

THE CONCEPTION OF WOMAN IMPLICIT IN THE NOVELS OF THOMAS HARDY

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## PREFACE

This study is based upon an intensive reading of the novels of Thomas Hardy, an examination of a large amount of critical material about these works, and a careful investigation of the woman question of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

I wish to thank the librarians at the University of Kansas for their courtesy and patience in assisting me to find the books and periodicals I have needed in this work.

To those members of the Department of English at the University of Kansas who have given me valuable assistance in the preparation of this thesis I wish especially to express my appreciation: to Professor R. D. O'Leary, who suggested the subject and partially revealed its possibilities; to Professor J. H. Nelson, under whose direction I was enabled to compile a comprehensive bibliography of the critical writings on Thomas Hardy; and to Professor W. S. Johnson, who read my original manuscript and gave me much helpful advice and constructive criticism.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the conception of woman implied by Thomas Hardy in his novels. These works, with a few exceptions, deal largely with female nature; even in the stories which treat of a man's problems a young woman plays a more or less conspicuous role. It is to be inferred that the Wessex novelist's interest in the character of women dates back to his youth in Dorchester, where "he became the village amanuensis,"<sup>1</sup> writing from dictation the love letters of the village girls. Evidently this employment must have given him an opportunity to observe female human nature "under the stress of emotion and circumstance, and he undoubtedly made the most of it."<sup>2</sup> Concerning his understanding of women and his genius in the portrayal of their character most critics speak very highly. Lascelles Abercrombie, an eminent English man of letters, observes: "Hardy's psychological imagination is much better suited, in the main, to the creation of feminine than of masculine character";<sup>3</sup> in agreement with this opinion, Joseph Warren Beach, a representative American critic, says: "Hardy's women are \*\*\*\*\* his most convincing and attractive characters."<sup>4</sup>

1. E. Brennecke: The Life of Thomas Hardy, p. 83.

2. Ibid.

3. L. Abercrombie: Thomas Hardy, A Critical Study, p. 110.

4. J. W. Beach: The Technique of Thomas Hardy, p. 207.

The special purpose of this study is to consider the extent to which Hardy's conception of woman was influenced by the feminist movement of the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Since he produced his novels between the years 1871 and 1897, during a period when the status of woman was materially changing, one can reasonably expect to discover in them suggestions of the "new woman." One is further justified in searching for traces of feminism in Hardy's work because of his questioning attitude toward acceptance of standards of living which civilization has established. "He loves to contemplate the entrance of new social ways and forms, into a world of old social preference and tradition \*\*\*\*\* to exhibit the mercurial influences of the new upon the old."<sup>5</sup>

A woman movement with its attendant problems and controversies was a prominent feature of the unrest during the later Victorian Age in England, a time of changing ideals in economic, cultural, and spiritual values, and a period of the development of a new social order. The position of women in the mid-Victorian social order was essentially different from man's and inferior to his. Her place was in the home, his in the realm of business and economic activity. This clearly drawn discrimination between male and female spheres of life is due to two causes; the new industrial system of the early nineteenth century, which had drawn men away from their homes, but had left their wives in them; and the persistence of the eighteenth

5. L. P. Johnson: The Art of Thomas Hardy, p. 50.

century belief that a woman's entire education should be less serious and extensive than a man's. On account of her sheltered, domestic existence the woman developed into a dependent, clinging-vine type. In accordance with this ideal English society adopted certain notions regarding female nature; to these the majority of English women submitted. The belief that woman was inherently frail, ethereal, and mentally inferior to man prevailed generally among those of her own sex. The average Victorian woman was contented with the acquirement of more accomplishments and did not usually aspire to enter a larger intellectual life. She was extremely punctilious in her regard for the precepts of female etiquette, looked horrorstruck at any allusions to sex, and was reluctant to admit the existence of her sexual life.

After a period of submission to these edicts of social prejudice, women, toward the middle of the nineteenth century, attempted to demand recognition of their native ability. A few pioneer feminists ventured to proclaim the existence of female character, intelligence, and endurance. The first efforts in the interest of women's emancipation from masculine domination did not produce a greatly different attitude on the part of society in general. To agitation regarding the proper activity of woman the answer invariably was an idealization of the sphere to which she was relegated. The preciousness of the home and the glorification of the maternal function were urged in refutation of woman's demand for fully developed citizenship and equal competition with men in industry. When she sought serious

education, she was told that she should have only such knowledge as would fit her to be agreeable to her family and to manage a home successfully. Her assertion that extreme delicacy and moral sensitiveness were not inherent in women but affected by them was considered immodest and treacherous to her sex. When she ventured to advocate that the sexual relation was not intended primarily for the gratification of man, her ideas were regarded as threatening the whole social structure.

The woman movement grew in strength and numbers, expanding along economic, industrial, and intellectual lines. Owing to the persistent efforts of the pioneer feminists, the modern Englishwoman's position, with a few exceptions, is approximately equivalent to man's. She has practically the same educational opportunities as a man, for "at most of the Universities and University Colleges women students are admitted on equal terms with men";<sup>6</sup> although she may not vote until she reaches thirty years of age \*\*\*\* and a man votes at twenty-one,<sup>7</sup> she has a share in the government; and even if all barriers of prejudice have not yet been broken down, she can undertake a professional or a business career. Although the similarity in moral standards for men and women is still in a tentative stage, she has challenged the traditional code; at least, she has abandoned hypocrisy and concealment in regard to her sexual nature. She has partially revolutionized the

6. The Statesman's Year Book, 1926, p. 23.

7. Ibid, p. 5.

established conception of the marriage relation. The new woman takes pride in the assurance of free and unimpeded self-expression.\*

The years while Thomas Hardy was writing his novels were years of partial triumph for the woman's struggle for equal rights. Fighting tremendous opposition, women made considerable progress toward their present status. In the light of this agitation over the question of female ascendancy, Hardy's conception of woman is to be examined.

This study is to deal with three topics: first, the physical nature of the Hardy heroine, second, her mind, and third, her moral nature.

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\* The preceding discussion has been based upon the following works:

#### ON THE VICTORIAN AGE:

- G. K. Chesterton: The Victorian Age in Literature, London, 1913.  
W. R. Inge: The Victorian Age, Cambridge University Press, 1922.  
H. Walker: The Literature of the Victorian Age, Cambridge University Press, 1910.  
R. Macaulay: Orphan Island, New York, 1925.  
"Female Delicacy in the Sixties", Amy Louise Reed, Century, Oct., 1915.  
"The Victorian Woman," E. S. Harrison, The Nineteenth Century, December, 1905.

#### ON THE MODERN WOMAN:

- H. Ellis: Man and Woman, New York, 1916.  
W. L. George: The Story of Woman, New York and London, 1925.  
D. Russell: Hypatia or Woman and Knowledge, New York, 1925.  
T. Stanton: The Woman Question in Europe, New York, 1884.  
A. B. Wolfe: Readings in Social Problems, Book III., The Woman Problem, New York, 1916.  
"Changing Marriage", Beatrice Henkle, Survey Graphic, December, 1926.  
"Equality of Woman with Man, A Myth," John Macy, Harper's, November, 1926.  
"New Morals for Old", Series in The Nation beginning April 30, 1924.  
"These Modern Women", Series in The Nation beginning December 1, 1926.

## CHAPTER, II

### HER PHYSICAL NATURE

The women of Thomas Hardy's novels are resplendent in physical charm. They have magnificent resources both of face and body. Their beauty, ranging from the exquisite to the brilliant types, is not ethereal, but is essentially vital and sensuous. Hardy thinks of his feminine creations in terms of the ancient pagan goddesses and accordingly endows them with features of rare beauty. He pictures hair lovely on account of its luxuriant abundance and remarkable coloring; he describes with fastidious care the "marvelously rich hair"<sup>1</sup> of Fancy Day, the brown curls of Elfride Swancourt,<sup>2</sup> the squirrel-colored tresses of Ethelberta Petherwin,<sup>3</sup> the midnight locks of Viviette Constantine,<sup>4</sup> and the glorious chestnut mane of Marty South.<sup>5</sup> Of Eustacia Vye he says, "To see her hair was to fancy that a whole winter did not contain darkness enough to form its shadow."<sup>6</sup> In the lips of his heroines, clearly cut in outline and matchlessly curved, lies allure-ment; the "mobile peony mouth"<sup>7</sup> of Tess Durbeyfield showed "real vitality, real warmth, real incarnation"<sup>8</sup> and sent "a breeze through his

1. Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 36.
2. A Pair of Blue Eyes.
3. The Hand of Ethelberta.
4. Two on a Tower.
5. The Woodlanders.
6. The Return of the Native, p. 75.
7. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 12.
8. Ibid., p. 192.

Angel Clare's nerves."<sup>9</sup> In their eyes also Hardy suggests undebatable fascination; whether the eyes are "of a sapphire hue"<sup>10</sup> like Cytherea Grays's, or blue as autumn distance"<sup>11</sup> like Elfrida Swencourt's; and whether they have the charm of soft darkness like Bathsheba Everdene's,<sup>12</sup> or the blue, black, gray, and violet play of colors of Tess Durbeyfield's, they are ineffably beautiful; sometimes they are "full of nocturnal mysteries"<sup>13</sup> like Eustacia Vye's, or are kindled with untranslatable meanings of mystery, tenderness, and affection like Sue Bridehead's.<sup>14</sup>

In stature the Hardy women are inclined to be tall and straight, with a suggestion of the robustness characteristic of the ancient Greek goddesses. There is not the slightest degree of masculinity about them. It is in their distinctly womanly build that they are attractive. Their figures, tending to be slender rather than fleshy, are handsome, vigorous, and vibrant. Every muscle seems alive and active.

Lightness of foot and flexibility of body are specialities of the Hardy women, and in dexterity of motion they excel. Bathsheba Everdene's antics on a horse showed the rapidity of a kingfisher<sup>15</sup> and the noiselessness of a hawk.<sup>16</sup> "The performer Bathsheba seemed quite

9. Ibid., p. 8.
10. Desperate Remedies, p. 8.
11. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 2.
12. Far from the Madding Crowd.
13. The Return of the Native, p. 76.
14. Jude the Obscure.
15. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 18.
16. Ibid.

at home anywhere between a horse's head and its tail".<sup>17</sup> The heroines are elegant in walking and superbly graceful in dancing. Cytherea Graye was noted for "her apt lightness in the dance,"<sup>18</sup> and flexibility was the "first characteristic"<sup>19</sup> of Fancy Day. Elfride Swancourt, "running with a boy's velocity, superadded to a girl's lightness",<sup>20</sup> was the essence of grace. Ethelberta Petherwin abandoned her stateliness and "diadem and sceptre-bearing"<sup>21</sup> to run to observe a struggle between a hawk and a duck and raced lightly over the uneven ground. A favorite pastime of Eustacia Vye's was dancing, and Tess Durbeyfield "enjoyed treading a measure purely for its own sake."<sup>22</sup> Grace Melbury<sup>23</sup> was remarkable for her elegance and elasticity of movement, and Sue Bridehead for her litheness and buoyancy of body.

In Hardy's conception of female strength he has evidently discounted the prevailing Victorian belief in the frailty of women. Rather he seems to have assumed the peasant attitude that a woman by nature is practically as strong as a man. He never questions the advisability of a woman's working in the fields except in the words of the supercilious D'Urberville. He implies that the social position, not physiological differences, determines the degree of her physical strength. A woman not accustomed to field work can adjust herself to it, and one who shows

17. Ibid., p. 18.

18. Desperate Remedies, p. 8.

19. Under the Greenwood Tree, p. 60.

20. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 23.

21. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 2.

22. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 18.

23. The Woodlanders.

efficiency at manual labor can appear to advantage in the parlor. Bathsheba Everdene could assist in the labor of Weatherbury Farm when occasion demanded, or show refinement and elegance at a social gathering. In emergencies a woman can perform feats requiring noteworthy strength; quite unaided, Elfride Swancourt, by no means the most robust of the heroines, rescued her lover from a horrible death at the Cliff without a Name. Further evidence of Hardy's conviction that the degree of a woman's physical strength is largely determined by her status in society is in his remark concerning Marty South's making of spars: "The fingers which clasped the heavy ash haft might have skillfully guided the pencil or swept the string, had they only been set to do it in good time."<sup>24</sup>

Hardy has given his heroines certain traits of character in keeping with his conception of the essentially physical part of their nature. He has made them vain, fastidious about their personal appearance, and susceptible to flattery. The early women especially are absorbed in dress and adornment. In them Hardy emphasizes, too, mere vanity over personal beauty, yet he does not dismiss this quality in the portrayal of the later women, whose problems are always more vital than those of the first creations. He conceives woman as being extremely sensitive, impulsive, and emotional ----- thoroughly passionate and sexual.

24. Ibid., p. 8.

CHAPTER III

HER MIND

The following portion of this study is devoted to the analysis of Thomas Hardy's conception of the nature of woman's mind and her intellectual interests, as implied in his novels. The extent to which the struggle for intellectual independence interested the Wessex author has been investigated in the light of the controversies prevailing during the last quarter of the nineteenth century regarding female mental capacity and the advisability of women's participation in higher education. This analysis of feminine mentality is based on Hardy's exposition of woman's inherent capacity to acquire knowledge, of her creative ability, of her potential executive qualifications, and of her display of reason and judgment.

Cytherea Grays<sup>1</sup> and Fancy Day<sup>2</sup>, Thomas Hardy's earliest heroines, show mental alertness and capacity for learning. Through Cytherea's careful education in English, French, and music she felt sufficiently well equipped to attempt to earn her living as a governess, when upon the death of her father, she found herself practically penniless and dependent upon a brother whose earning power was limited.

1. Desperate Remedies.
2. Under the Greenwood Tree.

Of Fancy Day's scholastic honors in the training school and of her high standing in the government examination for a teachers' certificate, her father was justified in boasting; for at her school Fancy had well learned what was expected of her, "good manners, the smooth turn of her tongue, her musical skill, and her knowledge of books;"<sup>3</sup> very likely on the basis of his pride in his daughter's accomplishments, the crude but intelligent peasant was pleased to comply with her charge to him before the wedding, "to carefully avoid saying 'thee' and 'thou' ----- that those ancient words sounded so very humiliating to persons of newer taste."<sup>4</sup> On account of her proficiency in music, the success of Parson Maybold's scheme of supplanting the stringed choir of the Mellstock church by the cabinet organ was largely successful.

Greater mental grasp and more varied intellectual interests are portrayed in Elfride Swancourt.<sup>5</sup> She could play and sing nicely, well enough to entertain any of her father's casual guests or to captivate any young man who might be in her home ----- she was sufficiently assured of the technique of her performance to be thoroughly aware of the favorable impression which her sad, sentimental love song made upon Stephen Smith during the first evening of his professional engagement at the vicarage. In addition to this accomplishment in music, she

3. Ibid., p. 209.

4. Ibid., p. 257.

5. A Pair of Blue Eyes.

read and studied. In the library and museum at Endelstow House, where she could freely browse while her indulgent and ambitious father pursued his entirely absorbing study of genealogy, she made her own selection of reading. This opportunity for desultory study, according to Ruskin's theory revealed in Sesame and Lilies<sup>6</sup> the most satisfactory way for a girl to acquire learning, and also suggestive of Hardy's own unacademic early training ----- his own knowledge was gained largely through independent study, "at his own sweet will free from discipline and even from guidance"<sup>7</sup> -----, apparently proved profitable to the vicar's daughter. The inference is that Elfrida used discrimination and found books of value to her. She discovered Keats and imagined herself to be like "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"; she became acquainted with Wordsworth and attempted to commit herself to the guidance of the teachings in the "Ode to Duty." Moreover she came in contact with an interest, mediaeval art and manners, to which she devoted herself whole-heartedly and assiduously.

In the portrayal of Elfrida, Hardy implies a discrimination between male and female mental power, in favor of the former. He makes his judgment on the basis of skill in playing chess. Elfrida played entirely by rules and memory while both of her masculine opponents thought out their moves, Stephen Smith slowly on account of his little real experience with the game, and Henry Knight nimbly with the light-

6. Sesame and Lilies, "Queens' Gardens," p. 156: "Turn her loose in the old library every wet day and let her alone. She will find that which is good for her."

7. E. Brennecke: The Life of Thomas Hardy, p. 83.

ning speed of an expert. With the first young man Elfride was able to uphold her reputation of being an excellent player, but her skill matched against Henry's made her game seem childish. Hardy portrays also her expectation of being given advantages in a difficulty ----- Elfride wanted to play by club rules only when adherence to them meant profit to her. The mental strain of the second encounter with Henry, after she had studied an authority on chess until five o'clock in the morning, brought about such a disordered state of her nervous system that the doctor forbade her further participation in chess games. In this comparison of the female with the male mind, Hardy evidently believes that the woman approximately equals the man in actual acquisitive power, but in ability to adapt that knowledge to new situations, she is inferior to him.

In the case of Bathshebe Everdene<sup>8</sup> great activity of mind may be pointed out, but no real intellectual interests with it. Like her predecessors she had skill in music. Her singing at the shearing supper in her own home brought out the truest form of admiration from her men ----- rapt silence. Her excellent scholarship was praised by her aunt to Gabriel Oak when he came to present his offer of marriage to the young woman. Yet in all cases Hardy seems to point out her superficiality in culture. The fact of her abandoning the study of French at her father's death but of remembering the exact point where she stopped --- the verbs --- is significant of her entire cultural attitude. When she assumed control of Weatherbury Farm, she bought

8. Far from the Madding Crowd.

new pictures and books, along with the new furniture and looking glasses. Instead of reading during her leisure time, however, she found greater congeniality in the association with her unlettered, superstitious maid Liddy; she preferred to listen to flattery and to discuss love affairs, even abetting Liddy in determining, by means of a curious incantation with the Bible and the front-door key, the identity of her own husband. Although her interests were not literary, she had acquired in her superficial way a fragmentary knowledge of the contents of a good many books. This was displayed when she and Liddy, after the revelation of Troy's faithlessness, withdrew to the attic and there barricaded themselves to avoid a possible encounter with him. Bathsheba requested for her perusal and escape from ennui certain of her uncle's old books which she had packed away in boxes. From her comments upon the congeniality of certain books to her state of mind, it is evident that she knew their themes and subject matter in a general way. The number of volumes she demanded would have kept her studiously engaged for a considerable length of time, had she read them; she spent little time in attempting to absorb their contents, although she did hold a book in her hand while she sat at the window staring purposelessly and apathetically at the landscape.

Ethelberta Petherwin's liveliness of mind<sup>9</sup> is accompanied by tireless but utilitarian ambition for culture. Her record in the training school was brilliant and highly praised by the examining authorities.

9. The Hand of Ethelberta.

Possessing remarkable capacity for learning and unlimited mental energy, she mastered all difficulties involving intellectual attainment which lay in her path of social climbing. Largely through her education she was enabled to marry a young aristocrat and to conceal from his mother her connection with the servant class. When her lowly origin was discovered at the death of her husband, she was given the opportunity by her mother-in-law of completing her cultural equipment by studying two or three years in a boarding school on the continent; at the end of this period she had acquired considerable fluency in speaking French and could take her place in London society among Lady Petherwin's friends without causing any embarrassment to the elegant old dowager. After her break with Lady Petherwin, which was shortly followed by the older woman's death before a legal reconciliation was effected, Ethelberta found herself confronted by a self-assumed problem of amazing difficulty, that of supporting her family by the unique means of improvizing novels for cultivated audiences and of maintaining at the same time an unassailable social position; in the midst of preparing her stories, she took occasion to devote herself to every passing whim of the London public and to acquit herself convincingly in various lines, such as the study of Milton's poetry and the pursuit of archaeological investigations. The inference to be drawn from the portrayal of Ethelberta's cultural success is that real intellectual ability may be found in women of lower social rating and can, by intention and education, be advantageously brought out ----- "a bear may be taught to

dance."<sup>10</sup>

There can be no doubt as to the existence of Eustacia Vye's<sup>11</sup> native acquisitive ability. Fortunately she had had a cultured father, a regimental bandmaster at Budmouth, who had taken "great trouble with his child's education."<sup>12</sup> She possessed learning far beyond other people on Egdon Heath, in addition to her mental clearness and capacity, and was really alert, craving cultural experiences that her environment denied her. Perhaps, in her insatiable thirsting for music and poetry which she missed on Egdon, she confused cultural zeal with deep-seated discontent and eagerness to escape the boredom of her existence. Yet what her grandfather termed too much "romantic nonsense"<sup>13</sup> was, she believed, an actual yearning, which amounted to emotional fervor, for the cultured atmosphere of Paris.

Anne Garland,<sup>14</sup> like the earlier heroines, Cytherea and Fancy, had evidently been very apt in her school work. One infers that she had always faithfully prepared her lessons and that she could display to advantage the accomplishments she had learned. Like her mother, she could by her superior education keep her social position above that of the common villagers of Overcombe.

The next heroine, Paula Power,<sup>15</sup> is Hardy's first portrayal of an avowed "modern woman"; she was self-conscious in her pursuit of

10. Ibid., p. 2.

11. The Return of the Native.

12. Ibid., p. 78.

13. Ibid., p. 125.

14. The Trumpet-Major.

15. A Laodicean, published first in 1881.

culture and held many advanced views, especially on higher education for women. Mere accomplishments were of little interest to her, although she too could sing for her own romantic fancy's sake and had some talent in dramatic art. She is represented as having a very bright mind, and a diversity of intellectual interests which, by the aid of her wealth and its opportunity for leisure, she was able to follow. Her reading was wide and varied; her own library was well stocked with valuable reference books as well as fiction; she borrowed from a London circulating library; and she subscribed to a large number of current periodicals, English, French, Italian, and American ---- more than she could possibly read. Besides, she was interested in religious literature, and in her search for a believable doctrine, delved into all kinds of theological work, especially that concerning the Baptist Church, the choice of her father for her. Her intellectual experiences are suggestive of a lack of concentration ---- they smack of changing fads; she was in what might be called a doctrinaire stage, for she enjoyed professing her predilections and aversions, and deliberately betraying any recently acquired view on art, history, or religion. Project after project, inspired by her reading, she undertook and tired of. She had considered temporarily the plan of manufacturing Greek pottery on her estate, in imitation of the old fictile work she had read of. She had installed a telegraph in her castle, with which she had experimented continually -- at first-- sending messages from morning until night, but in the multiplicity of other interests she had lost her enthusiasm for it. Among her "advanced

views on social and other matters<sup>16</sup> she began to uphold energetically her belief in the theory of physical training for women; reinforced in this belief by reading the monthly magazines, upon her arrival at Stancy Castle, she had erected there a gymnasium of the very latest design and with the most up-to-date equipment. Dressed in a becoming pink flannel costume of boy's cut, she learned to perform very cleverly on the ropes and bars; she delighted in shocking Mrs. Goodman, her aunt, and Charlotte De Stancy, her companion, with adroit gyrations ---- probably her persistence in the enterprise was greatly intensified by her adoring and marveling audience.

Paula's most ambitious undertaking was the restoration of Stancy Castle. This project, besides bringing her in contact with an attractive young man, was to be an outlet for the application of various architectural theories she had acquired through her study and reading. Very early in the proceeding appeared traces of the young heiress's varied notions; greatly impressed by owning a genuine mediaeval castle, she was persistently attempting to fit herself into a romantic setting, but at the same time she wished to assert her tentatively Greek tastes. To avoid a clash of her ideas, she decided upon a compromise ---- the inclusion of a Greek court in her mediaeval castle. To her such an innovation was neither inconsistent nor offensive; to the well trained architect the plan was thoroughly inappropriate, yet out of his admiration for her he was willing to yield to it. Fortunate-

16. Ibid., p. 195.

ly, an article in the local newspaper condemning her queer architectural design swayed its author from wishing to execute it. The plans progressed, Paula glorying in her ability to discuss with Somerset details of architecture which usually she had to look up in reference books beforehand. Hardy seems to intimate little difference between the man's and woman's acquisitive nature; Somerset was a serious, well-informed young man who by years of study knew that with which Paula was for the first time triumphantly coming in contact. In contrast to his composure and complacency of mind were Paula's vigor and potential force of intellect; the young architect himself felt the possibilities of her brain power, telling her that to him she represented "science rather than art--the march of mind, the steamship, and the railway, and the thoughts that shake mankind."<sup>17</sup> With all of her mental capacity Hardy implies a quality of instability which might be interpreted rather as the result of her exhilaration from new mental adventure, than as an inherent weakness.

In *Lady Constantine*<sup>18</sup> Hardy portrays for the first time a woman who pursues the same study as a man. Viviette was "a woman of bounding intellect and venturesome fancy,"<sup>19</sup> yet her motive in studying astronomy and her devotion to the science were very different from the zeal of Swithin St. Cleve, the son of a poor curate. To the young man the immensities of the universe and the wilderness of the heavens were all absorbing interests. Although Viviette was much impressed with the

17. *A Laodicean*, p. 103.

18. *Two on a Tower*.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 55.

wonders of the skies and wished enlightenment, which she knew by warning would be terrible, she was never so fond of astronomy as she was of her astronomer-comrade. Herdy implies that she was fundamentally capable of grasping the study, but that she was not inclined to follow it for its own sake. While she was searching through works for information about equatorials, she was never forgetful of the young man's existence. Although she loved to listen to Swithin talk about the wonders he had found and to give explanations of his discoveries, she was interested intrinsically in his company. This attitude was revealed when, during his absence in London for the purpose of securing a new equatorial, she forgot twice to record some very particular observations which he wished very greatly to have and which she promised faithfully to obtain. The fact that the chance to observe certain astral bodies would probably not occur again during her lifetime was not of sufficient importance to her to make her vigilant. She gloried in the possibility of her protege's becoming Astronomer Royal, but concentration on astronomy in itself was not to her taste. Never did she become so devoted to her science that she forgot conscience or conduct, and the emphasis which she placed on St. Cleve's confirmation was really painful to the young man, much as he loved her.

An instance of female acquisitiveness is Elizabeth-Jane Newson's<sup>20</sup> devotion to books, independent of schools and tutors. Her desire, even in Newfoundland where she was employed in making nets for

20. The Mayor of Casterbridge.

the fishermen, was to "become a woman of wider knowledge, higher repute,"<sup>21</sup> and she "sought further into things than other girls of her position ever did."<sup>22</sup> Upon taking up her residence at Casterbridge and in spite of receiving little encouragement from her simple minded mother, she delved "with painful laboriousness, but never flinching from herself,"<sup>23</sup> into the treasures of books; she even began the study of Latin. To make herself more worthy, by attempting to gain from her private study what girls usually obtained from formal schooling, was her wish. A significant phase of her persistent desire for self-improvement was her love for Donald Farfrae and her admiration of his learning; in comparison with the young man she felt lacking in knowledge. Yet she showed genuine delight in study for its own sake. She loved the atmosphere of books, and her own room bore many evidences of her endeavors toward self-improvement, such as "sketches, maps and little arrangements for tasteful effects."<sup>24</sup> Bit by bit she mastered her difficulties; she changed her vocabulary, although she could not "help using rural words sometimes,"<sup>25</sup> such as 'bide' for 'stay' and 'fay' for 'succeed,' which greatly vexed her step-father Michael Henchard; she became proficient enough in literature to quote Shakespeares appropriately. Ultimately she satisfied herself and placated Henchard,

21. Ibid., p. 29.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 158.
24. Ibid., p. 173.
25. Ibid., p. 164.

who had a solemn respect for learning. She proved the ability of a young woman to persist in her studies until she had mastered them and improved herself.

Grace Melbury,<sup>26</sup> the daughter of a timber-merchant, at a fashionable school in a large city where she came in contact with girls her superior in social standing, acquired accomplishments as successfully as her associates. At this institution she gained nothing practical, but attained a "pretty up-country curl in talking,"<sup>27</sup> learned to discuss glibly the literary styles of Dumas and Sterne, and generally impressed Hintock people with her superior manners, culture, and poise. So finished did she become under the refining influences of her education, that Dr. Fitzpiers, the young, highly cultured, professional man of the neighborhood, found her very charming, and approaching his own cultural standard. He was rather surprised at his discovery of any congeniality in tastes between himself and a peasant's daughter, but Giles Winterbourne, her rejected lover, remarked, "Why shouldn't a Hintock girl taken early from home and put under proper instruction become as finished as any young lady if she's got the brains to begin with?"<sup>28</sup>

The actual cultural interests of Grace and Dr. Fitzpiers are portrayed as being very different. Grace was mentally his inferior. "Cleverer, greater than herself, one outside her mental orbit ----- he seemed to be her ruler."<sup>29</sup> He was greatly interested in scientific

26. The Woodlanders.

27. Ibid., p. 99.

28. Ibid., p. 148.

29. Ibid., p. 210.

investigation and philosophical literature, toward which his gentle wife had no inclination. Even after the great trouble in her married life, when she became a serious student and read rather widely, she found no appeal in Fitzpiers' library. When her reconciliation to him became imminent, she specified that he should abandon his reading on abstruse subjects along with the old plays and French romances. Evidently Hardy means that in this instance the average female mind, even subjected to a superior education, has no appreciation of the interests of a highly developed male brain.

At the National School Tess Durbeyfield<sup>30</sup> made an excellent record, passing the Sixth Standard honorable. Her experience there must have accounted largely for the two hundred years' difference in ideals between Tess and her mother ---- Tess barely tolerated "The Compleat Fortune Teller", in whose merit Joan Durbeyfield firmly believed, even to the point of intrusting her daughter's destiny to its instruction. Although the girl had been obliged to give up her project of becoming a teacher, she had learned to feel shame in the family's shiftlessness and abject acceptance of poverty. In spite of her ability to learn readily, Tess came to be more interested in the realities of life, and frankly admitted her indifference to books.

Sue Bridehead,<sup>31</sup> Hardy's most intellectual woman character, is portrayed as having approximately the same ability to grasp and to assimilate subject matter as a man. During her association with the

30. Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

31. Jude the Obscure.

Christminster undergraduate, she had read at this friend's recommendation most of the Greek and Latin classics, many French and Italian works, and much English literature. She had done this reading of foreign authors through translations, but she had acquired actual contact with writers and subjects not usually studied by women. Although she did not like to be considered a clever or a learned girl, she had come to have advanced views on life, literature, morality, and religion. In addition to her wide knowledge of literature, Sue had developed the faculty of discrimination in book values. Throughout the association with her student friend, both in London and in the walking and reading tours with him through the country, she had had the advantage of discussion of authors and the exchange of opinion regarding them. She had gained the impersonal, detached attitude of a scholar and the power to appraise what she read. Her studies she had always pursued because she genuinely loved them.

The inadequacy of the average school for women of real acquisitive ability and large mental horizon is implied by Hardy in the delineation of the Melchester Normal School, where Sue matriculated, with the intention of becoming a teacher. This institution, like many others of its type, was devoted to the training of women teachers; since women teachers were to instruct immature students only, the subjects studied were naturally limited in number and restricted in scope and depth of subject matter. Here Sue, who entered after passing a brilliant examination to secure a scholarship, and after her liberalizing intellectual experience with the Christminster young man, was expected to receive the same training as "the daughters of mechanics, curates, surgeons,

shop-keepers, farmers, dairymen, soldiers, sailors, and villagers,"<sup>32</sup> who, it is implied were mentally inferior to her. The atmosphere of the entire institution was characterized by propriety in conduct. The regular hours, the bell summonings to classes and prayers, the uniform demands upon all students, and the close supervision of the mistresses must have been exceedingly distasteful to a young woman of independent spirit. No wonder that she found this a "species of nunnery"<sup>33</sup> which grew very tiresome! No wonder she needed to get away now and then for a little excursion with Jude! Soon "she had altogether the air of a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline."<sup>34</sup> Her running away from the school on account of the imposition of a ridiculously childish punishment seems justifiable and ---- meritorious. The freedom of the universities would have been congenial to her, and possibly to the other young women of the Normal School, who signified their sympathy with the little runaway by folding their arms and refusing to take notes from the geography mistress's dictation.

The similarity in acquisitiveness between man and woman is brought out in the comparison of the mental experiences of Jude Fawley and Sue. Before the two had met, Jude had read widely in the literature of the early Christian fathers, desultorily in the English poets, and fragmentarily of the classics. He was continually striving and grasping for knowledge, accepting indiscriminately what the books told him.

32. Ibid., p. 164.

33. Ibid., p. 164.

34. Ibid., p. 155.

Previous to the beginning of their acquaintance, Sue had passed beyond Jude in learning, in that she had acquired considerable literary judgment. She felt at ease in discussions of philosophy, art, or religion and had acquired certain artistic tastes and cultural attitudes. Gradually through her advice and direction, Jude emerged from his stage of meek approbation to one of appraisal and appreciation of values. The two came to have great similarity in interests and tastes.

This survey of the acquisitive power of women shows a great change from the school-girl intellects of the early heroines with their accomplishments in music and languages to those of the later ones who display forwardness of mind and experiment with the deeper problems of life. In the creation of these female characters Hardy was evidently attempting to evaluate woman's mental ability. In the potential force of Eustacia Vye's mentality, in the comprehensive intellectual interests of Paula Power, in the masterful intelligence of Viviette Constantine he was groping apparently for an estimate of what a woman's mind could actually grasp with advantage. This search seems to have culminated in the portrayal of Sue Bridehead, whose capacity for learning and ability to employ her knowledge approximated that of the male protagonist in the story.

The quality of imagination in Hardy's conception of the feminine mind must be noted. This is to be inferred from his treatment of woman's creative ability in literature. The only heroines in Hardy's works who aspired to literary expression and actually published literary works, Elfride Swancourt and Ethelberta Petherwin, appear in early nov-

els and are portrayed attempting to conceal their identity after the manner of the great Victorian woman, George Eliot. It might be mentioned that Felice Charmond contemplated writing a book to record her continental travels and that she tentatively proposed employing Grace Melbury as her secretary. On account of Mrs. Charmond's mental languidness and absorption in other affairs the project was never executed.

Before Elfride published her romance, she had composed her father's sermons, productions of which she and the vicar were equally proud. Wishing to impress Stephen Smith, the young London architect, favorably, she made of him a confidant in regard to the preparation of the addresses which her father delivered and afterwards discussed as if they had been his own. The sermon writing was largely a matter of mechanical skill, but showed sprightliness of wit and alertness of mind, if not high imagination. Although she belittled her achievement by comparing the writing of a sermon to the playing of a game, she gave the impression of being pleased with her performance.

The same pride in attainment she evinced in regard to her romance, "The Court of Kellyon," to which she signed the name, Ernest Field. Under the Victorian delusion "that a young woman has taken to writing is not the best thing to hear about her,"<sup>35</sup> she had concealed from her father the writing of her romance; but to Stephen Smith she made an entirely unnecessary explanation of her project. Seldom meeting people from the outside world, and browsing through the library of

35. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 185.

Endelstow House where she became absorbed in mediaeval art and manners, she wrote a romance of the Middle Ages. She produced the work in the spirit of mental adventure, not for publication. Only after her step-mother's advice, "Publish it, by all means. All ladies do that sort of thing now; not for profit, you know, but as a guarantee of mental respectability to their future husbands,"<sup>36</sup> did she consider the possibility of having her literary attempt put into print. Upon her reviewer and the reading public the book created only an ephemeral impression. Six months after Henry Knight had written the article in which he had declared the romance trite in subject matter, impossible in plot, unsatisfactory in treatment, and evidently the work "of some young lady, hardly arrived at years of discretion,"<sup>37</sup> he was unable to defend his position. The book was pleasant but indicated a lack of creative ability.

The spirit in which Elfride reacted to criticism is in accordance with Hardy's implication that she lacked true genius. Although she acknowledged to her step-mother her lack of real literary aptitude, she was evidently secretly disappointed at the reviewer's opinion of her book. She could not resist a childish bit of retaliation. Viewing his unflattering remarks as a purely personal slight, and magnifying "to colossal proportions the space she assumed herself to occupy or to have occupied in the occult critic's mind,"<sup>38</sup> she directed her father to address a letter to him explaining her motive in writing her work, and

36. Ibid., p. 146.

37. Ibid., p. 173.

38. Ibid., p. 177.

especially her reason for using the pseudonym. The fact that he had discovered the secret of her authorship on account of the inherent weakness of her production had not infuriated her so much as his insinuation that her idea in concealing her identity was silly.

The literary work of Ethelberta Petherwin is suggestive of greater ability; yet it is revealed as possessing vitality and cleverness rather than real imagination. Her work too was published anonymously ---- "Meters by E." In these verses, the energetic daughter of a butler, early confronted with the seriousness of life, turned to argumentative subjects, justifying "the ways of girls to men."<sup>39</sup> The work was unquestionably musical and beautiful society verse and full of undeniably clever, even brilliant ideas. The little volume produced a great stir in London literary circles; to conservative persons like Faith Julian, who thought them unbecoming any young woman and most certainly a young married woman, or like Lady Petherwin, who considered them positively indecent, the "Meters" of the anonymous Sappho were prodigiously startling; to young men of culture like Ladywell and Neigh, who were well informed in current literature, the verses were subjects of much heated conjecturing; to the reviewers the production was eminently worthy of criticism and comment. Although the estimates of its merits were inclined to be censorious, the book was discussed at dinner parties for weeks. Hardy's intimation is that the book provoked greater stir from the concealed identity of its author and unusual

39. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 19.

subject matter than from its style and thought, but that it did point to real ability. He leaves no doubt that the verses were really clever, but implies that they lacked elusive, inspirational charm.

The young widow's pride in the achievement of creating a sensation among cultured people was naturally great. Exhilarated by the notice of the reviewers and confident that she had done something noteworthy, she was not willing to relinquish her claim to distinction, preferring rather to risk losing her inheritance. When she refused to comply with her mother-in-law's demand to suppress the "Meters," the young authoress was left, upon Lady Petherwin's sudden death, with no resources but a temporary lease on a London house.

Relying upon the fame of her volume of verses, she made her second venture a combination of a literary and dramatic effort. This scheme showed ingenuity and fertility of brain, and its execution demanded talent. She inaugurated the picturesque entertainment of telling romances to select audiences of the London cultivated classes. The oral presentation of stories was a distinct innovation; their style was in imitation of the work of Defoe. The selection of Defoe Hardy designates as being very judicious, for he considered the old satirist's "style even better adapted for speaking than for writing."<sup>40</sup> Ethelberta used the vigorous, rapid narrative method with discrimination, yet with such likeness that her work verged upon a reproduction of her pattern. By virtue of her good looks and sparkling personality,

40. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 127.

she managed to conceal any lack of originality. Her triumph was short lived. After its novelty wore off, she was unable to command the large audiences she drew at first and wisely turned to a new project ---- that of making a brilliant marriage. Ethelberta is Hardy's only portrayal of a woman in an artistic career; he paints her failure in it, but seems to attribute this failure partially, at least, to the lack of suitable conditions under which she might develop her talent; he implies a want of creativeness, but he does not deny art altogether.

After his fifth novel Hardy does not treat of women's attempts to create literature. Evidently he is not concerned greatly with presenting the case for female genius. He leaves the impression that women's mind is not fundamentally creative, but does not deny an unusual capacity for clever and brilliant expression. In the latter novels he is interested in the elemental woman, rather than in the products of her mind.

In Hardy's conception of woman he had not overlooked the quality of executive ability, although he has not made it predominant. There is no doubt that had Cytherea Aldclyffe not been wealthy and able to employ an executive official she could have served excellently in the capacity of manager of her own estate. Her natural aptitude for superintendence asserted itself only in her semi-successful manipulations of the love affairs of Aeneas Manston, Edward Springrove and Cytherea Graye. In showing how Fancy Day could lead the singing of the women of the Mellstock Church above that of the choir and direct the arrange-

ments of the organ opening, even to the preacher's approval of her clothes, Hardy portrays a woman's ability to assert herself if she cares to do so. There is every reason to believe that Eustacia Vye had the qualifications to accomplish any exploit she was interested in. Although the only plans she effected were two ill-fated marriages, she was eminently able to work on a large scale. Of her Hardy says, "She seldom schemed, but when she did scheme, her plans showed rather the comprehensive strategy of a general than the small arts called womanish."<sup>41</sup> Most of Paula Power's plans were of ephemeral interest to her, yet she seemed to conceive only of vast enterprises ---- her pottery plant and castle restoration. To her the stupendous undertaking of a search through northern France for her lover was in no way baffling. Tess Durbeyfield in a quieter way showed capacity for good management. When she undertook the supervision of the poultry on the D'Urberville estate, she altered and improved the arrangements there. At the death of her father she assumed charge of the shiftless family and directed its entire affairs, until D'Urberville and her mother connived to make her agree to become his mistress.

The two heroines who actually displayed executive ability are Bathsheba Everdene and Ethelberta Petherwin. Upon her uncle's death Bathsheba assumed the managership of Weatherbury Farm. Here she impressed Gabriel Oak with her change from "the unpractised girl ---- into the supervising and cool woman."<sup>42</sup> Having taken charge of the farm as a

41. The Return of the Native, p. 82.

42. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 56.

business venture, she promptly made herself felt as a practical manager. Although she had the silent but efficient help of Gabriel, she had a keen understanding of her own position. She was "an Elizabeth in brain."<sup>43</sup> She believed that the responsibility for the productivity of the farm and proper execution of all its activities lay upon her shoulders. The hay-making, the sheep-shearing, and the bee-hiving she superintended; to the marketing of the products and the payment of salaries she personally attended; the efficiency with which all of the laborers performed their tasks she carefully watched. Her conception of her duties as mistress of the estate she energetically set out to realize in actual performance.

Hardy does not assign Bathsheba's failure in this undertaking to a lack of actual ability to manage. During the interval between her uncle's death and her formal assumption of the superintendency at Weatherbury, she had proved to the agent her fitness for her position by "her vigorous marshalling of the numerous flocks and herds which suddenly came into her hands."<sup>44</sup> There is an indication that her work in the organization of the farm activities required little revision; she followed generally the methods of her uncle whom the rustics had found to be "a very fair sort of man."<sup>45</sup> Neither because of her reliance upon her uncle's previous system nor because of her dependence upon Gabriel Oak's under-management does Hardy imply that she failed. With persis-

43. Ibid., p. 150.

44. Ibid., p. 383.

45. Ibid., p. 67.

tence she could have succeeded. He does indicate that continued effort was impossible because her essential feminine interests, lovers, distracted her attention from her business project.

Of all the heroines Ethelberta is the most "bustling, managing, rapidminded."<sup>46</sup> Her scheme for raising the social caste of her entire family is worthy of notice. The enterprise was this: She established her family, with the exception of her father, in her town-house, installing there as the necessary servants, her numerous brothers and sisters, their identity being concealed, of course, and renting a few rooms to lodgers of unusual standing, who were to be spoken of as being guests; she herself proposed to finance the undertaking by producing her extemporaneous entertainments at social gatherings. The execution of such an ambitious project required its author to direct a wise expenditure of her small means in order to present an appropriate appearance to a critical public, to manage tactfully the securing of engagements from the proper hostesses, and, above all, to be resourceful and spontaneous in her performances. To the resourceful Ethelberta the plan seemed feasible. With zest she applied herself to all parts of it. Keeping pace with the tastes of the London public, finding time to design her clothes and figures for the glazed tiles of the chimney-piece in her house, overseeing the education of her brothers, and watching her financial resources and opportunities for secret economies, demanded prodigious energy and poise. The magnitude of the undertaking

46. L. Abercrombie: Thomas Hardy, A Critical Study, p. 68.

daunted her little: never on account of the responsibility attached to it would she have abandoned it. If she had been contented to put her novel-telling on a purely commercial basis, and if she had been willing to tour the provinces, instead of performing for a critical London audience, she could undoubtedly have financed her prodigious undertaking and succeeded in it. After her marriage to the superannuated nobleman, she continued to demonstrate her executive ability by being "steward, and agent and everything."<sup>47</sup> The inference to be drawn from this portrayal is that the talent for management may be in a woman's mental equipment and may be used advantageously by her.

It is to be noted that Hardy does not attempt to create a strictly managing heroine after the fifth novel. He leaves the portrayal of female executive ability and creative faculty at the same time. Although he paints the desertion of each great undertaking by its originator, he implies that a woman's mind may have qualities enabling her to execute projects which require breadth of vision. He implies that with persistence and experience she has a fair chance for success; at any rate, his later heroines are presented as being resourceful and capable of assuming any necessary responsibility. He is interested in woman, not in the exploitation of her talents.

Hardy in his estimate of a woman's ability to use reason in determining her actions implies the blending of contradictory qualities;

47. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 474.

to ascertain his conception of the nature of this phase of her mental equipment involves attention to various traits of mind. Throughout the novels the heroines show a tendency toward capriciousness in thought and a proneness to be guided by impulse; yet they frequently display good judgment. In the matter of making decisions involving the weighing of one opinion against another the Hardy woman many times lacks stability. In affairs of very grave importance as well as in less consequential ones, there are frequent examples of vacillation. Elfride Swancourt is a woman of instability, hardly ever maintaining a position she first selected. Apparently afraid of her own power of discrimination, on her way to St. Launce's to meet her lover, she let her horse's lead determine her keeping or breaking the appointment with Stephen Smith. Many incidents of insecurity of judgment can be pointed out in Hardy's portrayal of his young woman. Likewise, Bathsheba Everdene was uncertain about her line of action and frequently turned to Gabriel Oak for advice. Ethelberta, Viviette, Paula, and even Sue Bridehead frequently dispatched letters which they wished to recall and commuted by second messages. Hardy apparently accounts for this quality of irresolution in woman by the fact that her emotion predominates over her reason. Most of the women yielded to the appeal of their feelings rather than to the dictates of their reasoning faculties; they were like Bathsheba Everdene, who "had too much womanliness to use her understanding to the best advantage."<sup>48</sup> There are instances of good reasoning, such as Bathsheba's habit of finishing her thoughts before

48. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 219.

expressing them, Paula Power's effort to be dispassionate in her opinions, and Sue Bridehead's ability to evaluate ideals of living; yet these women, as well as the others, displayed obedience to instinct.

The dependence of Hardy's women upon their emotions as guides makes them seem to be living for the present and consequently lacking in forethought. Like Elfride and Sue, most of them were inclined to build happiness on any accidental basis. It is rather in their ability to meet emergencies that the Hardy women revealed the best judgment; this trait of mind indicates action on the basis of intuition rather than as the result of a process of logical reasoning. Hardy's remark about Bathsheba, "Some women only require an emergency to make them fit for one,"<sup>49</sup> might be applied to many of the heroines, for there are instances throughout the novels of feminine accuracy in situations demanding immediate action. While Henry Knight was clinging, in imminent danger of death, to the ledge on the Cliff without a Name, every second's delay intensifying the insecurity of his position, Elfride revealed rare presence of mind; instead of consuming valuable time in seeking aid, she hastily tore her undergarments into strips, and tied them together for a rope with which she saved the young man's life. On the night of the harvest supper when a storm was approaching which would ruin the year's yield of grain and hay unless the ricks were protected, Bathsheba dexterously aided Gabriel Oak in adjusting the necessary coverings. When her husband was shot by Farmer Boldwood, she demonstrated remarkable poise and self-possession, maintaining these qualities until she had fully prepared Troy's body

49. Ibid., p. 56.

for burial. Under different circumstances Ethelberta proved herself able to meet an emergency; at the Hotel Beau Se'jour in Rouen she was not discountenanced by having to deal with three lovers ---- almost simultaneously. To escape an insistent by offensive lover, the gentle Anne Garland mounted his vicious military charger, held on by the mane, and rode at a frightful speed to safety. Mrs. Charmond, on the occasion of Fitzpiers' fall from the horse when he was returning from a surreptitious visit to her, hurriedly looked after the injury he had received, improvized a temporary hiding place for him, and removed all traces of his presence in her house. In very much the same way Grace Melbury dealt with Giles Winterbourne, when she discovered him stricken with pneumonia in the little hovel beyond his cottage, which she was occupying temporarily. By almost superhuman strength ---- for she was not robust ---- she managed to move him into the cottage where she could attend him. Distracted in conscience on account of feeling responsible for his condition, she remained calm and controlled through the ordeal of his illness and death.

Many examples can be pointed out of Hardy's belief in woman's caprice and irresolution to the exclusion of her ability to show good judgment, yet there are indications also that a woman can reason well. In general it might be concluded that in his opinion female reason is used least in regard to remote and abstract matters; and that feminine judgment is at its best in dealing with immediate and practical interests of life.

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50. Havelock Ellis, in *Man and Woman*, p. 449, offered this conclusion in 1894.

Hardy has not depicted an intellectual environment in his novels, nor an essentially intellectual woman. Yet he has implied his belief in a large degree of female intelligence. This is to be inferred from the fact that although the heroines are usually of the lower classes of society, among whom education had not generally prevailed, they make remarkable scholastic acquisitions. He seems to partake of the pride which the peasant fathers, Farmer Day and Farmer Melbury, had in their daughters' records at school; to be gently tolerant of the rustics who thought female education superfluous; and to feel pleased over Sue Bridehead's mental equipment developed by her desultory reading. The scope of the intellectual interests of the later women is much wider than that of the earlier ones; evidently, Hardy became convinced that a woman's mind was not so limited as the Victorians believed, and that her mental horizon could be enlarged and her life enriched by culture and education. Although his women do nothing very startling in the intellectual world, show comparatively little interest in creative or constructive work, he has revealed them as capable of real thinking. He identified himself with the woman's struggle for recognition of mentality equal to man's, by showing female characters who were not satisfied in acquiring mere accomplishments. The last great feminine creation, Sue Bridehead, entered into the masculine intellectual sphere with assurance and success.

Yet Hardy never seems to be defending a thesis about the mental superiority of one sex over the other, and he never portrays any particular sex antagonism in intellectual interests. The early novels

reflect the Victorian satisfaction in an excellent training school record of a young woman, and a bit of surprise and elation over a new intellectual experience. The conventional supercilious attitude of men towards a woman's literary production is indicated, but also an inference of his own rather high appraisal of their attempts, especially of Ethelberta's poetry. Midway in his novel writing career men and women are shown as meeting on somewhat the same intellectual plane. Paula Power, who had many varied but few profound mental interests, expressed great admiration for her lover's vast fund of knowledge; he in turn was impressed by the dynamic force of her mind. Sue Bridehead, the last great heroine, showed mental ability which was pleasing to her lover and which was also commensurate with his own. A great bond of union between Sue and Jude Fawley was their mental congeniality and the similarity of their intellectual interests.

In his portrayal of the strictly intellectual life of women Hardy has not overlooked the prominence of their emotional traits which tend to pervert her mental processes. On account of the outcropping of her instincts he has shown her losing in undertakings which she had the actual ability to execute. The most brilliant women failed in the final test demanding self-control. The inference is that owing to greater intellectual opportunities woman is demonstrating that male and female brain power are not vitally different.

CHAPTER IV

HER MORAL NATURE

The purpose in the following portion of this study is to determine Hardy's estimate of the moral nature of woman, as portrayed in his novels. The modern woman has freed herself from the acceptance of certain strictly feminine codes of ethics, which the Victorian woman, outwardly at least, observed. Today, in moral standards, as well as in intellectual interests and educational opportunities, woman has passed from acknowledgment of man's superior privileges and has demanded, tentatively at least, standards of conduct equivalent to his. The extent to which the women of Hardy's novels submitted to conventional systems or resisted them, either subtly or frankly, has been examined. Whether his portrayal implies any intrinsic difference in ethical attitude between the Victorian woman and the modern woman has also been questioned. The result of this investigation is considered in three parts, the first one comprising woman's conduct in its narrow application to propriety or etiquette, the second dealing with the nature of her religious views and her adherence to them, and the last including even more aspects of life, her sexual nature and relationships.

In the novels of Thomas Hardy the women are portrayed as having various attitudes toward the precepts of feminine deportment. Some observe the conventions scrupulously, some respect the letter but

not the spirit of such laws, and others openly challenge them. Examples of those who were consistently conservative are Cythera Graye<sup>1</sup> and Elizabeth-Jane Newson.<sup>2</sup> Cythera in contemplating a means of livelihood considered several schemes from the point of view of their respectability before she decided to undertake work which was merely honest and not genteel. To Elizabeth-Jane, who had so consciously reached a higher social plane than she was born to, "any suspicion of impropriety was ---- like a red flag to a bull."<sup>3</sup>

The number of those who interpreted conventions freely is much greater. Entirely contrary to the custom of the Mellstock community, Fancy Day<sup>4</sup> led the singing of the girls at church instead of following the lead of the choir in the gallery; she made her debut at the organ opening in gay apparel usually considered inappropriate for church wear. As a young school-mistress she was not expected to ask a young man inside of her house, unless she were well acquainted with him, yet she admitted the new vicar ---- on the score of his assistance in hanging her pictures and arranging her books. When she was confronted with the impropriety of drinking tea at an inn with a man not her fiance, she immediately became engaged to Dick Dewey, the tranter's son, and enjoyed a half hour's tete-a-tete with him at The Ship. Elfride Swancourt<sup>5</sup> rode unattended and fearlessly over the hills around Endelstow,

1. Desperate Remedies.
2. The Mayor of Gasterbridge.
3. Ibid., p. 258.
4. Under the Greenwood Tree.
5. A Pair of Blue Eyes.

but was conscious of indiscretion in being alone with young men. Glowing with delight in the novelty of her experience in climbing with Stephen Smith over the cliffs near Targen Bay, she let her pleasure be alloyed by recalling certain well-known injunctions. "I am afraid it is hardly proper of us to be here,"<sup>6</sup>---- she said inquiringly. "We have not known each other long enough for this kind of thing."<sup>7</sup> Yet quieted in her doubts by Stephen's judicial reassurance of the propriety of the situation, she remained in the alcove and heard, even precipitated, his proposal of marriage. On the occasion of her saving Henry Knight from death at the dreadful precipice, she discarded respect for propriety until after the rescue was accomplished. Having affected this by means of a rope made out of her undergarments, she was wearing nothing but her frock, and permitted him to follow her only at some distance behind. Knight "fully appreciated Elfride's girlish delicacy in refusing his escort in the meagre habiliments she wore."<sup>8</sup> Although Bathsheba Everdene<sup>9</sup> suggested bringing Liddy with her to see Troy's sword-exercise, at the young man's expression of disapproval of any escort, the young farm mistress herself thought that a third person would be superfluous. The respect which Lucetta Templeman<sup>10</sup> had for convention was variable; although she had been indiscreet in the extreme with Henchard, after she moved to Casterbridge and found a more

6. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 66.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., p. 262.

9. Far from the Madding Crowd.

10. The Mayor of Casterbridge.

eligible suitor, she objected to the former's calling upon her in her sitting room as late as ten o'clock. Paula Power<sup>11</sup> depended upon chaperonage, not for the sake of propriety, but as a guarantee against love-making. Grace Melbury<sup>12</sup> questioned the discretion of eating in public with Giles Winterbourne ---- she was not sure that she really cared to dine with him anyway.

Several of Hardy's women characters display a decided tendency to ignore conventions. The first to discard observance of precepts for the average woman's conduct was Ethelberta Petherwin.<sup>13</sup> At first subtly, but deliberately, she attracted the attention of her old lover, Christopher Julian, by including in a volume of anonymous verses which she sent to him a very personal poem by which he might identify her. Later by virtue of her project in public life she enjoyed a great deal of freedom, the right "to move abroad unchaperoned, which society for good reasons grants only to women of three sorts ---- the famous, the ministering, and the improper."<sup>14</sup> Although she took advantage of her exemption from conventional conduct, she was not Bohemian in her tastes. However, she shocked her conservative lover by allowing the artist Ladywell to exhibit his own portrait of her in the Academy. "Women allow strange liberties these days,"<sup>15</sup> Christopher Julian remarked. And still Ethelberta's great motive in life was to maintain recogni-

11. A Laodicean.

12. The Woodlanders.

13. The Hand of Ethelberta.

14. Ibid, p. 277.

15. Ibid., p. 202.

tion from a class whose ideals in behavior were conservative.

Instinctively Eustacia Vye<sup>16</sup> was unconventional and, moreover, she had acquired a reputation among the people in the vicinity of Egdon Heath for being "different". When she first conceived the scheme of meeting Clym Yeobright by joining the mummers at his mother's Christmas party, she asked the boy whose part she inveigled away from him to swear to absolute secrecy about her participation in the play. Later she decided that detection in the enterprise would not be a very dreadful thing ---- she calculated that her venture would be considered as just an additional freak of conduct. Her habit was to walk unattended over the heath at all hours of the day or night. What the community thought of her movements made little or no difference to her. If she chose to accept company, it was no business of theirs ---- those "miserable inhabitants of Egdon."<sup>17</sup>

The defiant attitude of Felice Charmond<sup>18</sup> in these matters was one affected to escape the boredom of her life in Hintock and to shock the people of that vicinity. She wore frocks of startling design, lived unattended in a huge house, and found great sport in smoking cigarettes. She appeared to have adopted the habit of smoking in contempt of "terrible insinuations of society ---- correctives and regulations pretendedly framed that society may tend to perfection."<sup>19</sup> Such ideals interested her little.

16. The Return of the Native.

17. Ibid., p. 313.

18. The Woodlanders.

19. Ibid., p. 249.

The disregard of Sue Bridehead,<sup>20</sup> the last great heroine, is portrayed as being almost freed from self-consciousness and entirely immune from affectation. Her infractions upon accepted customs in female etiquette were the most daring. She came to Jude's apartment after her escape from the Melchester Normal School, a piece of recklessness which made it necessary for her to wade across a river to avoid detection. Her composure in her predicament was pronounced, yet her attitude was not bold or flippant. Although she blushed for an instant at her wet garments spread out upon chairs before the fire to dry, she made herself very comfortable in Jude's Sunday suit; and when her clothes were so long in drying she approved Jude's plan of her passing the night in his lodging. This free attitude was not lasting, yet Hardy implies that it was her honest conception of behavior.

The Victorian notion that a young woman was delicate and unable to participate in exercise more violent than croquet<sup>21</sup> Hardy apparently scorns. Incidents have been mentioned showing female sturdiness of physique and a tendency to be athletic: Elfrida Swancourt's pursuit of the rabbit, Bathsheba Petherwin's race with the hawk, Anne Garland's<sup>22</sup> flight on the military steed, and Paula Power's indorsement of strenuous physical exercise. Usually these demonstrations of indulgence in unladylike activities were made surreptitiously, when on-lookers were presumably absent.

20. Jude the Obscure.

21. Rose Macaulay: Orphan Island, p. 219.

22. The Trumpet-Major.

It can be seen from this analysis of Hardy's portrayal of woman's attitude toward conventional conduct that he thinks she adjusts herself to it to suit her convenience; although as a matter of expediency she may abide by the regular precepts of behavior, she is portrayed in some instances as having no real conviction as to their necessity, and in others as actually defying them. The heroines show, with a few exceptions, an inclination to a liberal interpretation of rules of female etiquette, some tending to question them, and even, as Sue, to deny them frankly. He implies that the chief difference between the earlier and the later women is a greater degree of openness in disregard of conventions on the part of the latter. A tendency toward unconventionality he believes is in female nature; modern frankness has displaced Victorian concealment. The Hardy woman at heart is not a prude.

The religious views of Hardy's women characters are worthy of careful consideration; a study of their changing attitude toward the Christian Church throws light on their moral nature. The first heroines present an orthodox position in religion. Under the influence of Cytherea Grays, Cytherea Aldclyffe came to have real pleasure in morning and evening prayers. So strongly did Miss Grays feel the appeal of Christianity that she was persuaded of the expediency of her marriage to Aeneas Manston, a man whom she disliked. Although Elfrida Swancourt wrote her father's sermons, she was not interested in their spiritual side; a great deal of her religious belief was a matter of blind trust ---- she questioned somewhat, for she read the Bible to

understand all that she could and swallowed "the rest in a lump, by simple faith."<sup>23</sup> When Bathsheba Everdene's marital affairs became unbearable, she began, in sheer desperation, to go to church services very frequently. Her views on religion are not dealt with, but the assumption is that she was orthodox ---- the chances are that she questioned herself very little about the tenets of her faith. Feeling the need of strong defence for Sergeant Troy and confident that his attendance at church would raise his eligibility in the estimation of Gabriel Oak, she used it in justifying to him her interest in the scape-grace soldier.

The first woman to feel a thoroughly rebellious attitude toward accepted religious faith was Eustacia Vye. She attended church occasionally, but in "her savage independence of mind"<sup>24</sup> was resentful toward the whole universe. Contrasted with the other girls of the vicinity, she was very original in her thinking. Hating the dark glory and sombre beauty of Egdon Heath, but forced by circumstances to spend her life there, "she had imbibed much of what was dark in its tone, though inwardly and eternally unreconciled thereto."<sup>25</sup> Through spending much time both by night and by day on the heath, she had reached "that stage of enlightenment which feels that nothing is worth while."<sup>26</sup> Her rebellion was entirely personal, however, and was not asserted before other people. In matters of religious activities she carried on

23. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 220.

24. J. W. Beach: The Technique of Thomas Hardy, p. 103.

25. The Return of the Native, p. 77.

26. Ibid., p. 81.

little mutinies all by herself. For the regular Sunday observances of the heath people, which she found altogether unbearable, she substituted her own, such as overhauling her seaman grandfather's old charts and rubbish in the cupboards, and singing secular ballads which were ordinarily thought appropriate for week days only. If she read the Bible it was not on a Sunday, "that she might be unoppressed with a sense of doing her duty."<sup>27</sup> Unafraid of retribution for non-conformity to the ideals of the Church, she dared to assail the old gods and, with her remarkable "mental clearness and power,"<sup>28</sup> to idealize and deify such historical characters as William the Conqueror, Strafford, and Napoleon, while she wilfully underestimated the fine old Biblical heroes like Jacob and David. Her prayer was not for grace or forgiveness of sins ---- she felt guilty of none ---- but was always a devout plea for deliverance from loneliness and for the gift of a great love.

The first woman to take a definite public stand on religious matters and to show a positive interest in theological doctrine is Paula Power. She is introduced to the reader on the occasion of her refusal to accept the baptismal rite specified by the church of her deceased father's profession, the Baptist. Having read widely and lived a "stealthy inner life"<sup>29</sup> and feeling herself to be "emphatically a modern type of maidenhood,"<sup>30</sup> she could not agree with the evangelical

27. Ibid., p. 81.

28. Ibid., p. 108.

29. A Laodicean, p. 16.

30. Ibid., p. 15.

teaching of the Baptist denomination. Hardy suggests that without the great assistance of her wealth and social position she would possibly have been intimidated by the congregation to the extent of going through with the ceremony. Evidently the young woman was in a state of spiritual uncertainty and was industriously searching for a faith to approve. Neither the sermon reproving her for her sensational negation of the customary acknowledgment of faith nor the preacher's later theological arguments convinced her that she was obliged to accept without question the religion of her family; yet she tactfully and wisely declined to argue, listening attentively to the discussion of doctrine between Mr. Woodwell and George Somerset.

Paula's search for dogmatism does not signify a high degree of spirituality ---- rather an unsettled condition growing out of her extensive cultural interests. Had it not been for her respectful consideration of her father's wishes, her conscientious scruples in relation to the selection of a church would have been minimized. The real clash was between her deep reverence for her father and her very decided inclination to the pagan ideal. Mr. Woodwell feared that she had come under the influence of the New Lights, but she was concerned little with Old Lights or New. Having formed Greek tastes, she wished to be consistently Greek. Puritanism she could not correlate with her cultural interests; yet she regretted that her father's religion was inadequate to her intellectual experience.

In the dependence of Lady Constantine<sup>31</sup> and Grace Melbury upon

31. Two on a Tower.

the authority of the English Church, there is a step in the direction of conformity. Yet the adherence to the Church by Viviette Constantine is not portrayed as a matter of devotion; it was rather a sign of her attempt to uphold by religious demonstration certain phases of her conduct which she could not quite reconcile with her conscience. What the church meant interested her very little ---- it was a strong pillar to lean on. As to creed and doctrine she was apparently indifferent, for she made no question. Her respect for ecclesiastical authority was not consistent. Although she secured the rector's advice confirming the impregnability of her vow to abstain from all social activities and friendships during her husband's prolonged absence in Africa, she continued to enjoy the companionship of Swithin St. Cleve, the young astronomer. Deeply troubled in conscience, she would seek comfort in church services and in intermittent devotion outside of the regular hours for worship, but she proceeded to enter upon a secret marriage with this scientist. This step she wished endorsed by her husband's conformation which she succeeded in securing, feeling "that a certain levity"<sup>32</sup> in their treatment of the sacrament of marriage "would be well atoned for by a due seriousness on other points of religious observance."<sup>33</sup> And yet Viviette's real reverence for the church was not deep, for when she found herself embarrassed by an illegal marriage to St. Cleve, she dared to save herself and her unborn child from social ruin by marrying a very distinguished church dignitary, the Bishop of Melchester.

32. Ibid., p. 164.

33. Ibid.

Grace Melbury's orthodoxy is portrayed as being more disinterested than Viviette's, yet it gave her peace of mind. Brought through marital unhappiness to a keener realization of spiritual values, she fell back to acceptance of the faith of her early religious training. In asserting to Giles Winterbourne her intention of remaining only a day or two in his cottage and then proceeding to the home of a friend, she reinforced by Scriptural quotation her resolution of maintaining strict decorum in conduct. At the death of Winterbourne in conscience-stricken grief she proposed that a psalm be read over the body of her lover. She read "in that rich, devotional voice peculiar to women on such occasions."<sup>34</sup> After the psalm she and Marty South prayed tenderly and devotedly together, Grace's voice mingling with the field woman's "supplicatory murmurs that a Calvinist might have countenanced."<sup>35</sup> Finally, her respect for the tenets of the Church, which include veneration for the sacrament of marriage, was the leading determinant in making Grace agree to a reconciliation with her unfaithful but repentant husband.

Contrasted with Grace's conventional following of the teachings of the Church, is Felice Charmond's apparent lack of any religious convictions. Hardy suggests in her case a flippancy of attitude toward spiritual matters. He simply depicts a clash of opinion and interest between her and the people of Hintock. She is shown in the attitude of

34. The Woodlanders, p. 406.

35. Ibid.

enjoying the uniqueness of her position and the privilege of saying, "My neighbors think I am an atheist, except those who think I am a Roman Catholic; and when I speak disrespectfully of the weather or the crops they think I am a blasphemer."<sup>36</sup> But what she was or what she believed she did not say ---- the inference is that she had no decided views and was indifferent toward formulating any.

Tess Durbeyfield's<sup>37</sup> religious views show a development from the commonly accepted faith of the village of Marlott to the mildly unorthodox views of a vicar's son who had strayed from the spiritual fold of his father. "Like all village girls she was well grounded in the Holy Scriptures,"<sup>38</sup> yet there is an indication that orthodoxy was a veneer to her fundamental religious life. Very early she displayed a tendency toward independent thinking. The family troubles, her father's habitual drunkenness, and her mother's shiftlessness had made her sceptical; to her brother Abraham, when he was accompanying her to market with the load of honey, she expressed the opinion that the world seemed to her a blighted planet. Upon her return from the service of the D'Urbervilles, sick in mind at her weakness for having yielded to Alec, she was bitter and resentful toward the commonly taught doctrine. Although the words of the Seventh Commandment which the disciple of an evangelistic preacher was painting on the stile seemed directed especially toward her and filled her with terror, she could not help murmuring contemptuously to herself that she did not believe God to be the author

36. Ibid., p. 240.

37. Tess of the D'Urbervilles.

38. Ibid., p. 117.

of the law. Her experiences in connection with the death of her child show a pathetic adherence to the simple faith of her childhood. To accept the consequences of everlasting punishment for her sin she was reconciled; and that her illegitimate son might be saved the penalty of her wrong doing, she wished to have the rite of baptism administered to him. Yet when her tipsy father refused to have the vicar summoned for the christening ceremony, confronted by the child's rapidly approaching death, she improvised a baptism. In the presence of her brothers and sisters she performed a pitiable service, pronouncing the name Sorrow upon her wretched little off-spring. After his death, Tess's confidence in religion suffered a severe blow ---- the refusal of the vicar to grant a Christian burial to her baby; again she made a substitution for the ecclesiastical rite. A suggestion that God might possibly overlook the absence of the vicar's participation in the obsequies ---- which even the godly ecclesiastic tacitly approved ---- prompted her to perform them without his aid; with the aid of the sexton she buried the baby in the garden at night. Of course, because of ignorance and the simplicity of her faith, she was satisfied with her resourceful adaptation of the solemn rituals of the church, but in these ingenuous adjustments there is a hint that Tess was not bound by formal religious views.

Two or three years later when she left her home to assert her right to live as a useful human being she is portrayed as still apparently accepting the simple faith of her childhood; yet Hardy implies that at heart she was Pagan. "Women, whose chief companions are the forms and forces of outdoor Nature, retain in their souls far more of the Pagan

fantasy of their remote forefathers than of the systematized religion taught their race at later date."<sup>39</sup> As she descended the slopes of Egdon Heath on her way to Talbothays Dairy, in her spontaneous expression of gladness and independence she hummed "the old Benedicite that she had lisped from infancy,"<sup>40</sup> but when she stopped to question its meaning she realized her inability to adjust herself to what she thought it meant. At Talbothays she went to church regularly and participated in the chants and Psalm singing, for she liked the rhythm and melody of the music; yet her ideas regarding High, Low, and Evangelical principles were very vague. She was not exactly inactive spiritually, neither was she searching for creeds or doctrines. Rather was she quietly questioning the high seriousness of being alive and shaping sad imaginings, "feelings which might almost have been called those of the age ---- the ache of modernism."<sup>41</sup>

The influence of Angel Clare's views upon Tess's natural religious inclinations was very great. He had the effect of settling her religious difficulties. As their friendship deepened, her great love and admiration for the young man caused her to throw in her spiritual lot with his and to feel absolute reliance on his opinions. Along with "his manner and habits, his speech and phrases, his likings and his aversions,"<sup>42</sup> she appropriated his many negations and a few affirmations. Hardy designates her as being in a stage of "automatic orthodoxy."<sup>43</sup>

39. Ibid., p. 134.

40. Ibid., p. 135.

41. Ibid., p. 160.

42. Ibid., p. 260.

43. Ibid., p. 211.

She was proud to defend her acceptance of his religious views, for she believed that her dear husband knew everything. While these tenets were in her mind unquestionably right, she was not able to uphold them from a purely intellectual standpoint. Confronted by the diabolically clever D'Urberville, who could shrewdly make wrong application of her statements, she was hopelessly lost. Argument after argument she could quote verbatim, but she could not disentangle herself from the intricacies D'Urberville could make for her.

The religious creed of Tess was very plain; with reverential fidelity to the doctrines of Angel Clare, she said that she rejected most of the Prayer-book, but that she believed in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. There is never a hint of hypocrisy in her attitude. The fact that D'Urberville urged to her the veracity of his conversion seemed preposterously untruthful, and his calculations upon final salvation were innately repulsive to her. Prayer by one insignificant mortal for the purpose of changing the great Power's plans seemed to her utter folly. This philosophy she accepted, because it was her husband's, and because it seemed very reasonable to her. Hardy implies that whatever views Angel Clare held would have been followed by Tess. Yet there is no doubt that he guided her religious life along its natural inclination. His was the influence of a scholarly, refined, rather cautious sceptic upon a person who was by instinct a non-conformist. Her spiritual experience was colored wholly by her emotional life. She is portrayed as leading her life according to Angel Clare's opinions rather than by the dictates of her beliefs. When she lost confidence in him,

she discarded his simple faith and surrendered herself a second time to her old seducer, Alec D'Urberville.

The religious views of Sue Bridehead show two greatly different positions. The first shows her to be a brilliant young woman who through the advantage of cultural influences had consciously become unshackled from the creeds and tenets of Christian orthodoxy. There is a suggestion that her freedom in thinking was developed by her association with the University student who had supplied her with books treating of philosophy. To Jude Fawley's first sight she appeared congenially engaged in an ecclesiastical designing establishment; in reality she was greatly displeased by her "sweet, saintly, Christian business"<sup>44</sup> which required her to make Church texts and to look all day at figures of Christian martyrs and saints. As a relief from the tedium of her occupation, she bought some Greek statues of a foreigner and carried them home herself, although they were unwieldy and difficult to manage. She was willing to make the effort to secure them, saying "anything is better than those everlasting Church fal-lals."<sup>45</sup> When Miss Fontover, her employer, destroyed the figures, the youthful designer chose to uphold her own convictions and left the shop and Christminster. Leaving Christminster, the city of the great Christian writers, Newman, Pusey, Ward, and Keble, who in Jude's estimation made a place worthy of reverence, was to her a matter of little regret. In her mind those men did not loom very high in the history of the world.

44. Jude the Obscure, p. 101.

45. Ibid., p. 108.

Throughout her early acquaintance with Jude, Sue was continually perplexed about his humble credence. The model of Jerusalem at the exhibition to which she and Phillotson accompanied their school children held little inspiration for her. To her surprise Jude became so deeply absorbed in the miniature city that he forgot his surroundings. Although she examined it carefully enough to make a reproduction of it on the blackboard of her class room, she had no real interest in it. "I fancy we have had enough of Jerusalem,"<sup>46</sup> she remarked. "There was nothing first-rate about the place, or people, after all ---- as there was about Athens, Rome, Alexandria, and other old cities."<sup>47</sup> A few weeks later after her matriculation at the Melchester Normal School, when Jude suggested during the course of his walk with her that they rest in the Cathedral, she was almost vexed; she consented, but she expressed her preference for the railway station. "That's the center of the town life now. The Cathedral has had its day,"<sup>48</sup> she urged. Jude's preference for the devotional pictures of the early Christian masters of the Renaissance at Wardour Castle was a serious puzzle to her. She insisted that she was not trying to be modern, simply that her inclination was to the ancient rather than to the mediaeval point of view.

On the occasion of her flight from the Normal School and taking shelter in Jude's apartment she unfolded to him without affectation or bravado her freedom in thinking on spiritual affairs. Instead of a

46. Ibid., p. 123.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid., p. 158.

strident declaration about her denial of the faith Jude was immersed in, she quietly and unassumingly refused to join him in his evening prayers. Considerately she turned her back upon him while he went through his regular devotions. She candidly told him of her lack of reverence for the religion upheld by the University, asserting that it was so encased in mediaevalism she had "no respect for Christminster whatever, except in a qualified degree, on its intellectual side."<sup>49</sup> After Jude had read his Bible chapter, she offered to make over his New Testament according to a plan which she had originated and the Christminster friend approved. "Cutting up all the Epistles and Gospels into separate brochures, and rearranging them in chronological order as written"<sup>50</sup> distressed Jude. Maintaining her sacrilegious attitude and insisting upon the value of the plan as far as its literary merit was concerned, she proceeded to show him that "Solomon's Song" was ruined by the chapter headings. Jude could not understand that she was simply attempting to bring out the essential beauty of the song and to relieve its intense human interest from its mass of "ecclesiastical abstractions."<sup>51</sup> In her initial attempt to make him perceive that she objected not to the Bible but to its falsification by antiquated interpreters she was not successful, and she ceased to try --- yet Jude came in time to have the same liberal minded, objective attitude toward commonly-accepted religious views that she had held.

The second religious position of Sue<sup>1</sup> Bridehead was one of ab-

49. Ibid., p. 176.

50. Ibid., p. 178.

51. Ibid., p. 178.

ject reliance upon dogma. Under the terrible tragedy of the horrible death of her children she was unable to maintain her philosophy. In sheer desperation at her misfortunes she traveled mentally away from the Greek ideals she had found eminently satisfactory, and, coming under the influence of St. Silas's orthodoxy, accepted doctrines that she had previously scorned. After enlarging the views of Jude regarding life, customs, and morals, she herself became hopelessly dependent upon creed. Hardy implies in her turning to dogma of the Established Church a psychological reaction rather than a purely religious conversion. Naturally the terrific shock of her children's death made adjustment difficult; the only ease of mind she could find was in the elaborate, incense-burning High Church services at St. Silas's. In contrast to her spontaneous rejection of conventional faith, her reconciliation to systematic religion was one which required concentrated effort. With amazing thoroughness and mortifying severity, however, she assumed a course of self-abnegation and forced upon herself the execution of the Church's teaching. This she thought indicated the necessity of her returning to her once legal husband Phillotson, although she had been formally divorced from him. She renounced Jude whom she loved and remarried the man who sexually repelled her. Unafraid of herself under her old way of thinking, she found it necessary under the new to reinforce herself. To guarantee her intentions of continuing her second marriage to Phillotson, she even swore by the New Testament never to see Jude again. She herself admitted that she was beaten by superstition, but in the face of her suffering could not save herself from it. She realized that her orthodoxy was unnatural and forced yet was helpless to combat with circum-

stances. Thus Sue, the most independent thinker of all the heroines and owner of the most brilliant mind, is portrayed as leaning in the end on the same religious dogmas as women of far less brain power.

Hardy's treatment of woman's religion thus shows his attention to the revolutionary trend in religious thinking of the later nineteenth century. His heroines reflect both the Victorian attitude of accepting with little inquiry certain superficial tenets of faith and the modern initiative to form independent views of religion. He had depicted Cytherea and Elfride unquestioningly respecting observances which they little understood, but he has presented the defiance of Eustacia and the serious, if not profound, investigation of Paula; moreover, he has portrayed Sue as a subtle interrogator of religious views, who could discard conventional precepts. Hardy does not imply a highly developed spiritual life in women, although he does not deny the possibility of their religion having a real intellectual basis. The spiritual experiences of his women are greatly affected by their emotional reactions, or are involved in matters of conduct or conscience which the individual woman in the light of her civilized scruples cannot reconcile with her instinctive behavior. The clear, rational thinking of Sue Bridehead could not endure the trial of the death of her children; and she turned to the Established Church for solace and support, as less scholarly women had done. For this change of position Hardy implies that the blame should be attached to convention and not to the innate inability of women to maintain independence of religious views. Sue's faith was brought by convention to a test which was really unfair.

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The first aspect of the sexual nature of Hardy's women is their primitiveness. A significant phase of this quality is their unceasing interest in the other sex, their impulse to please men. Whatever else they may be interested in, they are always in the midst of fascinating love affairs. While Cytherea Graye was waiting, in a most straitened financial situation, for answers to her advertisements for work, she spent her time musing about the identity of her future husband. Simply gazing upon her left third finger would inspire a long series of romantic and sentimental conjectures concerning matrimony. Although Elfride Swancourt found her life at Endelstow very interesting, she responded eagerly to the novelty of masculine attention, Stephen Smith's, and her instinct to attract him became regnant. After her emotional life was once kindled, she gloried in its experiences. In the midst of Bathsheba Everdene's farm project, her supervision of the haying, sheep-branding, and marketing, she was never forgetful of her woman's power to charm. Even before she had undertaken this project, her thoughts had seemed "to glide into far-off though likely dramas in which men would play a part --- vistas of probable triumphs."<sup>52</sup> In spite of her remarkable success at the Casterbridge market, she was not quite satisfied with it on account of Farmer Boldwood's apparent failure to notice her. Because of his poverty Christopher Julian was not a suitable husband for the ambitious Ethelberta Petherwin; but the young widow was really in love with him. She spent

52. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 5.

her evenings in meditation over him, and he was apparently the chief inspiration of her little volume of love lyrics. Moreover, after entering public life, she took time to give her little sister Picotee advice about dealing with lovers. Eustacia Vye's entire existence was devoted to yearning for a great love. She knew that Wildeve trifled with her, but she loved on. "To be loved to madness --- such was her great desire. And she seemed to long for the abstraction called passionate love more than for any particular lover."<sup>53</sup> Being Wildeve's mistress had not satisfied her. After Clym Yeobright arrived at his home on Egdon, she took long airings with the expectation of a chance encounter with the strange young man; hoping to meet him, she even indulged in mummung, an activity she scorned. Pretty, gentle Anne Garland's existence was concerned with her alternate love affairs with the two sons of Miller Lovelace; she encouraged either one or the other until she finally settled upon Bob, the younger and less desirable of the boys. Almost all of Paula Power's negotiations regarding the reconstruction of Stancy Castle were colored by her emotional interests. Finding George Somerset, a London architect, very agreeable, she was willing to disregard her father's wish about employing the local contractor, Hamil, and to turn the project over to Somerset. She continually attempted to repress any emotional display, but her fondness for the young architect occupied her interests. At first she was very diffident toward his love-making and would not explicitly admit that she loved him; gradually she acknowledged to herself this real affection, and in the end abandoned her theory of moderation in

53. The Return of the Native, p. 79.

love. The desolation in Viviette Constantine's life, caused by her husband's absence and his selfish limitation of her interests, was entirely obliterated by her consuming love for the young astronomer, Swithin St. Cleve. Elizabeth-Jane Newson's interests were wrapped up in Donald Farfrae; she pursued her studies because she liked them, but she liked them doubly in the thought that she was becoming as learned as the young Scotchman. Félise Charmond, lover of mysteries and romance, was unhappy unless a man were in her presence. Women bored her. She cultivated persistently her talent --- that of lingeringly smiling her meanings to men. Grace Melbury, although a little Daphnean by nature, had only a slight notion of turning her education toward any project other than that of securing, at her father's instigation, a husband. With Tess Durbeyfield love was the chief motive for living. Throughout the long winter at Flintcomb-Ash Farm she toiled courageously, never quite desperate on account of the strength of her love for Angel Clare and of her hopefulness that he would return for her. Out of her unbounding love for him, she killed her seducer, and thoroughly enjoyed her few days' flight from justice in the company of her old lover. Although Sue Bridehead was farthest removed from pre-occupation with sex, the love instinct in her nature was very apparent.

The second aspect of primitiveness which Hardy implies in his delineation of woman is her display of jealousy toward others of her sex. In many instances this trait is shown at critical periods in their experience and determines decisions which might better be guided by reason; at other times it is of less importance; at all times it is instinctive. Although Bathsheba Everdene was greatly flattered by Sergeant Troy and loved him "in the way that only self-reliant women love when they abandon their

self-reliance,"<sup>54</sup> she was soon led by her discretion and common sense to realize that she should renounce him; she even made a trip to Bath for the particular purpose of rejecting him. Her intention, however, was changed by Troy's remark that he had seen a woman more beautiful than she. Unable to withstand this thrust at her vanity, and torn "between jealousy and distraction,"<sup>55</sup> she married him ---- to her very deep regret. Eustacia Vye's interest in the unworthy, fickle-hearted Wildeve was retained through her jealousy of the innocent Thomasin Yeobright; she had found him quite inadequate as a lover and had treated him with disdain as long as she had had no rival. That Wildeve might love Thomasin more than he did her caused her to confess to this once rejected lover the extent of her loneliness without him. Yet when Clym, a greater man, appeared on the heath, fearing his possible interest in the same Tamsie, she hastened that young woman's marriage to Wildeve, and not long after became the wife of the newcomer. Later she realized that as a result of these two marriages she had lost her opportunity for escaping the tedium of her existence; for Clym decided that his life work should keep him on Egdon Heath and Wildeve inherited a fortune that would have enabled both him and Eustacia to leave it. Sue Bridehead lost her self-control. "Her intellectuality does not save her from falling, at the most critical moment of her life, a victim to the most unintellectual of human frailties --- jealousy."<sup>56</sup> Until the arrival of Arabelle in Aldbrickham, Sue and Jude had lived in the same house in a purely spirit-

54. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 219.

55. Ibid., p. 297.

56. H. C. Duffin: Thomas Hardy, p. 150.

ual relationship. When Sue, by no means a sexless woman herself, perceived the intense sex appeal in Jude's former wife and realized the weakness of Jude under the influence of such a woman, she yielded to the consummation of her own union with him ---- a union which meant happiness but culminated in a great tragedy.

It is to be understood from Hardy's portrayal of the primitive qualities in women, that he regards the prominence of the physical element in their sexual nature. He does not exclude the spiritual phase of love, but he perceives the enormous physical force of the elemental woman.

According to Hardy's conception of woman she never becomes so thoroughly absorbed in an unusual undertaking that she forgets her sex. The conduct of Bathsheba Everdene in her farm project, Hardy's one portrayal of female assumption of a position ordinarily conceded to belong to a man only, demonstrates his belief in the persistent sexual attitude of woman. He questions only slightly Bathsheba's inherent executive ability or native capacity for business, but he reveals her as reinforcing these qualities with her essentially feminine attractions.

Throughout her administration she showed reliance upon her charm as a woman. Her appeal to the rustics for their cooperation was dominated by fundamental womanliness; a summons from her for one or two men would bring an immediate response from all of them, all eager to serve her; for a mere master they would hardly have left so spontaneously a congenial gathering at the malthouse, where a newcomer was relating his life story. Although she always maintained perfect poise and dignity in her formal dealings with the men she was conscious of the advantage of her beauty. She was always careful to dress faultlessly; at

the Casterbridge Corn Exchange she appeared in no rough, mannish clothes, but in distinctly feminine, even dainty attire. Her negotiations with the farmers were carried on in gentle but firm tones, and she was reasonable in listening to the arguments of her competitors. She was wise in observing unostentatious behavior and in taking advantage of her good looks to secure the prices she wanted for her grain. "In arguing on prices, she held to her own firmly, as was natural in a dealer, and reduced their persistently, as was inevitable in a woman."<sup>57</sup>

Still further evidence of the lack of her entire absorption in her undertaking was her interest in love affairs. She and her maid, who was infinitely lower in intelligence than she, are portrayed as indulging together in the questionable joke of sending a valentine anonymously to Farmer Boldwood. She and Fanny Robin are portrayed as becoming the victims to the same fascinating soldier, Sergeant Troy. The young farm mistress with her poise and tact, her exhilaration in her independent position, and her feeling of responsibility for the success of her project, was no more self-reliant in resisting her sexual instincts than the defenseless little peasant girl who worked for her. The gay deceiver himself, Sergeant Troy, was impressed with the "revelation of all women being alike at heart, even those so different in accessories as Fanny and this one beside him [Bathsheba]".<sup>58</sup>

Hardy implies also that regardless of woman's advance in scope and depth of intellectual activities she has not curbed her inherent sex in-

57. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 103.

58. Ibid., p. 351.

instincts. It is true that the shrewd, well educated Ethelberta displayed remarkable self-control, insisting that she "must take a practical view of affairs"<sup>59</sup> and attempting to follow the trend of the leading minds in town regarding the use of wisdom in matters of love; but Hardy does not indicate a very remarkable depth to her affection for Christopher Julian; to choose between a career in public life and marriage with a poor musician did not mean a great struggle. Paula Power, the woman of decidedly broad intellectual interests, had asserted to herself so much her advanced views on higher education and temperance in love that she had formed "the habit of self-repression at any new emotional impact;"<sup>60</sup> however, she became irritable and melancholy, and was poignantly distressed at learning of Somerset's seeming inferiority to her ideal of him; her untiring search on the continent to apologize for her apparently capricious behavior to him shows a vast variation between her theory and actual practice. Not all of the veneer of Grace Melbury's fashionable schooling kept her in the end from acknowledging her real preference for the humble cider-merchant, Giles Winterbourne. Evidently to show that education does not materially affect a woman's primitive emotions, Hardy has placed the cultured, refined Grace Melbury in juxtaposition with Marty South, a woman of the fields; in reading the Psalm and praying together over the body of Giles, and later in mourning together at his grave, both women demonstrated their great love. Both women suffered for their love in silence ---- Marty, because Giles did not reciprocate

59. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 156.

60. A Laodicean, p. 249.

her affection, and Grace, because he had died without recognizing the sacrifice she made for him. Another instance can be pointed out to substantiate Hardy's belief in the persistence of the elemental woman through educational attainments; that of the inherent likeness in sex nature between Sue Bridehead, the most intellectual of the heroines, and Arabella Donn, who exemplifies most obviously "the unvoiced call of woman to man."<sup>61</sup> Sue, as a result of her study and reading, had assumed an attitude of self-control ---- one which was compatible with her cultural tastes; yet when the need to make sure of the man confronted her, the impulse to please him was also present ---- just as it was with Arabella. Sue and Arabella are portrayed as being fundamentally similar as women, Sue with her appreciation of Jude's ideals in scholarship and Arabella with her scorn for books and study. Of course, between Jude and Sue there was the beautiful spiritual relationship which never existed between him and Arabella, yet Hardy implies that superior education in a woman does not change her inherent primitiveness in display of sex appeal.

The next phase of woman's morality to be analyzed in Thomas Hardy's novels is that of her standard in dealing with the male sex. Is she straightforward or inclined to use duplicity? What is the nature of any lack of straightforwardness, and what is the motive for such?

The extent to which the heroines indulged in flirtations is first pointed out. Cytherea Graye whispered a No with "the Yes accent"<sup>62</sup> to the proposal of her lover, Edward Springrove, and then waited in

61. Jude the Obscure, p. 41.

62. Desperate Remedies, p. 53.

trembling suspense as to the manner in which he would understand her reply. Fancy Day's annoyance to her lover, Dick Dewy, by too much spirit in her dancing with Farmer Shiner and by too vivacious conversation with the same rival, pleased her exceedingly. Bathsheba Everdene had a real contempt for unfair dealings in love, but her careless folly in sending a valentine to Farmer Boldwood as a means of playful retaliation for his failing to notice her at the Casterbridge Corn Exchange was productive of as much harm as a bit of designed misrepresentation would have been. To make amends for the childish caprice and to avoid the appearance of being a trifler with Boldwood's affections, she conscientiously attempted to persuade herself to a serious consideration of his impetuous offers of marriage. "She felt that as she had begun the game she ought to accept the consequences."<sup>63</sup> Her infatuation for Sergeant Troy changed her purpose, however. With Gabriel Oak she was essentially honorable; to his early proposal she had answered in a decided negative, and had taken pains to correct the false impression as to the large number of her suitors given him by her aunt. The ambition of Ethelberta Petherwin as a social climber led her to reject the man whom she most loved; her resort to the scheme of a brilliant marriage after the failure of her artistic career and her search for a husband satisfactory in position and wealth showed her capable of assuming a role of mercenary heartlessness. Anne Garland could not resist "the fearful pleasure of leading him on [Derriman]"<sup>64</sup>; she thoroughly en-

63. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 150.

64. The Trumpet Major, p. 60.

joyed the consciousness of being able to work him to irritation or complacency. Whether Paula Power was dissembler or coquette, George Somerset was unable to determine; she would apparently be interested in him ---- even make overtures to him ---- and then teasingly resist all of his advances to her. The explanation of her actions, of course, was that her affectation of the "modern" theory of moderation in love clashed with her genuine regard for the young man ---- at heart she was neither dissembler nor flirt. Sue Bridehead admitted to Jude that one reason for her marrying Phillotson was that she had yielded to her "love of being loved"<sup>65</sup> and had encouraged the old schoolmaster to love her; then to reconcile the flirtation with her conscience, she decided to make suitable reparation for it by marrying him.

Misrepresentations beyond the pale of coquetry are next treated. Fancy Day reported to her lover punctiliously of her harmless flirting with Farmer Shiner; of her guile in countenancing Vicar Maybold's proposal after she had become Dick's fiancée she remained judiciously silent. After Elfrida Swancourt had tired of her lover Stephen Smith, she was afraid to tell him straightforwardly of her change of feeling for him; instead of frankly admitting that she loved him no longer, she failed to keep an engagement with him and offered no explanation as to her actions. In her dealings with the supplanter of Stephen in her affections she was equally unfair. Her motive, of course, was preservation of her lover's regard. When she realized that he considered her his ideal, "a nineteenth-century young lady"<sup>66</sup> as unpractised in love as he,

65. Jude the Obscure, p. 286.

66. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 346.

she resorted to various evasions and half-truths to conceal from her experiences with former lovers. The admittances she made entangled her hopelessly; a complete confession of matters as they really were she seemed unable to make.

Eustacia Vye's actions show a combination of an inherent sense of honor, an intense hatred of her environment, and a passionately loving nature. Olym Yeobright she fervently loved because he was the finest man who had ever come into her life; to him she admitted her doubt as to their happiness in marriage; in no way did she conceal from him her longing for the throbbing life of Paris; she married him, knowing that he was determined never to return to France but trusting that she might persuade him in some way to change his project of service to the Wessex people. She loved him, but she admitted that she had seen in him a promise of the life she wanted; "she loved him rather as a visitant from a gay world to which she rightly belonged than as a man with a purpose opposed to that recent past of his which so interested her."<sup>67</sup> The marriage proved to be unhappy; yet she upheld her vows. After Olym became quite reconciled to living on Egdon as a furze gatherer, she sought relief in merriment, a village dance, which renewed relations with her former lover, Wildeve. However, she refused to let these continue, bravely asserting, "As a wife, at least, I've been straight."<sup>68</sup>

Viviette Constantine and Lucetta Templeman show a decidedly lower sense of honor in their dealings. When Viviette became aware of her

67. The Return of the Native, p. 236.

68. Ibid., p. 405.

pregnant condition, she decided to save herself, on the basis of redeeming her coming child from social ruin, by marrying the Bishop of Melchester, thus playing unfairly with two men, St. Cleve, the father of her child, and her ecclesiastic husband. H. C. Duffin considers this marriage the only wholly immoral thing that Hardy ever did.<sup>69</sup> Lucetta Templeman evaded a marriage with Henchard, after she had endeavored to secure it because of her former intimacies with him, and became the wife of Donald Farfrae, who she knew would not tolerate her indiscreet sex-behavior. Fearing this discovery, she tried to obliterate all traces of her irregularities and secured her letters to Henchard, which were incriminating evidence. The inference in the novel is that on her death-bed, immediately following the skimmington, she made to Farfrae at least a partial confession of her experiences.

Grace Melbury's lack of straightforwardness is implied in her diffidence in asserting her own convictions and in her yielding to the suggestions of her father regarding the choice of a husband. She was completely dazzled by the attention of Fitzpiers and let herself be drawn toward him by the irresistible force of his personality. Without really loving him, but appreciating the superior advantages that she would have as his wife, she married him, although she had been taught from childhood that Giles Winterbourne was to be her husband. In spite of her infatuation for the brilliant professional man, she did not overcome her genuine affection for her childhood lover. Her declaration to her father, a short time before the day of her marriage to Fitzpiers,

69. H. C. Duffin: Thomas Hardy, p. 32.

that she preferred her engagement to Giles to continue, the ambitious timber-merchant regarded as mere sentimental dalliance; had she candidly told him her reason for such a request, suspicion of Fitzpiers' infidelity, her father might have listened. In fact, she was rather pleased that her fiance could remove her distrust of him.

Fess Durbeyfield, like her predecessor, Elfride Swancourt, lacked integrity through wishing to keep her lover's good opinion. At Angel Clare's first proposal of marriage she acknowledged her preference for him as a husband, but insisted stammeringly that her lowly social position was incompatible with her becoming the wife of a parson's son. Her real reason, her relations with Alec D'Urberville, she concealed at all of Angel's succeeding offers, by pleas of her unworthiness, her lack of ladylikeness, and by various equivocations. Her conscience distressed her, and she made repeated resolutions to reveal her difficulty to her lover; but at appropriate times for disclosure, her courage would fail her ---- "her instinct of self-preservation was stronger than her candor."<sup>70</sup> Finally, steadied by her mother's counsel to suppress the details of her unfortunate past and persuaded that expediency demanded secrecy about it, she drifted into acquiescence of Angel's persistent suit. As the time for the wedding approached, her qualms of conscience were renewed. Because opportunities for oral confession presented themselves with less frequency during the preparations for the nuptials, she resorted to writing to him a complete narrative of the three or four years of her life before coming to Talbothays Farm. At his failure to receive the

70. Fess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 242.

letter, she was almost induced to believe that silence was expected of her; yet she made one final attempt immediately preceding the ceremony which Angel dismissed ---- for she gave the impression of being worried about trivial faults. Not until after the wedding, when her husband had disclosed his dissipation in London, did she tell her "story of her acquaintance with Alec D'Urberville and its results."<sup>71</sup>

Hardy thus implies a large degree of deception to be in the nature of woman. It should be noted however that he has not idealized his men characters. There are the scoundrels, Aenes Manston, Sergeant Troy, Damon Wildeve, and Alec D'Urberville ---- none of them lacking in personal charm ---- who made women their victims; there are also Henry Knight, Clym Yeobright, and Angel Clare who treated the women they loved with unpardonable cruelty. Evidently Hardy believes that men and women are not essentially different in moral nature; at any rate, the inference is that he discards the Victorian theory of the "finer clay" quality of women.

Hardy's attitude toward this tendency to duplicity in women is different toward the close of his novel-writing career from what it was at the beginning. In the earlier novels he implies that a woman is a creature of unaccountable whims and caprices, and not answerable for all of her artifices. He depicts Elfride Swancourt's purposeless love of sheer force over a man and says of her, "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

71. Ibid., p. 287.

to a man in like circumstances."<sup>72</sup> In the later novels he appears to be convinced that a woman is not inherently untruthful in her dealings with men; that simply owing to her experience and to her treatment by society she has been forced to the use of subterfuge to defend herself. He pictures Tess Durbeyfield as a woman who is ashamed of the apparent necessity for female evasiveness but who is not quite able to cast it aside. In her heart Tess said, "Is coyness longer necessary? Truth is truth between man and woman, as between man and man"<sup>73</sup>; yet she could not bring herself to a confession of her surrender to Alec D'Urberville. There is further indication of Hardy's own change of opinion in his analysis of Angel Clare's reconciliation to Tess's mistake: Angel "now began to discredit the old appraisements of morality. He thought they wanted readjusting. Who was the moral man? Who was the moral woman?"<sup>74</sup>

It should be noted also that to equalize his portrayal of female duplicity, Hardy has endowed his women with commendable traits also. The conscientious endeavor of Bathsheba to make reparation for her foolish escapade must not be forgotten. "It was not Bathsheba's way to do things furtively. With all her faults she was candour itself."<sup>75</sup> Of the schemes of Ethelberta her author says, "Her honesty was always making war upon her manoeuvres, and shattering their delicate meshes, to her great inconvenience and delay."<sup>76</sup> He balances women's propensity

72. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 313.

73. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 227.

74. Ibid., p. 433.

75. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 277.

76. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 348.

to use subterfuge by giving her prodigious ability to endure for the cause of her love. This trait is apparent in Elfrida Swancourt, but is most notable in Tess Durberfield. Tess, in the strength of her love, worked persistently and almost uncomplainingly at the most difficult tasks on Flintcomb-Ash Farm, too proud to ask for financial aid from Angel's family. Her final proof of her capacity for loving was her murder of D'Urberville in the hope of securing Angel's forgiveness. In spite of Hardy's portrayal of a lack of straightforwardness among women he implies that many fine traits are encompassed in their great capacity for loving.

In his novels Hardy has treated the attitude of women toward illicit sex relationships. He has portrayed her deference to public opinion in these matters, the tendency in her own mind to justify unlawful sexual intercourse, and her steps toward altering the existing system of sex behavior.

Cytheres Aldclyffe, the first of the heroines, greatly feared that the existence of her illegitimate child would be discovered. Betrayed and deserted by a wild army officer, she left her baby on the doorstep of a strange house, and carefully concealed her identity as its mother. A man whom she met a few months later and greatly loved she refused to marry on account of her moral unfitness. She chose to live a life of penance and suffering for her wrongdoing, yet there is evidence implying that she overcame her original sense of guilt; she kept in touch with her son and, when he reached manhood, manoeuvred to have him close to her in the capacity of steward of her estate.

Eustacia Vye had positive contempt for the opinion of the com-

munity where she lived and accordingly little fear of publicity; her violation of the Egdon social code she appraised by her own standard, which was a fastidious one. "as far as social ethics were concerned, Eustacia approached the savage state, though in emotion she was all the while an epicure."<sup>77</sup> For the sake of expediency she had carried on her affair with Wildeve with extreme caution, but her real consideration was her own self-respect and pride. When she had thought that Wildeve had deserted her and would marry the other woman, she had resolved to think no more of him. The bonfire, which had formerly been her signal for him to meet her, would not have been lighted, had she not thought him free to come to her again. "You did not think I would have lit it if I had imagined you to have become the husband of this woman. It is insulting to my pride to suppose that,"<sup>78</sup> she earnestly declared. The moral straightness of her marriage relation she had so jealously gloried in, that under Clym's scathing insinuations as to the nature of her relationship with Wildeve, she left her husband's wretched cottage and returned to her grandfather's home. Eustacia's second dealings with Wildeve show her innate self-respect rather than any fear of the opinion of others. On account of her pecuniary shortage, she was confronted with the necessity of accepting her old lover's financial assistance to arrange her departure from the heath. Although she was crushed by Clym's unjust treatment of her, she could not break her marriage vow for Wildeve. Neither did she think that she could receive money from him without feel-

77. The Return of the Native, p. 109.

78. Ibid., p. 70.

ing herself under serious obligation to him. "To ask Wildeve for pecuniary aid without allowing him to accompany her was impossible to a woman with the shadow of pride left in her; to fly as his mistress ---- was of the nature of humiliation."<sup>79</sup> Troubled by these two issues, she determined to go away, made ready for the flight, and exchanged signals with Wildeve for the midnight appointment to drive to Budmouth. When the time for the meeting came, evidently considering Wildeve "too poor a luxury,"<sup>80</sup> she committed suicide by drowning. Eustacia thus seems to have directed her conduct from the point of view of self-esteem rather than from that of public opinion.

Lady Viviette Constantine's solution of her problem indicates a great dread of public opinion. Having been informed that the death of her lion-hunting husband had occurred after her clandestine marriage to Swithin St. Cleve, she set about making plans for the immediate repetition of the ceremony. She reversed her decision at learning the great sacrifice in fortune that Swithin would make in marrying her and insisted that the young man go on an extensive tour in the pursuit of science. At first she was uneasy about her position, but adapted herself to it gradually. Of her in this situation Hardy remarks that "women the most delicate get used to strange moral situations."<sup>81</sup> She became reconciled to her dilemma in the anticipation that at the end of the four years' pilgrimage, Swithin, having reached the age of twenty-five and become en-

79. Ibid., p. 421.

80. Ibid., p. 422.

81. Two on a Tower, p. 273.

titled to his fortune, would return to claim her by a legal marriage. The generous woman, shortly after the departure of Swithin's ship, found a reason to regret her altruistic measures --- evidence of her pregnancy. After vain attempts to reach her youthful lover, she hid her disgrace by accepting the Bishop's proposal, ---- her excuse being her concern over the child's social status.

Lucetta Templeman and Felice Charmond feared public opinion. The detection of Lucetta's infractions of the moral code caused her death. Although she was of a good family and had been well educated, she had been left at her parents' death to manage her life as best she could. Lonely and living in a boarding house, she had welcomed the opportunity of nursing Michael Henchard through a lingering illness. Intimacies had resulted from this friendship which both wished to legalize by marriage. After her removal to Casterbridge, Donald Farfrae interested her far more than Henchard. She decided to accept Farfrae's proposal of marriage, justifying her change of mind toward the mayor on the charge of his having sold his wife. Her conscience was quite free from scruples, but, fearing that Farfrae would not overlook her lightness of character, she preferred to live under the shadow of her secret and to trust that her husband would never learn of her past. By proving herself a faithful and loving wife she believed that she could make reparation for her concealment. Her letters to Henchard, which contained the incriminating evidence, she managed to secure ---- but not before they had been examined by the crowd at Peter's Finger Inn. The skimmington which occurred a few evenings later as a result of these discoveries was such a shock to Lucetta that she died ---- a victim to the standards of other people.

Although Felice Charmond was very much dissatisfied with her life in Hintock, and delighted in amazing the people there with her freakishness and tempestuousness, she feared greatly publicity of her affair with Dr. Fitzpiers. It is to be noted that until she became unable to resist her fascination for him, which had its origin in a bit of deliberate but harmless flirtation, there had been on her part nothing in her life of which she should have been ashamed. Although she was his mistress, she attempted to convince the man's wife, Grace, that she was merely trifling and coquetting with him. Finding that Grace was unconvinced of the innocency of her association, she made a full confession of its real nature ---- and then was in immediate consternation lest the outraged wife make a public example of her. When Fitzpiers came to her after the blow from the enraged Melbury's powerful swing, she carefully effaced all evidence of his presence in her house and managed his secret departure from Hintock. Her further relations with him were carried on far away from Hintock, on the Continent, where she evidently counted on her obscurity to screen her indiscretion.

Tess Durbeyfield's motive for concealing her relations with Alec D'Urberville had no incentive from a fear of public opinion; she considered nothing but the estimate Angel Clare would have of her. Had she valued highly the estimate of society, she could have easily induced Alec to marry her; she preferred to endure the taunts of her mother rather than to submit to what she knew would be a humiliating marriage. Viewed in the light of her home environment and of her mother's low ideals, Tess's decision was remarkable. She effaced herself as much as possible before her baby's birth, because she was horrified by "shreds

of conventions"<sup>82</sup> ---- although she could not quite reconcile them with the natural world. She felt that the moral hobgoblins were terrifying her without reason, but she continued to make herself feel that she was "a figure of Guilt."<sup>83</sup> Instead of parting with the child, she preferred to keep and care for the frail little thing herself. On various occasions she spoke in bitterness, wishing that she and the baby both were dead, yet people noticed her genuine fondness for him. Instead of becoming a recluse and consequently a greater burden on her already impoverished family she yielded to the illuminating dictates of her common sense and went into the fields to work. Hardy suggests that in her heart she really doubted her sinfulness. "Alone in a desert island would she have been wretched at what had happened to her? Not greatly."<sup>84</sup> She bore herself with dignity and "looked people calmly in the face at times, even when holding the baby in her arms."<sup>85</sup> Through the friendliness and sympathy of her companions her moral sorrow passed away. The serious illness and death of her baby made her forget entirely his offense against society in coming into the world. Her efforts to preserve his life in this world and her solicitude as to his salvation in the next were singularly sincere and touching.

At the end of the two years following her trouble, two "silent reconstructive years,"<sup>86</sup> she had recovered her grip on life sufficiently

82. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 108.

83. Ibid., p. 108.

84. Ibid., p. 115.

85. Ibid., p. 115.

86. Ibid., p. 131.

to determine to annihilate her past. With enthusiasm and relish for life she left home to work as dairymaid at Talbothays, and felt that in her determination to assert her right as an individual she had actually "laid a new foundation for her future."<sup>87</sup> The only restriction she believed herself to be under was the self-imposed prohibition that she should never marry. The fact that Angel Clare appeared to her in the light of a deity, intensified her inclination to underrate her own qualifications, and to view her unfortunate tests of life as a greater sin than in her mind she actually thought it was.

Sue Bridehead had little inclination to conceal the irregular phases of her behavior. Apparently she had entered the association with the Christminster student in no furtive way, and had endured without complaint her father's refusal to take her back after the young man died. Without any attempt to hide her past from Jude, she frankly and unapologetically told him of her life with the undergraduate. When she found life unendurable with Phillotson, instead of running away, she courageously informed him of her wishes to be with Jude and gave him the courtesy of showing acquiescence to her proposal. Even after she and Jude had formed their irregular union she took few measures to veil it. Out of consideration for the little son of Jude by Arabella, she made the concession of being called Mrs. Fawley, but she would not pretend to the Christminster landlady that she was a married woman. "Sue had not the art of prevarication."<sup>88</sup> In addition to admitting to her

87. Ibid., p. 140.

88. Jude the Obscure, p. 392.

critical questioner that she was not married, she explained to her the conditions, Jude's and her own former unhappy marital ventures, which had entered into making their unconventional union.

This examination of woman's reaction to the matter of transgressions against the moral code for female conduct shows a great change from the attitude of the first heroine, Cytherea Graye, to that of the last one, Sue Bridehead. Throughout his novels Hardy seems to imply that woman, through fear of the lash of public opinion, resorts to concealment of anomalous conduct, rather than through conviction of the infallibility of behavior criteria. In some of the earlier characters he portrays a feeling of defiance toward recognized standards; but in Sue Bridehead he presents the woman who, not only disregards them, but unflinchingly refuses to admit that her infractions are guilt. That is, her conduct did not appear to her as being guilty until after the terrible tragedy in her life which unbalanced her mind and corrupted her intellect which had "played like lambent lightnings over conventions and formalities."<sup>89</sup>

Hardy has portrayed in his novels women who display a tendency to alter existing systems of sex morality. A distinctly liberal attitude toward irregular conduct is found in an early heroine, Bethsheba Everdene,. Although she knew that Troy, her husband, had greatly loved Fanny Robin, she insisted that the girl's dead body, which Gabriel Oak had brought from the Casterbridge Union, be laid out in her own parlor for the night preceding the funeral and not be left at the church.

89. Ibid., p. 410.

Even after she learned that Fanny had died in giving birth to Troy's child, she restrained her resentment ---- until he ungenerously refused to treat her with a semblance of the regard he acknowledged having for the dead woman. Then, giving a "long, low cry of measureless despair and indignation,"<sup>90</sup> she left the house until after the funeral and burial of Fanny. Later when she discovered the disturbed condition of the flower bulbs which Troy had planted with painstaking care on the grave, she collected the roots and replanted them with sympathetic attention; moreover, she sent a request to the church-wardens for them to repair the spout of the gutter which had directed the stream of water on the grave. Her magnanimity knew no bounds; when Troy died at the hands of Farmer Boldwood, she prepared his body for burial and coolly directed that it be interred by the side of Fanny Robin ---- whose tomb he had erected at Bathsheba's expense ---- and had his name inscribed on the stone beneath Fanny's.

A few of the women are presented as asking for a similar standard of morality for men and women. In the portrayal of Eustacia Vye, Hardy suggests the fairness of a single basis of conduct. After Clym had adjusted himself to the humbleness of manual labor on the heath, he could sing while he gathered the furze boughs and bound the faggots. To his ambitious wife this complacent submission to the monotony of his occupation was bitterly humiliating. His efforts to make her have a less forlorn outlook upon their destiny were of little effect. Yet she decided that if Clym was able to be lighthearted she also was justified

90. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 353.

in finding pleasure; she attended a village picnic at East Egdon, feeling that a dance on the green would drive away her abject despair and its diversion bring a little of the satisfaction Olym found in his work.

To Wildeve she declared, "I began a new system of going to that dance, and I mean to stick to it. Olym can sing merrily; why should not I?"<sup>91</sup>

In the portrayal of Grace Melbury there is additional evidence of a woman's demand for herself the code of conduct assumed by a man. When she left her father's house, at the sound of her husband's voice, she fled to Giles Winterbourne, expecting to secure his assistance in reaching a friend at Sherton. Because the night was exceptionally stormy, Grace accepted her old lover's offer of his poor little cottage; here she stayed while Giles unselfishly withdrew to a miserable hovel where on account of the exposure he contracted a grave case of pneumonia. In spite of her solicitous treatment of him and the professional services of her husband, whom she had summoned as a last resort, the stricken man passed away. After Giles' death, Grace replied to Fitzpiers' questions in a way which would compromise her with the deceased man. To Fitzpiers' inquiry, "Am I to draw from that regarding her relationship with Giles the obvious, the extreme inference?"<sup>92</sup> she replied in the affirmative. "It was her last opportunity of repaying him for the slights which she had borne at his hands so docilely."<sup>93</sup> The sincerity of her love for Giles is in no way belittled, but her pleasure in finding retaliation for Fitz-

91. The Return of the Native, p. 336.

92. The Woodlanders, p. 403.

93. Ibid.

piers' mistreatment of her is made very apparent. Why should Fitzpiers begrudge her one lover beside himself when he had had so many?

The most eloquent plea for a single standard is in Tess Durbeyfield's suffering. Her marriage to Angel Clare took place after an extended betrothal on account of her penitential mood as a result of her surrendering herself to Alec D'Urberville. On the night of the wedding Tess and Angel exchanged confidences about their past. Angel's confession greatly surprised Tess; he had during a state of doubt and difficulty gone to London and "plunged into eight-and-forty hours' dissipation with a stranger"<sup>94</sup>; he had never repeated the offense, but felt that Tess should be told as a matter of perfect frankness and honor. He asked for Tess's forgiveness and received it. She was almost glad of this affair, for it gave her an opportunity to acquaint him with a similar incident of her own experience, which she revealed, "murmuring the words without flinching, and with her eyelids drooping down."<sup>95</sup> But Angel Clare did not forgive Tess. Although she had generously condoned his mistake, forgiveness, he thought, hardly applied to her case. The pair separated, Tess to support herself and Angel to find adjustment in South America. Not until she was subjected to the humiliation of Alec D'Urberville's pursuit and the further impoverishment of her family by the loss of their home did she admit severe treatment from Angel. Finally, however, she wrote to him, reproving him severely, "You know that I did not intend to wrong you ---- why have you wronged me? ----

94. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 286.

95. Ibid., p. 287.

I will try to forget you. It is all injustice I have received at your hands."<sup>96</sup> If Angel's record had been spotless, she would have been less resentful.

Thus in Tess Hardy has courageously expressed an appeal for a single moral code for men and women; this he suggests in the rather perverse Eustacia, and more fully treats in the sentimental Grace. Finally he does speak out frankly his belief that it is no more woman's part than man's to pay the penalty for breaking conventional standards of morality.

The frankest expression in Hardy's novels of the woman's right to live her life according to her own conviction is to be found in the portrayal of Sue Bridehead. As a child she had participated in boys' games and had scorned her aunt's attempts to make her behavior prudent. As a young woman she formed a friendship with a University student in London, which entailed sharing an apartment with him, and was consequently prohibited by her father from returning home at the young man's death. This association was a realization of wishes expressed by earlier heroines that men and women might be friends without becoming lovers. Ethelberta Petherwin would have liked Ladywell as a friend but did not wish to marry him; she desired "warm friendship between herself and him, as well as all her lovers, without that insistent courtship-and-marriage question."<sup>97</sup> Felice Charmond, in attempting to maintain to Grace Melbury the innocence of her love for Fitzpiers, declared that in her world real friendships existed between respectable men and women. Sue demon-

96. Ibid., p. 471.

97. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 316.

strated the possibility of such a relationship, for she and her Christminster friend went about as two men friends. Although she thought "that, in a proper state of society, the father of a woman's child will be as much a private matter of hers as the cut of her underlinen,"<sup>98</sup> she kept her relation with him a strictly intellectual one. Later when she made Jude's acquaintance, she showed poise and ease of manner toward him; there was no fluttering, breathlessness, evasiveness or nervousness in her bearing, as there had been in Elfrida Swancourt's when she first met Stephen Smith.

Likewise with Jude, after she had severed an unconsummated marriage with the old schoolmaster Phillotson, she insisted upon a non-sexual union ---- at first. Unlike Viviette Constantine she could fathom a real friendship between a man and a woman; when the young astronomer told Viviette that all he needed beyond his beloved science was one warm friend and indicated that she should be such a friend, her reply was, "You would have to become a woman before I could be that, publicly; or I a man."<sup>99</sup> Besides Sue's motive to uphold her theory of the loveliness of a spiritual relation between man and woman, there were various conditions which reinforced her inclination toward a sexless intimacy with Jude: Phillotson's liberal release of her from the semblance of her marriage to him, Jude's meeting with Arabella on the night he was to go to Marygreen during the serious illness of Aunt Drusilla Fawcley, and their anomalous position as legal mates of other persons.

98. Jude the Obscure, p. 284.

99. Two on a Tower, p. 68.

Although Sue was greatly relieved by the granting of the two divorces which made her and Jude free in the eyes of the law, and although she submitted herself to Jude because she feared the hold Arabella had upon him, she was unwilling to legalize her relations to Jude by a second formal marriage. She had found marriage to Phillotson so unfortunate that she feared a second contract to be cherished under a Government stamp. "Ugh, how horrible and sordid,"<sup>100</sup> she had insisted was the binding by law in sexual matters. The dignity and social advantages in marriage that most women of her time felt she was willing to forego. Any suggestion of publishing banns after her natural marriage to Jude depressed her. The arrival of Jude's son by Arabella made her consider deliberately and resolutely a legal marriage ---- at a Superintendent Registrar's office by virtue of its privacy. How the sordidness of securing a certificate sickened her! She and Jude had actually entered the office with Jude's old Marygreen friend, Mrs. Edlin, as their sole attendant; thoroughly disgusted by a perfunctory service between a sul- len young soldier and timid, sadyed bride, they were convinced of the inappropriateness of a public office for their own wedding. A service at their own parish church frightened Sue as much as the registry one. Both she and Jude were persuaded that they were not strong enough, or perhaps too sensitive, for the ordeal and that the contract would ruin their dream of happiness. One final concession they made in the interest of Jude's son, who was taunted by the neighborhood children about the queer marital relations of his parents. The unusual couple went away

100. Jude the Obscure, p. 306.

from Aldbrickham for several days and let it be known on their return that they had been legally married; in reality their status was unchanged.

For the sake of upholding her attitude upon sex relationships, Sue was able to endure many phases of unpleasantness. Believing that there was nothing very exceptional in her views, she maintained, "Everybody is getting to feel as we do. We are a little beforehand, that's all."<sup>101</sup> For some time she and Jude felt that their union was like a return to Greek joyousness, for they were without care, sickness or sorrow. The first actual trouble was the decline in Jude's trade; the apparent attempt to satisfy their neighbors only resulted in arousing even greater suspicion of their mysterious conduct and in a noticeable diminution in the number of orders for headstones and epitaphs. Although Jude and Sue felt no wickedness or shame, they were somewhat depressed by this Aldbrickham distrust. Finding that they were misunderstood, they resolved to leave that town. Throughout the preparations for moving, which necessitated disposal at auction of most of their possessions, Sue showed no sign of weakening in her faith. The second great test of her confidence in her principle was the serious and extended illness of Jude which threw the burden of supporting him and their children upon her. This responsibility and the humble occupation it imposed upon her did not undermine her courage. She felt consolation that in spite of a relentless world she had found happiness, until Jude's affliction came; she worked without complaint, first at helping Jude with his own trade and finally at selling pastry at country fairs.

101. Ibid., p. 339.

The supreme trial of her assurance in herself and in her irregular union, which came after the return to Jude's beloved Christminster, she was unable to meet. Hardy has devised an unreasonable, horrible test for her, the death of her two children at the hands of Jude's son, and the miserable suicide of the unhappy child. Even before returning to Christminster, Sue had to combat a little shaking of her complacency; Arabella's unkind insinuations at Kennetbridge about the inherent respectability in legal marriage had annoyed her. Seeing Phillotson in the Remembrance Day throng made her experience a curious dread of him. Difficulties in finding lodgings did not prompt her to conceal the fact of her irregular union from the suspicious Christminster landladies, and yet she was becoming a trifle rebellious and thoroughly despondent over her situation. In the face of her unpleasant experiences she managed to control herself admirably, showing remarkable patience toward little Jude and his strange, unchildish questions, and extreme anxiety about her lover's health and comfort. Jude's solicitude in turn about her own condition seemed to compensate for many annoyances; temporarily buoyed up by it, she regarded the landlady's refusal to furnish lodgings as no disgrace ---- hardly a handicap. Yet beneath her apparent complacency Hardy implies that she was becoming unsettled in her attitude. Then, under the overwhelming blow in the death of the children, she naturally lost her self-reliance and repudiated her right to disregard recognized standards for sex relationships. To her this denial of her theory meant not the legalizing but the renouncing of her natural marriage; no longer did she feel satisfied with the divorces which she once believed had relieved her and Jude of any obligations to their respective mates.

She assumed the belief of the sacramental view of marriage, asked to be reinstated, by the repetition of the church service, as Phillotson's wife, and approved Jude's remarriage to Arabella. Hardy implies that a morbid mental condition brought on by intense suffering over the loss of the children caused her to submit to the extreme literal interpretation of conventional sex behavior. She acknowledged herself beaten and without fighting strength to strike back.

In Sue, Hardy has portrayed the modern woman in her attempt to deny sex and also in her more normal acceptance of it. At first she exhibited a quality of sexlessness but abandoned it when she perceived the strength of the sexual instinct. Although she had not regarded this as a necessary evil, she prided herself upon being able to repress it. When she did surrender to it, she felt at first that she had somewhat lowered herself; yet as her intimacy with Jude continued, she seemed to believe that the spiritual and physical union of man and woman is an ideal relationship.

Hardy implies that the persecution of society caused Sue to sever her beautiful union with Jude and to return to a relationship repugnant to her but generally recognized as being quite moral because it was regular; her decision was responsible too for Jude's renewal of his sordid marriage. The horrible tragedy that caused her to acknowledge the precepts of convention was indirectly due to the force of social prejudice; Little Father Time killed the two babies and himself because Christminster landladies questioned Sue's respectability and refused her lodging on account of the burdensome children. On account of this awful performance she came to feel that her life with Jude had been sinful. Morbidly blaming herself and finding a certain relief in self-mor-

tification, she decided to make reparation by adjusting herself to the precepts of convention. Her remarriage to Phillotson was in the spirit of penance. Society would not allow a man and a woman of high ideals to direct their lives along a basis of their own intrinsically fine and honorable convictions, but forced them to submit to regulations whose only real binding quality was their legality. Sue and Jude had made the sex relationship one of beauty and dignity; society belittled it by recognizing only its baser side.

Hardy's conception of woman in the marriage relation has been studied. He is not concerned with the single woman who has no sexual interests. With the exception of a few colorless females like Faith Julian, whose chief pleasure was browsing in museums, and Charlotte De Stency, whose personality was outshone by the brilliant Paula Power, Hardy has not portrayed a spinster.

The consideration of marriage as a means of support has been found to some extent; yet no heroine wished to marry simply to gain a livelihood. In a few instances the woman to save her family or some member of it from financial embarrassment agrees to a distasteful marital alliance. On account of Aeneas Manston's officious pecuniary assistance to Cytherea Graye's brother, the young lady felt that the only honorable reparation she could make was marriage to the benefactor. She is pictured as trying to persuade herself that her position as such a man's wife was preferable to that of a homeless dependent. Even the artful schemer, Ethelberta Petherwin, did not seek a brilliant marriage just to appease her own greediness for wealth. Finding that her novel-telling scheme was failing financially, she abandoned it, and her love

for the poor musician as well, and set out to find a suitable husband, "some man she might respect, who would maintain her in such a stage of comfort as should, by setting her mind free from temporal anxiety, enable her further to organize her talent and provide suitable incomes for them her family and herself."<sup>102</sup> Her search was vigorous, and her investigation of the financial resources and family trees of her prospects was thorough ---- until she found the gentleman who met her specifications in wealth and genealogy.

The incentive to rise by marriage to a higher social status than that of her family is not pronounced in the Hardy woman. Fancy Day used a starvation campaign against her father to secure his consent to her marriage with a tranter's son, whom the ambitious peasant regarded as being inferior to the husband that she with her superior education was entitled to have. Ethelberta Petherwin's comprehensive scheme of improving the position of her entire family, not merely her own rating, has been mentioned above. Eustacia Vye, who married Clym Yeobright expecting to realize her dream of a life in Paris, really loved him. The woman who most consciously allowed social aspiration to determine her choice of husband was Grace Melbury. She had been educated at a fashionable school and could not help letting the advantages of a marriage with a cultivated professional man outweigh those of settling down with a cider and apple merchant. Even in this instance Hardy implies that something beyond mere acquisition determined her preference. "The possibilities of a refined and cultivated inner life ---- rather than any vulgar

102. The Hand of Ethelberta, p. 239.

idea of marrying well"<sup>103</sup> caused her to yield to the fascination of Dr. Fitzpiers. If she had not been buoyed up by her father's insistence upon the eligibility of her charming suitor, she might have adjusted herself to Hintock life and have allowed her engagement to Giles Winterbourne to continue. Throughout Fitzpiers' courting of her she was conscious of a curious dread of him and intermittently felt a revival of her old attachment for Giles. She partially realized that nonessentials were guiding her decision rather than sterling qualities.

The number of marriages that are made purely because of the woman's desire for a home and family is likewise small. The Victorian insistence upon the theory that a woman's only place in society is the home concerned Hardy in no way, although he does not portray her in antagonism to the domestic ideal.

A very few of the heroines are depicted as being thoroughly domestic in disposition. Thomasin Yeobright was by temperament fitted to lead a quiet, uneventful life as housekeeper and homemaker; she asked for nothing beyond an adoring and attentive husband, children, and a comfortable home. Money and social position were matters of secondary consideration ---- her baby's health and well-being she would never sacrifice. Besides to her the heath was "a nice wild place to walk in."<sup>104</sup> She was one of the fortunate girls who could adapt herself to whatever place her destiny had brought her. Satisfaction with one's environment was thus the basic element of her attitude toward life. After the tragic

103. The Woodlanders, p. 207.

104. The Return of the Native, p. 413.

death of her faithless husband she rather easily adjusted herself to a marriage with the serene, cheerful reddleman, Diggory Venn. Anne Garland is introduced "measuring out lengths of worsted for a fringed rug that she was making."<sup>105</sup> Charming, capable, and dignified, she anticipated and wished nothing beyond settling down in a pleasant home. Fancy Dey's chief domestic interest was needlework, to which she devoted herself assiduously in the interest of personal adornment. Possibly on account of her superior educational advantages she assumed a somewhat flippant attitude toward housewifery, considering "the every day" table furnishings quite appropriate for an informal unexpected guest instead of laboriously changing to the company linen and silver as her step-mother insisted upon doing. Yet there is no doubt that Fancy in a home of her own would be observant of the fine points of domestic skill.

Hardy's greatest feminine creations are not lacking in domestic traits, but their first interests are not the home. All of Bathsheba Everdene's domesticity was affectation. After the shearing supper when she remained at the head of the table in the midst of the singing and merrymaking of her employers, she busied herself with knitting ---- she realized that so occupied she made a very pleasing spectacle. Needlework in itself she hated. Liddy's suggestion that she spend the time of her seclusion from her husband in hemming handkerchiefs or in finishing her sampler provoked her greatly. Eustacia Vye appreciated her unfitness for becoming the wife of an altruistic schoolmaster by her remark, "Some-

105. The Trumpet-Major, p. 3.

106. The Return of the Native, p. 234.

times I think there is not in Eustacia Vye that which will make a good homespun wife,"<sup>106</sup> yet she adjusted herself, reluctantly, of course, to the simple life in the cottage at Aldernorth. Tess Durbeyfield was essentially a creature of the out-of-doors. On account of her family's shiftlessness she had been obliged to assume some household duties ---- taking care of her numerous brothers and sisters and helping with the family washing were tasks she dutifully performed. Haymaking, harvesting, and milking were work she preferred. On account of her love for Angel Clare she naturally intended to adapt herself to a thoroughly domestic life; and she could cook and sew, although cooking and sewing were not her instinctively chosen tasks. If work of this kind were to be required of her, she could do it efficiently. The intellectual Sue Bridehead could competently manage household affairs. When she went away from Phillotson, she left the cupboards in excellent condition, the keys in their exact locations, and her housekeeping accounts in perfect balance. When she went to Jude, she "kept house, and managed everything"<sup>107</sup> on his slender income. Furthermore, she did not rebel at having little Jude come to live with them, and treated the queer youngster with kindness and motherliness. Her own children she greatly loved and cared for; there is not the slightest evidence of her neglect or indifference toward them; she did not resent in the least their presence. On the other hand, there is no particular exultation in her motherhood. Home-making and child-bearing she took for granted as necessary facts of life.

Thus Hardy does not suggest in his conception of woman any

107. Jude the Obscure, p. 303.

glorification of her motherhood; according to his portrayal she does not make a fetish of the home. He designates neither the desire for a home nor yearning for children as the primary incentive for marriage; but he does emphasize the love instinct which "reaches to the core of human nature."<sup>108</sup> Most of the women are fundamentally interested in their mates and in association with them. Suggestions of joy in simply being in the lover's presence are to be found in the marriage of Eustacia and Clym in spite of its unfortunate ending. "When it rained they were charmed, because they could remain indoors together all day with such a show of reason; when it was fine they were charmed, because they could sit together on the hills."<sup>109</sup> The abounding happiness of being in the company of the lover is depicted in the courtship of Tess and Angel at Talbothays Dairy, where the two were thrown together in their work. When they drove to the station to deliver the milk-cans, "they were so absorbed in the sense of being close to each other that they did not begin talking for a long while."<sup>110</sup> During their unconventional intimacy Jude and Sue also displayed unaffected delight in working and playing together. They could take a walk together through the fields and anticipate with complacency a cold dinner on account of it. "The pair ---- were so absorbed in their own situation that their surroundings were little in their consciousness."<sup>111</sup> Their holiday excursions they unreservedly enjoyed. Upon Arabella "that complete mu-

108. S. C. Chew: Thomas Hardy, p. 178.

109. The Return of the Native, p. 283.

110. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 237.

111. Jude the Obscure, p. 305.

tual understanding, in which every glance and movement was as effectual as speech<sup>112</sup> was wholly lost. At the Great Wessex Agricultural Show they thoroughly enjoyed themselves, combining amusement with instruction at small expense, admiring their own work, the model of Christminster, listening to the music, smelling the roses, and inspecting the exhibits. The whole day's outing was a bit of unalloyed gladness to both of them. Neither cared for social position, or ambition ---- their sweet association was sufficient.

Hardy in his conception of woman implies that she attempts to meet the masculine ideal of a wife. Cytherea Graye is pictured as spending her time in contemplation of Edward Springrove's specifications for his wife, "A child among pleasures, and a woman among pains,"<sup>113</sup> and in silent evaluation of herself by them. Although Elfride Swancourt had gloried in her despotic ruling of Stephen Smith's heart and had accepted his own underreting of himself, she became docilely attentive to her next and greater lover, Henry Knight. On account of her idolization of him she grew to assert herself less and to expect his tyranny over her. Because he told her that he did not believe in the fashionable theory of the day, that woman was justified in practising wiles upon men, she attempted to conceal from him her previous love affairs, which had been in no way disgraceful. She did realize the absurdity of his unreasonable requirement, that the woman whom he was to marry should be innocent of previous, however harmless, participation in affairs of the

112. Ibid., p. 344.

113. Desperate Remedies, p. 24.

heart; she even defended herself to the extent of saying, "All these together [accomplishments] are so much rubbish because I ---- accidentally saw a man before you!"<sup>114</sup> yet in the next moment she completely capitulated to his standard, confiding, "If I had known you had been coming, what a nunnery I would have lived in to be good enough for you."<sup>115</sup> Elizabeth-Jane Newson and Lucetta Templeman both gauged themselves by their conception of the worth of the man they loved, the former by trying to reach the level of Farfrae's understanding, and the latter by concealing from him her indiscreet past. Lucetta had no interest in activities aside from her husband's; she either accompanied him as much as possible in his business dealings or remained at home in eager anticipation of his return from work. In the same way Lady Constantine threw herself into the scientific investigations to which her youthful lover was devoted.

In the union of Bathsheba Everdene and Gabriel Oak Hardy has portrayed a satisfactory marriage based on the spirit of good fellowship and mutual understanding. His first proposal she had scorned ---- he had confidently come with a lamb for a betrothal present and had informed Bathsheba's aunt that he would be very glad to marry the young lady. To Bathsheba herself he enumerated the various advantages that she as his wife might have: a gig, birds, flowers, chickens, and a piano after two years, which he could accompany with his flute. He did not consider that she might not value so highly these inducements to marri-

114. A Pair of Blue Eyes, p. 380.

115. Ibid., p. 381.

age. The triumph in a matrimonial conquest she admitted, but she could see no particular glory in one for herself unless for love. Quite independent of his or anyone's opinions, she appraised his offer, decided that her advantages outweighed his, and gave him a point blank refusal. After her tempestuous matrimonial venture with Francis Troy, which had ended in a double tragedy, the killing of Troy by Farmer Boldwood, and the confinement of the latter to an insane asylum for life, Bathsheba was considerably reduced in her own estimation and her conceit was less marked. Throughout the period of her farm managership and her marriage she had relied, unconsciously at first but consciously at last, on Gabriel Oak. She had learned to appreciate the sterling qualities of the man who had never ceased to love her. Their marriage promised to be happy, for "there was that substantial affection which arises --- when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other's character."<sup>116</sup> To Gabriel she relinquished her share in the management of Weatherbury Farm. There was a lovely feeling of comradeship between the two, but Bathsheba wished the business to be conducted by her husband and her participation in it to be merely accessory.

The last two great heroines, Tess and Sue, identified themselves with the interests of the men they loved. Tess's entire outlook on life was dominated by the ideals of Angel Clare. His decision to become a farmer led him to consider the wisdom of marrying a woman who would be adapted to farm life, one who understood dairy work and poultry and who

116. Far from the Madding Crowd, p. 468.

could "direct a field of laborers in an emergency, and estimate the value of sheep and calves."<sup>117</sup> That her own training and environment had made her competent to meet this requirement made Tess very happy. That her experience had been such as to make her moral standard apparently lower than Angel's grieved her exceedingly. "To her sublime trustfulness he was all that goodness could be."<sup>118</sup> Although he refused to forgive her transgression of yielding to Alec, her attitude toward him was one of abject slavery. She did plead and argue with him slightly, but at his indisposition to change his opinion, she allowed him to make the decision about their future. In the face of his desertion of her she upheld him to her friends and to Alec; she even made excuses to them for the offer he was reported to have made to Izz Huett, to have her accompany him to South America as his mistress. When Tess was taken in custody by the government officials at Stonehenge, on account of her murder of D'urberville, she surrendered almost gladly. The few days of supreme happiness in her flight from justice with Angel compensated for the months of suffering at Flitcomb-Ash Farm. She faced conviction and death bravely, murmuring, "This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me."<sup>119</sup> Sue Bridehead submissively accepted the plan of Phillotson's educational project, that of taking a large double school, where he was to instruct the boys and she the girls. There was little spontaneity in her

117. Tess of the D'Urbervilles, p. 209.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

119. *Ibid.*, p. 505.

work. Very different was her attitude in her association with Jude, whom she helped in his occupation of lettering headstones and inscriptions ---- until he was released from the contract to renew the Ten Commandments at the Aldbrickham church. After Jude's illness which obliged her to contribute to the family's support, she adopted his scheme of selling pies and cakes; even these Jude made, for he had had early experience in the bakery business with Aunt Drusilla Fawley. Throughout her association with him her interests were identical with her lover's.

In a few instances Hardy has portrayed women who were unwilling to identify their interests with the man's. In preference to marrying Christopher Julian, a man whom she admired and respected, Ethelberta Petherwin devoted herself to a scheme of social climbing interspersed with attempts at an artistic career. Instead of participating in the interests of the iniquitous old nobleman whom she married, she monopolized them entirely ---- and then had time to pursue her own, that of writing poetry. The marriage of Eustacia Vye is Hardy's best example of irreconcilable interests of man and woman. "Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath, and translate them into loves, and you have the heart of Clym."<sup>120</sup> She greatly loved Clym, but she thought that through marrying him she might escape existence on Egdon Heath. He, in his zeal to serve his community, saw his project of teaching the poor and ignorant heathmen glorified by the assistance of the beautiful Eustacia. Because he loved his people and anticipated

120. The Return of the Native, p. 205.

eagerly their enlightenment through his efforts, he overlooked her dreams of Paris. He continued to see in her the partner of his enterprise, although at her instigation he agreed to open his school at Budmouth and not on Egdon Heath. So obtuse was he to her passionate longing for release from her environment that he urged her to marry him and live in a tiny cottage at Aldernorth, until he finished his preparation for his work. He persisted in reading and studying in spite of the positive pain his books caused her. The breach between their interests was widened by Clym's partial loss of eyesight; his affliction made it necessary for him to abandon indefinitely his educational scheme, and he found adjustment to his handicap in the humble occupation of furze gathering. He became reasonably happy in this out-of-doors life, but his wife considered his low social status embarrassing. Her unhappiness annoyed him; he was a little resentful that she could not derive solace from the heath as he could. "The monotony of his occupation soothed him, and was in itself a pleasure."<sup>121</sup> In sheer desperation she had to seek relief from her depression by a little gayety elsewhere. The culmination of their inharmonious aspirations was the death of Clym's mother which indirectly was the cause of the separation of the wretched, though once happy, couple.

According to Hardy, woman does not desire the marriage relation primarily as a means of livelihood or of social improvement. The latter item does concern her somewhat, though usually indirectly through her parents' attempts to arrange her marital affairs. Neither does Hardy consider that a woman's interest in marriage is owing to her

121. Ibid., p. 299.

essential domestic propensities. Rather the basis of marriage is love, which he portrays as an intermixture of passion, affection, and companionship. The elemental physical phase of union is implied on account of the woman's primitive sexual nature, but there are also gleams of genuine enjoyment in the association of man and wife. With the exception of Viviette Constantine the heroines appear to have great respect for the sanctity of the marriage vow; even the rebellious, selfish Eustacia Vye could not break hers easily. Until the appearance of Sue Bridehead, no woman protests openly against the sacramental view of marriage. According to Hardy's conception of this relation a wife voluntarily enters into the interests of her husband, or he expects her cooperation in his schemes. When the wife assumes indifference toward these, her unconcern is shown as growing into antagonism. Hardy does not anticipate the extremely modern marriage in which a man and his wife can successfully pursue their respective individual interests and at the same time be considerate of each other's.

Hardy in his conception of woman's nature does not imply inherent female innocence and purity, ideals which the Victorians cherished along with certain notions of female delicacy and physical frailty. Neither does he consider her innately sinful; he apparently does not believe in the "sinister efficiency of women."<sup>122</sup> He paints his heroines as human beings who as such possess commendable traits and also unworthy ones.

122. L. Abercrombie: Thomas Hardy, A Critical Study, p. 31.

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An examination of the novels of Thomas Hardy has shown that the women characters do deviate considerably from the usually accepted standard of right and wrong. They are presented as taking advantage of convention, if adherence to it is of service to them, and acting in defiance of it when the occasion demands. In their religious views also Hardy implies a liberal interpretation of the simple orthodox faith they are taught and ostensibly accept. Their religious experience usually entails no great degree of spirituality; rather it is controlled by their emotions and instincts. Mere tenets of belief concerned few of the heroines; it is true that Paula Power searched rather industriously for a definite faith, that Tess Durbeyfield automatically assumed what she considered to be a creed, and that Sue Bridehead identified her intellectual interests with a certain philosophy analogous to a system of religion. Paula apparently abandoned her pursuit of dogma; Tess was concerned with Angel Clare's profession faith largely because of her interest in the man himself; and Sue's turning from her pagan ideals to Christian orthodoxy displayed hysteria rather than genuine conversion. In their sexual relationships Hardy shows that women violate strictly conventional standards of behavior. Even the loveliest and most lovable of the heroines are pictured as resorting to misrepresentations and subterfuges in dealing with men; sometimes these distortions of truth are in the nature of mere flirtations, but more often they are of tremendous significance, both to the man and to the woman concerned. A number of the women in the novels are guilty of irregular

sex behavior. There is usually, though not always, a tendency to be straightforward within the marriage relation.

While Hardy has dealt with woman's numerous deviations from Victorian standards of conduct, in the end he implies that these are not indicative of innate moral elasticity on her part. In the earliest novels he implies that woman should not be considered wholly responsible for her transgressions against the moral code ---- that she is handicapped by an inherent tendency toward duplicity. Later he comes to the opinion that this trait is not inborn but assumed as a means of self-defense against the unfair treatment of society. He implies also that her proneness to conceal her disregard of the moral code is not owing to her genuine conviction of her guilt but to a justifiable wish to escape the merciless retribution of other people. Besides, Hardy shows that her motive for evasion and concealment is not altogether selfish but grows out of her great capacity for loving. He makes his later heroines ashamed of the apparent necessity for misrepresentation in their dealings with their lovers.

Hardy suggests a capacity for moral independence in women. The high-minded peasant woman in her freedom from the extreme insistencies of society, he implies has the normal attitude toward conduct. Had Tess Durbeyfield not come in contact with a few smug teachings of Victorian respectability, she would not have been morbidly conscious of her guilt in surrendering to D'Urberville. Further justification for female moral freedom is to be found in Hardy's eloquent plea for a single standard of moral conduct for men and women, as portrayed in the unjust treatment of Tess by Angel Clare. The Wessex novelist appears

to vindicate Sue Bridehead's attempt to direct her moral conduct regardless of the precepts of society. Society, he shows, will not recognize the element of individualism in behavior and persecutes women who try to alter moral regulations, especially those dealing with sexual relationship. Sue represents the modern woman who shows that a woman's sexual life can be entirely moral and honorable without the regulation of society.

CHAPTER V.

CONCLUSION

Great interest in the intrinsic nature of woman is revealed in the novels of Thomas Hardy. This is borne out by his most convincing feminine creations, women of peasant stock, whom culture and convention have touched least. Through a careful and most sympathetic delineation of this more or less primitive type, Hardy has been enabled to reach the truest and purest quality of the elemental woman.

Since he is concerned with woman's essential nature, he deals with only those phases of the nineteenth century feminist movement which throw light on this. Woman's struggle for full citizenship, for the privilege of the franchise, and for participation in public life does not appear in his work. Political issues involving either men or women are of no moment to him. He identifies himself in no way with woman's clamoring for governmental activities, and little with her right to engage in industry or professions. The woman in Hardy's novels earns her living if necessity demands that she do so. If she is a distinct peasant type with little education she goes into the fields and works with men. There is nothing unusual in her field labor, for the English peasant woman has always done it ---- and English society has approved. Bathsheba Everdene's farm management scheme was somewhat of an innovation, but directly in line with activities to which she as a peasant girl was accustomed. Hardy implies no particular problem in presenting her in the midst of this undertaking; he is not attempting to prove by

it that women have the right to assume the work of a man; there is merely his partial vindication of her ability to do it ---- if she chooses. If the heroine has had the advantage of a careful education in a training school, she enters the teaching field, the most genteel employment, according to Victorian ideals, for a girl to engage in for a few years immediately preceding her marriage, unless she remains in her father's home. Women in Hardy's novels never assume teaching as a life work, but as a temporary occupation.

Hardy evidently feels that a woman's mentality rather than her economic capacity reflects her real nature. Accordingly he has identified himself with the phase of the feminist movement which entails the widening of woman's intellectual interests. He never presents a woman as making an issue out of her mental ability or as insisting upon recognition of her intellect. Rather his heroines shrink from exploiting their intellectual ability. Yet he does consider his heroines in the light of their mental equipment. He assigns to them as the novels appear an increasing interest in study and ability to grapple with serious subject matter.

That a woman's essential nature is determined best by observing her conduct Hardy seems to believe. His greatest sympathy with the modern woman movement is with that phase of it which is concerned with female morality. The right of a woman to vote is of little consequence in his estimation compared with her right to direct her personal life as an individual. The woman as the victim of the unfair treatment of society is of supreme consideration with him.

Hardy's novels reflect the passing from the ideal of masculine domination to that of equality between men and women, as regarding intellectual ability and moral responsibility. He finally reaches the opinion that intellectual differences are not determined by sex but by opportunity. In the matter of actual acquisitive ability he implies approximate likeness between men and women. Possibly he portrays a greater number of men as pursuing learning for its own sake and as possessing a larger fund of information; but in the end he implies that the man and the woman can follow the same studies and attain the same degree of satisfaction in them. The mental traits of creativeness and executive ability he emphasizes very little either in men or in women. The only real attempts at original expression are made by the women, Elfride and Ethelberta. The genius to create is not prominent in the men characters; his men students make no real contributions to the world of scholarship or science; his architects display little inventiveness. The ambitious executive schemes of Bathsheba and Ethelberta find no parallel in masculine undertakings, although there is the portrayal of an excellent business man in Donald Farfrae. The greatest discrimination that Hardy makes between male and female minds is in display of judgment. He implies some deficiency in woman in selfcontrol, and a slight incapacity for long, involved mental processes involving precise logic, but also a great faculty for practical and rapid action in a time of emergency.

Hardy finally arrives at the conviction that morality is not an inherent trait of either sex, that what has been considered a weakness in female moral behavior has been determined by the attitude of

society toward her. Changing from his original belief in an innate tendency in women to display duplicity, he discovers that society is responsible for the development of this quality. She has found a lack of straightforwardness an expedient measure of self-defense. In his novels Hardy implies that the same primitive sexual desire causes both man and woman to make deviations from the conventional moral code. She suffers infinitely greater retribution and much more relentless treatment from society. To avoid the unfairness of public opinion she has learned to conceal her violations of the code. The more conventional her environment is, the greater she feels the necessity for concealment. This is to be inferred from the difference in attitude between Viviette Constantine, who belonged to the class of society most strictly bound by the precepts of convention, and Tess Durbeyfield, who lived in an environment where irregularity in sex behavior was not considered unpardonable sinning. The former woman had been taught to believe in the supreme importance of her social position and resorted to the most extreme measures to uphold it. With Tess the ideal of mere social respectability was not greatly developed, until she came in contact with it in trying to measure her conduct by the views of Angel Clare. Then out of love for him she concealed her past from him ---- and not without a feeling of shame at her lack of frankness. The plea for a single standard of moral behavior for both sexes, as implied in the portrayal of Tess indicates Hardy's opinion that a woman can be morally responsible. Further proof of it is in the problem of Sue Bridehead, who abandons concealment and dares to face the world with a mode of life, entirely honorable, but different from the conventional one. The fact

that society whipped her into submission to convention, which entailed a loathsome marriage, reinforces his stand that woman has been its victim. This does not mean that Hardy condones women's mistakes, which he frankly acknowledges, but that he believes her by nature to be approximately as moral as man.

Hardy's portrayal of Sue Bridehead as a type of modern womanhood is reached through a succession of feminine creations, in whom there are suggestions of the later heroine. The development of his conception of woman is not a steady one. There are shiftings back and forth in regard to her mentality and morality, but there are distinct indications of the evolution of his opinion regarding female nature. The intelligence of the early women is not questioned; in some instances these display decidedly intellectual tastes ---- Elfride Swancourt, for instance. In Paula Power, a woman conceived of midway in his novel-writing career, and in Viviette Constantine, who delved into the study of astronomy, appears a definite widening of female mental horizon, which is anticipatory of Sue Bridehead's love of study and vast range of intellectual interests. The same growth of independence in religious views can be likewise traced. The leaning upon orthodoxy in Cytherea Graye and the indifference of Elfride Swancourt beyond a childish faith change to rebellious but suppressed questioning in Eustacia Vye. Paula Power's search for a dogmatic faith reflects an active state of mind typical of Sue's adjustment of her philosophy to her life. The passive uncertainty of Tess becomes bold rejection of orthodoxy in Sue's assumption of pagan ideals. Most of the heroines before Sue defy conventional standards of behavior, but they differ from her in their tendency to conceal from

society their violations of the code. Elfride Swancourt morbidly hid the fact of even her slight infractions from her lover. Eustacia Vye shows the first real disregard of public opinion; she was rebellious toward her environment and despised her community; yet in the end it was her innate pride, rather than mere consideration of public disapproval, that would not let her break her marriage vow for Wildeve. The vacillating Grace Melbury, who disregarded the precepts of behavior in a small way and was almost willing to let her conduct be judged on its merit, easily succumbed to the expediency of respectability. Tess Durbeyfield desired to be candid about her irregular relation with D'Urberville, but could not on account of her great admiration for her lover, who signified to her eminent propriety intolerant of unconventionality. Sue shows essentially the same nature as the previous women, the same sexual instincts as they, but she asserted her sexual nature in a spirit of frankness which they lacked. There was no loud proclaiming on her part that she had the right to do as she pleased; she calmly and thoughtfully accepted sex as a natural element of life, and assumed her ability to be morally upright outside of the only sexual relationship society considers ethical.

Woman is essentially feminine in Hardy's conception of her. Her assumption of man's intellectual and moral standards never conceals her identity as woman. Her appeal in physical charm is constant. No matter how great her mental interests, her female attractiveness is always intact. Under the influence of the feminist movement, the Wessex novelist simply interprets woman as existing in her right as an individual. His heroines are creations of the eternal feminine, with all its lure and fascination, plus all the characteristics of a human being.

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