevitability. For all that, A Pair of Blue Eyes is an interesting novel. It does not deserve its present neglect.

V

A LAODICEAN

The reader who ventures on A Laodicean will probably do so only after he has been thoroughly carried away by the Hardy of the Wessex novels. Yet an approach to the novel from this direction may well provoke an unfavourable reaction. Fascinated by Hardy's Wessex, readers may refuse to accept the very different world of this novel, which is middle-class, contemporary and domestic, rather than peasant, nostalgic and exotically rustic.

It is perhaps for this reason that twentieth-century criticism generally damns A Laodicean. Carl Weber, for example, regards it as "the poorest novel [Hardy] had ever written".¹ To R. C. Carpenter it is "a potboiler of the worst sort".² Bert G. Hornback dismisses it as "badly melodramatic, and overall probably the worst of Hardy's novels".³ Even those critics who have attempted to analyse A Laodicean agree that it is a failure. Albert J. Guerard, for example, argues that the novel begins brilliantly and then collapses "after the first one hundred and forty pages",⁴ a view which has been largely accepted by Irving Howe⁵ and Michael Millgate.⁶

Yet contemporary reaction to A Laodicean was by no means unanimous in condemnation. It is true that the editor of Harper's Magazine complained that Hardy had "pitched his new romance . . . on a lower and

feebler key than usual",⁷ and that it was ignominiously "remaindered to Mudie"⁸ two months after publication in book form. But the unsigned reviewer of the Athenaeum, while mildly criticizing Hardy's occasional crudity, found it "interesting in many ways to observe the improvement which ten years have brought".⁹ Havelock Ellis, writing in 1883, shortly after the publication of Two on a Tower, responded favorably to A Laodicean, and looked forward to more fiction of this kind. He predicted that Hardy would

scarcely write another novel of the peculiar power, and, it might be added, the peculiar weakness, of Far from the Madding Crowd. It seems more probable that he will pursue the vein of comedy which began in The Hand of Ethelberta, and is, perhaps, the most characteristic outcome of his genius . . . it is probable that, of stories in this manner, A Laodicean and Two on a Tower will not be the last.¹⁰

Fortunately, Ellis' first prediction was mistaken; nor is it possible to agree with him that Hardy's "vein of comedy" promised as much as, if not more than, the tragic or melodramatic novels with their "peculiar" powers and weaknesses. Nevertheless, Ellis' observation, that the comic mode developed in The Hand of Ethelberta is characteristic of Hardy's genius, was valid. Reading Hardy's novels more or less in order of appearance, Ellis saw what he believed to be a consistent and developing mode of expression. In this chapter I wish to show that in form, theme, structure and characterization A Laodicean is typical of Hardy and, though it is inferior to the great Wessex novels, still deserves consideration for the light it throws on his preoccupations and intentions.

In the General Preface to the Wessex Edition of 1912-31 Hardy classified A Laodicean as one of his three novels of ingenuity. Apparently Hardy thought that the melodramatic or sensational elements in A Laodicean, the intricate plotting and the swift resourcefulness of William Dare, were sufficiently akin to similar elements in Desperate Remedies and The Hand of Ethelberta to warrant placing all three books in the same category. Be this as it may, Hardy's earlier opinion expressed in his 1896 preface, and allowed to stand in the Wessex edition, seems to have been that A Laodicean was essentially a romance:

The changing of the old order in country manors and mansions may be slow or sudden, may have many issues romantic or otherwise, its romantic issues being not necessarily restricted to a change back to the original order; though this admissible instance appears to have been the only romance formerly recognized by novelists as possible in the case. Whether the following production be a picture of other possibilities or not, its incidents may be taken to be fairly well supported by evidence every day forthcoming in most counties. (v)

Interestingly, Hardy claims to be writing a romance of a different kind, whose subject will evidently deal with change from an old to a new order, and which will include "romantic issues". The tale appears to have a topical, realistic basis, for its incidents are "supported by evidence every day forthcoming in most counties". In short, A Laodicean was to be another of Hardy's characteristic combinations of romance and realism.

As early as Desperate Remedies and again in A Pair of Blue Eyes he had mixed Gothicism, sensationalism and romance with realistic treatments of setting and character. In A Laodicean, Hardy makes the mediaeval castle, with its ruined outbuildings and mouldy portraits of the de

Stancy ancestors, into a powerful influence on the characters. The brief burial scene in the family vault and the firing of the castle at the end also derive ultimately from the Gothic novel. The armed confrontation between William Dare and Abner Power at the vestry table (407ff) is certainly sensational, though not more so than other episodes in Hardy's fiction. On the other hand, Somerset's drawn-out courtship of Paula is treated sentimentally. The chivalric imagery used in A Pair of Blue Eyes reappears in A Laodicean. A. J. Guerard argues that Hardy parodies the courtly love convention¹¹ by having Somerset and the "knightly" de Stancy vie with each other for the hand of the unattainable lady. Michael Millgate too has noted Hardy's occasional use of chivalric image patterns for ironic effect: "A threat of portentousness in the chapel scene in the second chapter is subsequently dispelled by Somerset's improbably taking up Mr. Woodwell's 'challenge' and entering into the theological lists in defence of the lady sitting in her 'pavilion'" (60).¹²

A Laodicean, like the earlier Under the Greenwood Tree, is akin to one of Shakespeare's romantic comedies in which a youth meets a maiden, falls in love with her, is frustrated by a series of obstacles or accidents, overcomes them and finally marries the heroine. Because of the prevailing comic tone we are not in serious doubt, or at least not for long, as to Somerset's eventual success. As Hardy himself remarked in the preface, the narrative proceeds to "a predetermined cheerful ending" (v). Indeed, at the end of the novel the landlord of Sleeping-Green Inn observes that "all's well that ends well". Accordingly,

the villainies of Dare and the craft of de Stancy and Abner Power amuse and entertain rather than seriously alarm the reader. The tour of Europe which dominates the second half of the novel may be compared to the flight to the green world undertaken by the characters in a Shakespearian romance. In the European setting Paula, duped by Dare's trickery, temporarily loses sight of reality, only to regain it on her return to familiar surroundings.

Hardy's feeling that the action of A Laodicean suited the mood of romantic comedy is probably best indicated by his inclusion of a play within the novel: the theme and comic tone of Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost is, as Millgate suggests,¹³ similar to that of A Laodicean. Moreover Paula, like other Hardy heroines, has something of the boyish sprightliness of Shakespeare's comic heroines. This is implied partly by the masculine element in her first and second names, partly by the energy, forcefulness and coolness with which she conducts her affairs and partly by the "boy's costume" (190) she wears when exercising in the gymnasium.¹⁴ But she most obviously adopts a masculine role in the final scenes when she pursues Somerset to Europe and proposes to him at his bedside. It is not that Hardy intends Paula or his other heroines to be sexually ambivalent; his women are more likely the reflection of Hardy's personal tendency to be attracted by aggressive, intellectual, independent-minded women. At any rate, the correspondences to Shakespearian romantic comedy are not there by chance. They are part of Hardy's technique of treating his material comically, rather than pathetically or tragically.

The bizarre plot episodes, too, are typical of Hardy. Despite the strictures of modern critics, most of these incidents can be related to his central themes. Jean R. Brooks maintains that "Somerset's fall down the turret staircase, unlike Knight's down the Cliff without a Name, leads nowhere in plot or poetic vision".¹⁵ But aside from the opportunity it gives Hardy to forewarn the reader of the Dare-de Stancy connection, it surely has the thematic purpose of suggesting the dangers inherent in overromanticizing the past, much in the way that the narrow escape of Paula and Somerset from the speeding train underlines the dangers of modernity. The latter incident has the further advantage of bringing hero and heroine together for a moment of shared emotion which reveals to Paula, at least, that she has fallen in love with Somerset.

It is interesting that Hardy's statement about the ordinary and the uncommon in fiction was apparently formulated just after completion of A Laodicean and shortly before correcting it:

'The writer's problem is, how to strike the balance between the uncommon and the ordinary so as on the one hand to give interest, on the other to give reality.

'In working out this problem, human nature must never be made abnormal, which is introducing incredibility. The uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters; and the writer's art lies in shaping that uncommonness while disguising its unlikelihood, if it be unlikely'.¹⁶

No matter how sensational the events may be, the characters in a fiction should appear to be "true", "real" and "ordinary" like the reader himself.¹⁷ Yet Hardy cannot be said to have done this in A Laodicean any more than Walpole and Reeve did it in their romances. While Hardy was capable of creating lifelike characters, he found it difficult to do so and at the same time make them memorable. In A Laodicean, for example,

the hero, George Somerset, is a character whose actions seem to accord with the laws of probability, but he is too obtuse to be the centre of interest. On the other hand, the most incredible character, William Dare, is once again the most memorable. Hardy had stumbled against a resistance -- inherent in the romance mode itself -- to realistic characterization. It was a problem that Hardy had encountered in Desperate Remedies and that he was able to overcome in a novel such as The Woodlanders -- partly by bestowing on romance characters like Giles a certain verisimilitude of conduct, and partly by bestowing on realistically conceived characters like Grace, a mythic dimension.

Hardy stated the central theme of the novel in the opening lines of his 1896 preface. A Laodicean would be concerned, he wrote, with the "romantic issues" resulting from the "changing of the old order in country manors and mansions" (v), i.e., with the passing of the old and the coming of the new. Hardy was aware that the old structures and institutions of society were crumbling. Although he saw the inevitability of the process he regretted their demise, for he viewed the future with trepidation. This theme appears to a greater or lesser extent in most of his novels and in many of his stories and poems. The passing of the old order is linked to Hardy's general preoccupation with the ravages of time and the inevitability of change. For Hardy, what has passed, or is in the process of passing, stirs his emotions and arouses a sense of pathos, or produces an elegaic note; hence the frequent reference in his writing to the fading beauty of a woman, or to decaying castles, mansions and churches. It is in this nostalgia for the past that Hardy's

romanticism is most pronounced, and it is to be found even in so modern-minded a novel as A Laodicean. The effects of time and change touched him personally; for, as noted earlier, he had been much struck by "the decline and fall of the Hardys".¹⁸

Hardy introduces his theme by a series of images in the opening pages of the novel. The first begins with a description of the setting sun illuminating a "bold and quaint example of a transitional style of architecture which formed the tower entrance to an English village church" (3). The graveyard setting and the Keatsian swarm of "lustrous gnats", dancing and wailing incessantly in the air, complete the picture. The old world, represented by the church, is dying. Perhaps the "transitional style of architecture" hints at the new phase which is to come. To stress the thematic implication Hardy adds:

There are few in whom the sight of a sunset does not beget as much meditative melancholy as contemplative pleasure, the human decline and death that it illustrates being too obvious to escape the notice of the simplest observer. (3-4)

The second image cluster centres on the modern telegraph wire which leaps across the moat of Stancy Castle

over the girdling wall, and thence by a tremendous stretch towards a tower which might have been the keep where, to judge by sound, it vanished through an arrow-slit into the interior. This fossil of feudalism, then, was the journey's end of the wire, and not the village of Sleeping-Green. (22)

Again there is the reminder that the feudal spirit is dead. In addition, in the conjunction of wire with castle, Hardy hints that his romance will be concerned with the encounter between ancient and modern.

In A Laodicean, as in Under the Greenwood Tree or The Mayor of

Casterbridge, the conflict is dramatized by contrasting groups of characters. The de Stancys represent the economic, social and moral decay of the old aristocracy. The earlier extravagance and fatuous ostentation of Sir William, senior, have led to the economic collapse of the family. Their degeneracy is implied by the sly and dishonourable conduct of Captain de Stancy, by the turpitude of the Captain's illegitimate son, William Dare, and by the ambiguous features of Charlotte, the Captain's sister: "It was not the de Stancy face with all its original specialties: it was, so to speak, a defective reprint of that face: for the nose tried hard to turn up and deal utter confusion to the family shape" (29). The de Stancys and others like them were vigorous and creative when they built the magnificent Gothic churches and castles, but they are so no longer. Old Sir William lives in "genuine roadside respectability" (47), the absurd preacher of opportunistic advice.

The Captain is an obscure, undistinguished and "unaspiring" (201) army officer "with a tired air" (169), a far cry from the vital warrior knights of earlier times. On several occasions Hardy stresses that Paula sees in him or wishes to see in him a man of romance. Once de Stancy realizes Paula's weakness he plays up to her. The gap between the true and the false in his character then becomes more obvious. Hardy has, indeed, created a romantic figure, but for purposes of satire. This is suggested by de Stancy's almost stereotyped character. He is a combination of the villainous protagonist of Gothic prose romance and the Byronic hero.¹⁹ As might be expected, his moustache and hair are "raven black" (169), his character egocentric, his temperament melancholy.

Like Sergeant Troy before him, he is something of a lady-killer: "He was sufficiently old and experienced to suggest a goodly accumulation of touching amourettes in the chambers of his memory, and not too old for the possibility of increasing the store" (169). But in consequence of a somewhat mysterious earlier entanglement with a woman, de Stancy has reined in his passionate nature by vows of abstinence and celibacy (181-182). These, of course, are quickly terminated when he spies on Paula.²⁰ De Stancy's resemblance to Byron's amorous hero is underlined by his ready quotation of verses from Don Juan XIV.17-18 (170), in which Juan expresses a jaded view of life. De Stancy's "taedium vitae" (172) and propensity for travel, which resemble Childe Harold,²¹ further connect him to Byron.

In the relationship between Dare and de Stancy, Hardy makes ironic allusion to the legend of Faust. Hopelessly enmeshed by the wiles of his son, de Stancy is "as full of apprehension as one who has a league with Mephistopheles" (426). De Stancy is not the Marlovian Faustus who sought knowledge and power; he is more the romantic, disillusioned, gloomy Goethean Faust who, enticed by the vision of a fair maiden, barter his honour to gratify his lust. In staging the vision, Dare, like Mephistopheles, gains control over de Stancy's soul. The legend of Faust denotes the relations of father and son. The weak-minded de Stancy falls the more easily into Dare's power because of his sense of guilty responsibility for his son's illegitimacy.²²

Dare is an interesting and thoroughly entertaining villain. He is curiously likeable, perhaps because we enjoy seeing him make a fool

of the somewhat priggish Somerset, or possibly because we sympathize with the injustice he has suffered. In his cheeky persistence in evil and in his refusal to be daunted he is very much like the bastard Edmund in King Lear. Dare does not physically resemble the de Stancys, but his dark eyes (187) come from his father, while his belief in luck and fortune is no doubt inherited from his grandfather. Dare's name suggests that he is an inveterate gambler. He believes in a "theory of chances and recurrences" (318); though his schemes never fully prosper, he is usually "fortunate" enough to escape outright exposure and arrest.

At the same time, he is a compound of several romantic archetypes. His demonic attributes have been described and discussed by a series of critics beginning with J. O. Bailey.²³ But it is not enough to say that Dare is one of Hardy's "Mephistophelean visitants"; the point is that in having Dare play Mephistopheles to de Stancy's Faust, Hardy deepens the characterization of the two men and illuminates their relationship. Hardy also compares Dare to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein: his "ambitious experiments" in rousing his father to take the role of Paula's suitor "seemed about to be rewarded, like Frankenstein's, by his discomfiture at the hands of his own creature" (218). Yet Dare seems closer to the "creature" itself than to Frankenstein. Deprived of home and love, he becomes destructive and, like a psychopath, views his own actions without remorse, indeed without any emotion whatever. In his agelessness and cosmopolitanism (81), Dare resembles the Wandering Jew, doomed to roam indefinitely without country and home (158-159),

the de Stancy tattoo on his chest like the mark of Cain.²⁴

Dare completes the ruin of the de Stancys by vindictively destroying the family home. Significantly he kindles the blaze with a heap of old portraits of his de Stancy ancestors, suggesting that he has all along cared more for the castle as a material possession than as an ancestral home. Indeed, none of the de Stancys show genuine interest or affection for their past. Having failed to win Paula's hand, the Captain will remain unmarried like his sister, thus effectively bringing the family line to an end.

The de Stancys, on the whole, represent something negative, as Dare himself admits:

We de Stancys are a worn-out old party -- that's the long and the short of it. We represent conditions of life that have had their day -- especially me. Our one remaining chance was an alliance with new aristocrats; and we have failed. We are past and done for. Our line has had five hundred years of glory, and we ought to be content. (472-473)

Dare's point is that made by Matthew Arnold that by standing aloof from the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, the traditional aristocracy had failed to provide moral leadership to the nation. They had therefore lost their raison d'être.²⁵

Despite this negative view of the de Stancys, the narrator finds much that is attractive in England's mediaeval past: "leisure, light-hearted generosity, intense friendships, hawks, hounds, revels, healthy complexions, freedom from care, and such a living power in architectural art as the world may never see again" (22). However, the castle represents other things besides art. It is described as:

the hoary memorial of a stolid antagonism to the interchange of ideas, the monument of hard distinctions in blood and race, of deadly mistrust of one's neighbour in spite of the Church's teaching, and of a sublime unconsciousness of any other force than a brute one. (21)

The attribution of a brutal callousness to the original inhabitants of the castles anticipates Hardy's remarks about Tess' violent d'Urber-ville ancestors.

As the preceding quotations indicate, the castle, so closely associated with the surviving members of the de Stancy family, symbolizes the spirit of the Middle Ages. Paula's desire to restore it presumably signifies an attempt to preserve the past. The castle may also symbolize England's cultural heritage, and the struggle for its spiritual possession anticipates the symbolic struggle for Howards End in Forster's novel of that name. So important is the castle in A Laodicean that Hardy originally subtitled his three-volume English edition of 1881 "The Castle of the de Stancys. A Story of To-day".²⁶ It is provocatively paradoxical, suggesting the novel is both Gothic and modern at the same time -- a modern romance in short. Hardy's subsequent decision to delete the first part of the subtitle may reveal how he wished his novel to be read.

If the attractions and deficiencies of the past are represented by the de Stancys and their castle, the new era is represented by the Power family and their institutional symbols, the chapel and the railway. Their surname has, in the first place, mechanical and industrial connotations. Paula's father, John Power, was a railway contractor, his brother an engineer; and Paula herself frequently uses the telegraph

and later the railway. It is ironically appropriate that the aristocratic de Stancy at first disparagingly refers to Paula as "Miss Steam-Power" (171). The name also alludes to the increasing social and political influence of the industrial middle classes during the nineteenth century following their acquisition of economic power during the Industrial Revolution. The late John Power was a philanthropist and a Member of Parliament. His daughter too is a "power" in the Markton community and a highly desirable marriage partner for impoverished aristocrats. Finally, the name suggests something of the energy and forcefulness of the family, especially of Paula herself, which contrasts sharply with the tired de Stancys.

John Power made his money through railway contracting in England and on the continent. The tunnel he constructed near Stancy Castle is described as "a triumph of science" (102). Somerset admires the work, "mentally balancing science against art, the grandeur of this fine piece of construction against that of the castle, and thinking whether Paula's father had not, after all, the best of it" (106). The scientific triumphs of the modern age, identified with John Power, are worthy of the artistic constructions of the past. In part, therefore, the novel is concerned with a science-versus-art antithesis. Although he buys Stancy Castle, Power never manages to live there; accordingly the reader has no reason to think of him as a mere parvenu. Power remains staunchly loyal to his Baptist faith and generously provides funds for the building of the chapel. In brief, Hardy's attitude to the John Powers of England is, on the whole, sympathetic.

The role of Abner Power is not consistently sustained in the novel; yet his initial function is clear. Abner represents the perversions of science and technology among the industrial middle classes, just as Dare represents the extreme of degeneracy in the aristocracy.²⁷ In Hardy's fiction the names given to the figures are often indicative of their traits of character. Abner Power's Christian name implies his nonconformist origins, though Hardy may also have intended an allusion to the Biblical Abner, the opportunistic commander of Saul's army.

By profession, Abner Power is "a mechanical engineer" (410). But where his brother John expresses his levelling tendencies through Parliament, Abner lays his technical knowledge at the feet of a group of social revolutionaries, employing science and technology for socially destructive purposes. Wounded in the accidental explosion of the "machine" he had devised to murder his political opponents, Abner is left symbolically marked:

His visage, which was of the colour of light porphyry, had little of its original surface left; it was a face which had been the plaything of strange fires or pestilences, that had moulded to whatever shape they chose his originally supple skin, and left it pitted, puckered, and seamed like a dried watercourse. (266)

Later he is described as "a strange-looking personage" with "the face of a smelter" (276), a possible association with heavy industry. The imagery of stone and sterility implies that Abner has a utilitarian or mechanistic lack of human feeling; the imagery of fire hints at his diabolical nature. Sought by the police, he is forced to flee from country to country with his scarred face, a sign that, like Dare, he is a latter-day Cain. The image pattern connects these family blacksheep,

for both are of the devil's party.

Paula, before she falls under the influence of de Stancy and Somerset, expresses the spirit of the industrial middle classes. Some critics have complained that she and the other characters "seem more like tokens than people".²⁸ It is true that if we measure Paula by the standards of the realistic novel she is not completely convincing. Hardy was not always able to make his semi-allegorical characters fit into a realistic setting. Father Time, for example, seems out of place in the world of Jude the Obscure. On the other hand, with Troy, Farfrae, Henchard, Fitzpiers, Alec d'Urberville and Tess, Hardy succeeds in creating memorable characters who also represent the new or the old. It is partly a matter of the kind of world Hardy is able to create in a particular novel, partly a matter of literary tact. To this reader at least, the "lifelike" Somerset is the duller character in the novel. Paula seems an interesting and complex heroine who loses none of her charm because she also represents her class.

In naming his heroine Paula, Hardy perhaps alludes to St. Paul and thus identifies her with stringent morality and puritanical tenets, with self-conversion, frequent epistles and indefatigable travelling. In what might otherwise be an irrelevant remark, the narrator observes that the Mediterranean Sea, which the travellers approach on their trip through southern France, is also the sea of St. Paul (311). Though Paula denies that she is a "Puritan" (131), she has been brought up as Baptist and has acquired puritanical traits: "The habit of self-repression at any new emotional impact was instinctive with her always"

(246). This partly explains her initial shyness with Somerset. She also maintains the rigid moral standards of puritanism. Her attitude to Somerset, for example, changes radically when she believes that he has lost his money through gambling and excessive drinking. Nevertheless, she is not a thorough-going puritan, as Somerset observes (104), and the novel traces her shift from Calvinism towards a middle position, a theme to be considered later.

There is also a Hellenistic strain in Paula's character, somewhat at odds with her puritanism. She is several times said to be Greek or Neo-Greek in aesthetic inclinations (89, 91), or in spirit.²⁹ By "Greek" Hardy means Paula's classical rational and scientific spirit.³⁰ Somerset observes:

'You represent science rather than art, perhaps.'
 'How?' she asked, glancing up under her hat.
 'I mean,' replied Somerset, 'that you represent the
 march of mind -- the steamship, and the railway, and the
 thoughts that shake mankind.' (101)

Her connection to science is again underlined by Somerset: "Archimedes, Newcomen, Watt, Telford, Stephenson, those are your father's direct ancestors" (124). The list of scientists is a further indication that Hardy sees the Greeks as the originators of the modern scientific spirit.

Paula plans to utilize the clay on her lands to manufacture "Hellenistic pottery" (38). In her dressing room Somerset notices "a Bible, the Baptist Magazine, Wardlaw on Infant Baptism" together with "photographic portraits of the artistic, scientific, and literary celebrities of the day" (40). Despite the religious literature on her

table, Paula is closer to the spirit of Hellenism, science and the modern world: "She was in fact, emphatically a modern type of maidenhood, and she looked ultra-modern by reason of her environment" (15). But Paula, in spite of her puritanical and scientific upbringing, becomes attracted to the romantic Captain de Stancy, his family and ancestral castle; her longing to identify herself with them and with the past provides one of the important antitheses of the novel. The other is her wish to be true to her father and his principles. It is clear that in her vacillation between old and new, the romantic and the practical, she embodies the principal theme of the novel.

The last character associated with the Power family is the Baptist Minister, Mr. Woodwell. His surname indicates Hardy's rather patronizing attitude towards him. There is no doubt that Woodwell is sincere, honest and zealous in his duties; but he is also dogmatic, narrow and culturally and intellectually limited. The initial description of him hints that he is deprived or impoverished in some way:

On a platform at the end of the chapel a haggard man of more than middle age, with grey whiskers ascetically cut back from the fore part of his face so far as to be almost banished from the countenance, stood reading a chapter. (14)

He fails to get the better of Somerset in theological debate, and although Paula's father, John Power, was a staunch member and chief pillar of the church, Woodwell is unable to retain Paula's allegiance. Woodwell's ineffectiveness implies that the dissenting churches will not succeed in stemming the modern trend towards skepticism and rationalism. A similar attitude is expressed in Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

Parson Clare, though not a dissenter, holds to the Pauline doctrines associated with English puritanism. He is an admirable parson, warm and humane, but his views are narrow, and he cannot prevent his intellectual and philosophically-minded son from abandoning the family faith.

Hardy's criticism of English nonconformity is reinforced by his architectural imagery. While the accomplishments of the feudal aristocracy are represented by the castle and the Gothic churches that Somerset visits, the achievements of the Powers are embodied in buildings like the railway tunnel or Baptist chapel. Hardy admires the construction of the tunnel, but he is also conscious of its sinister aspects: Paula and Somerset are very nearly killed by a speeding train (107). An incident signifying much the same thing occurs at the beginning of An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress when Egbert Mayne saves Geraldine Allenville from the steam threshing machine,³¹ and in Tess of the d'Urbervilles the heroine is threatened by the insatiable thresher at Flintcomb Ash. The headlong rush into the present has its dangers for humanity.

Hardy's attitude to the chapel reveals his aesthetic criticism of nonconformity. Financed by John Power, designed and constructed by Havill, one of its prominent members, the uncouth chapel is a strictly utilitarian structure in its purpose, in its design and in the materials used to construct it:

The building was . . . a recently-erected chapel of red brick, with pseudo-classic ornamentation, and the white regular joints of mortar could be seen streaking its surface in geometrical oppressiveness from top to bottom.

The roof was of blue slate, clean as a table, and unbroken from gable to gable; the windows were glazed with sheets of plate glass, a temporary iron stove-pipe passing out near one of these, and running up to the height of the ridge, where it was finished by a covering like a parachute. (11)

Here Hardy lists a number of man or machine-made materials rough to the touch and unpleasant to the eye. The hard "g" and insistent "s" alliteration is cacophonous to the ear. Readers and critics accustomed to the mellifluous nature descriptions and powerful emotional passages of the Wessex novels have found A Laodicean lacking in stylistic merit. Yet there can be no doubt that the hand of the poet lies behind this and other passages in the novel.

On the next page Somerset compares the chapel unfavourably with the castle:

The chapel had neither beauty, quaintness, nor congeniality to recommend it: the dissimilitude between the new utilitarianism of the place and the scenes of venerable Gothic art which had occupied his daylight hours could not well be exceeded. (12-13)

Somerset and apparently Hardy clearly favour the Gothic over the utilitarian style on aesthetic grounds. Thus far Hardy's predilection might appear to be that of a post-Romantic. But he shows an awareness of other aspects of the issue:

The chapel and its shabby plot of ground, from which the herbage was all trodden away by busy feet, had a living human interest that the numerous minsters and churches knee-deep in fresh green grass, visited by him during the foregoing week, had often lacked. (13)

Hardy anticipates the end of the novel by pointing out that the institutions developed by utilitarianism were meeting a real human need as against the Gothic churches which were gradually being abandoned because

they no longer had anything to say to the present. The busy people attending the modern chapel ignore or despise nature, while the Gothic blends harmoniously into the English landscape. Hardy is not simply a nostalgic romantic: he recognizes the deficiencies in both the old and the new.

Insensitivity to nature implies an insensitivity to the aesthetic and emotional needs of man. This may be seen in the following description of the grounds surrounding the home of Mr. Woodwell:

It was a house which typified the drearier tenets of its occupier with great exactness. It stood upon its spot of earth without any natural union with it: no mosses disguised the stiff straight line where wall met earth; not a creeper softened the aspect of the bare front. The garden walk was strewn with loose clinkers from a neighbouring smithy, which rolled under the pedestrian's foot and jolted his soul out of him before he reached the porchless door. But all was clean, and clear, and dry. (290)

Clean, clear and dry indeed, but oh how dreary! The imagery further suggests the link between dissent and the principles of the Power family, utilitarianism and industry. Hardy's point is strikingly similar to the criticisms of the English middle classes in Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy and to the imagery of Dickens' Hard Times.

Chapel and castle are contrasted to each other at the very beginning of A Laodicean (11-13, 21-22), and again at the end. As the castle burns out of control

the powerful irradiation fell upon the brick chapel in which Somerset had first seen the woman who now stood beside him as his wife. It was the only object visible in that direction, the dull hills and trees behind failing to catch the light. She significantly pointed it out to Somerset, who knew her meaning. (480)

The ugly chapel survives while the stately castle falls into ruin, nev-

er to be restored. It is a symbolic summary of the novel's action. Heirless, the de Stancy line is doomed to extinction. But Paula and Somerset have married. Their new house, "eclectic in style" (481), will symbolize the creative union of old and new.

Architectural settings, used extensively in A Laodicean, replace the lavish natural background employed in the Wessex novels. In a work like Jude the Obscure, where Hardy gives relatively little attention to the natural setting, the architecture again becomes important. At Aldbrickham, for example, Hardy contrasts the "picturesque mediaeval ruins beside the railway" with "the modern chapels, modern tombs, and modern shrubs, having a look of intrusiveness amid the crumbling and ivy-covered decay of the ancient walls".³² The decaying buildings of Christminster symbolize the outdated learning of Oxford much as the ruin of Stancy Castle signifies the end of England's hereditary aristocracy.

Standing between the de Stancys and the Powers is George Somerset. He is not a West-countryman despite his surname. He is a typical, educated young Englishman of middle-class origin and pursuits, an architect by profession. He is neither of the aristocracy nor of the industrial middle classes. In figure he is slim and "pale" (4); his features reveal a rather "too dominant speculative activity" (5). Like Egbert Mayne, Stephen Smith and Edward Springrove, Somerset is serious but inexperienced, hesitant and unaggressive. Dreamy by nature (7), and artistic by temperament, he impractically follows an enthusiasm for "poetical literature" (6). Like Hardy's other Shelleyan heroes, Somer-

set is essentially passive in relation to the novel's dominant, energetic heroine. Paula's proposal to him as he lies alone on his sick bed does not, at first glance, resemble Grace's appearance before the sleeping Fitzpiers in The Woodlanders. Yet, both scenes may derive from Shelley. In Alastor, for example, the lady makes a decisive appearance before the passive hero while he lies asleep.

In several respects Somerset resembles Hardy himself. According to William Lyon Phelps, Hardy confided to him that "A Laodicean contained more of the facts of his own life than anything else he had written".³³ Indeed, critics have accused Hardy of padding A Laodicean by adding incidents from his own life with no particular attempt to adapt them to the action or theme of his novel.³⁴ The usually reticent author seems to have been unusually frank in admitting the presence of these biographical elements.³⁵ But Somerset's resemblance to the young Hardy is scarcely fortuitous: he is Hardy's spokesman.

Unlike the young protagonists of earlier novels, Somerset bears a certain abstract meaning bordering on allegory. He represents the English compromise: love and respect for the past together with an acceptance of the present. This is essentially a conservative and commonsensical approach, rather like Hardy's mature views on social and political affairs:

I find that my politics really are neither Tory nor Radical. I may be called an Intrinsicist. I am against privilege derived from accident of any kind, and am therefore equally opposed to aristocratic privilege and democratic privilege.³⁶

In his religious attitudes too, Somerset shows his resemblance to Hardy.

Though nominally an Anglican he is not a churchgoer, his love for the church being mainly aesthetic. Nevertheless, like Hardy himself, he is well-versed in the arguments for and against paedobaptism.³⁷ Somerset's familiarity with the Baptist tenets makes him capable of respecting Paula's family faith, though he continues to be cool to it mainly on aesthetic and cultural grounds. Similarly, his knowledge of science enables him to appreciate the achievements of Paula's father.

His middle position between the Powers and the de Stancys, and what they stand for, may also be seen in his architectural views. Somerset is described as recently having turned to a study of the native English Gothic (7) after a period of disillusion. He is, therefore, ready and able to undertake the task of restoring Stancy Castle, and he is sufficiently competent to see that Paula's initial enthusiasm for a Greek court (91) in a Gothic restoration is ill-considered (100). She soon accepts his view, however, and Somerset goes on to develop a strikingly original conception:

Somerset had not attempted to adapt an old building to the wants of the new civilization. He had placed his new erection beside it as a slightly attached structure, harmonizing with the old; heightening and beautifying, rather than subduing it. His work formed a palace, with a ruinous castle annexed as a curiosity. (157)

Somerset has preferred to design a new structure in Gothic style rather than to attempt a restoration of the old building. His design is a step in the direction of the compromise effected at the end of the novel. As Millgate sees it:

The central issue here is that of restoration -- a topic which much exercised Hardy in his days as a practising architect and, indeed, to the end of his life -- and it

seems clear that his approval is given both to Paula's instinctive preference for "honest" restoration and to Somerset's solution to the whole problem of restoring Stancy Castle.³⁸

In short, the couple turn their faces towards the present. A key word, as Millgate points out, is eclecticism -- the ability of Paula and Somerset to draw on the past in their approach to the present. It is Paula's movement towards the middle ground, represented by Somerset, that I next wish to discuss.

Critical opinion of A Laodicean is nowhere more divided than on the question of characterization. While the anonymous reviewer of the Athenaeum declared Paula to be "perhaps the most charming of Mr. Hardy's heroines",³⁹ Howe echoes Guerard in asserting that she declines into "a stuffy Victorian".⁴⁰ In the general rush to point out that Paula is Laodicean in her indecision, critics have neglected the equally obvious point that Paula is a developing character.

Initially, as noted, she is modern-minded yet puritanical, but there are signs that she finds this position too constricting. She has befriended Charlotte de Stancy, occupied the castle (which her father had not done), and made tentative plans to rebuild it. As the novel opens we find her rejecting Baptism, an act which anticipates her ultimate rejection of puritanism. There follows the minister's public denunciation of her as a Laodicean -- "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot" (17) -- which gives the novel its title. Some critics have observed that Paula's laodiceanism is not confined to her attitude to the Baptist Church but includes her "indecision" vis-à-vis Somerset. Yet

there is nothing undecided, lukewarm or indifferent about Paula's initial attraction to Somerset. Her sudden and unexplained cancellation of the excursion to the vegetable show (72-75), demonstrates a clear desire for his company. The naive and inexperienced Somerset finds this behaviour puzzling. The situation contains comic irony, for the reader perceives Paula's instinctive liking for Somerset. Her reluctance to admit her feelings is the result of "the hard, morbidly introspective views thrust upon her in early life" (240), and her "habit of self-repression at any new emotional impact" (246), her puritanical upbringing in short. While conducting Somerset through the castle she suddenly

became conscious that it was long and gloomy, and that nobody was near. A curious coyness seemed to take possession of her. Whether she thought for the first time, that she had made a mistake -- that to wander about the castle alone with him was compromising, or whether it was the mere shy instinct of maidenhood, nobody knows; but she said suddenly, 'I will get something for you, and return in a few minutes.'
(90)

Paula returns with some wine, but accompanied this time by a chaperon in the person of Charlotte de Stancy. Such a marked concern for propriety is not usually characteristic of Hardy's heroines.⁴¹ By and large they are passionate women who actively set out to win their men. However, by the end of the novel Paula, matured by her experiences with de Stancy and the tour across Europe, behaves decisively and aggressively: she pursues Somerset through Normandy, finds him alone, ill in bed, and proposes to him.

A more gradual change takes place in her attitude to the past and the present. At first, she reads the latest periodicals (39),

holds advanced social ideas and advocates higher education for women (192). Obsessed with the importance of time (37) she has a telegraph installed in the castle and a clock which tells the seconds. But the result of her move to the castle and her growing association with the de Stancys is to awaken her latent emotional and aesthetic response to the past. Mr. Woodwell is able to predict and account for Paula's development, though he is too biassed to welcome it:

'Sometimes I think those Stancy towers and lands will be a curse to her. The spirit of old papistical times still lingers in the nooks of those silent walls, like a bad odour in a still atmosphere, dulling the iconoclastic emotions of the true Puritan. It would be a pity indeed if she were to be tainted by the very situation that her father's indomitable energy created for her.' (69-70)

There is, of course, much irony and even satirical comedy in these passages, directed not just at Woodwell and the naive Somerset, but against the rationalistic Paula as well. George Wing has pointed out the "abundant evidence of Hardy's intentional sense of fun, an attribute with which, more often than not, he is perversely not credited."⁴² Wing's point is well taken, but he too overlooks the constant irony and satire especially directed at Paula, Somerset, Woodwell and de Stancy.

An indication of the diminishing influence of her father is to be seen in Paula's casual abandonment of the mourning clothes she has worn since his death (127). About the same time she tells the startled Somerset of her ardent desire to become a de Stancy so that the castle could be her ancestral home (101). Soon after this, Paula abandons the idea of building a Greek court (117) which implies her retreat from the Greek rational spirit. She exercises less (190); we hear no more about

the education of women, and she takes to reading books on mediaeval architecture (97, 117) instead of periodicals.⁴³ But Paula cannot help herself for

Human nature at bottom is romantic rather than ascetic, and the local habitation which accident had provided for Paula was perhaps acting as a solvent of the hard, morbidly introspective views thrust upon her in early life. (240)

It is interesting that in December 1880, while Hardy was dictating A Laodicean to Emma from his sick-bed, he made the following journal entry: "'Romanticism will exist in human nature as long as human nature itself exists. The point is (in imaginative literature) to adopt that form of romanticism which is the mood of the age.'" ⁴⁴ Paula's "pre-dilection d'artiste" for the romantic side of life is also Hardy's.

Paula's growing romanticism centres on the castle, symbolic of art, the past, feeling, imagination and romance. Yet her desire to restore it is futile, for the past can never be adequately restored, as Hardy the architect well knew. Moreover, in her obsession with the castle and its former owners, Paula is not being true to herself. Somerset naturally objects to Paula's longing to be a de Stancy and tries to encourage her pride in the achievements of her father:

It was a strange idea to get possession of such a nature as hers, and for a minute he felt himself on the side of the minister. So strong was Somerset's feeling of wishing her to show the quality of fidelity to paternal dogma and party, that he could not help adding --
'But you have forgotten that other nobility -- the nobility of talent and enterprise? (124)

Though Somerset values the past he does not worship it slavishly, as his plans for the restoration reveal. The middle way, however, is not

usually very enticing; and Paula, therefore, flirts with the romantic de Stancys for some time until the attractive veneer of romanticism is suddenly removed to reveal the deceit and moral void beneath it. In marrying Somerset Paula accepts the middle way, welcoming the present while retaining the past, accepting both mind and heart, reason and romance:

On their way down to the little town they pondered and discussed what course it would be best to pursue in the circumstances, gradually deciding not to attempt rebuilding the castle unless they were absolutely compelled. True, the main walls were still standing as firmly as ever; but there was a feeling common to both of them that it would be well to make an opportunity of a misfortune, and leaving the edifice in ruins start their married life in a mansion of independent construction hard by the old one, unencumbered with the ghosts of an unfortunate line.

'We will build a new house from the ground, eclectic in style. We will remove the ashes, charred wood, and so on from the ruin, and plant more ivy. The winter rains will soon wash the unsightly smoke from the walls, and Stancy Castle will be beautiful in its decay. You, Paula, will be yourself again, and recover, if you have not already, from the warp given to your mind (according to Woodwell) by the mediaevalism of that place.'

'And be a perfect representative of "the modern spirit"?' she inquired; 'representing neither the senses and understanding, nor the heart and imagination; but what a finished writer calls "the imaginative reason"?''

'Yes; for since it is rather in your line you may as well keep straight on.' (480-481)

Millgate has pointed out that Paula's "finished writer" is Matthew Arnold, and that the terms are drawn from Arnold's essay "Pagan and Mediaeval Religious Sentiment" which Hardy had recently been reading.⁴⁵ But Arnold's ideas are not identical with Hardy's. Arnold balances the pagan Greek spirit, "the senses and understanding", against the Christian spirit of "heart and imagination". Hardy's basic distinction, however, is between the modern, rational, utilitarian, scien-

tific spirit and the romantic, emotional, aesthetic feeling for the past. On the whole it would seem that Hardy was influenced more by Culture and Anarchy than, as Millgate proposes, by Essays in Criticism and Mixed Essays. Yet Millgate is surely correct when he writes that Paula's choice of Somerset

implies above all the rejection of the opposing attitudes represented by the outmoded mediaevalism of Stancy Castle and by the aggressive, puritanical "modernism" of Paula's father, and the ratification, instead, of that common-sense eclecticism to which Paula has been instinctively drawn from the first, and which is consistently embodied in the figure of Somerset himself.⁴⁶

Paula's ultimate religious position is left somewhat ambiguous.

In answer to a question from Somerset she replies:

'What I really am, as far as I know, is one of that body to whom lukewarmth is not an accident but a provisional necessity, till they see a little more clearly.' She had crossed over to his side, and pulling his head towards her whispered a name in his ear.

'Why, Mr. Woodwell said you were that too! You carry your beliefs very comfortably. I shall be glad when enthusiasm is come again.' (478)

Somerset is referring to Woodwell's horrified supposition (70), later repeated by Somerset (309), that Paula has been influenced by the doctrines of the "New Lights". What these doctrines amount to is not made clear. Hardy appears to be suggesting that Paula has radical theological and ecclesiastical views. Perhaps there is a hint that she is attracted to agnosticism. If so, her religious creed is similar to Hardy's own, another indication that the compromise of Paula and Somerset, qualified though it may be, is the one advocated by Hardy. At any rate, Paula comes to recognize and accept her laodiceanism: since she cannot know she refuses to choose.

A Laodicean comes at mid point in Hardy's career as a novelist. He had dealt before with the clash of old and new and he was to do so again, but in none of the other novels did he come so close to a solution of the problem that haunted his imagination. Hardy attempted to carry his practice of dramatizing the conflict between old and new a step further. He combined a novel of ideas with romance form and technique. Subtitled "A Story of To-day", the book deals seriously with the problems that were of concern to his country's leading thinkers; to provide a framework for these ideas Hardy adopted a mainly non-realistic literary approach. In its underlying structure the book is similar to a Shakespearian romantic comedy. The characters are partly allegorical; some of them derive very obviously from romantic character types. A Gothic castle serves as central symbolic setting. The plot incidents are sensational, melodramatic and often contrived with disregard to probability.

Adapting Matthew Arnold's analysis of England's social classes to a problem novel, Hardy made several of his characters stand for particular forces in Victorian society. In such a novel it is not an easy matter to convey ideas precisely and, at the same time, to make the characters believable and engaging. Some readers, for example, have found Paula to be tiresome or stuffy. In order to make Paula's reluctance to acknowledge her feelings for Somerset more credible, perhaps Hardy should have shown her as being initially less certain of her liking for Somerset, just as she is clearly undecided about her spiritual, aesthetic and intellectual allegiances. In order to delay Paula's

acknowledgement of love, Hardy later contrives to remove her from the main setting, to place her in proximity to Somerset's rival and even to invent a hackneyed intrigue to discredit Somerset in the eyes of the morally upright Paula. While this presumably is the intention behind the travel section, it is wrong in terms of the novel because it changes the tone and replaces thematic discussion with irrelevant material culled from Hardy's own European tour of the previous year. The result is unnecessarily to draw out the resolution of the problem, leaving the reader with the feeling that the novel is broken-backed. It might also be argued that since Somerset has the important moral and intellectual task of pointing the way to a solution of the central problem of the novel, it is inconsistent that in his relation with Paula he should be so obtuse and diffident. This, however, is an awkwardness that occurs in other Hardy novels besides A Laodicean. The same awkwardness may be found in Gothic romance: because the villain is the focus of interest, the hero frequently appears ineffectual and dull.

Another fault in A Laodicean is that although Hardy concentrates on one major theme, he brings in too many disparate techniques and motifs. While we might not want to lose the amusing gymnasium scene, for example, it is not fully appropriate to a novel of ideas. Dare, as we have seen, is associated with gambling and chance. This suits his character, but does not tie in well with the central conflict between old and new. On the other hand, some critics have complained of the melodrama or "preposterous sensationalism that outdoes anything in Desperate Remedies".⁴⁷ I have tried to show that several of the melodrama-

tic episodes of the plot are, in fact, connected to the novel's central theme, but even where they are not, they do not seriously detract from the frequently comic or tongue-in-cheek tone of the book. Many of the incidents in the novel are, as George Wing rightly points out, intentionally funny and often ironic. Certainly, Hardy's instinct for melodrama and sensation is greatly to be preferred to the aimless European tour of Books IV and V. More fanciful episodes rather than fewer might have suited the bill in a work which presents ideas in a non-realistic manner.

Hardy is nowhere more himself than when he chooses a romantic theme, the appeal of the past, adapts it to the form of a romantic comedy, and fills the work with characters whose prototypes are to be found in Gothic and Romantic literature. If several of these characters are memorable it is because of their mysterious or even preternatural qualities. But it is clear in A Laodicean as in his other works that Hardy is no tame follower of Romanticism. His attitude to the Byronism of de Stancy, to the initial Shelleyanism of Somerset or to Paula's excessive veneration of the past is wryly satirical. In the Wessex novels this theme is handled tragically or melodramatically; in A Laodicean, as in some of the earlier novels, Hardy's attitudes tend to emerge through irony, satire and comedy.

Despite its defects, A Laodicean is an interesting and important novel. The imagery, though it may be derivative, is well adapted to the theme. If the reader is dissatisfied, the reason is not simply because the novel is over sensational and melodramatic, or because Paula

is tiresomely Victorian, or even because Hardy failed to express his ideas successfully. It is more likely that certain passages, the travel section among them, unnecessarily prolong the novel and wander from the central theme and setting. Consequently A Laodicean, interesting and amusing as it is in many places, remains secondary to Hardy's major achievements.

VI

TWO ON A TOWER

Two on a Tower is the least interesting of Hardy's longer prose fictions. He himself was uncertain and perhaps embarrassed about the book.¹ In a letter to Edmund Gosse on December 4, 1882² Hardy called it a romance, as he did in the subtitle to the three-volume edition of 1882 and again in the 1895 preface. Later, in the General Preface to the 1912 Wessex Edition, he classified it as one of the "Romances and Fantasies". Yet by comparison with A Laodicean, a so-called "Novel of Ingenuity", Two on a Tower is surely less melodramatic, or sensational; it contains no romantic nostalgia for the past.³ The Gothic trappings, ambiguous manifestations of the supernatural and chivalric imagery that so often characterize Hardy's romance-novels are almost completely absent here. Despite the obvious plot manipulation and improbabilities of action, the problems raised by the romance of Swithin and Viviette are treated realistically. Certainly Two on a Tower is not more bizarre or romantic than some of the narratives in the "Novels of Character and Environment". Elsewhere Hardy refers to Two on a Tower as a novel,⁴ though in setting, in the social class of the principal characters and in its insubstantial theme, Two on a Tower differs markedly from the "Novels of Character and Environment".

Hardy was presumably writing within the Victorian convention of

the love romance, a sub-genre of prose fiction, loosely called a novel, in which a frequently sentimental and sometimes melodramatic love story is unfolded more for the entertainment than for the edification of the reader. Two on a Tower is a novel of this kind as are most of the other "Romances and Fantasies" -- A Pair of Blue Eyes, The Trumpet-Major, The Well-Beloved and A Group of Noble Dames.

Hardy may have originally intended, as he states in the preface, to develop the "cosmic" theme, but this plan was dropped, and the love story allowed to take over. Given Hardy's interests it is to be expected that once he had begun such a story, he would use the occasion to make another ironic study of a love relationship. In A Laodicean, the heroine's motives had been examined by a male onlooker; this time, however, the action would be seen from the woman's point of view.

Hardy's decision to classify Two on a Tower as a romance may be further explained as an attempt to avoid placing the book in the same category as his major novels, lest he then draw upon himself the ridicule of hostile critics. Hardy had been stung by the adverse notices the book received after its publication in volume form in October 1882.⁵ These reviewers were offended by Hardy's defiance of conventional moral proprieties and by the satiric portrait of Bishop Helmsdale. Harry Quilter of the Spectator pronounced the novel to be the "worst the author has written".⁶ The Saturday Review objected to the characterization, narrative technique and style.⁷ Even Hardy's admirer, Havelock Ellis, the first to take an overall view of Hardy's early fiction was forced to admit that the novel lacked "inspiration".⁸ Later critics, less

troubled by its impropriety, have been able to find some virtues in the book. Nevertheless, they usually award Two on a Tower only cursory treatment, and there is no general agreement on its central theme or themes.

It is doubtful whether an extended examination can reverse the nearly universal verdict.⁹ Two on a Tower does disappoint Hardy's admirers. It lacks depth and diversity of theme. Swithin is too lacking in emotion and feeling to arouse the sympathies of the reader; Lady Constantine, though an attractive enough heroine, seems to escape the suffering that would normally engage the reader's sympathies. Hardy apparently began with the idea of setting "the emotional history of two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe, and to impart to readers the sentiment that of these contrasting magnitudes the smaller might be the greater to them as men" (v). There are indeed traces of this intention scattered throughout the novel, but Hardy was unable to carry off his plan convincingly, perhaps because the stellar universe is not vital to the novel except in so far as Swithin finds it a fascinating object of study. After a promising beginning Hardy appears to lose interest in the cosmic theme, and turns his attention instead to the "two infinitesimal lives".¹⁰ Hardy might have given extended, forceful treatment to the motif of the return of the wanderer to his native soil as he did in several other fictions, but in Two on a Tower Hardy dealt only briefly with Swithin's return to England, and ended the novel with undue speed.

Yet there are many good moments in Two on a Tower, especially in

the opening chapters. While some critics have remarked on the tower symbolism, they have not usually tried to show the link between the dominant symbols and the main theme. Briefly stated, Two on a Tower is concerned primarily with love and sexual attraction oppressed by time and subject to the vagaries of an uncertain world. Love, emotion and desire contend with reason, common sense, career ambitions and social aspirations. The theme is dramatized by the love of Lady Viviette Constantine, a mature, upper-class lady capable of great depth of feeling, for an emotionally immature youth of low social class who, though handsome and talented, is somewhat obtuse. He is, moreover, nine years her junior. Here, as elsewhere in Hardy, the plot is based in large part on the problems that arise out of differences in social class. As a thematic concern, however, the class problem is clearly subordinate to the issue of age difference.¹¹

Hardy treats the situation lightly, feeling apparently that ironic comedy need not be incompatible with his stated intention of stirring the emotions of his readers:

Some few readers, . . . will be reminded by this imperfect story, in a manner not unprofitable to the growth of the social sympathies, of the pathos, misery, long-suffering, and divine tenderness which in real life frequently accompany the passion of such a woman as Viviette for a lover several years her junior. (vi)

Hardy handles the characters' lack of self-awareness ironically. Lady Constantine does not appear to recognize that she is largely motivated by frustrated sexual desire;¹² Swithin, of course, is unaware of his own emotional deficiencies. Although he matures during the novel, it is clear that compared to Viviette he remains emotionally shallow and

therefore unworthy of her:

Yet to those who had eyes to understand as well as to see, the chastened pensiveness of her once handsome features revealed more promising material beneath than ever her youth had done. But Swithin was hopelessly her junior. Unhappily for her he had now just arrived at an age whose canon of faith it is that the silly period of woman's life is her only period of beauty. (311)

Swithin lacks the depth or maturity to appreciate Viviette's finest qualities.

In an attempt to give the story a tragic dimension Hardy implies that the love of Viviette and Swithin is, in a sense, in defiance of the forces that govern the world, an infringement of the natural order and fitness of things. It is not, however, the stellar powers that oppose the lovers, as we might expect from the sinister description Hardy gives of them at the beginning of the novel. The stars are presented as cold, impersonal "Immensities" (33), quite indifferent to the concerns of man. Although they do not intervene in the action, there is a suggestion that Swithin's studies render him indifferent to the loving-kindness of Viviette. Compared to the stars, man is indeed insignificant, but the stars are horrible and ghastly and man, if he is to retain his desirable human qualities, must make his emotional life here on earth rather than in the heavens.

On the other hand, there is an underlying sense that nature, which once again takes on the qualities of a living being, actively disapproves of the increasing attachment of Swithin and Viviette. Hardy several times personifies natural objects, almost always to suggest that they are in pain: "The sob of the environing trees was here expressively manifest" (3). It is not clear at first that there is any

connection between nature's anguish and the activities of the lovers. But the disapproval of an outraged nature becomes apparent when a "circular hurricane" (120) disrupts the couple's wedding plans. Hardy's handling of nature is certainly more muted here than in Desperate Remedies or A Pair of Blue Eyes, where we are made to feel that a malicious, hostile nature actively seeks to destroy man. In Two on a Tower nature apparently grieves at the lovers' unnatural activity.

More important, Viviette's love for Swithin constitutes a direct challenge to the laws of time, and Time personified emerges in the novel as their implacable enemy. Viviette is aware from the very beginning, as Swithin is not, of the significance of their age difference. At their first meeting Swithin remarks that "time is short, and science is infinite" (9), meaning that if he is to realize his ambitions he must work hard in the relatively short life-span allotted him. In his struggle to achieve success there is no time for love, as Viviette comes to understand. She too is in a contest with Time, a race to find love before her beauty fades: "Time, had taken no liberties with her features as yet" (107), the narrator ominously remarks. Their two aspirations are basically incompatible, and cannot be permanently reconciled despite the lovers' attempt to forestall time by a sudden, secret marriage. "Time, however, was merciless" (266), we are reminded.

Hardy apparently toyed with the idea of making Two on a Tower into a tragic novel. The constant reference to "fate", "accident", "chance", "misfortune", "doom", or "fatality", the frequent use of the word "tragedy" and the presence of a series of omens preceding their

marriage appear to forebode some inevitable retribution or catastrophe. Perhaps Hardy intended this to occur at the end of the novel when Swithin returns to find that Viviette's beauty has faded and to discover that he is no longer in love with her: "Time had at last brought about his revenges" (311). Yet the point is blunted by Hardy's rush to complete the novel, and obscured by the gratuitous final comment: "The Bishop was avenged" (314). Alternatively, Hardy may originally have planned to describe the lovers' vain attempt to snatch happiness in the face of cosmic hostility, for in more than one sense they are "star-crossed lovers", but if so, the idea was abandoned.

Yet none of these solutions would have made the novel tragic, for it is all too obvious that Swithin lacks the stature of a tragic hero. He is far too shallow and hence incapable of deep suffering and final recognition of his errors. Viviette is merely pathetic. Tragedy would not have been possible, even in revision. But in reconsidering the novel prior to its publication in book form, Hardy felt that his original ending was weak or inconclusive, for it was not sufficiently clear in the serial version how Swithin reacts to Viviette's death. Hardy therefore made the following addition to the final paragraph:

He looked up for help. Nobody appeared in sight but Tabitha Lark, who was skirting the field with a bounding tread -- the single bright spot of colour and animation within the wide horizon. When he looked down again his fear deepened to certainty. It was no longer a mere surmise that help was vain. (313-314)

Hardy chose to end the novel ironically. As Viviette dies of joy, Swithin is already casting an approving eye on Tabitha Lark. The implication is that Tabitha's physical attractiveness will more than compensate

Swithin for the loss of Viviette's "loving-kindness" (312). Swithin is emotionally deficient and egotistic, but Hardy almost cynically implies that Swithin's reaction is only natural and more in keeping with the ultimate fitness of things. The revised ending may harmonize with the ironic tone of the novel, but Viviette's highly improbable death is allowed to stand; we feel neither pity for Viviette, nor sympathy for Swithin. We are left instead with the impression that Hardy preferred an easy compromise to an intricate unravelling of a difficult moral problem.

Compared to Hardy's other minor novels the theme of Two on a Tower lacks depth and diversity. But the novel is capable of making a greater impact on the reader than might be thought from the foregoing summary. It has an interesting symbolic and mythic structure, unfortunately more apparent at the beginning than at the end. The unifying symbol is the tower which, as Richard Carpenter perceives, is

both a superb setting and a provocative symbol
Hardy's imaginative setting of the tower lends something to the novel that lifts it above the ordinary romantic melodrama of the period. Some of this influence is undoubtedly due to deep-seated mythic responses: towers are archetypally the point of communion between the world of spirit and the world of men. Since the beginning of time men have ascended high towers to separate themselves from the mundane, to place themselves in mystic converse with the eternal, to raise themselves above ordinary men the better to realize their universal humanity. Beyond this, a tower is a powerful phallic symbol, suited to the growth and consummation of a passionate love affair. And in Hardy's own mythology, the antiquity of Swithin's tower calls for the images of Time which form an oblique commentary on the ephemerality of human love.

Obviously the tower is an image of the aspiration which fills St. Cleeve, rising as it does above its mildewed base, above the trees, "into the sky a bright and

cheerful thing, unimpeded, clean, flushed with the sunlight" (4). On its summit, Swithin, the man of science, direct, simple, factual, feels intensely the immensity of space and the perennial human need to know, an emotion sadly at odds with the love he comes to feel for Viviette. Finally, in terms of dramatic scene the tower is a superb setting because it at once limits and concentrates action.¹³

Carpenter's remarks are well-taken, but there is more to be said. A tower can be a place of revelation as well as of spiritual communion. This is the case in Browning's "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" published in 1855, the setting and theme of which derive ultimately from quest romance.¹⁴ Viviette's initial arduous ascent to the summit and the discovery that she makes there is analogous to what is usually the climactic episode in some of these old romances. It is also worth recalling that in A Pair of Blue Eyes Elfride and Knight experienced the first intimation of their feelings for one another on the tower of the old church, and that the tower's later collapse symbolized the approaching breach in their relationship.

The reluctance of the editors of the popular magazines of the Victorian era to publish fiction touching in any way on sexual relationships is well known. These restrictions were particularly galling to Hardy because so much of what he had to say concerned human sexuality. At the same time, his financial position was not strong enough to allow him to bypass the magazines as a means of reaching the public. He consequently deals with sexual matters either by oblique hints, as in de Stancy's espial of Paula's gymnastics in A Laodicean, or by means of symbolism. As we have seen, Hardy from the very first creates episodes with heavy sexual overtones. It is possible that the Victorian

reviewers did not understand them. But if they did, they must have shared Hardy's reticence or were apparently unwilling to compromise themselves by singling out and analysing them. One way or another, there is no doubt that Hardy often made his early critics feel embarrassed and uncomfortable. Thus the anonymous commentator in the Saturday Review remarks that in

A Laodicean the author showed us very queer people doing very queer things Captain de Stancy, for instance, tried our patience . . . at two points -- the scene in the picture gallery and that of the gymnastics -- he became completely incredible.¹⁵

The reviewer goes on to remark that Two on a Tower contains "an extremely repulsive element, on which, to be sure, Mr. Hardy touches as lightly as possible -- but he would have done better to exclude it altogether".¹⁶

The modern reader, however, is likely to find the sexual theme the most interesting aspect of the book. In an excellent first chapter Hardy boldly introduces his subject through his major symbol, the tower. As a result of her husband's desertion of her and the rash promise she made to him to avoid company, Lady Constantine has gradually fallen into a state of extreme frustration. Though she is probably not conscious of her real desires, her maturity and marital experience added to a basically passionate, tender nature has filled her with longing for physical love, symbolized by her wish to climb the tower. Hardy's description stresses its phallic appearance:

The central feature of the middle distance, as they beheld it, was a circular isolated hill, of no great elevation, which placed itself in strong chromatic contrast with a wide acreage of surrounding arable by being covered with fir-trees. . . . This pine-clad protuberance was yet further marked out from the general landscape by having on

its summit a tower in the form of a classical column, which, though partly immersed in the plantation, rose above the tree-tops to a considerable height. Upon this object the eyes of lady and servant were bent.

A few days later, the same lady, in the same carriage, passed that spot again. Her eyes, as before, turned to the distant tower.

Although the pillar stood upon the hereditary estate of her husband the lady had never visited it, owing to its insulation by this well-nigh impracticable ground. The drive to the base of the hill was tedious and jerky, and on reaching it she alighted, . . . She then ascended beneath the trees on foot.

The column now showed itself as a much more important erection than it had appeared from the road . . . The column had been erected in the eighteenth century . . . It was little beyond the sheer desire for something to do -- the chronic desire of her curiously lonely life -- that had brought her here now. She was in a mood to welcome anything that would in some measure disperse an almost killing ennui. She would have welcomed even a misfortune. She had heard that from the summit of the pillar four counties could be seen. Whatever pleasurable effect was to be derived from looking into four counties she resolved to enjoy to-day.

It . . . was really a tower, being hollow with steps inside. . . . The sob of the environing trees was here expressively manifest . . . their thin straight stems rocked in seconds, like inverted pendulums; while some boughs and twigs rubbed the pillar's sides, or occasionally clicked in catching each other. Below the level of their summits the masonry was lichen-stained and mildewed, for the sun never pierced that moaning cloud of blue-black vegetation. . . . Above the trees the case was different: the pillar rose into the sky a bright and cheerful thing, unimpeded, clean, and flushed with the sunlight.

Here stood this aspiring piece of masonry, erected as the most conspicuous and ineffaceable reminder of a man that could be thought of;

She hesitated to ascend alone . . . yet feeling herself the proprietor of the column and of all around it her self-assertiveness was sufficient to lead her on. . . . The trap-door leading on to the roof was open, and on looking through it an interesting spectacle met her eye.

A youth was sitting on a stool in the centre of the lead flat which formed the summit of the column, his eye being applied to the end of a large telescope that stood before him on a tripod. This sort of presence was unexpected, and the lady started back into the shade of the opening. (1-5)

Readers may wonder if "the good little Thomas Hardy", as Henry James once contemptuously referred to him,¹⁷ would deliberately introduce so bold a symbol into a novel. Certainly Hardy knew as much as any man about frustration and sexual desire and, as Evelyn Hardy has pointed out, the passion of Viviette for a younger man may well be adapted from Hardy's childhood relationship with Julia Augusta Martin, the tenderhearted lady of the manor.¹⁸ Moreover, one of the constant themes in Hardy's fiction is the nature of sexual attraction; as earlier noted he frequently employs daring and original situations to dramatize these motifs.¹⁹ The tower is therefore by no means an isolated example of Hardy's sexual symbolism.

The tower has other functions as well. It is a place of solitude, warmth, tranquillity and love in a world subjected to repressive social conventions and monetary calculations. Hardy refers to the tower as an "island" (4, 133), and stresses the barrier constituted by the surrounding ploughed fields which isolate and insulate it from the rest of the parish. On the tower Swithin and Viviette are able to commune with the heavens and each other in a way that reminds us of Adam and Eve before the Fall. There are indeed several suggestions that the tower is the unfallen Eden. We are told, for example, that Swithin was "living on in a primitive Eden of unconsciousness" (12), or that "though the month was February below it was May in the abacus of the column" (44).

Swithin's naiveté and innocence reminds us of Adam, and Viviette is explicitly likened to Eve (46, 108, 260). The analogy is completed by the presence of a cunning "tempter" (290), Viviette's brother Louis Glanville, the offer and acceptance of an apple (57) and, finally, the inevitable loss of Eden (Swithin's abandonment of the tower). The suggestion of an idyllic communion of man with God emerges in a significant revision Hardy made to the text. In the serial version the village choir rehearse "Onward Christian Soldiers" under the patient direction of Parson Torkingham. However, Hardy later substituted the 53rd Psalm: "'The Lord look'd down from Heav'n's high tower/The sons of men to view'" (20). In revision Hardy brings a comic, but totally unrelated episode into significant relation with the dominant imagery of the novel.

Indeed, Swithin's study on the tower has an almost religious intensity. He introduces Viviette to the secrets of the heavens: "He . . . lighted her up the winding staircase to the temple of that sublime mystery on whose threshold he stood as priest" (65). In return, as Millgate points out,²⁰ she attempts to initiate him into the complexities of the human emotions. Essentially a pagan,²¹ Swithin has zeal only for his study of astronomy: "Not unaptly might it have been said that he was worshipping the sun" (7). Viviette, on the other hand is the "dévôte" (157), the nun (26, 64), the practising Christian. It is only because she insists, that Swithin agrees to the confirmation ceremony. Yet in the end it is Viviette who abandons her principles, not Swithin his.

In an attempt, possibly, to deepen the aura of solemnity and

holiness around the lovers' initiation of each other into the mysteries of Heaven and Earth, Hardy, on several occasions, mentions the time-hallowed, even sacred nature of the tower site. He begins by suggesting it may once have been "an old Roman camp, -- if it were not (as others insisted) an old British castle, or (as the rest swore) an old Saxon field of Witenagemote" (3). Later, Viviette, impressed by the "funereal" gloom of the dark firs, remarks that "many ancient Britons doubtless lie buried there" (65). The most elaborate of these allusions to pre-history occurs on the morning of Swithin's wedding. Swithin rises early to make his preparations among the trees surrounding the tower:

It was a strange place for a bridegroom to perform his toilet in, but, considering the unconventional nature of the marriage, a not inappropriate one. What events had been enacted in that earthen camp since it was first thrown up, nobody could say; but the primitive simplicity of the young man's preparations accorded well with the prehistoric spot on which they were made. Embedded under his feet were possibly even now rude trinkets that had been worn at bridal ceremonies of the early inhabitants. Little signified those ceremonies to-day, or the happiness or otherwise of the contracting parties. That his own rite, nevertheless, signified much, was the inconsequent reasoning of Swithin, as it is of many another bridegroom besides; and he, like the rest, went on with his preparations in that mood which sees in his stale repetition the wondrous possibilities of an untried move. (133).

The passage implies that the marriage and perhaps even the romance of Swithin and Viviette is as ephemeral as the marriage rites and lives of the paleolithic peoples. There is pathos in this thought, but also the danger that the reader will be struck more by the insignificance of Viviette and Swithin than by the pathos of their situation. Hardy had succeeded in creating a sense of the impact of nature on modern man in

The Return of the Native and would succeed in showing the influence of history and heredity in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, but in these novels such elements are very carefully and closely worked into the texture of a serious or even tragic tale. In Two on a Tower Hardy fails to convince us of the validity of the connection with the past. The romance of Viviette and Swithin becomes trivial, almost farcical, their discrepancy in age a subject for humour rather than a love with universal implications. Perhaps Hardy had intended from the start to treat his subject comically, but if so the pathetic and tragic elements are out of place.

There are other symbols in the novel which, though effective in themselves, do not appreciably deepen the reader's emotional involvement. While returning from their wedding, Viviette is accidentally struck by her brother's horsewhip. The episode is highly improbable and melodramatic, and thoroughly typical of Hardy. Though Louis is unaware of Viviette's presence, the lash is brutal and humiliating to her. It symbolizes Viviette's sense of guilt and prefigures both her later self-punishment and her brother Louis' displeasure at her romance with Swithin. The episode could have been used tragically; instead it prefaces the brief honeymoon which is perhaps the lovers' happiest period. By contrast, the face-slapping incident in Tess of the d'Urbervilles presages the heavier blow that Tess will deliver to Alec at the close of that novel, and ties in with the underlying feudal imagery. The face-lashing in Two on a Tower seems to point to a tragic outcome which never in fact occurs; it does not fit the comic-satiric tone of the

novel and therefore seems out of place.

Elsewhere, Hardy disrupts the prevailing tone by presenting scenes that appear to belong more to a bedroom comedy than to a novel. One such episode occurs when Swithin attempts to steal out of Viviette's house dressed in the clothes of her late husband. Both Viviette and the villagers think at first that it is Sir Blount returned from the dead. Later we learn that Sir Blount was in fact alive at this time, and that Viviette's marriage with Swithin was therefore invalid. The episode may symbolize Viviette's sense of guilty fear; but its predominantly farcical quality seems incompatible with Hardy's professed intention of stimulating "the growth of the social sympathies, of the pathos, misery, long-suffering, and divine tenderness which in real life frequently accompany the passion of such a woman as Viviette for a lover several years her junior" (vi).

Much better adapted to the mood of the novel is Viviette's hallucination of "a golden-haired, toddling child" (271-272), which precedes by a day her discovery that she is pregnant. It seems a perfectly convincing example of the psychology of everyday life and, at the same time, a symbol and portent of things to come.

It is in Hardy's method of characterization that his proximity to the world of myth and romance is most obvious. Initially the book appears to deal with the romantic misadventures of a naive young man victimized by a femme fatale -- a prose rendition of Byron's Don Juan. As we have seen, Swithin plays Adam to Viviette's Eve. He is also Adonis to Viviette's Venus (56-57), Odysseus to Viviette's Circe or Calyp-

so (46), Samson to Viviette's Delilah (46-47); in short manly innocence is under siege by feminine wiles. Swithin's experience resembles that of Thomas Rymer's with the queen of Elfland, suggestive of the knight's encounter with la belle dame sans merci. It is interesting that Hardy compares Swithin to Byron's Don Juan (6), a naive, handsome, young man irresistibly attractive to women. Ironically, Viviette's fate resembles that of Byron's amorous ladies. In the end, it is she who turns out to be the victim: she becomes pregnant and cannot find Swithin when she most needs him. He returns to his real wife, "science" (67), leaving Viviette to the effects of time, change and a second unhappy marriage.

Swithin and Viviette are obviously opposite in character. Where he is young, guileless, unpractised, she is mature, subtle and experienced. Swithin's first name and fair complexion suggest a Saxon origin. Presumably there is also an allusion to the saintly bishop of ancient Wessex. Hardy stresses Viviette's black hair and hints that there is "Romance blood in her veins" (6).²² While the name, Viviette, includes the notion of life, there may also be an allusion to Vivien, the beguiler of Merlin. Besides the obvious suggestion of constancy in love, Viviette's surname, Constantine, implies something European, even Byzantine. She is the grand lady, he the poor man of humble social class. Where he is steady, cerebral, mechanical (267, 312), she is impulsive (179-180), emotional and romantic (233). He is "a spring bud hard in bursting", she all "ripeness of emotion" (102). Swithin is perhaps a development of the passive Shelleyan idealist so common in Hardy's fiction, Viviette the initiating (124), maternal (32, 55, 258) figure who

helps him to realize himself. The Shelleyan motif is further suggested by the tower setting and the telescope used to scan the heavens. Like Paula Power, Viviette approaches Swithin when he is sick in bed and kisses him (77). The scene may ultimately derive from the visit of the dark-haired maiden to the sleeping poet in Shelley's Alastor. In an earlier, equally suggestive scene Viviette finds Swithin asleep on the tower and steals one of his locks. The allusion to Samson and Delilah implies that Viviette might be a destructive influence on Swithin. On the other hand, she greatly assists him by supplying him with instruments. In short, she possesses the characteristics of both the negative and positive animae.

There are other interesting qualities in Viviette only barely hinted at. As a result of the rash promise made to Sir Blount, Viviette has cloistered herself from society. Hence her likeness to a "nun" (26, 64) -- a counterpart, perhaps to de Stancy, the passionate "monk in regiments". She is very conscious of what others may think of her: in her efforts to please Sir Blount, Swithin, or Louis she has repressed herself. Hardy speaks of her "cribbed and confined emotions" (53).²³ There is a strong sense that Viviette seeks an outlet for her warm, generous, loving nature. With these and other noble qualities it is surely out of character for her to agree to dupe Bishop Helmsdale into providing a name for her child. Assuming Hardy wished to promote the satiric-comic aspects of his novel, it would have been better perhaps had he avoided the pathetic and tragic touches which make us want to sympathize with Viviette.

At first glance the character types in Two on a Tower may seem to provide a departure from Hardy's usual pattern of Shelleyan hero and ingénue -- blond, young and countrified -- pitted against the dark-haired villain and fatal lady. Nonetheless, the basic pattern is there. To the extent that a villain exists in the novel it is Louis, Viviette's ne'er-do-well brother, who plays a role similar to William Dare in A Laodicean. (He urges Viviette to make a marriage of convenience in order to feather his own nest.) Though Louis is not as improbable as Dare, the Mephistophelian associations are present. He is a sly, dark-eyed man (177), continually smoking. As previously noted he is a "tempter" and a "spider" (219) who tries to snare the unwary in his traps (221).

Tabitha Lark is essentially Hardy's typical fair young maid of country origin, unpractised, but educated, who despite the machinations of the villains eventually succeeds in winning the hero. There is an obvious similarity here to Fancy Day, Cytherea Graye, Tess, Grace Melbury and others. It may be objected that Hardy leaves Swithin's future relations with Tabitha open. But as we have seen, Hardy revised the ending of the serial version to strengthen the existing hints (307) that Swithin is eventually to find solace in Tabitha's arms.

Two on a Tower falters partly because Hardy was unable to decide on the exact nature of his theme. In the preface he first speaks of his wish to contrast "two infinitesimal lives against the stupendous background of the stellar universe" (v), and secondly of the wish to develop a sense of "the pathos, misery, long-suffering, and divine tenderness which in real life frequently accompany the passion of such a woman as

Viviette for a lover several years her junior" (vi). It is apparent that Hardy is concerned more with the second than with the first of these themes. In developing the love story Hardy stresses Viviette's physical attraction to Swithin. It would seem too that Hardy wished to treat his material seriously and possibly even tragically; unfortunately this intention is at variance with the ironic comedy which actually pervades the novel. Consequently it is hard to take the action seriously. Some aspects of the novel -- the stellar background and Viviette's feelings, for example -- are presented realistically. Certain episodes -- the abrogation of Viviette's marriage with Swithin and her unexpected death at the end are highly improbable. Such wide differences in tone do not satisfactorily co-exist in the same novel.

On the whole the characterization is weak. It is difficult to sympathize with a character like Swithin who conducts his life in such an unfeeling manner, and who is only saved from the full consequences of his behaviour by Viviette's death. Despite Viviette's reprehensible behaviour to Bishop Helmsdale, she does touch the reader's emotions, yet Hardy dissipates this sympathy with the heroine and her problems by arbitrarily choosing to end the novel with her death. The other characters are dull. There is no William Dare or Abner Power to enliven the proceedings.

Furthermore, the novel contains few romance elements of the kind encountered in the fictions discussed earlier in this study. The novel is the weaker for their absence, because Hardy very often creates powerful effects by basing his literary structures on archetypal pat-

terns that have stirred the emotions of generations of readers. Nevertheless, the use of character opposites borrowed from Gothic romance, improbable as they may sometimes be in the realistic world of the novel, does make for a dramatic heightening of the central situation. Allusions to powerful myths such as that of Venus and Adonis and the Fall of Man lend to the romance of Swithin and Viviette, at least in its initial stages, a sense of significance and anticipation. It is disappointing that Hardy is unable to sustain these motifs throughout the novel. The central symbol of the tower is well chosen, however, and closely related to the novel's sexual theme. It continues to shed insights and meaning until the very end, when the lovers are united on the column for the last time.

Despite the pretentious statement of intention in the preface, Hardy produced only a commonplace love romance. The book is weak mainly because of its trivial theme, unnecessarily prolonged action, false conclusion and dull characterization. Yet Hardy may have learned something important from its composition. In the novels that followed he paid greater attention to the conception and execution of his stories. Hardy developed further his interest in myth, symbol, romance and the legendary tales of the past, but they were worked into the texture of the novels, adapted to their prevailing moods and integrated more fully with their themes.

VII

SHORTER FICTION:

"THE ROMANTIC ADVENTURES OF A MILKMAID" AND "THE FIDDLER OF THE REELS"

Most book-length studies of Hardy's fiction allow a section or small chapter for a general survey of his stories and novellas. There is general agreement that certain of these are good and others not, yet very few critical accounts of individual stories or novellas, good or bad, have been written. In the limited scope of this study it is not possible or desirable to add still another general survey or even to undertake a detailed consideration of several short fictions. A novella and a tale -- "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" (1883) and "The Fiddler of the Reels" (1893) -- have been singled out for discussion in this chapter because they are particularly rich in such non-realistic elements as myth, folklore and fantasy, and because they reveal Hardy's abiding interest in the perils of sexual attraction. It is true that the same materials may be found in a number of the other tales, but what these two fictions have in common with each other and with several of the novels is the same basic methods of characterization and plot structure. In general, the tales tend to support the hypothesis that the romantic, fantastic aspects of Hardy's work are both the most typical and the most impressive features of his art.

Hardy himself did not think highly of "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid". In The Life of Thomas Hardy he confines himself to the bald statement that he "sent a short hastily written novel to The Graphic for Summer Number".¹ Purdy quotes Hardy's deprecatory remark that "This story was written only with a view to a fleeting life in a periodical, and having, moreover, been altered from its original shape, was not deemed worth reprinting".² It seems likely that Hardy was once more swayed by the adverse opinions of his reviewers. Lippincott's Magazine commented that "'The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid' will be widely read, . . . half with amusement and half with vexation at being so tricked and befooled by a clever writer who ought to do better for his admirers".³ The Literary World was even more caustic. The reviewer called the work

a weak, inconsequential, unnatural story If Mr. Hardy's genius is to run itself out in such nonentities as this, he would better lay his pen down, and rest for the future on his last reputation. The story is . . . thin and flat and insipid.⁴

The Nation also confessed its disappointment; their reviewer criticized Hardy for putting the reader off "with a humdrum daylight termination".⁵ Most of the British periodicals of the time failed to review "The Romantic Adventures", perhaps because it did not at first appear in book form.

The early critics were embarrassed or disdainful. Lascelles Abercrombie found the "romantic apparatus . . . somewhat preposterous", yet confessed to finding the descriptive passages "curiously effective".⁶ Joseph Warren Beach calls the story "the most arrant pot-boiler that

was ever turned out by [a] tired and harassed writer of novels".⁷ Evidently Beach disapproved of writers "who maintained throughout the nineteenth century the sentimental and Gothic traditions of the eighteenth!"⁸ Rutland dismisses it with the summary remark that it is "wholly impossible, but entertaining".⁹ Weber, writing some years later, thought it to be a "worthless trifle".¹⁰ But despite the scorn of these critics "The Romantic Adventures" was eagerly read by the public. Purdy remarks that it "was widely pirated, . . . and more frequently and cheaply reprinted in America through many years than perhaps any other work of Hardy's".¹¹ Clearly "The Romantic Adventures" had a certain appeal that was overlooked or discounted by the reviewers and early critics. No doubt the provocative title contributed to its popularity.¹² But caveat emptor! Those hoping to witness the ruin of yet another passionate milkmaid were in for a disappointment. Hardy's use of the word "Romantic" was somewhat different from the expectations of his readers.

When, thirty years after its first publication, Hardy decided to collect various of his short fictions in A Changed Man, he included "The Romantic Adventures". His apologetic attitude to these tales is revealed in the preface: "I reprint in this volume, for what they may be worth, a dozen minor novels" (v). A similar view is revealed in a letter he wrote to Florence Henniker on November 2, 1913:

I was glad to receive your letter telling me that you like to have the book, but you must not expect much from it: most of the stories were written so very long ago, as mere stop-gaps, that I did not particularly care to reprint them. Readers seem to be pleased with them, however.¹³

When A Changed Man was added to the Macmillan Wessex Edition Hardy

placed it in the ambiguous category of "Mixed Novels". Whether he meant that the tales were mixed in genre, mixed in quality, or simply diverse is left to the reader to decide; but certainly they are not what we would today call novels. All of them are stories or tales with the exception of "The Romantic Adventures", which is of novella length, and would most accurately be described as a short romance.

In the existing critical climate "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" has been neither anthologized nor awarded separate publication. It remains relatively inaccessible to the public, buried in that volume of the Macmillan Wessex Edition known as A Changed Man. A summary of its contents is therefore desirable. In the opening episode of the novella, the dairymaid Margery Tucker inadvertently interrupts the melancholy Baron Von Xanten in an attempt at suicide. Repenting of his rash gesture the Baron asks her to name her reward; after some thought Margery asks him to take her to a ball. Though the Baron is somewhat apprehensive of the consequences, he feels obliged to keep his word.

Margery is ecstatic at the ball, but, as the Baron feared, she finds it difficult afterwards to adjust to the realities of her life as a humble dairymaid. In particular, she no longer wishes to become the wife of plain Jim Hayward, the lime-burner. Feeling responsible for Margery's sudden discontent with her lot, the Baron tries to assist Jim -- first by giving him handsome furniture to impress the by-now snobbish and materialistic Margery, and later, when he is gravely ill, by coercing her into a sudden marriage with Jim. Margery agrees to the wedding ceremony only on the condition that she and Jim live apart until

she is ready to consummate the marriage. The Baron then leaves the country, supposedly to recuperate in a more salubrious climate. However, rumours later reach Margery that he has died abroad.

Jim, finding that he is no closer to Margery than before, now decides to bring matters to a climax. He joins the local regiment and, resplendent in his new red uniform, pays public court to the lusty widow, Mrs. Peach. Jim's ruse does indeed awaken Margery's possessive instincts, but to everyone's surprise the mysterious Baron makes a sudden reappearance and for a moment it seems likely that he will succumb to temptation and carry Margery away with him to become his mistress. However, honour prevails. The Baron masters his feelings, restores Margery to Jim and disappears forever. Jim and Margery settle down into a passionless, but reasonably happy marriage.

Although recent commentators are unwilling to award more than minor status to this tale, they are nevertheless more prepared than earlier critics and scholars to acknowledge the effectiveness of its non-realistic elements. Evelyn Hardy, Albert J. Guerard and Richard Carpenter have commented on its likeness to fairy tale; Guerard and Douglas Brown see the similarity to ballad, and Millgate argues that it is another of Hardy's modern or contemporary romances.¹⁴ All these aspects are present, and others as well. Margery, tripping through the fields on her way to her grandmother's with a basket on her arm, does remind us of Little Red Riding Hood. Her almost miraculous transformation in the hollow tree from milkmaid to lady, the journey to the ball in the Baron's carriage, her dancing with him and the subsequent rever-

sion to her former state -- are all obvious adaptations of the Cinderella story. Even the moral, the danger of aspiring above one's social level, is characteristic of the fairy tale and, needless to say, of Hardy's other fictions.

It is perhaps not too far-fetched also to see in "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" a resemblance to "Beauty and the Beast". The melancholy Beast, it may be recalled, is under a spell which can only be lifted when someone loves him for himself. Beauty falls under his power because of an act of trespass committed, however, by her father. She goes to live with him and gradually finds herself becoming accustomed to his strangeness. Later, while on a visit to her parents, she learns he is dying and rushes back to his mansion. Beauty succeeds in reviving Beast, and discovers that she now loves him. There is a certain parallel to this in Margery's unexpected meeting with the Baron while trespassing on his property (which has the effect of preventing his suicide), her initial fear of him followed by a growing infatuation and, later, her quick response to his summons.

Many of the folktales Hardy records in the autobiography and notebooks are concerned in one way or another with "the ruined maid". But for the Baron's change of heart at the last minute, Margery would have been just that. The Fanny Robin episode in Far from the Madding Crowd, similar situations in Tess of the d'Urbervilles and in many of the tales and poems show that Hardy found "the ruined maid" an attractive subject.¹⁵

Another common figure in folk literature is the mysterious

stranger. As long as country people remain close to the land and familiar only with their own parish, any stranger may become an object of suspicion. If, in addition, such a person were foreign,¹⁶ and alone or simply unfamiliar with local customs, a superstitious peasantry might suppose him to be an emissary of evil. In folk literature the devil is often presented as one who dresses differently from others. Mysterious strangers are common enough in Romantic and post-Romantic literature. The Baron is one of a series of outsiders, usually malevolent, who come to disrupt the peace and order of the agricultural communities Hardy describes.

Several critics have commented on the incorporation of ballad motifs in Hardy's fiction and poetry.¹⁷ A good example of this technique may be found in "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid", the plot of which is based on "The Demon Lover", a ballad which recounts the fate of an unfaithful, avaricious woman who deserts house, husband, and baby to sail away with her former lover, now mysteriously wealthy.¹⁸ In the end, the ship founders and the lover is revealed to be a demon. In the course of his research in the Dorset County Museum, Michael Millgate discovered a note in Hardy's copy of A Changed Man which clearly shows the connection between the ballad and Hardy's romance:

The foregoing finish of the Milkmaid's adventures by a re-union with her husband was adopted to suit the requirements of the summer number of a periodical in which the story was first printed. But it is well to inform readers that the ending originally sketched was a different one, Margery, instead of returning to Jim, disappearing with the Baron in his yacht at Ldmouth after his final proposal to her, & being no more heard of in England.¹⁹

At least two references in the revised text apparently prepare the

reader for a calamitous conclusion (315, 350). In most versions of the ballad the demon lover is a revenant, returned from the dead to test and finally punish the faithless wife. In Hardy's story the Baron returns unexpectedly at the end like a ghost, it being supposed by the villagers that he had died abroad.

In "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" we find ourselves in the world of romance and fantasy. Yet Hardy does not, as in some of his weird tales, choose to immerse himself completely in the supernatural. He rather adopts a Hawthornian ambiguity: there are many hints that the Baron is a demonic figure possessed of supernatural powers, and certainly the villagers look on him in this light. On the other hand, for the skeptical reader, the Baron's behaviour may be explained in a perfectly natural and rational way. The whole question is blurred by Hardy's apparently deliberate complication of the novella's point of view.

In the original publication of the romance in The Graphic, the narrator is omniscient, although he casually mentions that he has derived at least part of his knowledge of the events from Margery and Jim. However, in the revised edition, Hardy immediately introduces us to a land-surveyor who, it would seem, has taken the story from Margery (314, 317), and Jim (394), and passed it on to the present narrator. The land-surveyor is "a gentleman with the faintest curve of humour on his lips" (299) implying, perhaps, that he takes the villagers' account of the weird Baron with considerable skepticism. At any rate, the narrator, by now considerably distanced from the events, can allow himself to pose as being quite impartial on the question of the Baron's supposed

supernatural identity. In his final comment on the Baron, he observes that in Silverthorn the Baron

is still regarded as one who had something about him magical and unearthly. In his mystery let him remain; for a man, no less than a landscape, who awakens an interest under uncertain lights and touches of unfathomable shade, may cut but a poor figure in a garish noontide shine. (399)

The narrator advises us to adopt the attitude of the villagers, for should we subject the Baron's character to the light of reason we are likely to strip him of his mystery and glamour. The older generation of critics who admired Hardy's realism felt embarrassed when Hardy introduced elements from Gothic romance. Modern commentators, influenced perhaps by the current fad for fantasy and the occult, are fortunately more receptive.

It is not surprising to find echoes of Shakespearian romantic comedy among the other romance elements employed in the tale. There is first of all an allusion to Shakespeare's As You Like It. The melancholy Baron is said to be "the Jaques of this forest and stream" (344). A few pages further on, the narrator compares the Baron's enchantment of Margery to the power of "Prospero over the gentle Ariel" (349). But these allusions are less important than the subtler feeling that Hardy is once again leading us into a delightful dream-world that never was. The action takes place at Silverthorn:

It was half-past four o'clock (by the testimony of the land-surveyor, my authority for the particulars of this story, a gentleman with the faintest curve of humour on his lips); it was half-past four o'clock on a May morning in the eighteen forties. A dense white fog hung over the Valley of the Exe, ending against the hills on either side.

But though nothing in the vale could be seen from higher ground, notes of differing kinds gave pretty clear in-

dications that bustling life was going on there. This audible presence and visual absence of an active scene had a peculiar effect above the fog level. Nature had laid a white hand over the creatures ensconced within the vale, as a hand might be laid over a nest of chirping birds. (299)

In the scene that follows, Margery emerges out of the foggy valley bottom and ascends into the light of an early May morning, (a time of year associated with fertility and other folk rituals). It is on Mount Lodge that she has her initial encounter with the mysterious Baron. All the marvellous, glamorous experiences she has with him stand in sharp contrast to her life as a milkmaid in her father's dairy and to the humdrum, passionless life that awaits her as Jim's wife and to which she returns at the end. Throughout the tale, the scenes alternate between the real world of Silverthorn below and the enchanted dream-like realm above, which is similar in atmosphere to the "green world" of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. In retrospect, the name Silverthorn²⁰ carries with it a sense of the doubleness that pervades Hardy's romance -- the silvery elegance of the Baron's social sphere pitted against the thorniness of the everyday world.

The last two chapters resemble the final act of a Shakespearian romance: the characters, hopelessly confused, rush madly off in various directions in a comic attempt to find each other. Finally, however, a general reconciliation takes place. Husband and wife are reunited; the father makes peace with the young couple and the melancholy Jaques departs, never again to trouble the peace. As in Shakespearian comedy, the characters enter the realm of romance tainted by the vices and folly of society. Inside they are somehow purged, puri-

fied, or at least chastened. This is roughly the experience of Hardy's major characters. He may have regretted that he could not give the story the traditional calamitous ballad ending, but the present conclusion is quite consistent with the prevailing ironic tone, the logic of fairy tales and, moreover, is thoroughly characteristic of the author of Desperate Remedies, Under the Greenwood Tree, Far from the Madding Crowd and A Laodicean.

In the original version Hardy does not attempt to date the story,²¹ but in revising it for publication in A Changed Man Hardy chose to set the action in the 1840s (299), perhaps to distinguish the story from Tess in time as well as in place. It is interesting that Under the Greenwood Tree, The Return of the Native and The Mayor of Casterbridge are also set in the 1840s, the period of Hardy's childhood when the full impact of the industrial revolution had not yet reached Dorset. For Hardy, and possibly for his readers, it was a period both remote and dimly remembered, conducive to the mood of romance. At any rate, "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" has something of the same gay pastoral quality of Under the Greenwood Tree. It contains too, a similar cyclic alternation of the seasons: the Baron appears to Margery on a May morning (299). He "dies" in October (360) only to reappear once more at the time of the Yeomanry Review in May (378, 389). There is a muted reference here to such myths of death and rebirth as Venus and Adonis, or Proserpine and Pluto. Similar mythic allusions are to be found in Shakespeare's romantic comedies, particularly in the last plays.

It is not true, as some critics have alleged,²² that "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" lacks a theme. Hardy is once more concerned with the effects of sexual desire, with courtship and marriage. He recognizes that what is called love is basically sexual attraction, and that marriage, if it is to have any chance at all of succeeding, must have the more important ingredient of compatibility. The Baron himself states the novella's theme. In recommending Jim to the reluctant Margery the Baron observes:

He is an honourable man, and will make you a good husband. You must remember that marriage is a life contract, in which general compatibility of temper and worldly position is of more importance than fleeting passion, which never long survives. (365-366)

Margery, however, is very little attracted to Jim. Hardy stresses this point in an addition he made to the ending. In The Graphic, when Jim asks her whether she would now go with the Baron should he so request her, Margery replies: "'Yet no,' she added, hearing the baby cry, 'he would not move me now.'" To this Hardy added in revision: "It would be so unfair to baby" (399). Margery is not unhappy with Jim; on the other hand, she is obviously not deeply in love with him. It is the Baron who appeals to her strongest and deepest feelings: "Indeed, the Baron's power over this innocent girl was curiously like enchantment, or mesmeric influence" (349). Her submissive reaction is like Cytherea's to Manston, Elfride's to Knight or Bathsheba's to Troy. It is a sexual power almost always in Hardy preceded by a symbolic or physical action -- passionate music, rescue from danger, or a display of swordsmanship. In "The Romantic Adventures" the Baron is first saved from suicide by

Margery's appearance. He then rewards her by symbolically redressing her in clothes of his choice and dancing with her. Hardy stresses that she lacks all power to resist him. In another interesting addition to the ending, Hardy makes Margery's passion for the Baron explicit:

After a moment she added: 'Now that he's dead I'll make a confession, Jim, that I have never made to a soul. If he had pressed me -- which he did not -- to go with him when I was in the carriage that night beside his yacht, I would have gone. And I was disappointed that he did not press me. (399)

The effect of the revision is to change Margery's character. In the original text she had been able to refuse the Baron's proposal to elope, but in the later version it is he who saves her honour (and perhaps her soul) by rejecting the temptation to exploit her weakness.

As the narrator observes: "the Baron's power . . . was so masterful that the sexual element was almost eliminated" (349). Margery is of course awed by the Baron's rank, wealth and stature, but Hardy makes it plain that the "sexual element" is not the least of his charms. Her ambition to become the Baron's wife is, however, totally unrealistic. No matter how we regard his offer to take her with him, it is certainly not a marriage proposal. Though Margery has the power to raise him from his fits of melancholy, there is never the slightest suggestion that they are in any other way compatible. Fortunately for her, the Baron's sense of responsibility saves her from what sooner or later would have been a "fate worse than death". In Hardy's view, sexual passion is a most unreliable foundation for happiness in marriage.

Margery's weaknesses make it relatively easy for Jim and the

Baron to manipulate her. In the wedding scene Margery is a "lamb" being led to the sacrifice (363). Her bitter complaint that "'tis a footy plot between you men to -- snare me!" (371), expresses her view that she has been victimized by the men. But Margery is not simply a persecuted maiden. Hardy finds pathos in a young woman's loss of freedom and independence when she is compelled to accept masculine domination. He touches on this motif in several of the novels and tales. In "The Romantic Adventures", however, Hardy does not mean us to feel pity for Margery; her plight is largely the result of her ludicrous social ambitions and desire for material goods; hence the overthrow of her independence, pathetic and tragic elsewhere in Hardy, is here merely a comic rendering of justice in keeping with the comic tone of the romance. In this fiction, Hardy's attitude to social climbing is one of disapproval. If the Baron had not impinged on Margery's life she would probably have quietly settled down with Jim. But by allowing her a taste of high society the Baron stimulates her latent ambition for luxury. The Baron, aware of the dangers, plays the role of Margery's tempter unwillingly, but feels obliged by his promise to take her to the ball. He becomes the disruptive outsider, not because he is consciously evil like Manston or Alec, but because of Margery's moral weakness.

The story is open to an intriguing psychological interpretation: it can be understood as an attempt on the part of Margery to work out in real life the dreams, fantasies and desires of her unconscious mind. Hardy suggests that her character is basically childish (306, 328, 395). She seems to feel, for example, that she is not properly appreciated,

either by her father or by Jim. Whenever she has trouble at home she flees to her grandmother's:

She had a place of refuge in these cases of necessity, and her father knew it, and was less alarmed at seeing her depart than he might otherwise have been. This place was Rook's Gate, the house of her grandmother, who always took Margery's part when that young woman was particularly in the wrong. (353)

She is unable either to reject or accept Jim decisively. In order to put off the marriage, Margery complains of his lack of material goods. When these make a miraculous appearance she reluctantly agrees to the marriage. Still unwilling to face her problem directly, she uses the Baron's summons as an excuse to disrupt the wedding. Her reaction when she supposes that Jim has deserted her for Mrs. Peach is typical of her childishness: "a' seemed very low. Then she said to me, 'I don't like standing here in this slummy crowd. I shall feel more at home among the gentlepeople.' And then she went to where the carriages were drawn up" (389). At the precise moment when Margery is running away from her problem with Jim the Baron makes another miraculous appearance. The Baron may therefore be regarded as an expression of her escapist tendencies and even of her unconscious sexual fantasies -- the desire to be swept off her feet by a powerful, handsome Prince Charming. She sets the stage for this by making the unusual request that the Baron reward her by taking her to a ball, and by failing to tell him that she is engaged to Jim. But Margery does not simply want to go to a ball; she wants to be taken there by the Baron.

In his presence her normal traits of determination and independence fade. As noted previously, Hardy revised the ending to show that

Margery is incapable of resisting him. Her loss of will, the conscious side of her psyche, is striking; as the Baron warns her, she is risking her salvation (350). In psychological terms the Baron is the animus in his negative aspect, that side of her psyche that seeks to lure her away from the difficult task of creating a mature relationship with a real man. The least of her dangers is a prolonged childishness. She is in fact risking her very existence, for there is more than one hint that the Baron is a demon of death. He is obviously suicidal. The narrator remarks on the "deadly" whiteness of his skin (303). He first appears to her in May, falls sick in October and supposedly dies shortly after, only to make a sudden reappearance the next May. He offers to carry her away in his black coach and yacht to a distant region which we must assume to be infernal, and to which he eventually returns. Hardy blends his intuitive understanding of human psychology with his conscious knowledge of myth to create a fascinating presentation of the critical period in the psychic development of an immature woman -- the moment when she must choose either to accept reality and full womanhood or to languish, perhaps forever, in a childish realm of daydream and fantasy.

There is, of course, more than one way of looking at Margery's behaviour. Like the fickle lady in "The Demon Lover", Margery is egoistic, materialistic and socially ambitious. As we read the story we wonder if she will suffer the same fate. But Hardy is careful not to blacken Margery's character unduly. Since she does not at first consummate her marriage with Jim she cannot really be accused of wanting to commit adultery with the Baron. Perhaps Hardy's decision to dis-

pense with the expected ending was guided in part by a reluctance to allow the tale to become too obviously similar to the ballad. At any rate, his disapproval of Margery's frivolity is expressed mildly through his ironic and sometimes comic treatment of her.

Readers of "The Romantic Adventures" will look in vain for Hardy's usual theme of the passing of the old. But in The Graphic version of the tale Hardy had included the following passage:

This hamlet had once been a populous village. It bore the name of Letscombe Cross. In the middle, where most of the houses had formerly stood, a road from the hills traversed the highway at right angles down to the water-meads, and at the intersection rose the remains of the old mediaeval cross which shared its name with the hamlet. The interesting relic of ante-Renaissance times was sadly nibbled by years and weather, but it still retained some of its old ornament, and was often copied into the pocket-book of the vagrant artist. Jim Hayward was standing in sight of this object when he beheld, advancing towards it from the opposite direction, the black horses and carriage he sought, now gilded and glorious with the dying fires of the western sun.²³

It seems likely that Hardy made the deletion because of the resemblance of the scene to the oath-swearing in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. The paragraph does show, as do the two brief references in Two on a Tower, that Hardy had by no means abandoned his concern with the passing of the old way of life. Indeed, "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" was followed some months later by the publication of "The Dorsetshire Labourer", the essay in which Hardy set forth in memorable terms his regret for the decline of rural England. Hardy's deletion of the above passage in "The Romantic Adventures" is justified, for it is not germane to his central theme, however much it increases the drama of the particular scene.

Once again Hardy employs the technique of character opposites in "The Romantic Adventures", though the contrasts are not as pronounced as in Two on a Tower. Margery is essentially the country ingénue, innocence at the mercy of experience, though a careful examination of her behaviour reveals that she is not altogether naive. Nor is she particularly refined or sensitive; yet Hardy does manage to suggest by means of her speech that she is a cut or two above the people around her. It is worth noting that in revising the text Hardy added more of the vernacular to Margery's speech and emboldened her behaviour.²⁴ She thereby moves closer to Jim's level and correspondingly further from the sphere of the Baron. While Hardy is at some pains to show that Tess would adorn her lover's social sphere, it is all too evident that this particular milkmaid would be a liability.

The Baron as we have seen, can be regarded as a figment of Margery's imagination, or even as a semi-allegorical representation of death. He is also a skilful mélange of the Gothic villain-hero, the Byronic fatal man, and the conventional devil of folklore. Where previously Hardy had drawn on Childe Harold for his portrait of de Stancy and Don Juan for Swithin, the appearance and behaviour of Baron Von Xanten owe something to the heroes of Byron's romantic verse narratives and possibly to Manfred. To begin with, he is a wealthy, leisured nobleman. Since little is known about him for certain, his mysteriousness inevitably inspires conjecture among the villagers: "That he had committed some folly or hasty act, that he had been wrongfully accused of some crime, thus rendering his seclusion from the world desirable

for a while, squared very well with his frequent melancholy" (356). The Byronism of this passage is obvious. The Baron's characteristic philosophical pessimism and pronounced death-wish may also derive from Manfred.

Hardy particularly emphasizes the Baron's Satanic quality. He is "an unknown and handsome stranger" (308), tall and dark (304). It is perhaps significant that Margery first encounters him in the garden as she is committing a small act of trespass.²⁵ The postman remarks that the Baron has "lived in England so long as to be without any true country . . . so that 'a must be born to something that can't be earned by elbow-grease and Christian conduct".²⁶ To Margery he is a "demi-god" (354); the narrator compares him to Rhadamanthus (327). He smokes; his eyes appear to burn with an unearthly light (395); his horses and carriage seem "black and daemonic" (393). Jim unwittingly brings all these allusions together when he remarks: "Anybody would think the devil had showed you all the kingdoms of the world since I saw you last! (334) The Baron occasionally signs himself "X" (328), traditional symbol of a person or object unknown or unrevealed.²⁷ Perhaps in revising the locale of the romance from the Valley of the Swera to the Valley of the Exe Hardy sought to imply a link between the Baron's signature and the name of the river. It is presumably not merely a coincidence that he arranges to meet Margery at Three-Walks-End in Chillington Wood (317).

Margery and the Baron are dramatic opposites. In a sense she is a persecuted maiden, he the oppressive villain-hero. Her sanguine temperament and pink complexion contrast with his sickliness and un-

healthy pallor. She is a country girl, "Nature's own image" (305), he a product of aristocratic decadence. She is the "orange-flower" to his "sad cypress" (361). He leans towards death; she has the power to revive him.

In James Hayward we find another of Hardy's young, fair-haired (331) countrymen courting a lady who has become unattainable to him because of her social ambitions. Jim, however, is not quite the dreamy, diffident, naive young man commonly found in Hardy's minor fiction. He is intrepid and aggressive, even somewhat underhand. There is a good deal of subtlety in his relationship with the Baron. At times he conspires with him to undermine Margery's freedom and independence, yet as he instinctively understands, he is also the Baron's rival. His freshness and health (330-331) contrast strongly to the sickly vitiation of the Baron. At the same time Jim's association with nature and the outdoors implies a basic compatibility with Margery. The Baron is akin to the tired, decadent de Stancys; Jim and Margery are of healthy energetic stock.

The handsome, lusty Mrs. Peach plays an amusing though minor role in the novella. Since she has become restive in her widowhood she poses a threat to Margery's future happiness. Her predatory qualities link her with Viviette, Felice Charmond and Arabella -- femmes fatales potentially dangerous to the young hero. The character types are therefore very much in accordance with the usual pattern of Hardy's fiction.

The early critics disapproved of "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" largely because of what they considered to be its gross im-

probability. But this cannot be a legitimate objection. In the first place, beneath the facade of magic, mystery and romance a keen psychological analysis of female behaviour is taking place. Secondly, Hardy is successful in creating a neo-Shakespearian world of fantasy and romance within which the weird Baron and the improbable events have their being. We are charmed and amused, never outraged as we sometimes are when Hardy tacks on an arbitrary ending to a basically realistic story. In "The Romantic Adventures" the elements of fairy tale, ballad and myth are ironically and skilfully played off against the rationalistic presuppositions of the reader. As earlier noted, several aspects of the story promote the assumption that the ruin of the milkmaid is well nigh inevitable. However, Hardy surprises the reader with an unexpected ending, at the same time satisfying him with the feeling that it is true to the nature of the characters and the atmosphere he has created. The main characters and events are memorable because Hardy allows full scope to his flair for fantasy and romance. "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" is not a major work, yet it accomplishes admirably what it sets out to do, and is closely related in theme to the novels; it deserves recognition as one of the most successful of his shorter fictions.

Several critics have commented on the resemblance of "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" to Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and Purdy is probably correct in arguing that a number of the modifications Hardy made to The Graphic version of "The Romantic Adventures" were owing to his concern about its similarity to Tess.²⁸ However, the re-

lationship of "The Romantic Adventures" to "The Fiddler of the Reels" is much closer. The two tales are connected in setting, theme, technique and characterization.

"The Fiddler of the Reels" takes place at about the same time as "The Romantic Adventures". Car'line lives at Stickleford where, in The Graphic version, the Tucker dairy is located. Both stories are concerned with the irrational nature of sexual attraction. Both contain large elements of romance and fantasy, and a supernatural explanation of events is ambiguously balanced by an apparently natural or psychological interpretation of behaviour. The most obvious resemblance between the two stories lies in the similar techniques of characterization that they reveal. The interrelationships of the Baron, Margery and Jim are strikingly similar to those of Ollamoor, Car'line and Ned. The raven-haired, mop-headed musicians of the Toneborough ball²⁹ anticipate the romantic appearance of Mop Ollamoor as described in "The Fiddler".

There can be no doubt that "The Fiddler" develops its symbols more economically than "The Romantic Adventures".³⁰ As in most symbolic works it is not possible, or desirable, to make a one to one identification between symbol and meaning. The story permits several interpretations, all of which are consistent with themes that Hardy advances elsewhere in his fiction.

In the first place Mop Ollamoor is a romantic archetype of the dark, primitive, sexually powerful man who threatens the stability of conventional domestic life. Like Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights or

the gypsy in Lawrence's "The Virgin and the Gypsy", he represents a passionate, amoral approach to life diametrically opposed to the supposedly ordered control of the passions known as marriage. Such figures turn up in literature whenever courtship and marriage lack physical passion or fervour, in consequence of an undue subservience to a moribund social convention. As his name proclaims, Mop Ollamoor is "all amour", and hence closely related to Hardy's other romantic men of uncontrolled passions -- Sergeant Troy, Fitzpiers, Damon Wildeve, Captain de Stancy, Alec d'Urberville and, of course, to that other musical seducer, Aencas Manston. Usually these figures are dark-haired, of foreign extraction, or at least strange to the neighbourhood in which the action takes place.

Frequently they have Byronic qualities. Although this is not true of Mop, the seductive-demonic nature of the man is obvious enough. He is a stealer of hearts. "Many a worthy villager envied him his power over unsophisticated maidenhood -- a power which seemed sometimes to have a touch of the weird and wizardly in it (166). He "had never, in all likelihood, entered a church at all. All were devil's tunes in his repertory" (167). He is capable of magical appearances and disappearances: at the end he vanishes into the "dark heath-land . . . a place of Dantesque gloom" (183-184) with the child. Like Baron Von Xanten he seems demonic, but not quite the traditional demon-lover of the ballads. Certain attributes imply a likeness to the elf or fairy: the kinship with animals, his association with music and dancing,³¹ the "elfin shriek" of his fiddle. Other elements of folklore and fairy tale add to Mop's glamour. He is the legendary child-stealing gypsy,

"un-English" in appearance, "his complexion being a rich olive, his rank hair dark and rather clammy -- made still clammier by secret ointments" (166). There is something too of the Pied Piper of Hamelin in his ability to move the village children; the hypnotic effect he has on the sensitive Car'line is similar to the impact of the Baron on Margery.

In Desperate Remedies Manston's use of music to acquire a hold over Cythera is presented in more or less realistic terms, in keeping with the predominant atmosphere of the novel. In "The Fiddler of the Reels", however, the music becomes an "unholy musical charm" (185) appropriate to the fantastic nature of the principal character. But in both fictions music represents sexual power. Mop's violin is blatantly phallic.³² The narrator speaks of the "saltatory tendency which the fiddler and his cunning instrument had ever been able to start in her" (180). Next "Mop began aggressively tweedling 'My Fancy Lad,' in D major, as the air to which the reel was to be footed for it was the strain of all seductive strains which she was least able to resist" (180-181). The music contains a "pathos running high and running low in endless variation, projecting through her nerves excruciating spasms, a sort of blissful torture" (181). Almost at the end of her strength, she "flung up the veil, and cast her eyes upon him, as if imploring him to withdraw himself and his acoustic magnetism from the atmosphere" (182). "She thus continued to dance . . . slavishly and abjectly, subject to every wave of the melody, and probed by the gimlet-like gaze of her fascinator's open eye" (182). Finally she collapses "in convulsions, weeping violently" (183). Mop's extravagant virility, symbolized by his

long, profuse, highly scented black hair, stands in significant contrast to poor English Ned Hipcroft who, as Hardy tactfully phrases it, possessed "a nature not greatly dependent upon the ministrations of the other sex for its comforts" (171). Unlike Margery, Car'line understands that a yeoman lover can make a tractable husband, but unfortunately for mankind sexual attraction is the demonic force that disrupts perfectly sound and rational matrimonial arrangements. It is not so very different in its effect from the malicious wind of Desperate Remedies or the cliff in A Pair of Blue Eyes: man is the perennial victim of natural forces far greater than himself.

"The Fiddler of the Reels" also lends itself to psychological interpretations, though not quite so obviously as "The Romantic Adventures". The two rivals represent different aspects of Car'line's psyche. On the one hand Ned Hipcroft, as his surname may imply, stands for home, cozy domesticity and security. In his Lambeth lodgings he moves about "with the facility of a woman, doing his own cooking, attending to his stocking heels" (171), and nothing suits him better than the role of husband, father and provider: "The ready-made household of which he suddenly found himself the head imparted a cozy aspect to his room, and a paternal one to himself" (175-177).³³ Car'line is only too pleased to find these qualities in Ned, though it is clear she does not find him personally attractive.

Mop, of course, is quite the opposite to Ned. He is the romantic, instinctive man well able to sweep a girl off her feet, but quite incapable of sustaining and providing for her, even should he want to. His

attitude to women is exploitative, as his treatment of his daughter shows: it is rumoured that he has trained her as a dancer "to keep him by her earnings" (185). He is the fatal man, fatal at any rate to Car'line's virtue and reputation. In short, as the Baron is to Margery, Mop is Car'line's animus, the negative destructive side of her psyche that threatens her happiness, peace of mind and very health.

Readers may wonder if Mop was intended to be a symbol of the artist, for Hardy grants him Orphic qualities:

There was a certain lingual character in the supplicatory expressions he produced, which would well-nigh have drawn an ache from the heart of a gate-post. He could make any child in the parish, who was at all sensitive to music, burst into tears in a few minutes by simply fiddling one of the old dance-tunes he almost entirely affected. (167)

The narrator says of Mop's fiddling that "There were tones in it which bred the immediate conviction that indolence and averseness to systematic application were all that lay between 'Mop' and the career of a second Paganini" (166). Yet the qualification is as important as the comparison. Mop seems more devoted to love than to music, and he is far from martyring himself for art. If he is a pariah, it is by choice, not from public disapprobation or persecution. Nor is Mop a creator; if anybody has that function it is the unlikely Ned Hipcroft, an artisan-mechanic who was "in his small way, a central man in the movement" to construct the "huge glass-house" of the Great Exhibition (171). The hypothesis that the story contrasts artist to artisan runs counter to one's feeling of Hardy's practice. When Hardy creates an artist figure he usually does so explicitly. We have, for example, Egbert Mayne the novelist (An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress), Robert Trewe the

poet ("An Imaginative Woman"), or Jocelyn Pierston the sculptor (The Well-Beloved), but these figures are mild and somewhat Shelleyan in cast, quite different from the audacious Mop Ollamoor.

More integral to the totality of the story is its theme of change. On the face of it, the events of the story could as easily have been fitted into the exhibition of 1862, which Hardy knew well from first hand observation, as into the exhibition of 1851, which Hardy knew only by hearsay. It would seem, therefore, that he deliberately chose the year 1851 to mark the time when, in his opinion, the new urban industrial civilization of Victorian England began radically to affect the old rural way of life.

At the beginning of "The Fiddler of the Reels" the old gentleman looks back upon 1851 as a significant date:

'For South Wessex, the year formed in many ways an extraordinary chronological frontier or transit-line, at which there occurred what one might call a precipice in Time. As in a geological "fault", we had presented to us a sudden bringing of ancient and modern into absolute contact, such as probably in no other single year since the Conquest was ever witnessed in this part of the country.' (165)

In its emphasis on the place of industry in the nineteenth century, the exhibition is an appropriate symbol of the new forces at work. Hardy fills the tale with background allusions to the passing of the old way of life. Several of the references have to do with the railway. Near the beginning, when Ned decides to leave Stickleford, the narrator observes that "The railway to South Wessex was in process of construction, but it was not as yet opened for traffic; and Hipcroft reached the capital by a six days' trudge on foot" (171). However, four years later,

when Car'line comes to join him in London she does so on the new excursion train. The next year the couple return to Stickleford by train, and Car'line enters the village all too ready to display her newly acquired town ways before her former neighbours (178). Hardy thus dramatizes a point he makes elsewhere, that by bringing town close to country the railway served to break down rural isolation and to erode traditional culture. He makes much the same point in alluding once more to the disbanding of the old Mellstock quire (167). But most interesting are the complex associations of Mop and Ned. Ollamoor, like Michael Henchard, stands primarily for the old, natural world -- ancient, mysterious, physical. Ned, on the other hand, is like Farfrae -- allied with what is new, urban and industrial: "He was a respectable mechanic, in a far sounder position than Mop the nominal house-doctor" (170). The new ways are replacing the old, but as in The Mayor of Casterbridge Hardy shows a keen awareness of the deficiencies of the former and the values in the latter. Mop is a rogue, but he is passionate, virile and romantic. Ned is what follows logically from the break-up of old Wessex, as described in "The Dorsetshire Labourer". He leaves the country for the city, where he leads a life that is essentially rootless and anonymous. He is not unhappy:

In London he lived and worked regularly at his trade. More fortunate than many, his disinterested willingness recommended him from the first. During the ensuing four years he was never out of employment. He neither advanced nor receded in the modern sense; he improved as a workman, but he did not shift one jot in social position. (171)

In the future too he will earn enough to live adequately, but his life will lack personal significance; he will have Car'line, but no children.

Ned's sterility hints at an inability to be fully creative. Mop, like Henchard, cannot withstand the economic forces that are changing society. But he can at least refuse to submit to them. By defying conventional morality he asserts his own freedom. He lives a life of instinct, passion and romance, but he will always in a sense be on the run from forces more powerful than himself.

It is not really possible in a tightly knit story like "The Fiddler of the Reels" to discuss characterization independently of theme and symbol. This is to Hardy's credit, for it is a sign of his fine craftsmanship. It is clear, however, that Hardy does not depart from his basic methods of characterization. Mop is another of Hardy's dark-haired villain-heroes combining the amorous, reckless qualities of figures like Troy, Manston, or Alec d'Urberville with the symbolic values of a Michael Henchard. All these characters are linked by Hardy's use of demonic or Mephistophelian imagery, and most of them are portrayed as outsiders or intruders. Mop too comes "from nobody knew where" (166), and has an "un-English" complexion and name.

Ned, on the other hand, despite his profession and subsequent departure for the city is of country origin, as his name implies. Like many another Hardian young man he appears decent and respectable, but diffident and unpractised in the ways of women and hence easily overshadowed by the vital, amorous villain. As we have seen, there is a good deal more to Ned than that. He is in fact quite unlike Hardy's other young countrymen, but it is equally clear that Hardy is working with a certain character type.

Car'line Aspent can be fitted into the pattern of Hardeian heroines. She is another country maiden who stands between the charismatic fatal man and the mild, decent country lad who offers her a safe and secure, although unromantic, existence. Like Fanny Robin or Tess she has to face the consequences of her seduction. But the differences are important. Hardy is primarily interested in Mop and his contrast to Ned, so despite Car'line's fall, Hardy resolutely avoids any tragic or pathetic touches which might distract the reader from the central theme. He stresses Car'line's hysterical nature, her tendency to spasms and convulsions, thus achieving his aim of making her character appear credible within a basically improbable plot situation.

The triangular plot in which two men compete for the same girl is quite similar to "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" and indeed to several of the novels previously discussed in this study. It is thoroughly characteristic of Hardy's imagination that he should employ stereotyped plot situations and stock characters and even similar themes. Despite the dangers in this practice, Hardy leaves the reader with the feeling that each of his works is quite different. His success is due not so much to his skill in changing the details of the pattern as in his ability to create a series of memorable characters who impress us either with the truthfulness of their psychology or with the vigour of their personalities.

Moreover, both tales admirably reveal Hardy's abiding fascination with the nature of human passion, evident from the time of his first ventures into prose fiction. In Desperate Remedies, however,

Cytherea found herself pitted between the evil of the urbanized Aeneas Manston and the virtue of the poetical, countrified Edward Springrove. Hardy apparently realized that in this oversimplified, almost trite use of character opposites there lay the possibility of a much more significant contrast. Thus in "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" (1883), written in mid-career, the dark, intrusive, sophisticated man turns out to be quite unlike the villain one would have assumed him to be from the characteristic demonic imagery, and Jim Hayward, the country youth, is more unscrupulous in matters of love than the Baron. In The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), the original contrast is virtually reversed: the alien, disruptive (though well-meaning) man is the blond Farfrae, who introduces new business methods, and the man who gradually steals our sympathies is the dark, passionate, violent Henchard, symbol of the old way of life. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that in "The Fiddler of the Reels" (1893) the fair-haired country lad is again the instrument of the new forces, while the dark passionate man, linked to the natural and traditional way of life, has now become the intruder figure. Indeed, the supposedly decent young men and women of fair complexion are in the later fiction as likely as not to be associated with sterility (Ned), rigidity (Angel Clare), nervous debilitation (Sue), or death (Giles), and the dark men (Alec, Fitzpiers, Mop) are, as often as not, associated with passion, energy and fertility.

Nevertheless, the tension between sexual fulfillment on the one hand and security on the other, remains constant in Hardy's fiction. This contrast is invariably dramatized by the choice the heroine must

make between the romantic "bad" man and the passionless "good" man.

Sooner or later, Hardy's heroines usually opt for the second. They may not always be completely fulfilled in him, but he does seem preferable to the uncertainty and destruction usually associated with the romantic man. For Hardy the romantic is ever attractive, but hardly to be trusted. Invariably, Hardy returns to his anti-romantic stance.

VIII

THE WOODLANDERS

The Woodlanders occupies a rather unusual position among Hardy's fictions. It is certainly one of his major novels, yet critical reaction to it has always been restrained. It is seldom found on high school or undergraduate reading lists, nor has it ever been in great demand with the public. The film makers and television producers have not so far been tempted to film it, deterred presumably by its relatively undramatic qualities and laboured consideration of Victorian morality.¹ Writing in 1965, Carl Weber reported that The Woodlanders had never been able to stand higher than sixth, or at most fifth place in the critical estimate of Hardy's major fictions.² There is every reason to suppose that it has not become more popular in the last decade. This is regrettable. Although The Woodlanders cannot be judged superior to Tess of the d'Urbervilles, Jude the Obscure, or The Mayor of Casterbridge, it is at least as good as Far from the Madding Crowd and The Return of the Native. The natural descriptions in The Woodlanders have an eerie beauty; the characters are original; the theme is rich; and, worked into the action, are mythic and romance patterns of real complexity and power. Hardy himself thought highly of the novel.³

The Woodlanders was generally well received by the Victorian public when it was published in book form in March 1887. But once

again, and not for the last time, several reviewers objected to Hardy's new work on moral grounds. At the centre of the furor was their repugnance for Fitzpiers' sexual misdemeanours and, more particularly, his apparent success in having his affairs and not being punished for them. The reviewers employed such terms as "disagreeable" or "repulsive" to describe his behaviour. The Athenaeum concluded by warning its readers that "the novel is distinctly not one for the 'young person' of whom we have lately heard".⁴ What is more interesting, though perhaps no less predictable, is the reviewers' praise for the realistic elements of the novel, particularly its rural setting and some of the characters, and their disapproval of the supposedly improbable characters and situations. The reviewer of the Pall Mall Gazette was pleased to observe that Hardy's "own love and knowledge of woodland scenery is so strong that he never fails to present to his readers a picture of vivid realism. . . . the occupations of rural life . . . are all brought before our eyes with almost microscopic fidelity".⁵ The Athenaeum reviewer too was gratified to find that Hardy was no longer "so far removed from ordinary probabilities as in some of the earlier works",⁶ although he felt obliged to note that Hardy was not altogether immune to the "temptation" to place his characters in "unlikely" situations. Writing in The Spectator, R. H. Hutton opined that "Mr. Hardy, as usual, is stronger in his pictures of genuine rural life than in any other part of his story". He went on to say that "the account of Marty South and her hysterical father, who is killed by the nervous shock of finding that the fate he had feared for himself had become impossible, are [sic] admirably sketched".⁷ It is

difficult to avoid feeling that Hutton's sense of what is probable and what improbable is somewhat arbitrary. To this modern reader the death of old South by hysteria does not appear to be inherently more likely than the behaviour of Fitzpiers, Felice or Giles, who are singled out by various reviewers as examples of Hardy's inability or unwillingness to create lifelike characters. The Saturday Review, for example, concluded a generally perceptive account of the novel with the

hope that Mr. Hardy, whose characters are wont to be so essentially persons of flesh and blood, will not be led astray by the desire to idealize. Giles Winterborne is perhaps, a little too consciously treated as the incarnation of a phase of village civilization, and not quite enough as an individual.⁸

Evidently the Victorian reviewers as well as early critics like Rutland responded to Hardy when they felt that he treated character and incident realistically, and grew restless when they detected a tendency to carry realism into the area of sexual morality. This is curious because, for the most part, Victorian readers did not object to the coincidence and contrivance which fill the pages of both Dickens and Hardy, although this often makes modern readers uncomfortable. Fortunately for Hardy's reputation, we are receptive today to the introduction of myth, romance and fantasy in fiction, and we can enjoy Hardy's relatively frank presentations of sexuality together with his frequently non-realistic methods of characterization, while the Victorian and early twentieth-century critics could not.

Recent studies of The Woodlanders have focussed on Hardy's textual revisions and his treatment of nature. Several critics admit that

the book possesses great beauty and considerable power, yet they have not always been able to explain why this is so. The relationship of The Woodlanders to one or the other of the Wessex novels has been frequently pointed out. Although it was published in 1887, Hardy had evidently had the book in mind since late in 1874, just after the completion of Far from the Madding Crowd.⁹ Certainly the triangular relationship of Giles, Grace and Fitzpiers resembles the relationship of Gabriel, Bathsheba and Troy in Far from the Madding Crowd and the relationship of Dick, Fancy and Parson Maybold in Under the Greenwood Tree.¹⁰ In the latter, as in The Woodlanders, a socially ambitious father sends his only daughter away to be educated. On their return, both maidens must choose between a relatively coarse youth and a highly educated gentleman from outside their local district.

Hardy's early romances are also linked to The Woodlanders by a certain similarity in their treatment of nature. Under the Greenwood Tree and The Woodlanders have, as their titles suggest, virtually the same setting in an idyllic sylvan landscape, and Hardy conveys part of his theme by means of a subtle use of tree symbolism. For example, in the first paragraph of Under the Greenwood Tree Hardy introduces us to trees that are almost human:

To dwellers in a wood almost every species of tree has its voice as well as its feature. At the passing of the breeze the fir trees sob and moan no less distinctly than they rock; the holly whistles as it battles with itself; the ash hisses amid its quiverings; the beech rustles while its flat boughs rise and fall. And winter, which modifies the note of such trees as shed their leaves, does not destroy its individuality.¹¹

Just as Dick's sensitivity to trees indicates his fitness to be Fancy's

suitors, so Giles' understanding of trees is a touchstone of the sensitivity of his feelings for Grace. Fitzpiers, who is oblivious to trees, is also insensitive to people. In The Woodlanders Hardy again goes beyond the pathetic fallacy to imply that trees have an existence of their own, and that intuitive people like Giles are capable of communicating with them. Giles, of course, is the "wood-god" (335), the spirit of the trees, but Marty and even old Melbury share some of his powers: "'Yet you and he could speak in a tongue that nobody else knew -- not even my father, though he came nearest knowing -- the tongue of the trees and fruits and flowers themselves'" (400). The benevolent influence of the trees in Under the Greenwood Tree can be felt in other ways too. At the end of the romance, for example, the wedding party gathers beneath the shade of an ancient tree whose size and age lend an almost religious dignity to the ritual.

In Far from the Madding Crowd, a pastoral romance set among cultivated fields rather than amidst the woodlands, Hardy introduces us to characters who resemble trees. The heroine, Bathsheba, takes refuge at the time of her greatest humiliation -- the night that Troy declares he loves Fanny dead more than Bathsheba living -- in "a thicket overhung by some large oak and beech trees".¹² Nature exerts a soothing, even healing influence upon her, for in the morning she awakens "with a freshened existence and a cooler brain"¹³ prepared to return, albeit despondently, to her life on the farm. The oak under which Bathsheba takes shelter is a common English tree associated with strength and reliability. More particularly, it symbolizes the sturdy protect-

ive qualities of Gabriel Oak, the man whom she eventually recognizes to be the worthiest of her three suitors. Bathsheba's surname, Everdene, is also connected with trees. (A "dene" is a wooded vale.) Like the evergreen, she appears to have an endless hold on youth and life. It is not by chance that one of the earliest metaphors used to evoke Bathsheba's personality is the "bowed sapling",¹⁴ capable of bending down and springing back to the perpendicular, suggestive of the resilient quality of her character. If Boldwood be added to the list, then three characters in Far from the Madding Crowd appear to have arboreal qualities. In The Woodlanders Hardy goes a step further: he designates the moral stature of his major characters by portraying their attitude to trees -- beginning with Giles and Marty at one end of the spectrum, ranging through the Melburys, father and daughter, and ending with Fitzpiers and Felice Charmond, who are ignorant or even fearful of the woods.

Under the Greenwood Tree, Far from the Madding Crowd and The Woodlanders have other things in common. To a greater or lesser degree they are concerned with time and the effects of change, with sexual attraction, courtship and marriage. It is clear, however, that The Woodlanders is a more profound study, not only of what might be involved in the heroine's choice, but also of nature and its relation to man. The later novel, moreover, creates an entirely different atmosphere while retaining to some extent the pastoral mode. Since Hardy's treatment of nature in The Woodlanders has received considerable critical attention¹⁵ it need not be discussed in great detail here. Certain points, however,

are worth stressing in order to show further the relation of The Woodlanders to his earlier fiction.

Under the Greenwood Tree and Far from the Madding Crowd reveal Hardy's attraction to the romantic view of nature, an attachment which lingers on into The Woodlanders. Certainly there is some evidence in the latter work that Hardy retained his sympathy for the notion advanced first by the classical pastoral poets and later by the Wordsworthian school that, on the whole, life is most meaningful for man, and that he is at his most virtuous, when he lives close to nature. The traditional way of life practised in Hintock is presented to the reader as an Edenic kind of existence, gradually crumbling under the impact of the new ways -- Grace's fashionable schooling, the intrusion of disruptive townsfolk like Barber Percomb, Mrs. Charmond and Fitzpiers, the enclosure movement and other supposed improvements. Grace is described as having "fallen from the good old Hintock ways" (49), as having lost the "paradise of the previous June" (367). For a time we are led to hope that she might readapt to Hintock: she "sucked in this native air of hers like milk" (100). There is also the passionate outburst she makes against the education given her by her father: "I wish I worked in the woods like Marty South! I hate genteel life, and I want to be no better than she!" (267)

This is very much in keeping with the anti-intellectual strain that surfaces in Wordsworth's poetry from time to time. The Wordsworthian touch may also be dimly seen in the following lines from the first chapter:

At length could be discerned in the dusk, about half a mile to one side, gardens and orchards sunk in a concave, and, as it were, snipped out of the woodland. From this self-contained place rose in stealthy silence tall stems of smoke, which the eye of imagination could trace downward to their root on quiet hearthstones, festooned overhead with hams and flitches. (4)

This passage, with its suggestion of a harmonious and reciprocal relationship between man and nature, is very similar in theme to the description of the tranter's cottage in Under the Greenwood Tree.¹⁶ Both descriptions almost certainly derive from the familiar lines of Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey":

The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage ground, these orchard tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!¹⁷

Hardy speaks also of "the dramas of a grandeur and unity truly Sophoclean" which "are enacted in the real, by virtue of the concentrated passions and closely-knit interdependence of the lives therein" (4-5). The surface allusion is to Sophocles, but the idea recalls Wordsworth's preface to the second edition of Lyrical Ballads, in which he defends his decision to deal with "humble and rustic life" because "in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity".¹⁸

On the other hand, Hardy's attitude to nature had been profoundly affected by Darwin's Origin of Species.¹⁹ Intellectually Hardy realized that the nature cult promoted by Rousseau and Wordsworth did

not square with the Darwinian hypothesis and could not be adapted to it. In the tough-minded, even bitter frame of mind that enveloped him as he grew older, Hardy felt obliged to state what he took to be the truth: beneath the beautiful and apparently harmonious surface of nature, a fierce contest for survival is taking place:

They went noiselessly over mats of starry moss, rustled through interspersed tracts of leaves, skirted trunks with spreading roots whose mossed rinds made them like hands wearing green gloves; elbowed old elms and ashes with great forks, in which stood pools of water that overflowed on rainy days and ran down their stems in green cascades. On older trees still than these huge lobes of fungi grew like lungs. Here, as everywhere, the Unfulfilled Intention, which makes life what it is, was as obvious as it could be among the depraved crowds of a city slum. The leaf was deformed, the curve was crippled, the taper was interrupted; the lichen ate the vigour of the stalk, and the ivy slowly strangled to death the promising sapling. (58-59)

The grim Darwinian view of nature presented in this oft-quoted passage pervades the novel and undercuts the sentimental romantic view that the reader might otherwise be tempted to adopt. It is worth noting that this and similar descriptions of nature come from the authorial observer, not from the characters, who never show the slightest awareness of the continuous struggle for survival in nature. The result is a dramatic irony in which the characters, some of whom have a deep empathy with nature, nonetheless fail to perceive either its amoral aspect or the implications this may have for their own capacity to mate and survive. For example, if Giles is to win Grace it is important that he clearly demonstrate to the girl and her father his ability to provide for her. This point is stressed in a passage that employs Darwinian terms:

Since one of the Souths still survived there was not much doubt that Giles could do what his father had left

undone, as far as his own life was concerned. This possibility cheered him much; for by those houses hung many things. Melbury's doubt of the young man's fitness to be the husband of Grace had been based not a little on the precariousness of his holdings in Little and Great Hinton. (118)

Giles, of course, realizes what he has to do, but he does not see that he is part of a wider struggle for survival. Unfortunately for Giles, Fitzpiers is much better adapted to succeed in the contest for a mate. Giles' personal qualities of honesty, reticence and lack of self-confidence work against him. The loss of his house is followed by termination of his understanding with Grace.

Yet Hardy, though he accepts the Darwinian hypothesis, is far from content with it. Fitzpiers may be better adapted to survive,²⁰ but he is, initially at any rate, the wrong man for Grace. Have him she will, though it appears she would have been happier with Giles. For the reader, the implications of the Darwinian hypothesis are sobering enough. The Unfulfilled Intention does not carry out its purposes in a way that can give any satisfaction to man. The narrator again comments:

Melbury perhaps was an unlucky man in having the sentiment which could make him wander out in the night to regard the imprint of a daughter's footstep. Nature does not carry on her government with a view to such feelings; and when advancing years render the opened hearts of those that possess them less dexterous than formerly in shutting against the blast, they must inevitably, like little celandines, suffer 'buffeting at will by rain and storm.' (19)

As Hardy remarks in The Life: "The emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it".²¹ The pathos of man's situation is that he has been created

with feelings and a sense of justice in a world that has neither. It is clear once again that the woodlanders are not aware to nearly the same degree as the narrator of cruel nature's laws. There can therefore be no assurance that man will have a greater chance for happiness in secluded Hintock than in an urban setting. The tension in Hardy between his desire to think of nature as a kind mother and his more objective recognition that there is no more comfort for man in a natural setting than there is in the city is nowhere more apparent than in The Woodlanders. As he matured, the attacks on the sentimental romantic view of nature became stronger, reaching a peak in Tess and Jude.

For the most part Hardy thinks of nature in The Woodlanders as a personified force with laws quite independent of and separate from man's. An intuitive person like Giles is capable of "intelligent intercourse with Nature" (399). He and Marty are "possessed of its finer mysteries as of commonplace knowledge" (399). There is no suggestion that this knowledge makes Giles or Marty happier, though it may be significant that they are the two noblest and most virtuous characters in the book.

Occasionally, however, nature appears in the form of a spirit distinctly hostile to man:

No sooner had she retired to rest that night than the wind began to rise, and after a few prefatory blasts to be accompanied by rain. The wind grew more violent, and as the storm went on it was difficult to believe that no opaque body, but only an invisible colourless thing, was trampling and climbing over the roof, making branches creak, springing out of the trees upon the chimney, popping its head into the flue, and shrieking and blaspheming at every corner of the walls. As in the grisly story, the assailant was a spectre which could be felt but not seen.

She had never before been so struck with the devilry of a gusty night in a wood, because she had never been so entirely alone in spirit as she was now. She seemed almost to be apart from herself -- a vacuous duplicate only. The recent self of physical animation and clear intentions was not there.

Sometimes a bough from an adjoining tree was swayed so low as to smite the roof in the manner of a gigantic hand smiting the mouth of an adversary, to be followed by a trickle of rain, as blood from the wound. To all this weather Giles must be more or less exposed; how much, she did not know. (371-372)

It is this storm which causes Giles' death. Such descriptions have an extraordinary force, and we would not want them deleted. Nevertheless this conception of nature does not quite fit into the context of a novel that adopts the Darwinian approach. What has the "Unfulfilled Intention" to do with a malicious "assailant" filled with a lust for "devilry"? It can perhaps be argued that the passage is merely an outburst of Grace's overwrought imagination stimulated by loneliness, a sense of guilt and solicitude for Giles. There is indeed a hint of this, but the reader is left with the impression that the assailant has an objective existence. The description resembles previously cited passages in Desperate Remedies and A Pair of Blue Eyes, as well as the storm scene in Far from the Madding Crowd, which reveal in nature a spirit decidedly baleful to man. These early novels are not strongly Darwinian, but they do show Hardy reacting forcefully against the Wordsworthian vision of a nature inhabited by a beneficent spirit. Clearly, the philosophical consistency is less important to Hardy than the poetic effect.

In its more strictly thematic concerns too, The Woodlanders is closely connected to Hardy's early novels. Principally it has to do

with the impact of time and change. The main characters are all oppressed by time in a direct and personal way: "The sad sands were running swiftly through Time's glass; she had often felt it in these latter days. . . . Her freshness would pass, the long suffering devotion of Giles might suddenly end -- might end that very hour" (348). This motif runs through the book like a sad refrain. The woodlanders are also victims of the changes slowly overtaking Hintock: old occupations are disappearing; houses are being pulled down; some of the villagers are emigrating; the old aristocracy has crumbled away and is being replaced by a new class that has little understanding of the land or the people that live on it. Like Henchard in The Mayor of Casterbridge, Giles is the symbol of the old way of life, and the novel concludes with his passing.

In The Woodlanders Hardy again shows that human beings often make their life choices because of sexual attraction and social ambition, but that these inducements provide a poor basis for a happy marriage. This is most obvious in the case of Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond, whom Hardy pictures as impulsive and superficial people. But Grace too chooses for the wrong reasons. The narrator explains that when Grace's false

structure of ideals was demolished by the intimacy of common life, and she found him [Fitzpiers] as merely human as the Hintock people themselves, a new foundation was in demand for an enduring and staunch affection -- a sympathetic interdependence, wherein mutual weaknesses are made the grounds of a defensive alliance. Fitzpiers had furnished nothing of that single-minded confidence and truth out of which alone such a second union could spring. (244)

The attitude to marriage expressed here is much the same as that pre-

sented to the reader in earlier novels such as Far from the Madding Crowd or The Mayor of Casterbridge. True love is the result of long association, comradeship and a sense of having successfully passed through crises or hardships. This kind of experience constitutes a sound basis for marriage. It follows that Grace could probably have been happy with Giles, despite the barrier raised by her fashionable schooling.

The novel considers Victorian notions of respectability and finds them cold, artificial, and inhuman. Hardy implies that Grace was selfish in allowing Giles to abandon the hut. She placed her reputation in the eyes of the community higher than the physical well-being of the man she loved. But beyond this, Hardy blames the new middle-class education which severs rural youth from its roots and teaches it artificial notions of behaviour. Connected to this is his criticism of the English aristocracy, whose members are prone to idleness and promiscuity. Though muted here, Hardy's attack on the gentry is much more explicit in A Laodicean and Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

Finally Hardy raises philosophical questions of freewill, the nature of reality and the relation of man to his environment. At times, the characters take the position that circumstances are intractable. Behind them stands the narrator, certain that only "the die of destiny had decided that the girl Marty should handle the tool; and the fingers which clasped the heavy ash haft might have skilfully guided the pencil or swept the string, had they only been set to do it in good time" (8). Hardy asks what principle, if any, animates nature, what effect this has on man, and what his response should be to it. Most of the characters

have difficulty in distinguishing between appearance and reality, the natural and unnatural, the genuine and the artificial. Because the narrator frequently takes the reader into his confidence, these questions seem capable of solution. But this is deceptive. The characters do not readily find the answers. At the end of the novel the truth only appears to emerge, for Hardy's conclusion is probably the most complex, ironic and ambiguous he ever created.

Hardy's decision to alter the ending is well-known.²² In revisions made subsequent to the serialization, first in 1887 and again in 1895, Hardy has Melbury predict that Fitzpiers will again bring unhappiness on Grace by a resumption of his philandering (439-440). Although it is evident from the length of time Hardy took to make the changes that they were carefully considered, they are inconsistent with the feeling he carefully develops over many pages that both Grace and Fitzpiers have matured and adjusted their ways to an extent that permits resumption of the marriage. (Hardy probably changed the emphasis in response to the fulminations of the reviewers who felt Grace's return to Fitzpiers to be quite incredible.)²³ Further, if Grace is so foolish as to be taken in once again by Fitzpiers, then Giles' sacrifice is not merely futile; it is stupid. The hint that Fitzpiers will again betray Grace comes mainly from Melbury; yet his ruminations contradict the opinions of the chorus of villagers whose remarks follow immediately. The villagers stress Grace's cleverness, her seizure of the dominant position in the relationship, and her success thus far in "taming" Fitzpiers. Melbury, on the other hand, has invariably been wrongheaded or misguided in

his advice to Grace. The reader may therefore feel that Melbury's view of the future of the marriage, though understandable, is hardly likely to be authoritative. The note of scepticism that Melbury introduces does provide, however, a darker note of realism in contrast to the comic-romance mood that floods the end of the novel.

In form The Woodlanders is both an ironic tragi-comedy and a pastoral elegy. If Grace had chosen to remain faithful to the kind of life represented by Giles she would have acquired something of Marty's stature. It might then have been possible to think of her as a tragic heroine. But Grace is not of the stuff from which tragic heroines are made. She chooses comfort over principle. The novel ends in a comic reconciliation with her husband in a hotel chamber. Instead of the lonely vigil by "the last bed of Giles Winterbourne" (443), Grace returns to the bed of her husband.

Yet Marty's situation too has its ironies. On the same page Hardy remarks:

As this solitary and silent girl stood there in the moonlight, a straight slim figure, clothed in a plaitless gown, the contours of womanhood so undeveloped as to be scarcely perceptible in her, the marks of poverty and toil effaced by the misty hour, she touched sublimity at points, and looked almost like a being who had rejected with indifference the attribute of sex for the loftier quality of abstract humanism. (443)

The key word is "almost". Does Hardy mean that Marty has just about attained the "loftier quality of abstract humanism", or does he mean that Marty is one who has almost, but not quite, succeeded in suppressing her emotional needs? If the former, one wonders what Hardy intends by the

term; in what respect "abstract" is superior to, say, concrete or personal humanism, and just how it is to be practised by "a lonely maid" (442), whose work is mainly with trees and whose off-hours are spent in the cemetery tending the grave of a man who was largely unaware of her. If the latter, it would seem that Marty has suppressed her womanhood more through necessity than indifference.²⁴ In any case her choice hardly seems preferable to Grace's, even if the latter is heading for trouble with her philandering husband. Grace at least loves Fitzpiers, continues to find him sexually attractive, and knows the kind of man he is. If it is true that Marty's fidelity to Giles' memory is an ironic comment on Grace's fickleness, it is equally true that Grace's choice of the marriage-bed is an implied criticism of Marty's choice of the death-bed.²⁵ It is difficult to accept the reasoning of those who argue that Marty is the true heroine of the novel. Hardy apparently intended the two girls to provide contrasts for each other.

As in some of the earlier fictions, notably Under the Greenwood Tree and "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid", the underlying structure and setting of The Woodlanders reveal a debt to Shakespeare. In his romantic comedies and last plays, Shakespeare usually sets a major part of his action in an idyllic or fantastic green world. The main characters arrive sin-laden from the king's court. In the new locale they are purged of their sins, and they return at the end of the play morally transformed to the real world. Although the natural setting of The Woodlanders has its sinister aspects, in other ways it resembles the dreamlike, innocent setting of Shakespeare's romantic comedies. Hintock

is a "green world" (202) of trees much like Shakespeare's Forest of Arden: "It was one of those sequestered spots outside the gates of the world where may usually be found more meditation than action, and more listlessness than meditation" (4). It is a "Tempe-vale" (44) inhabited by such "Arcadian innocents" (340) as Giles and Grace. Into this idyllic world step "sophisticated" outsiders like Barber Percomb, Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond, who ironically affect and are affected by what they find there.

There is death in The Woodlanders, but there is also a hint of new life. Ultimately Grace turns from her preoccupation with the dead Giles to be reunited with Fitzpiers. This is followed by their departure forever from the Edenic world of Hintock. This motif of death and return to life is underlined by several allusions to Shakespeare's last plays. The narrator observes that during the autumn and winter following Giles' death Marty and Grace "like the two mourners in Cymbeline, sweetened [Giles'] sad grave with their flowers and their tears" (404).²⁶ In the preceding section Hardy observes of Grace's attitude to Fitzpiers: "A little time might melt her frozen thoughts, and lead her to look on him with toleration, if not with love" (403). One is reminded also of the concluding scene of The Winter's Tale in which a wife returns from "death" to be reunited with her husband: the supposedly "cold" statue of Hermione, moved by Leontes' expression of repentance, grief and love, seemingly becomes warm.

In a provocative discussion of Shakespeare's romantic comedy in Anatomy of Criticism, Northrop Frye observes:

In the rituals and myths the earth that produces the rebirth is generally a female figure, and the death and revival, or disappearance and withdrawal, of human figures in romantic comedy generally involves the heroine. The fact that the heroine often brings about the comic resolution by disguising herself as a boy is familiar enough. The treatment of Hero in Much Ado, of Helena in All's Well, of Thaisa in Pericles, of Fidele in Cymbeline, of Hermione in The Winter's Tale, show [sic] the repetition of a device in which progressively less care is taken of plausibility and in which in consequence the mythical outline of a Proserpine figure becomes progressively clearer. These are Shakespearean examples of the comic theme of ritual assault on a central female figure, a theme which stretches from Menander to contemporary soap operas. . . . However, the theme of rebirth is not invariably feminine in context: the rejuvenation of the senex in Aristophanes' The Knights, and a similar theme in All's Well based on the folklore motif of the healing of the impotent king, come readily to mind.²⁷

Frye's observations shed light on the otherwise puzzling episode of Grace's near escape from the man-trap. Hardy pictures it as a dreadful monster: "the sight of one of these gins, when set, produced a vivid impression that it was endowed with life. It exhibited the combined aspects of a shark, a crocodile, and a scorpion" (425). Elsewhere Hardy terms it "diabolical" (429). The imagery implies that the man-trap is a symbolic hell-mouth similar to those pictured in mediaeval and renaissance art.²⁸ Grace's heart is in the grave with Giles; but in the month of May (433), she emerges to join her husband, rather like Proserpine in her annual return to the upper world in the spring. The embrace in the hotel room would then be not merely an ironic comment on the strength of Grace's sexual desires, but a gesture richly symbolic of her return to life. Certainly the conclusion of the novel -- with its scenes of reconciliation and union symbolized by a new marriage, a festive meal and the hint of a new life to come -- is similar in spirit to

the ending of one of Shakespeare's last plays.

As David Lodge has shown in his stimulating introduction to the Macmillan paperback edition of The Woodlanders, the novel is also closely related to the classical pastoral elegy.²⁹ Lodge discusses the significance of Hardy's allusion to Cymbeline, and then draws attention to the mythic and ritualistic elements underlying the action. He observes that Hardy presents Giles as the spirit of the woodlands: Grace thinks of him as "the fruit-god and the wood-god in alternation" (335), or as "Autumn's very brother" (246). Although other critics have pointed this out, Lodge is the first to show that Hardy was drawing heavily on the ancient fertility myths of the dying god which are frequently worked into the traditional pastoral elegy. In these myths the god, a spirit of nature, or a human figure like Adonis dies only to revive again in the spring. In the Adonis cult, for example, women and girls perform "extravagant rites of mourning for the death of the god, followed by ritual acts expressing hope of his rebirth."³⁰ Thus when Giles dies "all nature is described as mourning his death".³¹ Presumably Giles' surname refers to the death-birth motif. Just as in Shakespeare's Cymbeline Bellarius, Arviragus and Guiderius mourn for the "dead" Fidele, so Grace and Marty grieve for their beloved, and plant the spring flowers that in the traditional elegy symbolize the renewal of life. However, Lodge points out that for Hardy there can be no resurrection. The elegy for Giles is, in effect, Hardy's lament for the traditional way of life which he knew to be inevitably doomed by the forces of change. The mythic allusions may lead us to expect Giles' rebirth, but, ironically, it is Grace

who apparently returns to life.

Beneath the pathos of the lament there is the further irony, expressed in the last lines of the book, that Giles' sacrifice for Grace was futile: "for she has forgot 'ee at last, although for her you died!" (444). Giles is certainly something of a sacrificial figure (402): Grace realizes that he has "immolated himself for her comfort" (385). Yet if this is what his sacrifice amounts to, the conclusion of The Woodlanders seems an ironic parody of the ending of Dickens' Tale of Two Cities. Like Sydney Carton, Giles dies to put the woman he loves into the arms of another man, but while Carton's death is significant in the context of the resurrection theme of Dickens' novel, Giles' sacrifice seems fruitless, especially if we accept the interpretation advanced by several critics that Fitzpiers will sooner or later turn to other women.

Lodge's argument might be disputed on the grounds that Giles' spirit is in effect resurrected in Marty who continues to "plant the young larches" (444) and to operate Giles' cider press accompanied around the countryside by Creedle (402). It would follow from this that Giles' memory and the significance of his life are not forgotten. His spirit lives on, maintained in Marty's life-work. Though the argument seems plausible, it does not fit the general impression left on the reader by the conclusion. Marty promises indeed to plant the young larches, but apparently recognizes that "none can plant as you planted" (444). Marty never had Giles' peculiar touch with trees, and there is no suggestion that Giles' power is now transferred to her. Nor are any of Giles' semi-divine qualities reproduced in Marty. He dies childless,

and there is every indication that Marty too will leave no-one behind her. In returning to Fitzpiers, Grace not only appears to be forsaking Giles' memory, but abandoning Hintock and all it represents. Giles stands for a way of life and an attitude to nature that is disappearing, never to be replaced. Lodge's argument is therefore sound.

Hardy makes an ingenious, but not inappropriate, combination of pastoral elegy and comic-romance in the conclusion of his novel: Giles, and what he represents, dies and is lamented. Yet life continues: in the manner of a Shakespearian romance, a husband and wife are reunited, and a new, though admittedly precarious, life together is planned. The conclusion is consistent with the position Hardy takes, for example, in "The Dorsetshire Labourer" or in A Laodicean, that although there is pathos in the break-up of the old culture, some of the new ways that are replacing it do contain positive elements.

Hardy's use of romance is not confined to Shakespeare and the pastoral elegy. Judging by the paucity of Hardy's references to Spenser, it does not appear that he was one of Hardy's favourite poets, though it may be assumed that Hardy would not have ignored Spenser in his assiduous study of the great poets.³² The Woodlanders, however, contains evidence that Hardy knew Spenser very well, for there is a striking resemblance between Calidore, the knightly hero of Book VI of Spenser's Faerie Queene, and Edred Fitzpiers. Calidore, the Knight of Courtesy, is engaged in a long and fruitless search for the Blatant Beast. One day he finds himself in a serene pastoral land. He stops to talk with the shepherd Meliboe and soon wins the latter's favour by

expressing his enchantment with pastoral life. Wearying of his quest, and attracted by Pastorella, Meliboe's beautiful foster-daughter, Calidore decides to sojourn with the shepherds; he doffs his armour, and begins a gradual courtship of the maiden. Although he is supposed to exemplify aristocratic courtesy, Calidore is not concerned that Pastorella has long been courted by a humble rustic youth named Coridon. Pastorella is relatively easy game for Calidore because "Though meane her lot, yet higher did her mind ascend" (VI.ix.10). He bedazzles the maiden with his words and fine manners. Without much difficulty, Calidore triumphs over his humble rival, and eventually Pastorella responds to his love. Soon after, while Calidore is absent, a group of bandits ravage the countryside. The shepherds are carried away later to be killed, and the land abandoned to desolation. Determined to rescue Pastorella, Calidore dons his armour, thus symbolically resuming his knightly identity, and descends into the caves of the bandits. He finds Pastorella gravely wounded, but succeeds in routing the bandits and rescuing her. It is evident from the emphasis on Pastorella's revival from death to life in VI.xi.44-50 that Spenser is consciously alluding to the myth of Proserpine, and that Pastorella's return to life is meant to blend with and reinforce the theme of Calidore's return to duty. Calidore and Pastorella then leave the country and reside for a time in a castle. There Pastorella is discovered to be of noble birth and hence a fitting consort for Calidore. She remains at the castle waiting for Calidore until he completes his quest.

Hardy's plot greatly resembles Spenser's. It need hardly be ob-

served that both actions occur in a pastoral setting and that in both cases the heroine, like Proserpine, spends some time literally or figuratively in the underworld. There is, moreover, a similarity in name between Meliboe and Melbury.³³ Both maidens lack a mother's protection and advice and are afflicted by well-meaning but ineffective fathers. Meliboe and Melbury, impressed by the fine manners and courtliness of their guests, stand aside, and allow their daughters to be swept off their feet. Although initially associated with the country, Pastorella and Grace prove to be suitable wives for their husbands. In both cases the passionate intruder is a noble gentleman who comes from the sophisticated outside world. His stay among the peasants ultimately turns out to be a mere interlude, a dabbling, while he ignores or evades his real duties.

It is clear in VI.ix of the Faerie Queene that Calidore's sojourn among the shepherds is morally wrong. Calidore fails to recognize that he is abandoning the quest less because of the attraction of pastoral life than because of his desire for Pastorella. Moreover, he uses his skill with words consciously to deceive Pastorella's father: Spenser describes Calidore listening to Meliboe's speech in favour of pastoral life as

rapt with double ravishment,
Both of his speech, that wrought him great content,
And also of the object of his vew,
On which his hungry eye was alwayes bent;
That twixt his pleasing tongue, and her faire hew,
He lost himselfe, and like one halfe entraunced grew.

Yet to occasion meanes to worke his mind,
And to insinuate his harts desire,
He thus replyde: "Now surely, syre, I find,

That all this worlds gay showes, which we admire,
 Be but vaine shadowes to this safe retyre
 Of life, which here in lowlinesse ye lead,
 Fearelesse of foes, or fortunes wrackfull yre
 Which tosseth states, and under foot doth tread
 The mightie ones, affrayd of every chaunges dread.

"That even I, which daily doe behold
 The glorie of the great mongst whom I won,
 And now have prov'd what happinesse ye hold
 In this small plot of your dominion,
 Now loath great Lordship and ambition;
 And wish th'heavens so much had graced mee,
 As graunt me live in like condition;
 Or that my fortunes might transposed bee
 From pitch of higher place unto this low degree."³⁴

Hardy conceives of Fitzpiers in much the same way: Fitzpiers too is confused and incapable of facing his predicament in an honest way. He has chosen to live in Hintock because he is too indolent to make his way as a doctor in the outside world; once in Hintock he is held by his desire for Grace. He too is skilled in words, using them to deceive himself as much as others:

The thought that he might settle here and become welded in with this sylvan life by marrying Grace Melbury crossed his mind for a moment. Why should he go further into the world than where he was? The secret of happiness lay in limiting the aspirations; these men's thoughts were counterminous with the margin of the Hintock woodlands, and why should not his be likewise limited -- a small practice among the people around him being the bound of his desires? (160-161)

In coming to Hintock Fitzpiers not only neglects his profession, he disrupts the order and morality of the village, much in the way that Calidore's seduction of Pastorella brought on the visitation of the bandits and the destruction of the pastoral society.

The Spenserian structural pattern is quite consistent with the view that The Woodlanders is a form of pastoral elegy. Though Calidore

succeeds in rescuing Pastorella, the pastoral life cannot be revived, and Calidore must incur some of the blame for its destruction. Like Calidore, Fitzpiers abandons the village taking his lady with him. He leaves behind a society which has been weakened in the course of the action, though not necessarily because of his actions. The prognosis for Hintock is not encouraging.

To realize that The Woodlanders is deeply saturated in myth and the elements of romantic comedy, pastoral elegy and poetic romance is to become aware that any interpretation of the work along strictly realistic lines is bound to leave the reader with unresolved questions. Only by recognizing the non-realistic elements can we hope to do justice to the power and complexity of the work.

A major image pattern in The Woodlanders is linked to the underlying Spenserian romance structure. This presents Fitzpiers as the imperfect knight and insecure rider. A nineteenth-century gentleman of aristocratic lineage was, in effect, the lineal descendent of the mediaeval knight; as such he would have been expected to maintain some of the old traditions -- disinterestedness, courtesy, readiness to serve the general welfare and perhaps the ability to set a moral standard. Such a gentleman would also have been familiar with horses and have known how to handle them. Measured by this standard, Fitzpiers is sadly deficient in the chivalric virtues. Instead of serving as a leader of the community, he tends by his actions rather to corrupt the villagers. This is particularly obvious in his fondness for the village girls. In a casual but significant remark Hardy records Melbury's resolve to com-

bat "this rank and reckless errantry of his daughter's husband" (301). Clearly Fitzpiers has more in common with Sir Launcelot than with Sir Galahad. In the incident with the man-trap, it is perhaps significant that Fitzpiers does not arrive in time to assist Grace in escaping from it. His tardiness underlines his deficiencies as a defender and protector.³⁵

Fitzpiers' failure to support the role of the knight is nowhere more evident than in his fear of and clumsiness with horses, a point Hardy frequently stresses. This may indicate a general inadequacy, but the inability to govern his horse most probably symbolizes Fitzpiers' inability to govern his passions. At any rate, Hardy measures Fitzpiers by chivalric standards and finds him wanting.

Hardy further develops his ironic portrait of Fitzpiers by comparing him to Tannhäuser (245), the German minstrel-knight who spent seven years of revelry in the cave of Venus.³⁶ Finally, troubled by his conscience, Tannhäuser left to seek absolution from the Pope. The Pope told Tannhäuser that he could no more expect forgiveness than the papal staff could burgeon. Tannhäuser retreated in despair, but three days later the Pope's staff blossomed, a sign of divine grace. However, Tannhäuser could no longer be found; he had returned forever to Venusberg. The story with its strong sexual implications fascinated nineteenth-century writers and artists. Wagner employed the legend in his opera Tannhäuser of 1846-48. Hardy would have encountered it there and again in Swinburne's "Laus Veneris" published in Poems and Ballads of 1866.³⁷ In The Woodlanders Felice plays the role of Venus, distracting the hero from his true responsibilities. Grace (as her name suggests)

may have been intended to represent God's extension of grace. Little Hintock House, Mrs. Charmond's home, is a perfect Venusberg:

To describe it as standing in a hollow would not express the situation of the manor-house; it stood in a hole. But the hole was full of beauty.

The ashlar of the walls, where not overgrown with ivy and other creepers, was coated with lichen of every shade, intensifying its luxuriance with its nearness to the ground till, below the plinth, it merged in moss.

The situation of the house, prejudicial to humanity, was a stimulus to vegetation, on which account an endless shearing of the heavy-armed ivy went on, and a continual lopping of trees and shrubs. . . . its hollow site was an ocular reminder by its unfitness for modern lives of the fragility to which these have declined.

The highest architectural cunning could have done nothing to make Little Hintock House dry and salubrious; and ruthless ignorance could have done little to make it unpicturesque. It was vegetable nature's own home. (65-66)

Hardy makes it evident that Mrs. Charmond is a femme fatale by associating her with the man-traps. Lest the point escape the reader, Mrs. Charmond remarks significantly: "Man-traps are of rather ominous significance where a person of our sex lives, are they not?" (67) Fitzpiers' visits to Little Hintock House, and his later sojourn there while ill, take on greater significance once the presence of the romance pattern is grasped.

At first glance, Giles Winterborne seems to be an unlikely candidate for knighthood, but the persistent references to Giles' true chivalry indicate that Fitzpiers' failure to uphold the ideals of knighthood is being contrasted with Giles' success in doing so despite his humble origins. Hardy refers to Giles' "chivalrous" character at least three times (247, 379, 402), but nowhere more significantly than in the pas-

sage previously cited, in which Fitzpiers, ironically referred to as "Tannhäuser", rides down into the gathering gloom of White-Hart Vale on his way to an assignation with the aging Venus of Little Hintock House, while Giles, also on horseback, gradually ascends into Grace's consciousness: "Nature was bountiful, she thought. No sooner had she been cast aside by Edred Fitzpiers than another being, impersonating chivalrous and undiluted manliness, had arisen out of the earth ready to her hand" (247). Moral purity and loyalty to Grace are aspects of Giles' nobility. In contrasting Fitzpiers to Giles, Hardy may well be alluding to the Lancelot/Galahad opposition in the Arthurian cycle. Certainly there should be nothing in Hardy's use of chivalric imagery to surprise the reader. Hardy effectively employs it, as we have seen, in A Pair of Blue Eyes and, to a lesser extent, in A Laodicean and Two on a Tower.

Hardy usually arranges his characters in patterns. Thus, the relationship of Grace to Giles and Fitzpiers resembles the situation in Far From the Madding Crowd in which Bathsheba eventually reverses her early decision to reject Gabriel Oak. In several of Hardy's other novels and stories, including some examined earlier in this study, we find a heroine who must choose between a smooth, attractive stranger from the outside and a cruder, more homely, but reliable young man of country origin. The men stand for very different ways of life. Despite the care with which Hardy developed his characters, some of them came in for a great deal of criticism from the reviewers and early critics. They recognized Hardy's non-realistic representation of character, but they did not appreciate it. Since there has obviously been some misunder-

standing of Hardy's intentions, a consideration of the major characters in The Woodlanders and their interrelationships can be of value. This may also help further to reveal the romance pattern underlying the book.

Fitzpiers' likeness to Calidore and Tannhäuser has been discussed. He also shares the characteristics of the Faustian heroes commonly found in Gothic romance and in the poetry of Byron, and, at the same time, Fitzpiers is cast as a Shelleyan idealist. People who know him assume that he is

likely to err rather in the possession of too many ideas than too few; to be a dreamy 'ist of some sort, or too deeply steeped in some false kind of 'ism. However this may be, it will be seen that he was undoubtedly a somewhat rare kind of gentleman and doctor to have descended, as from the clouds, upon Little Hintock. (120)

He makes at least two significant quotations from Shelley. The first, from The Revolt of Islam II.23, implies that Fitzpiers is ready to idolize Grace just as Laon idealized Cythna (137). When Giles observes that Fitzpiers has evidently fallen in love, Fitzpiers replies: "I am in love with something in my own head, and no thing-in-itself outside it at all" (138). But this is just the point: Fitzpiers' conception of Grace is merely romantic. He has no notion of what Grace is really like and doesn't begin to appreciate her qualities until after he has lost her. The second quotation from Epipsychidion (219-221) refers to Felice Charmond:

'-- Towards the loadstar [sic] of my one desire
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light.'

Once again there is heavy irony. Shelley's passion for the lady cele-

brated in the poem turned out to be ephemeral, based as it was on someone he hardly knew; like the desire of the moth for the flame, the poet's sentiments led him into trouble, a point that Hardy with his intimate knowledge of Shelley's life would be well aware of. In the context of The Woodlanders the passage implies that Fitzpiers' romantic passion for Felice also has its dangers.

Fitzpiers provides an interesting psychological study of an immature personality. He has not been able to settle down in his profession. Instead of working purposefully towards this goal, he skips from one interest to another, and indulges himself in idle daydreams. Significantly, one afternoon while he is dozing, Grace steps into his consulting room and is briefly observed by him through the mirror, during a moment of consciousness. He later explains to her why he again shut his eyes:

'I fancied in my vision that you stood there,' he said, pointing to where she had paused. 'I did not see you directly, but reflected in the glass. I thought, what a lovely creature! The design is for once carried out. Nature has at last recovered her lost union with the Idea! My thoughts ran in that direction because I had been reading the work of a transcendental philosopher last night; and I dare say it was the dose of Idealism that I received from it that made me scarcely able to distinguish between reality and fancy. I almost wept when I awoke, and found that you had appeared to me in Time, but not in Space, alas!' (154)

By having Fitzpiers obtain his first close glimpse of Grace through a mirror Hardy stresses the idealistic nature of Fitzpiers' character, and his tendency to make women conform to his own idea of them rather than to see them clearly for what they are. Though he doesn't realize it at first, Grace has the power of the positive anima to lead Fitzpiers to-

wards a life of useful activity. Fitzpiers' potential is, however, still unconscious. The other side of his psyche contains the desire for a lazy, bohemian life at the centre of which would be a wealthy woman who could support him in his indolence. Felice Charmond, the femme fatale, is therefore the negative anima, a projection of Fitzpiers' immaturity. His problem is to work out these opposing claims on his psyche. Accordingly, on psychological grounds Fitzpiers' return to his wife, accompanied as it is by the definite steps he has taken to establish himself in his profession, makes good sense; and this bodes well for their future together.

In the earlier fictions Hardy's Shelleyan heroes are diffident, gauche or even shy with women. Not so Fitzpiers. The admixture of Gothic and Byronic qualities makes him seem quite different. He is dark-eyed (119), aristocratic, handsome, solitary, mysterious, "foreign" (53), inclined at times to melancholy and gloom. Like Don Juan, Fitzpiers is fatally attractive to women. Though he may tire of them, they do not tire of him. There is a resemblance here to Troy, de Stancy and perhaps to Hardy's other passionate Byronic figures. Like Aeneas Manston, Mop Ollamoor and the Baron, Fitzpiers can exert a power over women: "it was plain that . . . Fitzpiers when he was present exercised a certain fascination over her -- or even more, an almost psychic influence as it is called" (188). Judging by events, the secret of Fitzpiers' fascination is his enormous sexual charm, which sways Suke and Felice as well as Grace. Like Hardy's other fatal men, Fitzpiers is an outsider who disrupts the community. Yet he cannot be taken altogether seriously. There is a good deal of comic irony in his characterization. While Har-

dy was probably satirizing the kind of man who envelops a basically libidinous nature in a cloak of romantic verbiage, he was no doubt also ridiculing the stock heroes that appear so frequently in the pages of Shelley and Byron. Unfortunately for Hardy, the Victorian reviewers took Fitzpiers seriously and waxed indignant. Yet Hardy does not conceive Fitzpiers in realistic terms any more than he does the world in which Fitzpiers has his being. Within the comic romance mode, Fitzpiers' role appears no more incongruous than that of Calidore in his world, or the characters in a Shakespearian romance.

The early reviewers and critics were also outraged by Mrs. Charmond, whom they found to be almost as improbable and morally repulsive as Fitzpiers. William Wallace of the Academy called her the "one weak character in The Woodlanders", arguing that she is "too much of a third-rate French actress".³⁸ A third-rate actress she certainly is, but surely not too much so. The point is that Fitzpiers allows himself to be taken in by the meretricious and artificial while ignoring the genuine and the natural. In the race against time in which all the characters are engaged, Felice has the most to lose, because she has tried to avoid and conceal the effects of time, and because the expedients she has adopted must inevitably fail. In her fear of what is natural, she adopts the artificial. Ironically, Marty's hair which is natural and genuine, once sold and transferred to Felice becomes a symbol of falsehood and vanity.

Mrs. Charmond's name alludes to her character. As Giles explains: "She's been a bit of a charmer in her time, I believe, . . .

A body who has smiled where she has not loved, and loved where she has not married" (274). Giles' remarks imply that she has often manipulated her sexual charms to attract men, but with very little genuine feeling behind the pose. Her first name evidently derives from Swinburne's "Félise", published in Poems and Ballads of 1866. In Swinburne's poem a disillusioned lover confronts for the last time his mistress of yesteryear amidst a setting of autumnal trees and dead leaves. He speaks of the physical nature of their passion and concludes that such a love cannot be proof against the passage of time. The allusion reinforces the general impression that Hardy's Felice will be the loser in the contest with time. Indeed, she eventually dies at the hands of the passionate South Carolinian who is earlier likened to "Satan . . . with his hour-glass" (179).

In Two on a Tower and "An Imaginative Woman" Hardy considers the love of an older woman for a younger man with some sympathy, despite the comic possibilities; but in The Woodlanders the satirical element is much stronger. Were she a belle dame sans merci or a noble lady engaged in a fateful struggle with a man of consequence, Mrs. Charmond could be treated pathetically or tragically, but she is merely a fading "vamp" enjoying a last fling with what is after all a very imperfect knight. The episode is more comic than pathetic. It seems irrelevant, therefore, to accuse Hardy of creating improbable characters. The Victorians may have been correct in insisting that Hardy was not primarily concerned about the morality of Fitzpiers' affair with Felice; but the point is that these characters, who are apparently ready to sacrifice everything for

love, in fact know very little about what love is. Hardy concentrates more on the selfishness, immaturity, and dishonesty of their relationship than on its immorality, a point of view that seems more akin to twentieth-century attitudes to conduct than it does to nineteenth-century attitudes.

Hardy's treatment of Giles partly as man, partly as a tree-spirit, may cause dismay among readers accustomed to the tradition of the realistic novel, but such figures are quite common in romance. As Northrop Frye observes:

In a myth we can have a sun-god or a tree-god; in a romance we may have a person who is significantly associated with the sun or trees. In more realistic modes the association becomes less significant and more a matter of incidental, even coincidental or accidental, imagery.³⁹

Attempts to interpret Giles' character according to the laws of probability will, in consequence, not be altogether satisfying. He is an interesting and unusual character because of the underlying myths associated with him. In other respects, Giles resembles Edward Springrove, Gabriel, Swithin, and Ned Hipcroft, country-born youths who figure as heroes in Hardy's fiction. Giles is of fair complexion, blue-eyed (246), "diffident" (210) with women, but of unbounded integrity. He differs from these recurring figures in that he fails to win the lady and later dies. Hardy's young countrymen have often seemed weak, and their ability to wrest the lady from the clutches of the dark-complexioned villains, has often seemed more a matter of wishful thinking than of probability. No longer a stand-in for Hardy himself, the country lad has now become a symbol of the inability of the rural way of life to defend itself from

outside forces.

At first glance Grace may appear to be the most realistically conceived of the characters in The Woodlanders, but as previously noted she is created, at least in part, from the world of myth and romance. To suggest that, like Giles, she is a part of the Hintock world Hardy calls her "sylph-like" (202), or an "Arcadian innocent" (340), and compares her to the deserted Ariadne (269). More significant is Hardy's attempt to evoke Grace's brittle chastity through mythic allusion. Hearing of the unexpected return of her estranged husband a "Daphnean instinct, exceptionally strong in her as a girl" (359) revives in Grace and causes her to flee the house. This seems merely descriptive, but in a later passage Hardy tells us that Grace "had more in her of Artemis than of Aphrodite" (379); he is apparently criticizing Grace's "timid morality" (379) which induces her to place her inviolability above Giles' physical well-being. Given the kind of Arcadian setting Hardy creates, Grace's middle-class Victorian attitudes seem out of place. Indeed she is never totally won back to the primitivism she claims she longs for. It is not surprising that in the end she abandons the green world of Hintock with Fitzpiers.

As in the earlier novels the characters in The Woodlanders fall into a familiar pattern. But this time the pattern is both complex and closely connected to the theme. Fitzpiers, for example, must choose between an aging Venus and a youthful Artemis, between an adulterous eroticism and married chastity, between a soul-destroying life of frivolity and play and a life of purposeful activity with Grace. For her part,

Grace has initially to decide between a simple country youth and a sophisticated gentleman. Later the choice is between fidelity to the dead and union with the living. The characters are also grouped in terms of their relationships to nature. At one extreme stand Giles and Marty. Fitzpiers and Felice are the two intruders, least understanding and sympathetic to nature. In the middle are Grace and her father wavering between their loyalty and affection for "the good old Hintock ways" (49) and their susceptibility to the new, urbane, but artificial way of life represented by Fitzpiers and Mrs. Charmond.

The Woodlanders appears at first sight to be a realistic novel and the reader is therefore inclined to judge the action according to the principles of verisimilitude or realism. But a careful reading will reveal that the non-realistic ingredients in this novel are far stronger than the realistic, and that the kind of experience the reader is being subjected to is more akin to the experience of reading a romantic comedy, a pastoral elegy or a verse romance.

The early critics of The Woodlanders, impressed by Hardy's apparent fidelity to nature, expected a like fidelity to ordinary human behaviour; and even today some readers continue to be offended by his mixture of realism and fantasy within the same book. But it is surely not just to demand of Hardy a consistency of approach that does not exist among his contemporaries. In Great Expectations, for example, the realistically conceived Pip co-exists with such fantastic characters as Wemmick, Miss Havisham and Estelle. As E. B. Gose has pointed out, the Victorian

novelists drew freely on the elements of romance and fantasy found in the Gothic novel and fairy tale.⁴⁰ In this respect, Hardy was doing no more than other Victorian novelists permitted themselves to do in accordance with long established practice. In his use of myth and symbol, however, Hardy went considerably beyond his contemporaries.

In the end the question must be: does Hardy succeed in creating a world in which characters and setting work together? The answer can hardly be in doubt. Far from being false or absurd, Hardy's use of myth, folklore, literary allusion and fantasy is endlessly fascinating; it greatly enriches the texture of his book, and it is this, rather than the action, that accounts for the impact of The Woodlanders on the reader. Moreover, using the simple story of Giles, Grace and Fitzpiers, Hardy creates his own myth of Wessex. According to Hardy the traditional village life of rural England, suffused with a simple integrity and connected to the natural cycle, was undermined by currents emanating from the outside which, though modern and powerful, were nonetheless impersonal, hollow, decadent, or materialistic. The death of Giles therefore represents the death of a way of life and an attitude to nature that could no longer be maintained in nineteenth-century England.

The Woodlanders meshes together components that Hardy employed singly or in simple combinations in his earlier fiction -- the pastoral setting, the Arcadian atmosphere and the underlying structure that seem to derive from Shakespeare's romantic comedies. Imposed on this is a Romantic view of nature heavily qualified by the Darwinian interpretation and by Hardy's own pessimistic view of the place of man in nature.

In addition, Hardy creates characters, whose qualities seem largely to be taken from romance literature and Romantic poetry. Finally there is the muted social comment that mirrors Hardy's own experience and preoccupations. The Woodlanders far surpasses the earlier minor works discussed in this study because of Hardy's now more masterful handling of techniques tried out in those same novels. The Woodlanders is a more profound and complex book than has heretofore been recognized. It deserves a place among the very finest of Hardy's achievements.

CONCLUSION

In this study I have considered some of Hardy's novels, novellas and short stories. I have placed more emphasis on the early and less successful prose fictions, although the later and better known works have not been neglected. They were selected from what Hardy calls "Romances and Fantasies", "Novels of Character and Environment", "Novels of Ingenuity" and the one "Mixed Novel". In short, the study encompasses a fairly representative selection of his less frequently discussed prose works. Hardy's Wessex novels have by now received considerable scholarly attention. The critics, naturally enough, have granted only cursory treatment to the rest of the fiction. Part of my intention has been to redress the balance, and to reveal the power and complexities in some of his supposed "failures". At the same time, because these fictions lack the density of the Wessex novels it is possible to see somewhat more clearly certain underlying motifs which appear throughout Hardy and which link one book to another.

In his analysis of why it is that Hardy is able to fascinate and hold his readers, A. J. Guerard observed that the Wessex novels "are something more than realistic and that this something more is the source of their strength".¹ Though conscious of the limitations of the term, Guerard called Hardy an "anti-realist" admitting, at the same time, that Hardy was also "a pure romantic like Scott, appealing to the

surprised child who lingers in us all . . . a popular teller of tales".² Though Guerard's conclusion may seem obvious to-day, it came at a time when critics were still praising Hardy's use of realism and criticizing his use of fantasy, sensation and gross coincidence. Guerard's conclusion is broadly correct, and this study has tended to confirm Guerard's insights, however much it may differ on the interpretation of individual novels.

But Guerard's observation that Hardy was "a pure romantic like Scott" needs qualification. Despite his admiration for the Romantics and his adaptation of many of their techniques and attitudes, Hardy was by no means a quiescent follower. In some ways he was virtually an anti-Romantic. Scrutiny of any representative selection of his writings, prose or poetry, is bound to reveal the characteristic tension in Hardy's work. There is a conflict between his instinctive romanticism -- his nostalgic fondness for the past, his regret for the passing of the old, settled, traditional order with an accompanying loss of belief in a benevolent deity, his devotion to the imaginative literature of the past -- and his understanding that some of the old ways were not worth preserving, that modernism is inevitable and must ultimately be accepted and that there is truth and good in it.

A tension may also be seen in his attitude to nature. Instinctively he loved the humanized landscape of southern England. Under the Greenwood Tree reveals a certain sympathy with Wordsworth's view that nature is beneficent and that the possibility of a fruitful interchange between man and nature exists. As he developed, however, Hardy found

that he could no longer sustain such a view. But where other thinkers were prepared to abandon their early convictions when they found them to be inadequate, Hardy could not be so casual about a belief that meant so much to him emotionally. This perhaps is why the comments he directs against Wordsworth in Tess of the d'Urbervilles seem to reveal feelings akin to a sense of having been deceived or betrayed. Thus Hardy expostulates: "Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure, gets his authority for speaking of 'Nature's holy plan'",³ or again,

To Tess, as to not a few millions of others, there was
ghastly satire in the poet's lines --

Not in utter nakedness

But trailing clouds of glory do we come.

To her and her like, birth itself was an ordeal of degrading
personal compulsion, whose gratuitousness nothing in the result
seemed to justify, and at best could only palliate.⁴

Hardy's emotion here is similar to his reaction to the loss of religious faith. Sometimes he expresses this loss in bitter terms, "How arrives it joy lies slain,/And why unblooms the best hope ever sown?"⁵ sometimes plaintively:

Yet, I feel,
If someone said on Christmas Eve,
"Come; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb
Our childhood used to know,"
I should go with him in the gloom,
Hoping it might be so.⁶

Intellectually Hardy was convinced that nature was indifferent to man.

Emotionally he could not acquiesce in this perception and so he frequent-

ly preferred to posit a force hostile to man rather than accept the conclusion that there is absolutely no divine or supernatural presence in nature. Eventually Hardy developed the concept of the Will -- the notion, probably derived from Schopenhauer, that there is some force in the universe which is gradually attaining consciousness, but this concept emerges more clearly later on, in The Dynasts, after Hardy had ceased to write novels.

The same contradiction may be found in his reaction to the view promoted by Rousseau, Wordsworth and other Romantics that man is at his happiest and most virtuous when he lives closest to nature. In his early novels Hardy implied that the average man could find a satisfying and humane way of life in small isolated villages. In these hamlets of the pre-industrial age the inhabitants either laboured in the various forms of agriculture or sustained themselves by trades that were related to the rural economy. Their dependence on nature, their isolation from other communities and the interconnectedness of agricultural pursuits led to the development of a strong sense of community and with it a culture that was rich and significant because it related directly to the seasonal cycle and the work of the people.

Romance novels like Under the Greenwood Tree and Far from the Madding Crowd tend to suggest that virtue and contentment can indeed be found in such communities, providing, of course, that intrusions from the outside can be repulsed. But such a notion runs counter to the evidence of The Return of the Native and The Woodlanders. Man is not necessarily happier when he lives closest to nature, although there are some

indications in Clym and Thomasin, Marty and Giles that characters who are at ease with rural life may be better able to maintain the traditional virtues than deracinated city people.

An inner conflict is also apparent in Hardy's attitude to other Romantic poets. Beginning with Edward Springrove and moving through a whole series of male figures, Shelleyan idealism, impracticality and inconstancy are held up for satire and ridicule, if only because Hardy recognized these traits in himself and so sought to eradicate them. A similar ambivalence may be detected in his attitude to Byron. Captain de Stancy and Baron Von Xanten, for example, are satires of the Byronic hero that had so impressed Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Hardy could both indulge his fondness for the poet by dramatizing this kind of character, and yet dissociate himself from the Byronic stance by criticizing the hero figure.

Whenever he discussed the function of characterization in the novel Hardy invariably argued in accordance with the theory first outlined by Horace Walpole that the "uncommonness must be in the events, not in the characters".⁷ Yet it is clear that Hardy does not practise what he preaches. His most memorable characters are largely non-realistic. Drawn for the most part from Gothic romance, folklore, ballad and Romantic literature, there are usually four recurring types: the dark libidinous villain, the pallid, countrified young man, the femme fatale, and the innocent country girl.

This study has been primarily concerned with Hardy's use of non-realistic materials. It is evident that these came to Hardy from a wide

variety of sources: from the drama, fiction and poetry of the nineteenth and earlier centuries; from romance, fairy tale and myth; from oral literature -- ballad, folk tale and anecdote; from newspaper reports and family chronicles; from his own experience; and, not least important, from his imagination. In particular, the study has focused on the materials Hardy adapted from the long romance tradition and from Romantic poetry, for it is evident that the most important of Hardy's sources, the genres in which several of his sources came together, were Shakespearian romantic comedy, Gothic romance and Romantic poetry.

To link these often disparate genres or to show how one influenced the other is more the province of the literary historian than it is of the Hardy critic. It is evident, however, that Hardy not only connects these materials but welds them into a unity. A novel like The Woodlanders, to take an obvious example from among the works discussed in this study, contains elements of myth, verse romance, romantic comedy, Gothic romance and Romantic poetry. It is pedantic and ultimately untenable to argue that since the figure of Fitzpiers has much in common with Faust we are to look to Goethe alone as the source of Hardy's inspiration for Fitzpiers, rather than to the Shelleyan heroes, or to Spenser, or to the Tannhäuser legend. In fact, Fitzpiers is an amalgamation of all these and perhaps more.

Gothic romance plays an important role in bringing non-realistic materials into the nineteenth-century novel. Hardy himself was, as far as we know, not familiar with all the original Gothic novels. But the motifs and techniques of these romances came from earlier non-realistic

modes, including romance, and are passed on to the Romantic and post-Romantic novelists and poets who were read by Hardy. Keats' "Eve of St Agnes" obviously owes something to mediaeval and Gothic romance as well as to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and at the same time expresses themes which are typically Romantic. In similar fashion, Hardy could produce a novel which combines material and techniques from romance literature and Romantic poetry, and comment on his own world. As the terms themselves indicate, the connection between romance and Romanticism is close, though they often encompass very different literary forms.

Hardy never appears to admit the extent to which the underlying patterns of his work derived from non-realistic material, although he does acknowledge from time to time the poetic element in his fiction:

It was not as if he had been a writer of novels proper, and as more specifically understood, that is, stories of modern artificial life and manners showing a certain smartness of treatment. He had mostly aimed at keeping his narratives close to natural life and as near to poetry in their subject as the conditions would allow, and had often regretted that those conditions would not let him keep them nearer still.⁸

Given Hardy's reading interests and his knowledge of mythology, it was natural for him to construct his fictions in non-realistic ways. His major prose works do have the appearance of novels, but if they are read properly we cannot fail to see their kinship to poetry.

FOOTNOTES

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Biographical Considerations

¹For example, Hardy was an early and enthusiastic reader of Essays and Reviews and of Darwin's Origin of Species. See F. E. Hardy, The Life of Thomas Hardy, pp. 33, 153.

²Musing on the plight of the Durbeyfield children the authorial voice comments:

Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure, gets his authority for speaking of 'Nature's holy plan'.

See Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, p. 24.

³F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 55.

⁴In The Life of Thomas Hardy, generally accepted as Hardy's autobiography, and in the novels, tales and occasional pieces Hardy mentions dozens of poets, authors and thinkers by name or quotes from their works. In Hardy of Wessex, pp. 45-53, and in A Hardy Companion, pp. 200-224, Carl Weber and F. B. Pinion have compiled lists of the writers Hardy alludes to. These lists are useful though known to be far from complete, for in his literary borrowing and citation Hardy did not always state his sources; it is often difficult to track them down since Hardy frequently quoted little-known passages.

⁵For examples of Hardy's snobbish attitude to fiction as opposed to poetry see F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 49, 286, 291.

⁶See ibid., pp. 5-6, 18-19. The property was to pass out of the hands of Hardy's father at the time of his death.

⁷This is hinted rather than stated in the first chapter of The Life, p. 8, where we are told that Hardy's father "though in substantial circumstances and unexceptionable in every other way, did not possess the

art of enriching himself by business". Michael Millgate points out that "the 1851 census of Stinsford parish listed Hardy's father as a bricklayer employing two labourers". See Thomas Hardy: His Career as a Novelist, pp. 37, 365.

⁸F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 18-19.

⁹Ibid., p. 16. See also p. 32.

¹⁰Hardy's tendency to relive the trauma and fantasies of his childhood and young manhood in literature is not unlike the reaction of Charles Dickens to the episode in his boyhood when he was forced to work in a blacking factory. Several of Dickens' novels employ the changeling motif: an orphan boy of good family is finally rescued from poverty and degradation by a kindly older person who turns out to be a lost relative.

¹¹See, for example, The Life, pp. 214-215:

'The decline and fall of the Hardys much in evidence hereabout I remember when young seeing the man -- tall and thin -- walking beside a horse and common spring trap, and my mother pointing him out to me and saying he represented what was once the leading branch of the family. So we go down, down, down.' The tall, thin man was apparently Hardy's father! See Southerington, Hardy's Vision of Man, p. 8.

¹²See the reminiscence by Ellen E. Titterington (Hardy's parlour-maid), in "The Domestic Life of Thomas Hardy", p. 14, and F. B. Pinion and Evelyn Hardy, eds., One Rare Fair Woman, pp. xxiii-xxiv for other comments on Hardy's partiality to titled ladies.

¹³F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 24-25.

¹⁴There are grounds for supposing that Hardy had some sort of friendship with Tryphena, perhaps even an engagement, although there is no concrete evidence that Hardy had anything to be ashamed of when their relationship came to an end. See Robert Gittings, "Thomas Hardy and Tryphena Sparks", TLS (April 27, 1973), 477-478.

¹⁵See Wing, Hardy, p. 14.

¹⁶See, for example, Stewart, Thomas Hardy, p. 25.

¹⁷F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 28-29.

¹⁸Millgate points out (Thomas Hardy, p. 402, n. 16), that Hardy discussed the execution on at least two occasions, and that it may have helped to suggest the last scene in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. Hardy describes yet another public execution, the burning in 1705 of Mary Channing for the alleged poisoning of her husband. See Hardy's "Maumbury Ring" in Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, pp. 228-230. This episode too is retold at least twice. See Evelyn Hardy, ed., Thomas Hardy's Notebooks, pp. 82-83, and note 21 below. In February 1923 he published "On the Portrait of a Woman About to be Hanged", a poem which alludes to the trial and execution of Mrs. Edith Thompson for the murder of her husband.

¹⁹See, for example, The Life, pp. 51-52.

²⁰Ibid., p. 153.

²¹Hardy and Pinion, eds., One Rare Fair Woman, p. xxiii.

²²Praz, The Romantic Agony, pp. 26-27.

²³F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 213.

²⁴Quoted in Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 402, n. 16.

²⁵Praz, The Romantic Agony, p. 27.

²⁶Ibid., p. 28.

²⁷The two Cythereas.

²⁸Grace Melbury and Felice Charmond.

2. Hardy and the Romance Tradition

²⁹Evelyn Hardy, ed., Thomas Hardy's Notebooks, p. 51.

³⁰Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 136-137.

³¹Ibid., p. 186.

³²Ibid., pp. 304, 306.

³³See, for example, Clark, The Gothic Revival, pp. 17-18, and Railo, The Haunted Castle, pp. 16-17.

³⁴Rutland noticed a volume of Spenser's poetry in Hardy's library; see his Thomas Hardy, p. 15, n. 1. There is an allusion to Spenser's wedding poems in Desperate Remedies p. 274. Several of Hardy's lyrics are written in Spenserian stanzas, and most important, there is evidence in The Woodlanders that Fitzpiers' desire to seclude himself in the pastoral world of Little Hintock and the consequences that derive from this are based on Book VI, Cantos ix-xi of the Faerie Queene.

³⁵See Tompkins, The Popular Novel in England, p. 219, and Railo, The Haunted Castle, pp. 17-19.

³⁶See M. L. Anderson, "Hardy's Debt to Webster in The Return of the Native", Modern Language Notes, LIV (1939), 497-501.

³⁷Referred to in F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 15.

³⁸Ibid., p. 24.

³⁹See Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 182-184; "The Argument of Comedy" in Dean, ed., Shakespeare: Modern Essays in Criticism, pp. 79-89; A Study of English Romanticism, pp. 45-46. In the latter, Frye briefly points out the debt Romanticism owes to Shakespearian romance.

⁴⁰But see Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 44-46, 171-172, and Squires' discussion of Under the Greenwood Tree in his The Pastoral Novel, pp. 114-121.

⁴¹Millgate points out that Hardy mentions Mrs. Radcliffe's name in "The Science of Fiction".

⁴²In a letter to the Pall Mall Gazette of July 10, 1891 Hardy refers to "Alonzo the Brave" a ballad-poem by Lewis included in The Monk. Quoted by Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 289.

⁴³There is a reference to Frankenstein in A Laodicean, p. 218.

⁴⁴In Thomas Hardy, pp. 171, 185-186, 389 Millgate shows that Hardy was well acquainted with Hawthorne.

⁴⁵Desperate Remedies imitates the technique of Collins' detective thriller The Moonstone, published in 1868, three years prior to Hardy's novel. For a full discussion of Collins' influence on Desperate Remedies, see Rutland, Thomas Hardy, pp. 19, 133-134, 141-146. Hardy acknowledged having read The Moonstone in an early preface (later discarded) to A Pair of Blue Eyes. See Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 86.

⁴⁶Hardy speaks of his early acquaintance with ballads in F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 14-15, 20, and mentions his boyhood reading pp. 16, 24-25.

⁴⁷The influence of the Romantic poets on Hardy's formation of character types will be discussed in the next section.

⁴⁸F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 49.

⁴⁹Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 11.

⁵⁰Hardy, "The Profitable Reading of Fiction", in Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, p. 121. Hardy earlier referred to The Bride of Lammermoor in The Mayor of Casterbridge, p. 296.

⁵¹Scott, The Bride of Lammermoor, p. 300.

⁵²Ibid., p. 201.

⁵³Weber discusses Ainsworth's influence on Hardy in Hardy of Wessex pp. 11-12, 38, 40, 83, 90-91, 196, 200, 298 and in "Ainsworth and Thomas Hardy", RES, XVII (1941), 193-200.

⁵⁴Clara Reeve, The Progress of Romance, Vol. I, Evening vii as quoted in Allott, Novelists on the Novel, p. 47.

⁵⁵The merging of romance into the nineteenth-century novel is briefly discussed by Beer, The Romance, pp. 66, 68-72, by Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition, Chapter I, and by Gose, Imagination Indulged, pp. 13-14, 21-25, 40, 54, 57.

⁵⁶F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 204-205.

⁵⁷Davidson, "The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction" in Guerard, ed., Hardy, p. 15.

⁵⁸Gose, Imagination Indulged, p. 54.

3. Hardy and the Romantics

⁵⁹See the lists compiled by Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 50-53 and by Pinion, A Hardy Companion, pp. 200-215.

⁶⁰See his Thomas Hardy, pp. 164, 171, 185-186, 389. Millgate admits that Hardy's original conception of the romance as a literary form may have come from Scott, Ainsworth, Collins and others. But he argues that Hardy was mainly influenced by Hawthorne's unique injection of romance into novels of contemporary life. Millgate provides evidence that Hardy was familiar with The House of Seven Gables, The Marble Faun and with Henry James's study of Hawthorne. Evidently Hardy was particularly impressed by Hawthorne's introduction to The Scarlet Letter, parts of which he copied into his notebook and underlined. See also David W. Jarrett, "Hawthorne and Hardy as Modern Romancers", NCF, XXVIII (1973-74), 458-471, for a discussion of the relation of Hawthorne's House of Seven Gables to Hardy's A Laodicean.

⁶¹F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 150.

⁶²Ibid., p. 176.

⁶³Horace Walpole, preface to the second edition of The Castle of Otranto in Fairclough, ed., Three Gothic Novels, pp. 43-44.

⁶⁴Clara Reeve, preface to The Old English Baron in Spector, ed., Seven Masterpieces of Gothic Horror, p. 106.

⁶⁵Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, XIV in Noyes, ed., English Romantic Poetry and Prose, p. 425.

⁶⁶F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 252.

⁶⁷Scott, "Essay on Romance", Vol. VI of The Miscellaneous Works, p. 129. It is perhaps not mere coincidence that Hardy also employs in the passages cited above such expressions as "uncommon" and "ordinary".

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 130. Scott's acknowledgement that there may be an intermediate form is not altogether original. Walpole believed he was reconciling old romance with the modern novel to create a new form. See his preface to the second edition of The Castle of Otranto in Fairclough, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

⁶⁹Scott, Lives of the Novelists, p. 182.

⁷⁰Hawthorne, preface to The House of Seven Gables, p. xxix.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Charles Dickens, Letter to John Forster (1859), from John Forster, The Life of Charles Dickens (1874), Vol. III, quoted in Allott, ed., Novelists on the Novel, p. 66.

⁷³Anthony Trollope, Autobiography (1883), Chapter XII, quoted in Allott, ed., Novelists on the Novel, pp. 67-68.

⁷⁴F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 291.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 384.

⁷⁶See, for example, Shaw's satire of romantic poses in Arms and the Man, Caesar and Cleopatra and Man and Superman or Conrad's handling of the romantic dreamer in Lord Jim, "Youth" and "Typhoon".

⁷⁷See Holloway, The Victorian Sage, pp. 251-271 and Howe, Thomas Hardy, pp. 21-24.

⁷⁸Holloway, The Victorian Sage, p. 252.

⁷⁹Hardy, Desperate Remedies, p. 194.

⁸⁰Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 16.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 346.

⁸²Ibid., Chapter XXXVII.

⁸³In the strict sense of the term naturalism is the application of the principles of scientific determinism to fiction, the idea, for

example, that man is subject to the pressures of his environment. It appears in the fiction of France, England and the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. See Hardy's attack on the naturalists in "The Science of Fiction" (1891).

⁸⁴Note, however, the brief passage in Two on a Tower, pp. 119-120, in which both the characters and the narrator attribute a conscious viciousness to the actions of the wind.

⁸⁵Hardy, Jude the Obscure, p. 11.

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 28.

⁸⁷Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, pp. 9-10.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 24. The lines are quoted above in footnote 2.

⁸⁹Howe, Thomas Hardy, p. 23.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 24.

⁹¹Emily Brontë, Charles Dickens and George Eliot, for example, employ natural description to establish a setting or suggest an atmosphere.

⁹²F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 207.

⁹³Hardy, A Laodicean, p. 170. There is an apparent reference to the poem in Two on a Tower, p. 6, and Swithin seems to be at least partly based on Byron's naive young hero.

⁹⁴F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 292.

⁹⁵Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 243-244.

⁹⁶See Praz, The Romantic Agony, Chapter IV for a discussion of the appearance of the fatal woman in European, especially in French Literature. She may be found, too, in the work of the American Romantics, Poe and Hawthorne.

⁹⁷Hardy, A Pair of Blue Eyes, pp. 59, 351.

⁹⁸Ibid., p. 356.

⁹⁹In addition to those in A Pair of Blue Eyes see Desperate Remedies, p. 275 and The Return of the Native, p. 241ff.

¹⁰⁰Praz, The Romantic Agony, pp. 223-261.

¹⁰¹F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 212.

¹⁰²Praz, The Romantic Agony, pp. 253-254.

¹⁰³This was apparently in 1887. See Evelyn Hardy, ed., Thomas Hardy's Notebooks, p. 73.

¹⁰⁴F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 286.

¹⁰⁵As quoted in Brown and Bailey, eds., Victorian Poetry, p. 876.

¹⁰⁶F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 287.

¹⁰⁷Henchard, Baron Von Xanten and Mop Ollamoor may be regarded as exceptions, but it is noteworthy that they are in rivalry with fair-complexioned young men who stand for the community's sense of order and equity.

¹⁰⁸In "'Seraph of Heaven': A Shelleyan Dream in Hardy's Fiction", PMLA, LXX (1955), 624-635 and in "Hardy's Shelley", Keats-Shelley Journal, IV (1955), 15-29, Phyllis Bartlett has identified and gathered together many of Hardy's quotations from or allusions to Shelley. She also draws attention to the underlinings in Hardy's personal library copy of Shelley's poetry. See Roland Duerksen, Shelleyan Ideas in Victorian Fiction, pp. 160-165 for a summary of Bartlett's findings.

¹⁰⁹See Alastor, ll. 149-191. Hardy may have been attracted by the sexual implications of such bedside scenes. A lady visits a reclining man at the beginning of Two on a Tower (pp. 45-46), at the conclusion of A Laodicean (p. 463) and in The Woodlanders (pp. 149-150, 154). Since, however, the appearance of the lady is followed by a shift in the fortunes of the young man the scene could be interpreted as a visit of the anima.

¹¹⁰Though never as bold or unconventional as Shelley, Hardy's Platonic affection for a number of beautiful, talented, active ladies

has often been noted by his biographers.

¹¹¹"Light", "bright" or "brightness" is associated with Grace (The Woodlanders, p. 137), Ella Marchmill ("An Imaginative Woman", Life's Little Ironies, p. 5), Sue (Jude the Obscure, p. 156) as well as with Fancy Day, Elfride and Bathsheba, who have little resemblance to Shelleyan women.

¹¹²from The Revolt of Islam, I.xxvii.3. Hardy quotes it twice in The Well-Beloved. See the frontispiece and p. 59.

¹¹³Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, p. 167.

¹¹⁴Epipsychidion, ll. 219-221.

¹¹⁵Desperate Remedies, A Pair of Blue Eyes, An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress, Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

¹¹⁶Character typology of this kind was common enough in English and American fiction of the nineteenth century. See Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, pp. 219-220.

¹¹⁷Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 304.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

¹Desperate Remedies does not deal with the characteristic theme of the later novels, the nostalgic regret for a traditional way of life that was disappearing during Hardy's boyhood. But it is interesting that Hardy does make at least one reference to the changing order, the effect of the coming of the railway on Mr. Springrove's inn:

The Three Tranters Inn, a many-gabled, mediaeval building, constructed almost entirely of timber, plaster, and thatch, stood close to the line of the roadside, almost opposite the churchyard, and was connected with a row of cottages on the left by thatched out-buildings. It was an uncommonly characteristic and handsome specimen of the genuine roadside inn of by-gone times; and standing on one of the great highways in this part of England, had in its time been the scene of as much of what is now looked upon as the ro-

mantic and genial experience of stage-coach travelling as any halting-place in the country. The railway had absorbed the whole stream of traffic which formerly flowed through the village and along by the ancient door of the inn, reducing the empty-handed landlord, who used only to farm a few fields at the back of the house, to the necessity of eking out his attenuated income by increasing the extent of his agricultural business if he would still maintain his social standing. Next to the general stillness pervading the spot, the long line of outbuildings adjoining the house was the most striking and saddening witness to the passed-away fortunes of the Three Tranters Inn. It was the bulk of the original stabling, and where once the hoofs of two-score horses had daily rattled over the stony yard, to and from the coaches without, thick grass now grew, whilst the line of roofs -- once so straight -- over the decayed stalls, had sunk into vast hollows till they seemed like the cheeks of toothless age. (138)

Though the later destruction of the inn by fire does tie in with the plot, the passage has no connection to the theme of the book. In A Laodicean, Stancy Castle, associated with an ancient, aristocratic family, burns down; but there, as we shall see, the incident is used to symbolize the end of the feudal way of life.

²Hardy, Desperate Remedies, p. iii. The source of all subsequent quotations from Hardy's prose fiction will be identified by placing the page number in parentheses immediately after the quotation.

³Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, p. 45.

⁴See Guerard, Thomas Hardy, pp. 3-4, 20-21, 97-98; Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 31-32, 34; James F. Scott, "Thomas Hardy's Use of the Gothic", NCF, XVII (1963), 374.

⁵See Lawrence Jones, "Desperate Remedies and the Victorian Sensation Novel", NCF, XX (1965), 35-50; Rutland, Thomas Hardy, pp. 137, 141-146; Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 69, 71, 86; Wing, "Edwin Drood and Desperate Remedies: Prototypes of Detective Fiction in 1870", SEL, XIII (1973), 677-687.

⁶Collins was the popularizer rather than the inventor of the detective story. Detectives appear earlier in Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), and in Dickens' Bleak House (1852-53). Both writers in turn had been greatly influenced by Gothic romance.

⁷F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 204.

⁸Ibid., p. 150.

⁹Such is the case in Radcliffe's The Italian and The Mysteries of Udolpho as well as in Lewis' The Monk. In The Castle of Otranto the long absent father turns up only to be gravely wounded by the over-zealous hero. In Coleridge's Christabel and LeFanu's "Carmilla", there is a father who is king of the castle, but he is too pig-headed to be of much aid to his daughter.

¹⁰Manston's name is tantalizingly close to "monster". Like the dragons of old, Manston is evil, is associated with water and has nefarious designs on a maiden. Cf. the dragons or monsters slain by Perseus, Theseus and St. George. Grendel is another water-monster slain by a hero, though he cannot be accused of annoying a young lady.

¹¹Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, pp. 189-191.

¹²Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 31.

¹³An attribute, incidently, of Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer.

¹⁴This roughly describes the plots of The Castle of Otranto, The Mysteries of Udolpho and The Italian.

¹⁵At the time Cytherea meets Manston she is nineteen (158); Manston is in his early thirties.

¹⁶Such females appear in the works of the early Gothic writers Walpole, Radcliffe and Lewis and in the nineteenth-century writers Dickens, LeFanu, Hawthorne, George Eliot.

¹⁷See Stewart, Thomas Hardy, pp. 47-48 for a discussion of the political aspects of Hardy's unpublished novel. Other reconstructions of the novel have been made by Pinion, A Hardy Companion, pp. 15-17, and Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 18-25.

¹⁸For examples of these figures in Shelley see the poet in Alastor and the narrator in Epipsychidion.

¹⁹Shelley, Alastor, ll. 151, 153.

²⁰See Phyllis Bartlett, "Seraph of Heaven': A Shelleyan Dream in Hardy's Fiction", PMLA, LXX (1955), 624-626 for evidence of this Shelleyan motif in The Poor Man and the Lady.

²¹Macmillan had been favourably impressed by Hardy's description of country life in The Poor Man and the Lady. In the summer of 1871 Hardy sent the manuscript of Under the Greenwood Tree to Macmillan's, following it up by a letter in which he pointed out that two reviewers of Desperate Remedies had praised the scenes relating to country life. See Lerner and Holmstrom, eds., Thomas Hardy and his Readers, pp. 15-16.

²²Cf. "Stanzas Written in Dejection Near Naples", Stanzas I and II; "Ode to the West Wind", Stanza III; "Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills", ll. 39-62; Epipsychidion, ll. 408-482.

²³Smith, "Natural Settings and Natural Characters in Hardy's Desperate Remedies and A Pair of Blue Eyes", Thoth, VIII (1967), 86-87.

²⁴Edward's appearance on Cytherea's wedding morn recalls Keats' description of the haggard knight in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci":
The sight was a sad one -- sad beyond all description.
His eyes were wild, their orbits leaden. His face was
of a sickly paleness, his hair dry and disordered, his
lips parted as if he could get no breath. His figure
was spectre-thin. (275)

²⁵Hardy, Return of the Native, p. 282.

²⁶Cytherea's dilemma vis-à-vis Springgrove and Manston may be a reversal of Catherine's dilemma vis-à-vis Edgar Linton and Heathcliff. On the other hand, as I have tried to show in this and the preceding chapter, the dark man vs. light man antithesis probably originates in the Gothic romances, is further developed in the poetry of Shelley and Byron and becomes a commonplace in nineteenth-century fiction.

²⁷The brilliant electrical storm in Far From the Madding Crowd makes an interesting contrast to the lightning storm in Desperate Remedies. In the former novel, Bathsheba and Gabriel toil to save the ricks from the wind and rain. As in Desperate Remedies the man and woman are thrown together partly under the stress of fear. A feeling for Gabriel previously lacking in Bathsheba emerges, while her respect for Troy subtly diminishes. But there are differences: in the earlier novel the demonic undertones focus on Manston; the lightning storm is described naturalistically. In the later novel,

demonic imagery is applied to nature rather than to one of the characters. The emotion which emerges in the rick scene is tender and comradely rather than sexual; it is the consequence of shared labour as well as shared fear. Probably it is the decisive episode in Gabriel's long suit for Bathsheba.

²⁸Hardy, Far From the Madding Crowd, pp. 184-185.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

¹See the comments of John Morley, Macmillan's editorial reader, partially reprinted in F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 58-59, and the 1871 reviews of Desperate Remedies reprinted in Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage, pp. 1-8.

²Lerner and Holmstrom, eds., Thomas Hardy and his Readers, pp. 15-16.

³The Athenaeum, June 15, 1872 reprinted in Cox, ed., The Critical Heritage, pp. 9-11.

⁴The Pall Mall Gazette for July 5, 1872 partially reprinted in Lerner and Holmstrom, eds., Thomas Hardy and his Readers, pp. 18-19.

⁵See the Saturday Review for September 28, 1872 reprinted in Cox, ed., The Critical Heritage, pp. 11-14.

⁶F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 12.

⁷See Hardy's letter to Alexander Macmillan of August 17, 1871 reprinted in Lerner and Holmstrom, eds., Thomas Hardy and his Readers, p. 16.

⁸See Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 44-49. See also Squires' discussion of Under the Greenwood Tree in his The Pastoral Novel, pp. 114-121.

⁹Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 46.

¹⁰See my discussion of this point in the introductory chapter, pp. 16-17.

¹¹Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 211.

¹²There are, of course, further implications. The chorus of the song stresses the "winter and rough weather" that is sure to come. Shakespeare does not take a sentimental view of nature even if some of his characters do. Similarly with Hardy: following the call of the nightingale the authorial voice indicates that Fancy will keep the secret of her flirtation with Parson Maybold. By this ironic ending Hardy shows that this is to be a marriage in the real world and that Dick will have to take his chances along with the rest of us.

¹³See, however, Toliver, "The Dance Under the Greenwood Tree: Hardy's Bucolics", NCF, XVII (1962), 57-68; and Squires op. cit., pp. 115-117.

¹⁴The first paragraph of Hardy's 1896 preface reprinted in the Wessex and all subsequent editions suggests that Under the Greenwood Tree is set in the late 1830s or early 1840s, about the time of Hardy's birth. Millgate, pointing to allusions in the text (28), and to the 1896 preface printed in the Osgood, McIlvaine edition, shows, however, that the most likely date for the setting would be in the mid-1840s. See Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 55, 57 and 368n.

¹⁵The application of Book VI, Cantos ix to xi of the Faerie Queene to Hardy's treatment of pastoralism is examined in Chapter VIII.

¹⁶See the introductory chapter pp. 31ff.

¹⁷Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud", l. 12.

¹⁸See pp. 31, 72-73 and 178 for examples of the choir's acceptance of his lead.

¹⁹Hardy alludes to "Resolution and Independence" as a cure for despair in a journal entry on July 1, 1868. See F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 58.

²⁰See Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 55-61; Pinion, A Hardy Companion, p. 20; Rutland, Thomas Hardy, pp. 151-161; Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 6-9, 73-77.

²¹Eliot, Adam Bede, p. 176. Despite Hardy's denials, he was almost certainly influenced by George Eliot's treatment of rural life. Eliot's description of the harvest supper and the contrast between Loamshire and Stonyshire in Adam Bede may well have contributed to Hardy's treatment of the harvest supper in Far from the Madding Crowd and the Talbothays-Flintcomb Ash contrast in Tess of the d'Urbervilles. It is interesting, too, that Adam Bede reveals Eliot's strong attachment to the Wordsworthian philosophy.

²²Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 49.

²³I am indebted to Professor Ross for the observation.

²⁴It is characteristic of Shakespearian romantic comedy. Cf. the melancholy Jaques in As You Like It. Spenser's treatment of the pastoral can also be ambiguous as, for example, in the episode briefly alluded to on p. 80.

²⁵See Carpenter, Thomas Hardy, pp. 42-48; Meisel, Thomas Hardy, pp. 32-42; Toliver, "The Dance Under the Greenwood Tree: Hardy's Bucolics", op. cit., 57-68; Squires, "Under the Greenwood Tree" in his The Pastoral Novel.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

¹See the Saturday Review, (August 2, 1873) partially reprinted in Cox, ed., The Critical Heritage, pp. 15-18.

²See the Pall Mall Gazette, XVIII (October 25, 1873), 11-12.

³The Spectator, XLVI (June 28, 1873), 831-832.

⁴Patmore's letter to Hardy in 1875 is partially quoted in F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 104-105.

⁵Hardy is probably referring to Tess of the d'Urbervilles, which resembles A Pair of Blue Eyes in several ways. But Elfride's rejection of Stephen for Knight is similar to Grace's rejection of Giles for Fitzpiers and in both A Pair of Blue Eyes and The Woodlanders Hardy employs chivalric imagery.

⁶See "The General Preface to the Novels and Poems" reprinted in Orel, ed., Thomas Hardy's Personal Writings, p. 44.

⁷Ibid., p. 45.

⁸Ibid., p. 44.

⁹F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 73.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 79.

¹¹Ibid., p. 79.

¹²Ibid., p. 68.

¹³Ibid., p. 69.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 90, 92, 113.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 89.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 423.

¹⁷Since Stephen cannot ride a horse he must walk while she rides. He is also extremely conscious of her social and mental superiority.

¹⁸F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 92.

¹⁹The first section of the serial version of the novel is reprinted in Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 72.

²⁰Ibid., p. 67.

²¹Ibid., p. 370, n. 9; Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 11.

²²Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 370, n. 9.

²³Ainsworth's Rookwood (1834), opens and closes in an ancestral burial chamber, the structure of which resembles the Luxellian family vault.

²⁴Similar ghosts appear in Walpole's The Castle of Otranto, Scott's The Bride of Lammermoor and Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights.

²⁵Several of Hardy's protagonists -- Swithin, Ethelberta, Egbert, Edwin, Yeobright -- were given Saxon names.

²⁶F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 75.

²⁷Ibid., p. 75.

²⁸See Collected Poems; pp. 318-319.

²⁹I am indebted to Professor Ross for this suggestion.

³⁰This is actually the third of three parallel scenes: Felix Jethway, the first to fall in love with Elfride, was also the first of her lovers to find himself on the ground looking up at Elfride on horseback (309). If we are to believe his mother's account, Elfride's influence on him was literally fatal. Curiously, each of her lovers represents a step up the social scale for Elfride.

³¹The passage has a poetic quality. J. O. Bailey points out that in "Neutral Tones" of 1867, Hardy's correlation between hibernal imagery and disillusion in love has a similar quality to this passage from A Pair of Blue Eyes. See Bailey, The Poetry of Thomas Hardy, p. 56.

³²Alec's allusion to the Book of Revelation: "You temptress Tess; you dear damned witch of Babylon", (Tess of the d'Urbervilles p. 411), is similarly a comment on Alec rather than on Tess.

³³See Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 84, 298 n. 9. This must be one of the rare occasions when Hardy successfully resisted editorial pressure.

³⁴It was apparently one of Hardy's favourite insights, for we find virtually the same statement in The Return of the Native, p. 242, where the idea is embodied in the plot intrigue.

³⁵Knight's dilemma with Elfride anticipates Angel Clare's dilemma with Tess. Both women have secrets they are unwilling to tell because they fear rejection from their lovers. Like Elfride, Tess derives an emotional profundity from her early experience which

she could pass on to her husband. Henry Knight and Angel Clare are idealists with high standards of morality. In consequence of their sheltered upbringing and intellectual interests they are comparatively inexperienced with women and tend therefore to priggishness in matters of conduct.

³⁶Hardy, Desperate Remedies, p. 151. The erotic implications of torn or detached clothing are further developed by Hardy in Troy's first encounter with Bathsheba in Far from the Madding Crowd, and in the man-trap episode in The Woodlanders.

³⁷The word "diaphanous" made its first appearance in the three-volume edition of May 1873. Evidently there were things Hardy felt he could not say in a serial that would pass in a book. Disguised sexual innuendoes of this kind are among Hardy's favourite devices. See, for example, Troy's sword play in Far from the Madding Crowd, Paula's gymnastic exercises in A Laodicean, Arabella's throwing of the pig flesh at Jude.

³⁸Although his experience in love-making is equal to Tess's, Angel Clare is as stern as Henry Knight.

³⁹For evidence that Knight is troubled by his increasing dislike of women see pp. 331, 332, 366.

⁴⁰See Evelyn Hardy, Thomas Hardy, p. 143 and Stewart, Thomas Hardy, pp. 23-24.

⁴¹Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 74.

⁴²Hardy's early discarded preface is partially reprinted in Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 86.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

¹Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 127.

²Carpenter, Thomas Hardy, p. 62.

³Hornback, The Metaphor of Chance, p. 63.

- ⁴Guerard, Thomas Hardy, p. 25.
- ⁵Howe, Thomas Hardy, pp. 68-70.
- ⁶Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 166.
- ⁷Harper's New Monthly Magazine, LXIV (February 1882), 474-475, as cited by Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 127.
- ⁸Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 40.
- ⁹Athenaeum, II (December 31, 1881), 900, as cited by Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy, p. 96.
- ¹⁰Ellis, "Thomas Hardy's Novels", Westminster Review, LXIII (April 1883), 364, as cited by Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy, p. 132.
- ¹¹Pointed out by Guerard, Thomas Hardy, p. 25.
- ¹²Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 168.
- ¹³Ibid., p. 171.
- ¹⁴Bathsheba has Paula's initiative, Marty South the boyish form and ambiguous name. Eustacia, Lizzie Newberry and Sue Bridehead dress in men's clothes, but it is probably to the latter that Paula is most akin.
- ¹⁵Brooks, Thomas Hardy, p. 152.
- ¹⁶F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 150.
- ¹⁷Ibid., p. 150.
- ¹⁸Ibid., p. 214.
- ¹⁹The Life of Thomas Hardy contains many allusions to Byron and his poetry. There are at least three quotations from Byron in A Laodicean (v, 170, 378).
- ²⁰In his appearance and in his abrupt return to the pursuit of women de Stancy anticipates Alec d'Urberville.

²¹ Hardy alludes to Childe Harold's Pilgrimage on at least two other occasions in the novel. His address to readers "into whose souls the iron has entered" (v) echoes Childe Harold IV.131; the allusion to the Rhine as "the barks that bear the vine" (378), is from Childe Harold III.iv.499. Such references help to create a certain romantic ambience in the novel. The quotation of a particular poem enables the reader to see that an ironic contrast is being implied between Hardy's character and the romantic prototype.

²² The reversal of parental authority also has comic overtones. See pp. 179, 236.

²³ See Bailey, "Hardy's Mephistophelian Visitants", PMLA, LXI (1946), 1146-1184; Guerard, Thomas Hardy, pp. 96-97; Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 171; Brooks, Thomas Hardy, p. 153.

²⁴ Millgate has pointed out that yet another figure from romantic literature may have contributed to the characterization of Dare:

he suggests a malevolent version of Holgrave in The House of Seven Gables, a novel Hardy knew well. Dare is a photographer, Holgrave a daguerrotypist; both are men of many talents and obscure background. Both, too, play important roles in novels concerned with the working out of hereditary patterns.

Millgate also remarks that Dare has something of "the mischief-making scientists of such mid-century American writers as Poe and Hawthorne". See Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 171.

²⁵ See Arnold's introductory essay on "Democracy" published in The Popular Education of France (1861).

²⁶ Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 36.

²⁷ It is typical of Hardy's architectural structuring to balance one character against another.

²⁸ Hornback, The Metaphor of Chance, p. 64.

²⁹ She is also an admirer of the Roman stoic philosopher, Marcus Aurelius. See p. 300.

³⁰ Millgate has pointed out that A Laodicean reveals the influence of Matthew Arnold's Essays in Criticism and Mixed Essays which Hardy had been reading between 1878 and 1881. See Millgate,

pp. 174 and 387. Arnold's influence is also discussed by Dorothy Reimers Mills in her unpublished doctoral dissertation "The Influence of Matthew Arnold's Culture and Anarchy on the Novels of Thomas Hardy". It would seem that in describing the Power family as "uncircumcized Philistines who had taken possession of the old lands" (407), Hardy is using Arnold's familiar metaphor for the English middle classes. But Hardy does not follow Arnold slavishly: while the latter calls on the dissenters to admit more Hellenism, Hardy identifies the pragmatism of the Power family with the Greek rational and scientific spirit.

³¹ Hardy, An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress, pp. 23-24. This novella has several points of resemblance to A Laodicean.

³² Hardy, Jude the Obscure, p. 349.

³³ Phelps, Autobiography With Letters, p. 391. Photographs taken of Hardy as a young man coincide somewhat with the description of Somerset. See, for example, the photograph of Thomas Hardy aged twenty-one in F. E. Hardy, The Early Life of Thomas Hardy, p. 46.

³⁴ Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 125-126.

³⁵ In addition to Phelps, see F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 29-30.

³⁶ F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 204. See Millgate's illuminating discussion of Hardy's socio-political views in Thomas Hardy, pp. 174-182. That Hardy had arrived at a conservative middle-of-the-road position by the time of the composition of A Laodicean is proved by the entry for February 17, 1881 in F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 148.

³⁷ Hardy's youthful debates on paedobaptism with the sons of the Dorchester Baptist Minister, Perkins, are amusingly recounted in F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 29. On p. 30, Hardy acknowledges that Mr. Woodwell is largely based on Mr. Perkins, senior.

³⁸ Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 170.

³⁹ Athenaeum, II (December 31, 1881), 899, as cited by Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy, p. 95.

⁴⁰ Howe, Thomas Hardy, p. 69; Guerard, Thomas Hardy, p. 25.

⁴¹Grace Melbury is an obvious exception: her conduct shows an extreme fastidiousness.

⁴²Wing, Hardy, p. 36.

⁴³Paula's romanticism is clearly taken to an extreme. In A Laodicean her obsession is treated ironically with occasional comic overtones. In The Return of the Native, however, the romantic mania of Eustacia and Wildeve has tragic consequences.

⁴⁴F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 147.

⁴⁵Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 174-177.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 169.

⁴⁷Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 126.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

¹In the 1895 preface Hardy refers to it as "a slightly built romance" and as an "imperfect story". He did not change the phrasing when he revised the preface for the 1912 edition.

²Partially reprinted in Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 44.

³There are only the briefest of references on pp. 10 and 84 to Hardy's characteristic theme of the passing of the old way of life.

⁴See the end of the revised preface in the Wessex edition p. vi and F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 151.

⁵Two on a Tower made its first appearance as a serial in the Atlantic Monthly (Boston) from May to December 1882. Purdy, usually reliable in his bibliographic descriptions, writes: "Such revision as the novel underwent before its appearance in book form was slight in extent." (See Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 41.) This is correct, but, troubled by the harsh reviews the book had received after its initial

appearance in the three-volume Sampson Low edition, Hardy undertook further revisions. A comparison of the serial version of Two on a Tower in the Colby College Library with its final form in the 1912 Wessex Edition reveals extensive and often significant revision. The more important of these revisions will be pointed out in the course of the chapter.

⁶Quilter's review is partially reprinted in Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy, pp. 101-103.

⁷Partially reprinted in Cox, ibid., pp. 97-100.

⁸Ibid., p. 125.

⁹See, however, Howe, Thomas Hardy, pp. 72-73 and Wing, Hardy, pp. 36-39 for more sympathetic accounts.

¹⁰In a letter to Edmund Gosse on January 21, 1883, Hardy admits: "The truth is that, though the plan of the story was carefully thought out, the actual writing was lamentably hurried -- having been produced month by month, and the M S. despatched to America, where it was printed without my seeing the proofs. It would have been rewritten for the book form if I had not played truant and gone off to Paris". See Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 44.

¹¹In revision Hardy advanced Viviette's age from twenty-six to twenty-nine. By so doing he makes Viviette's passion for Swithin seem more unrealistic, and renders inevitable Swithin's ultimate disenchantment with her.

¹²An important result of Hardy's extensive revision to the serial is an underlining of the novel's sexual implications.

¹³Carpenter, Thomas Hardy, pp. 65-67.

¹⁴Hardy, a great admirer of Browning's poetry, would have been familiar with "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came". The following description of the tower possibly echoes the poem's title and refrain: "not a beam of the lantern leaked out into the night to suggest to any watchful eye that human life at its highest excitement was beating within the dark and isolated tower" (116).

¹⁵Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy, p. 97.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 98. It was Hardy's practice to expurgate, as far as possible, any sexual references likely to prove offensive to the readers of the serials and to restore these passages in the volume publication. Some of Hardy's revisions to Two on a Tower make the sexual implications of the novel a little more explicit. Thus in the final version Hardy allows Mr. Torkingham the following comment on Viviette's child: "Remarkably fine boy, and yet he was a seven-month's baby" (305). Ironically, Mr. Torkingham is unaware that Swithin is the real father.

¹⁷Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 286.

¹⁸Evelyn Hardy, Thomas Hardy, pp. 188-189. Hardy describes his childhood relationship with Mrs. Martin in The Life, pp. 18-20. He describes his reactions on finding the imprint of time on her when he visited Mrs. Martin some years later in London (p. 41). Later (pp. 101-102), he recalls his youthful "throbs of tender feeling" for her. This biographical interpretation is supported by Southerington in Hardy's Vision of Man, p. 113.

¹⁹See, for example, the sword play scene in Far from the Mad-ding Crowd which Hardy uses to demonstrate Troy's sexual mastery of Bathsheba. The cliff scene in A Pair of Blue Eyes and the gymnasium scene in A Laodicean also have sexual implications.

²⁰Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 190.

²¹Though his father was a clergyman, Swithin is without religion. Hardy likens him to Adonis (57); Bishop Helmsdale observes that he "looks as if he had come straight from old Greece" (183). Swithin's Greek appearance and his associations with science and reason recall Paula's rather similar associations in A Laodicean. In Two on a Tower, however, the impact of science on Swithin is negative, for he is deficient in feeling for things human.

²²This is a revision from "Southern blood" in the serial.

²³In serial revision Hardy changes "'I am just now going to church,' she said", to "'I am just now going to church,' she added in a repressed and hurried tone" (53).

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

- ¹F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 158.
- ²Quoted in Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 49.
- ³Lippincott's Magazine, XXXII (September 1883), 336.
- ⁴Literary World, XIV (July 28, 1883), 245.
- ⁵The Nation, XXXVII (September 20, 1883), 255.
- ⁶Abercrombie, Thomas Hardy, pp. 69-70.
- ⁷Beach, The Technique of Thomas Hardy, p. 125.
- ⁸Ibid., p. 127.
- ⁹Rutland, Thomas Hardy, p. 219.
- ¹⁰Weber, Hardy of Wessex, p. 301.
- ¹¹Purdy, Thomas Hardy, pp. 48-49.
- ¹²See Joseph Warren Beach, "News for Bibliophiles", The Nation, XCIV (January 25, 1912), 82, for evidence that the piratical publishers exploited the title to attract the prurient.
- ¹³Hardy and Pinion, eds., One Rare Fair Woman, p. 156.
- ¹⁴See Evelyn Hardy, Thomas Hardy, p. 185; Guerard, Thomas Hardy, pp. 93-96; Carpenter, Thomas Hardy, p. 77; Brown, Thomas Hardy, p. 116; Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 164, 198.
- ¹⁵Hardy treats the motif with comic irony in "The Ruined Maid"; see The Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy, pp. 145-146. See also the story of Jack Dollop as told by Dairyman Crick in Tess of the d'Urbervilles, pp. 171-172, itself an ironic commentary on Tess' predicament. Hardy was not the only nineteenth-century writer to find the ruined maid an attractive subject. She appears in the work of Dickens, Hawthorne, George Eliot and other nineteenth-century writers.

¹⁶While Purdy took the trouble to check over Hardy's manuscript and compare it with the initial publication of the romance in The Graphic, he evidently neglected to compare the magazine publication with the revised version published thirty years later in A Changed Man. Purdy reports only that "A few slight verbal changes were made in it at that time, and the scene shifted to Lower Wessex, more to the west, Casterbridge and the Valley of the Swenn giving place to Exonbury and the Valley of the Exe, possibly to remove the story from the scene of Tess". See Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 49. In fact, Hardy's revisions were considerable. The effect of one such revision is to stress the Baron's foreign qualities: Hardy changed his exclamation "My God" to "My Gott" (304), and the narrator remarks on the uncommonness of his mustachios (303).

¹⁷See Donald Davidson, "The Traditional Basis of Thomas Hardy's Fiction" reprinted in Guerard, ed., Hardy, pp. 10-23; Brown, Thomas Hardy, passim; Guerard, Thomas Hardy, passim.

¹⁸In the autobiography Hardy tells how as a boy he heard the farm-women sing "The Outlandish Knight", an analogue of "The Demon Lover". See F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 20.

¹⁹Millgate, Thomas Hardy, p. 283. The note is dated 1923.

²⁰The Tucker dairy was originally placed at Stickleford in the Valley of the Swenn. Hardy may have wanted to differentiate "The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid" from Tess and from "The Fiddler of the Reels" which he published some years after the first appearance of "The Romantic Adventures" in The Graphic. It is also possible that he sought to make his place names more suggestive.

²¹In The Graphic publication, however, Hardy's reference to the Baron's "steam yacht" (subsequently deleted) implies a contemporary setting. It would be characteristic of Hardy to associate machinery with the demonic: cf. the farm machinery in An Indiscretion in the Life of an Heiress, The Mayor of Casterbridge and Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

²²See, for example, Beach, The Technique, p. 124.

²³The Graphic, (June 1883), 24. Had Hardy not deleted the passage it would have followed the first paragraph on p. 393 of the Macmillan Wessex Edition.

²⁴In The Graphic Margery exclaims "'Tis a cruel conspiracy between you two men to -- ensnare me!'" This is revised to: "'Tis a

footy plot between you two men to -- snare me'" (371). A "mean crowd" in The Graphic becomes a "slummocky crowd" in the Wessex Edition (389). There are slight changes in behaviour. For example, in The Graphic Margery is shy about dancing before the Baron. In the revised version she does it without hesitation (312). The changes made to the ending have the same effect.

²⁵Subsequent to her dance with the Baron in the "moonlight at the top of her father's garden" the narrator remarks that "Margery was in Paradise" (315). Hardy may be alluding to the witches' sabbaths in which initiates were popularly supposed to dance with the devil, or with the fairies, by the light of the moon.

²⁶See p. 309. This was another addition to the 1913 publication. It is interesting that Hardy heightened the Baron's demonic qualities in a series of such revisions.

²⁷In Hebrew cabalist lore "X" can signify discord or a fugitive.

²⁸Several critics mention or discuss the relationship of Tess to "The Romantic Adventures". See, for example, Beach, "News for Bibliophiles", The Nation, CXIV (January 25, 1912), 83; Abercrombie, Thomas Hardy, p. 70; Purdy, Thomas Hardy, p. 49; Wing, "Tess and the Romantic Milkmaid", REL, III (January 1962), 22-30.

²⁹Hardy, A Changed Man, p. 325. Henceforth, numbers in parentheses following a quotation or textual reference will refer to "The Fiddler of the Reels" in the Macmillan Wessex Edition of Life's Little Ironies.

³⁰While several critics single out "The Fiddler of the Reels" for high praise, none of them have ventured to make more than the most cursory remarks on its symbolism.

³¹The last of the reels Mop plays to Car'line at the inn is "The Fairy Dance" (182).

³²Hardy presumably took the idea from the ballads. In "The Soldier and the Lady", for example, the soldier makes love to the maiden, playing on his "long fiddle" until she hears "the nightingales sing". Cf. the phallic display of swordsmanship in Far from the Madding Crowd. Troy is another ballad soldier with a ready and "cunning instrument".

³³It is interesting that in revising the story Hardy further stressed Ned's fatherly qualities. In the original Scribner's Maga-

zine publication Hardy writes that in contrast to Car'line's reaction to the abduction of little Carry, Ned "was nearly distracted". To this Hardy added: "by his passionate paternal love for a child not his own" (184).

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

¹There have been very few film or television productions of Hardy's fiction despite the success of the film version of Far from the Madding Crowd. If one can judge by the television production in the early 1970s of Jude the Obscure, Hardy does not adapt well to a small screen.

²Weber, Hardy of Wessex, pp. 225-226.

³See F. E. Hardy, The Life, pp. 185, 358.

⁴Anon. Review of The Woodlanders, Athenaeum, (March 26, 1887), 414, reprinted in R. G. Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy, pp. 141-142.

⁵Anon. Review of The Woodlanders, Pall Mall Gazette, XLV (May 19, 1887), 5.

⁶Anon. Review of The Woodlanders, Athenaeum, (March 26, 1887), 414; reprinted in Cox, op. cit., p. 141.

⁷Hutton, Review of The Woodlanders, The Spectator, LX (March 26, 1887), 419-420.

⁸Gosse, Review of The Woodlanders, Saturday Review, LXIII (April 2, 1887), 484-485; partially reprinted in Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy, pp. 149-153, as an unsigned review.

⁹F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 102.

¹⁰Pointed out by Stewart, Thomas Hardy, p. 129, Southerington, Hardy's Vision of Man, p. 119, and by Casagrande, "The Shifted 'Centre of Altruism' in The Woodlanders", ELH, XXXVIII.1 (1971), 105.

¹¹Hardy, Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 3.

¹²Hardy, Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 346.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 18. Hardy uses the same metaphor to describe Grace's return to nature and life in The Woodlanders, p. 247; her surname is a play on the Mulberry tree.

¹⁵For discussions of Hardy's treatment of nature in The Woodlanders see Casagrande, "The Shifted 'Centre of Altruism' in The Woodlanders", ELH, XXXVIII.1 (1971), 114-121; Fayen, "Hardy's The Woodlanders: Inwardness and Memory", SEL, I (1961), 89-92, 98; Howe, Thomas Hardy, pp. 104-106; Matchett, "The Woodlanders, or Realism in Sheep's Clothing", NCF, IX (1955), 256-259; Millgate, Thomas Hardy, pp. 250-253; Southerington, Hardy's Vision of Man, p. 120; Stewart, Thomas Hardy, pp. 129-131.

¹⁶The passage is cited on p. 82 of this work.

¹⁷Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey", 9-18 in Noyes, ed., English Romantic Poetry and Prose, p. 259. The notion of a harmonious integration between man and nature seems to have greatly appealed to Hardy.

¹⁸Wordsworth, "Preface to the Lyrical Ballads", Noyes, ibid., p. 358.

¹⁹For a discussion of Darwin's influence on Hardy see Webster, On a Darkling Plain and Roppen, "Darwin and Hardy's Universe", in his Evolution and Poetic Belief. Hardy had read Origin of Species soon after its publication in 1859. Darwinian allusions begin to appear in Hardy's prose fiction starting with A Pair of Blue Eyes (1872).

²⁰Fitzpiers' remarkable flair for survival and courtship is evident to the very last. At the end of the book he escapes the man-trap and wins Grace back to him at the same time. Others have noted that Giles and Fitzpiers are engaged in a struggle for survival. See, for example, David Lodge's introduction to the Macmillan New Wessex Edition of The Woodlanders. Arabella Donn is another Hardeian character with a Darwinian capacity to adapt; the nobler, but less flexible Jude perishes.

²¹F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 149.

²²See Weber, "Hardy and The Woodlanders", RES, XV (July 1939), 330-331, and Bailey, "Hardy's Mephistophelian Visitants", PMLA, LXI

(1946), 1164-1169.

²³Coventry Patmore, who had earlier given extravagant praise to A Pair of Blue Eyes, now wrote that "the whole interest of the story is spoilt by our being expected to believe in that incredible event, the abiding repentance and amendment of a flippant profligate". See his review in St. James's Gazette, (April 2, 1887), reprinted in Cox, op. cit., p. 148.

²⁴The quotation may imply some sexual ambiguity in Marty, an ambiguity heightened perhaps by Marty's boyish first name -- as Miss Suzanne Kennedy has pointed out in classroom discussion.

²⁵Rebakah Owen reported an apparently cynical reaction from Hardy when she spoke to him of "Marty's very beautiful character, and of her being called by many the one truly noble and womanly woman in his novels." He said, 'Ah, well! She did not get Giles, you see; very likely, if she had, it would have been a different matter.'" See Weber, "Hardy and The Woodlanders", RES, XV (July 1939), 332. While due allowance must be made for the possibility that Hardy may have wished to tease or provoke this eager and somewhat cloying literary lady from America, the remark does tend to substantiate the impression that Marty is making the best of a bad job.

²⁶David Lodge develops the implications of the allusion to Cymbeline in his introductory essay to the New Wessex Edition of The Woodlanders, pp. 27-28.

²⁷Frye, Anatomy of Criticism, p. 183.

²⁸See, for example, the representation of hell-gate as the jaws of a gigantic fish in Hans Memling's Purgatory. In other Renaissance paintings hell-gate appears as the beak of a huge bird of prey.

²⁹For a further discussion of The Woodlanders as a pastoral novel see Squires, The Pastoral Novel, pp. 150-173.

³⁰David Lodge, op. cit., p. 25.

³¹Ibid., p. 26.

³²For an assessment of Hardy's familiarity with Spenser see pp. 14-15 of this work.

³³Squires suggests that Melbury's name is derived from Melibeous, the dispossessed shepherd of Vergil's first eclogue. See Squires, op. cit., p. 151.

³⁴Spenser, The Faerie Queene, VI.ix.26-28.

³⁵Calidore too is somewhat remiss in his knightly obligation to protect his lady, but significantly when he resumes his identity as a knight (by donning his armour) he succeeds in delivering Pastorella from the caves of the brigands.

³⁶Hardy would have been familiar with the English version of the legend either from the ballad "Thomas Rymer" or from Keats' adaptation of it in "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". True Thomas, the hero of the former, is a poet-prophet who spends seven years in fairy land with the Queen of Elfland.

³⁷A more impudent treatment of the legend appears in Beardsley's Under the Hill (1896), but this appeared long after The Woodlanders.

³⁸Wallace, Review of The Woodlanders, Academy, XXXI (April 9, 1887), 251-252; reprinted in Cox, op. cit., p. 155.

³⁹Frye, op. cit., p. 137.

⁴⁰Gose, Imagination Indulged, p. 54.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

¹Guerard, Thomas Hardy, p. 82.

²Ibid., p. 84.

³Hardy, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, p. 24.

⁴Ibid., p. 456.

⁵Hardy, "Hap", ll. 9-10 in The Collected Poems, p. 7.

⁶Hardy, "The Oxen", ll. 10-16, ibid., p. 439.

⁷F. E. Hardy, The Life, p. 150.

⁸Ibid., p. 291.

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Abbreviations have been used in the footnotes and bibliography for a number of well-known or frequently mentioned scholarly journals. They are as follows: ELH (Journal of English Literary History); ELT (English Literature in Transition); MFS (Modern Fiction Studies); NCF (Nineteenth-Century Fiction); N&Q (Notes and Queries); PMLA (Publications of the Modern Language Association); REL (Review of English Literature); RES (Review of English Studies); SEL (Studies in English Literature 1500-1900); TLS (Times Literary Supplement).

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