THE NEW WOMAN AS BIFURCATED FEMALE IN JUDE THE OBSCURE, THE STORY OF AN AFRICAN FARM, THE ODD WOMEN, AND ANN VERONICA

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PREFACE

Although current critical analyses of Jude the Obscure, The Odd Women and The Story of an African Farm conclude that they are feminist works which applaud the New Woman Movement, I believe that each novel's feminist stance is illusory due to a popular ideology of the middle and late Victorian era--biological determinism--which medically and scientifically reaffirmed a popular cultural stereotype: that woman is either an angel or femme fatale. While professing to support the New Woman in each novel, the narrators, bound by a patriarchally based Victorian mentality, intend to castigate each woman--Sue, Lyndall and Rhoda--into these binary roles for their unconscious eroticism, as femme fatales who use their sexual power and physical beauty to ensnare men into marriage, which is the bio-determined goal of every woman. The women might pretend to fight the system and want their physical independence and economic freedom, but each woman learns that she cannot escape her bio-determined destiny which can deify her as an

angel, aloof from erotic nature, or condemn her as a sexual being once she becomes aware of her sexuality. Even a novel a generation later, Ann Veronica, still perpetuates the binary role of womanhood with one saving grace: finally, woman's enjoyment of her sexuality becomes permissable as long as it helps perpetuate the species.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter One: The Bifurcated Female

Most literary critics see the New Woman of the late Victorian era as vastly different from her predecessor--the bifurcated female--a woman represented as either angel or femme fatale who abounded in literature, art and the social sciences (1). Three texts of the new woman, Jude the Obscure(1894), The Odd Women(1895), The Story of an African Farm(1883) and Ann Veronica(1908), are applauded by many academicians as being groundbreaking and sympathetic tales of the New Woman and her push against the angelic or demonic female. In these texts we have women--new women--who feel and think differently from their fictional predecessors. But how different are Lyndall, Rhoda, Sue and Ann Veronica from their stereotyped counterparts? Depending on late Victorian class and gender prejudices, either very different or very close. These four women seem very different from Dora Copperfield, Esther Summerson or Dorothea Brooke, all lovely Victorian angels, or Becky Sharp, a typical femme fatale. Yet, if one examines the narrative comments and each character's self-reflective thoughts, a different story emerges. These female characters are not that different

from their bifurcated predecessors. Although Lyndall, Rhoda, Ann Veronica and Sue want to move beyond the bifurcation, of being classified as either an angel or femme fatale, they cannot; they have been biologically determined to act as either angel or demon. The ideology of the texts will not let them escape from their fate. The narrative voice of each novel, whether it is a commentator as in The Odd Women, or a self-conscious narrator as in Jude the Obscure, The Story of an African Farm and Ann Veronica (Booth 155), cannot escape its social and historical paradigm; nor can the four women or the men they are involved with. Instead of marvelling at the strength of these women, the narrators as well as the predominant male characters of each novel condemn or glorify them in a traditional manner befitting a femme fatale or Victorian angel. Even though they originally admired what these four women were striving for--intellectual equality and social and economic independence--neither the narrators or the male characters can see beyond the arena of traditional Victorian womanhood. Instead, they succumb to an all too familiar view of woman--as a dependent sexual being they want and must have because woman, in this traditional role, is a marketable "commodity" (Psomiades 46) for a man if she

represents society's aesthetic ideal of woman, which "eroticizes and depolitizes the realm of femininity" (Psomiades 39) into either the "good" or the "bad" (Psomiades 46). That is, each woman is more valued by society and the men in their lives when they revert to the bifurcated female than as the New Woman, probably since the New Woman held an aberrant place in society's economic structure whose worth was not based supposedly on her marriage prospects, but on her own intrinsic value as a productive worker. Unfortunately, the female characters are no better. While trying to be New Women, they repeatedly revert to the traditional role of the femme fatale, perhaps because as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar note in The Madwoman in the Attic, "the images of 'angel' and 'monster'" are "ubiquitous throughout literature" (17). The ideology of bio-determinism alters all four novels, making them not texts of the New Woman in praise of woman's struggle for self-hood, but four books ensconced in Victorian platitudes about women and men and their naturally inescapable roles. Yet the novels are not failures because they deconstruct at this level. Four new novels emerge due to this deconstruction, novels that disclose how difficult it is to overcome ideological thinking even when trying to break from

its paradigmatic grasp, which is impossible to do.

Without a brief look at the history of bifurcation, one cannot understand the impact of nineteenth-century bio-determinism on women's roles. Too often, critics like Nina Auerbach and Bram Dijsktra ignore the development of the bifurcated female, simply concluding that her entrenchment in western culture is reason enough for her existence in nineteenth-century Europe and England. Thus, to ignore her roots is not to understand how this split or bifurcated female arose from the bio-determined woman, a scientifically rationalized version of the religious and culturally formed bifurcated woman who was created by men who believed themselves, because they were scientists, above such prejudice.

Bifurcation of the female existed long before the nineteenth-century and has its beginnings in the old mother goddesses of early matriarchal societies which stretched from Gaul to Babylonia. The matriarchies began to disappear--between 5000 to 3000 B. C. (Walker 681)--when more physically aggressive peoples began to invade, and these invaders had their own religious systems dominated by male deities. Assimilation, not elimination, frequently occurs with imperialism, and the old matriarchal mother goddesses--

earth goddesses who bestowed, sustained and took life--were transformed into milder helpmates of the ancient deities. Ancient Israel was one of the few early patriarchal cultures surrounded by matriarchies. Judaism frowned on matriarchies and all other patriarchally formed religions as well. Yet it too assimilated a mother goddess into its religious narrative--Eve, "The Mother of all Things"--by bringing her "forth from a primal male ancestor" (288). Hebraism negated the mother goddess's positive role "in the fact that every living thing was doomed to die was blamed on the Mother who gave it finite life" (290). The once positive aspects of the mother goddess became polarized. Woman gives life, but she also kills it.

Early Christianity, with its Judaic roots, reinforced the bifurcation, obviously ignoring Christ's teachings. The Church wasn't sure about woman. Was she a gift from the devil, meant to taunt and tantalize man, or a spirit from heaven, like the Virgin Mary, brought to earth to be man's "helpmeet"? Church fathers were terrified of woman, that granddaughter of Eve who lured man out of the garden and into death. In 600 A.D. Church fathers argued over the possibility that woman had a soul--an argument which continued until the nineteenth-century (Walker 921). This

early church, with its mixture of Hellenism and asceticism, used scriptures to support its belief that man must leave woman alone: "It is good for man not to touch woman (I. Cor. 7:1) (because) . . . He that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife" (I. Cor. 7:33). As asceticism continued to dominate the Church, new rules, also based on scriptures, were implemented. St. Jerome praised virginity in Adveruss Joviarinum and believed that Adam and Eve had only copulated after the Fall (Duby 26-28). Virginity was the edenic way of life. St. Augustine was "less severe" (28), but even he surmised that Adam as "the spiritual aspect of the human condition," created by God, and Eve, "its sensual side" created by God from the flesh of man, disclosed the obvious disparity between the sexes: man was superior and spiritual whereas woman was "inferior and carnal" (30). The early Church hated the idea of sex but decided that ideally man would only "perform the sexual act with his wife not for pleasure but in order to beget children" (30). Woman's sexual nature was frightening to medieval man. She was a voracious sexual creature, and "he alone might not be equal to quenching her fires" (46).

Strangely, for all the religious distrust of woman,

literature and art did not address the dark side of woman's two-fold nature very often. Rather, artists viewed the more positive side of her bifurcation, the madonna. From Medievalism through the high Renaissance, woman as madonna dominated European painting. Until the Renaissance and the invention of the printing press, literature consisted of mostly poetry and many of the women portrayed in Provencal poetry, Petrarchan sonnets or Elizabethan love poems were images of neo-platonic perfection--twin or triple Venuses who lead their lovers to spiritual fulfillment via sensual ecstasy, a view which somewhat ignores the traditional view of woman's darker half. According to Ficino, a fourteenth-century neo-platonist, Venus Vulgaris, the common Venus, is the active form of love which leads man to satiate himself visually and physically. A speaker cataloging his lover's attributes in an Elizabethan love poem is being visually stimulated, which would lead to Venus Coelestis, divine or heavenly love "which make him equal to the Saints and Prophets" (Panofsky 143). In his duality, Ficino had little room for the femme fatale. Instead, those who fall into lust from their visual appreciation are trapped into a type of insanity--Amor ferinus--bestial love. Pico, another Renaissance neo-platonist, created his own system of Venuses

and gave man a little more leeway; he understood that visual love--Venere Celeste II--could lead to sensual love, Venere Volgare. Yet Pico hoped that this lustful state would be transitory and propel man to Venere Celeste I--the realm of the intellect and the home of platonic love (145).

With Romanticism, woman as idealized love or madonna changed in art and literature and Venus's bestial or sensual side re-emerged--the femme fatale. Woman's dark side had been hovering around the arts for centuries, but now it exploded. Early British Romantics such as Keats, Shelley and Coleridge have their Lamias, Geraldines and Mabs--all women without mercy who feed off unsuspecting men. The major Victorian poets continued the Romantic's devotion to the femme fatale. Tennyson's version of the Arthurian legends, Idylls of the King (1859-88), is filled with femme fatales--Guinevere and Vivien--women who destroy the men who love them. Pre-Raphaelite poet William Morris in his "Defence of Guenevere" (1858) continues the onslaught against a willful Guenevere whose beauty allows her to wreck havoc on the men around her (168). Another Pre-Raphaelite poet, Algernon Charles Swinburne, also writes of the femme fatale whose "passionate lips" and asp-like hair captivate her helpless lover (404) in "Sonnet for a Picture" (1880). He repeats

this gorgon-like image in "Laus Veneris." In this poem, another spellbound lover, Tristam, finds himself lured by a serpentine Venus: "About my neck your hands and hair enwound/ the hands that stifle and the hair that stings" (150-51). Perhaps the most famous of the Pre-Raphaelites also has the most potent femme fatale: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's Lilith from "Eden Bower" is the "fairest snake in Eden" (631). Of course, the femme fatale is not the domain of the male poet. Christina Rossetti, Dante's sister, also uses imagery of the femme fatale in the "Goblin Market" (1862). However, Lizzie's brief role as a femme fatale is used against another woman, Laura, because a male goblin enchanted her to seduce Laura (130-43).

While the Romantic and Victorian poets swoon over woman's dark sexuality, some women novelists of the period present us with a different look--women who try to reach beyond the bifurcation and who have something to say about being women. Jane Eyre (1847), for all her angelic sweetness, is a firebrand demanding Mr. Rochester to speak to her as an equal. Lucy Snowe (1853), another protoganist of Charlotte Bronte's, has a psychological depth unequal to any other early to mid nineteenth-century female character. Even Jane Austen's women, mostly from rural gentry, have

fire when necessary. George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke (1871) breaks a traditional social taboo and disinherits herself to marry whom she wants. So, is a woman writer the only one who can accurately delve into the female psyche? Perhaps. But even women writers can fall into the trap of ideological thinking. They too end up simplifying their female characters into angelic women who help lead wayward men toward the light by easily identifying with this male vision of womanhood, possibly because "the female imagination has perceived itself, as it were, through a glass darkly" (Gilbert 17); that is, . . . "what she sees in the mirror is usually a male construct" (17). Still, if one looks at Victorian literature, one can see how the literature is dominated more and more by men. The strong women writers of the first half of the nineteenth-century are not so readily replaced in the second half; instead, new writers and their creation of the proper female psyche--the Victorian angel--override literature.

Before the nineteenth-century, angels were viewed as "masculine . . . martial, armored figures" (Auerbach 70). With the rise of Victorianism, the "popular angelology cast angels as irrefutably female and by definition domestic" (64). An angel was a paragon of womanhood: "the roles of

daughter, wife, and mother" were the only roles to which women "naturally" aspired. Thus, angels and house became "virtually synonymous," creating a "social corollary between womanhood and domestic purity" (Auerbach 69).

Two of the great instigators of woman as angels were Coventry Patmore and John Ruskin. Patmore's poem, Angel in the House (1854-62), is a dedication to his fifteen years of marriage and discloses the Victorian cultural system where woman's virtue lives in the home. "To sing her worth as maid and wife;/No happier post than this I ask" (II. 38-39). However, John Ruskin's Sesame and Lilies, published in 1865, truly elucidates the role of the angel. Through moral aestheticism, in which the exterior beauty of an object reveals its inner goodness, Ruskin creates his perfect woman, an ideal who reflects the literary heroines of Shakespeare, Homer, and Chaucer (95). To Ruskin, the primary goal of women is to achieve a "true Queenly power . . . within their sphere"(76). He begins by discussing the rights of women which can never be separate "from the mission and the rights of man." She is the "helpmate of man" (77). Thus, she must be obedient to her husband, but this "wifely subjection" is only a "guiding tool," not a shackle. She succumbs to this role naturally because "her

intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision" (90). These womanly attributes lend the woman strength to give to her husband, so she may "never fall from his side" (92). A woman who uses her intellect in a "noble manner," not for self-development but for "self-renunciation" (92), ennobles man.

Of course, a woman must be cultivated for this role with the correct education: "to secure for her such physical training and exercise as may confirm her health, and perfect her beauty, the highest refinement of that beauty being unattainable without splendor of activity and of delicate strength" (92-93). For this inner and outer beauty to occur, "you have to first mold her physical frame, and then . . . fill and temper her mind with all knowledge and thoughts which tend to confirm its natural instincts of justice, and refine its natural tact of love" (95). Thus, she must be "trained in habits of accurate thought" and "piety" (97). However, she must not tamper with religion, "a dangerous science for women" (97). With this knowledge, woman may learn to "understand" man.

Ruskin does not reveal how to teach a woman any of this except to state that a "girl's education should be nearly in its course material of study, the same as a boy's" (98). Do

not raise a daughter as a "sideboard ornament" (103) and then complain of her frivolity. Give her the same advantage you would give a boy: teach her "courage and truth" (103). Yet Ruskin does note that the goals of educating each sex are different. A boy's education will lead him toward creating a foundation of knowledge that will lead toward independent thought, while a girl's is for "daily and helpful use" (99). A man learns his subject thoroughly; a woman learns it to please a man. One way to guide a woman's education is to pick her reading material. A woman should not read romances or magazines, but "good novels" or works "that study human nature" (100).

In all, a woman's duty is to be "the center of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty" (106). She is the "beautiful adornment of the state" (106). Without her "noble" presence, civilization would fall. Therefore, she must not become "idle or careless" (113) or use her "queenly dominion" to upset the natural balance (Ruskin 112). If she abandons her role, havoc results: "There is not a war in the world . . . but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked it, but have not hindered" it (113). For, without woman, man would fall to a more natural inclination--war (Ruskin 113).

But why angels instead of madonnas? Sexuality. Madonnas imply sexuality, whether it be for duty or not. In the nineteenth-century a woman's sexuality becomes a conundrum of medical, philosophical, social and religious views. Before the nineteenth-century, most women were primarily labelled by religion and philosophy as sex driven creatures except when motherhood intervened. Yet, by the mid-Victorian era, this view metamorphoses, and women, for the most part, are heralded for their lack of sexuality or sexual desire.

Peter Gay asserts in The Bourgeois Experience that "being bourgeois imposed a formidable strain" (II 329) on the Victorian middle class because it defined its inhabitants primarily by their traditional sexual and gender roles. Michel Foucault concurs with Gay but goes further by explaining these limitations: "The bourgeois began by considering that its own sex was something important, a fragile treasure, a secret that had to be discovered at all cost" (11). Before the Victorians, sex had the basic two-fold function: as a means to procreate the species, and as "ars erotica," the sensual pleasure of sex where "it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, (and) its reverberations in the body and the soul" (Foucault 57).

With the new scientific theory of Darwinism, and the pseudo-scientific theories social Darwinism and biological determinism, came the theory of "science sexualia," the science of sex (Foucault 53-73). According to Foucault, science sexualia was a "science subordinated" by a "morality whose divisions it reiterated under the guise of medical norm" (53). By ignoring the sexual drive, except as a procreative function, one could hopefully dispel its power over a person. He believed that to an advocate of science sexualia, sex could be regulated to a base, animalistic desire that was naturally found in men, not women. Hopefully as the species improved, this animal instinct would be driven out. Until then, it at least could be repressed through mental prowess. Science sexualia implies that women "naturally" were uninterested in sex; that is, woman's biological nature made her unable to enjoy sex (Foucault 104-06). A woman who did enjoy sex was quickly categorized as being unnatural or a femme fatale. The most fulfilling role for woman was motherhood. Unfortunately, to be a mother, one had to put up with the animalistic drives of one's husband as well as the religious and social pressure which informed one to "grin and bear it." Ideally, the reward of motherhood was great: the instiller of moral

virtue into one's offspring. However, this same paragon of virtue was deemed by science to be biologically and spiritually inferior to man.

Darwinism encouraged many psuedo-biological/medical theories that today are categorized under biological determinism, the belief that sex roles, behavior and traits are completely biologically inherited, not also a product of culture and socialization. In the 19th century these pseudo-theories were held by many to be fact. Even Charles Darwin was a follower of biological determinism, asserting in the Descent of Man that

> Man is more courageous, pugnacious and energetic than woman, and has a more inventive genius . . . He may be said to possess genius--for genius has been declared by a great authority to be patience; and patience, in this sense, means unflinching, undaunted perseverance. But this view of genius is perhaps deficient; for without the higher powers of the imagination and reason, no eminent success can be gained in many subjects. These latter faculties, as well as the former, will have been developed in man, partly through sexual selection--

> that is, through the contest of rival males, and partly through natural selection--that is, from success in the general struggle for life . . . Thus man has ultimately become superior to woman (635-44).

Darwin equated woman's brain size with her intellect, concluding that her brain, being "intermediate between the child and the man," also disclosed woman's physical and mental inferiority. Woman's "maternal instincts" as well as her "great tenderness and less selfishness" are admirable, but these "faculties are characteristics of the lower races, and therefore, of a past and lower state of civilization" (642-43).

Darwin is not woman-bashing; he truly believes in the white male's inherent superiority even though this superiority derives "in chief part to his inheritance from his half-human male ancestor" (643). Despite woman's lack of innate voracity, which would give her natural "courage" and pugnacity, she can still "reach the same standard of man if she is trained to energy and perseverance and to have her reason and imagination exercised to the highest point" (645).

Other bio-determinists were not as kind. They mainly employed craniometry to prove woman's biological and intellectual inferiority. Professor Paul Broca, one of the first scientists of craniometry, claimed that woman's small head measurement and lighter brain weight, when compared to man's, reaffirmed her inferiority: "In general, the brain is larger . . . in men than in women, in eminent men than in men of mediocre talent, in superior races than in inferior races" (Gould 83). Carl Vogt, a Swiss physician who agreed with Broca's findings, also did his own research, which showed "that the type of the female skull approaches, in many respects, that of an infant, and in a still greater degree that of the lower races" (81). Gustav le Bon, a nineteenth-century bio-determinist from the Broca school, declared that woman's intelligence was below that of a "gorilla" according to craniometry (Gould 104). Bio-determinist George J. Romanes, also using craniometry, decided that woman's "inferiority displays itself most conspicuously in a comparative absence of originality, and this more equally in the higher levels of intellectual work . . . Woman cannot reason; instead her intellectual capacity reveals itself in her higher developed sense-organs . . . The female mind stands considerably below the male" (655).

Since she is biologically and intellectually inferior, woman is probably morally inferior as well, if one follows the tenets of bio-determinism, which also happens to reflect Christian misogyny. Francis Galton, a 19th century eugenicist and cousin to Charles Darwin, declared that "Woman is . . . capricious and coy, and has less straightforwardness than man. It is the same with every female in every species . . . Coyness and caprice have in consequence become a heritage of the sex" (Romanes 662). This Lamarckian viewpoint is reaffirmed by Vogt's analysis:

> It has long been observed that among peoples progressing in civilisation, the men are in advance of the women; while amongst those which are retrograding, the contrary is the case. Just as, in respect of morals, Woman is the conservator of old customs and usages, of traditions, legends, and religion; so in the material world she preserves primitive forms, which but slowly yield to the influences of civilisation . . . Woman preserves, in the formation of the head, the earlier stage from which the race or tribe has been developed, or into which it has relapsed. Hence, then, is partly

> explained the fact, that the inequality of the sexes increases with the progress of civilisation (82).

If woman is so inferior to man, then why is she, as an angel, the guardian of Christian virtues who will raise her children accordingly? Fortunately, biological determinism answers this as well.

> Again, purity and religion, . . . were, the natural heritage of women. . . Christianity, while crowning the virtue of chastity with an aureole of mysticism . . . likewise threw the vesture of sanctity over all the other virtues which belong by nature to the female mind. Until the rise of Christianity the gentler and domestic virtues were no where recognized as at all comparable, in point of ethical merit with the heroic and the civic (Romanes 659).

Despite this accolade, Romanes noted that woman, even when she tends children, runs the household, and ministers to the sick and poor, must still by her nature, be "clinging to

husbands, parents, (and) brothers often without and against reason" (663). Even though woman supposedly was a more spiritual being than man, he is dumbfounded that "in so extraordinary a collision between the ideas of virtue, it should have been the woman who first flocked in numbers around the standard of the Cross" (659).

One bio-determinist, Carl Vogt, demoted religion to a secondary or tertiary place in man's lives. It became a belief lesser races or the weaker gender followed; it was "primitive" (Vogt 82). After all, the varied evolutionary theories argued that man was not a descendent of the biblical Adam and Eve, but a creature formed from lower ape-like ancestors. Theories of the earth's history and the beginnings of paleontology reinforced the break, showing obvious faults in the Bible. Caught between a dwindling religious faith and the new sciences, Victorian man faced a moral dilemma--who created me and why? Do I follow my father's faith which was probably created by man, or do I follow the tangents of science, which state that I am an animal evolving like other creatures from a lesser form to a greater one? For many, security lay in science for it showed man's evolution as being stalwartly progressive, with the white male as the most advanced species on earth.

It likewise reaffirmed woman's natural role: women bear children, and in order for the race to continue, they must continue this biological function. The obvious is not so clear, though. Many women were beginning to want more than this traditional role, and they had been fighting to achieve more even though laws and social mores refused to grant them more freedom. Writers such as John Ruskin and Coventry Patmore had placed woman on a pedestal, but many women did not want this honor. To be angels in the house or Ruskinian queens stifled them. They wanted to vote, to own property, to be able to divorce or marry whom they chose, to be educated in the same regards as a man, and even to work beyond the limiting roles of governess, teacher, or nurse. And, this desire frightened many people, both men and women. Biological determinism was the last stronghold against this New Woman. Religious and governmental laws were crumbling against the onslaught. If bio-determinism failed, many people feared that civilization would die.

The age of the New Woman did not occur over night; it took seventy years to build, beginning with Mary Wollstonecraft's A Vindication of the Rights of Woman in 1792 in which Wollstonecraft attacks women for being "intoxicated by men," (36) and men for wanting women only as

"mistresses" (57). She also demands that women's education be changed "to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent" (107). In 1825 her daughter, Mary Shelley, reinforced her mother's book with her own--An Appeal of One Half of the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain them in Political, and thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery: in Reply to a Paragraph in Mr. Mill's Celebrated Article on Government (Basch 10). Other pre-Millian articles which addressed female suffrage were "Harriet Taylor's (J.S. Mill's wife) article in the July 1851 issue of the Westminster Review, and Mrs. Hugo Reid's A Plea for Women," published in 1843 (Basch 13). Although Taylor wrote the article in the late 1840's, she did not publish her work until 1851 when two French suffrage workers, Jeanne Deroin and Pauline Roland, were imprisoned in Paris for trying to organize a male and female worker's union (Offen 249), a violation of the 1848 law, "Decret sur les Clubs, which stated that "women and minor children may not be members of a club, nor may the attend the meetings" (Offen 249) (2). Angry by the arrests, Taylor decided to use her essay as a reply to the imprisonment by discussing the "enfranchisement of women; their admission, in law and in fact, to equality

in all rights, political, civil, and social, with the male citizens of the community" (290). Marion Kirkland Reid's argument is also noteworthy because not only does she make a pre-Millian claim that allowing women to vote ". . . would call forth, in women, noble powers, which hitherto, have been too much suffered to lie dormant" (235), but she also attacks "Members of Parliament" for creating "legislation for their own most obvious interest . . . without the slightest reference to the injustice they were committing against women" (236).

Predominately a middle-class idea, the feminist movement of nineteenth-century Victorian England began because, not only was woman's role as angel of the house and keeper of the home confining, it was also unrealistic (Basch 14-15). The angelic queen happily kept the home while her powerful yet benevolent husband shielded her from the intrusive world. How many women lived this ideal role and were married to this ideal man?

And, if a woman were not married to this ideal man, how could she escape her predicament? She could not. The mid nineteenth-century angel of the house was bound by law to her husband, whether he was her savior or the devil. The moment she married, a woman "in law, belonged to the man she

married . . . He is the absolute master of her, her property, and her children" (Basch 17). Woman as a social or political entity was non-existent; she either belonged to her father or to her husband as acknowledged by English Common Law and parliamentary legislation since she was not a "man" (Sachs 24), a phrase the British court system took literally (26,27). A husband or father legally could sequester and abuse her without lawful recourse. Until the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1844, a husband could physically incarcerate his wife in his home. Nor did the Church, whether Protestant or Catholic, help matters: A Christian marriage contract obligated a woman to vow "lifelong obedience" to her husband (Mill 462). If she desired legally to fight her husband and obtain a divorce, she could, but only on the grounds of adultery, and only through the Private Act of Parliament which "declared not the wife but the marriage non-existent" (Basch 16). This was an expensive legal procedure that few if any middle or working class women could afford since legally they had no income. Nor could they get counsel to represent them; a male sponsor must be found to seek counsel for them (17).

If a woman were happily married, she still could not do anything legally--sign a contract, make a will, spend her

own dowry--without the consent of her legal owner, her husband. "Every thing belonging to the wife at the moment of marriage, chattels and real estate, became . . . the husband's property, as well as anything she might acquire later on" (20). Before the Married Women's Property Bill of 1870, a bill which the House of Commons had continually rejected from 1857, a woman, upon obtaining a divorce, could never retrieve her personal, pre-marital property or money. It was all his. Even the children were legally his, and a wife could only become the legal guardian of her children if her husband willed it so (Mill 463).

One of the strongest proponents of women's rights was John Stuart Mill whose Subjection of Women(1869) is a direct rebuttal to the Ruskinian queen. Mill attacks the belief that woman must be subordinate to man because "reason," according to "God and Nature," dictates it (430). He finds that "custom" substitutes for "reason" in the battle for women's rights (Mill 441). Biological determinism is false: "What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing--the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others" (451). One cannot use the "differences in bodily constitution" as proof of woman's inferiority or man's superiority (Mill 454).

"Stupidity" is not the dominating factor of one sex as compared to the other, but "is much the same all the world over" (454). Nor is woman's "natural vocation . . . that of wife and mother" (Mill 458). Indeed, Mill asserts that man is afraid of woman's need for a different lifestyle because, unless women are compelled to marry and produce children, there will be no future (459); that is, "there will not be enough of them who will be willing to accept the condition said to be natural to them" (Mill 458).

Mill also studies three other facets of the woman issue: spiritual superiority, property rights, and voting power. He upbraids the belief revolving around woman's supposed spiritual superiority as "exaggerated self-abnegation" (476). They have been taught to be "creatures of self-sacrifice" who must obey a sex who are "opposed to treating them as if they were good" (Mill 476). He then demands that woman has the "right to her own property" (482) as well as the power to earn money which "is essential to the dignity of a woman if she has not independent property" (483). Of course, he notes that the only way woman can really secure her position financially and socially is through voting power. Mill adamantly argues that women should have the power to vote and be elected to political

positions. Why cannot a woman vote if she can rule a country? According to Mill, England has a history of rulers who were women, yet it denies women the power to control their own lives because their sex makes them unreliable (484-90). The problem is not gender but education: "any of the mental differences supposed to exist between women and men are but the natural effect of the differences in their educational circumstances" (Mill 489).

Too often, Mill states that woman's "hysterical" nature has disqualified her for anything "but a domestic life" (489), yet by treating women as "hot-house plants" (498) who should languish as odalisques triumphant, society has seriously hampered woman's physical and mental health, and damaged itself as a whole as well. A better world would result if women could use their intelligence since it would "double the mass of mental faculties available for the higher service of humanity" (525). If the educational system changed, Mill argues that perhaps boys would no longer be reared, assuming that because they were born males, they are "by right the superior of all and every one of an entire half of the human race" (523).

Mill makes strong assertions and was very helpful in the woman's movement, but he too is trapped in an

ideological stance. He does not see women achieving their freedom, but men "giving" it to them (505). Nor does he realize that his second reason to educate woman--so she is not a "dead weight to man, holding him back socially and financially" (534)--echoes Ruskin. He also fears that woman's "nervous sensibility" is an inherited factor in women, not men (449). Throughout the essay, Mill makes other ideological faux pas, but he is still far ahead of the other men of his era, especially the medical and biological scientists such Carl Vogt, Gustave le Bon and Paul Broca.

By the 1860s, things began to change for women. Girton College, a woman's college of higher education, opened in 1868. Cambridge opened its doors to women in 1885 and Oxford in 1884 (Fernando 4), although women were not granted degrees from either of these institutions until fifty years later (Smith 323). Mostly women, in fact over 100,000 of them, taught in the British school system by 1881. After much petitioning of parliament, women were granted the municipal vote in 1869, meaning they could "sit on municipal and country councils as well as vote for them" (Sachs 25). Women were also moving into the secretarial field, becoming clerks and typists, jobs traditionally held by men. Many women wanted more from life, but many women didn't have a

choice. Women outnumbered men three to one by the 1880s (Fox vi). Thus, many women never married, becoming odd women. And, if an unmarried woman did not work, she did not survive. Thus, the New Woman movement began as a by-product of this basic survival instinct.

But who were these women? Usually they were not the "ardent feminists" or the "unorthodox intellects," but a "young generation of mostly middle-class women who reacted restlessly against the traditional system of over-protection by parents, followed by over-protection of husband" (Calder 163). These "new women," a social phenomenon that occurred not only in England, but all over Europe and in the United States, "seemed to reject Victorian concepts of home and domesticity or at least wanted these concepts modified" (Smith 317). Here are the first rumblings of reproductive rights as well as the demand to vote and achieve a higher education (Smith 319). From the 1870's onward, society had a more positive view of the New Woman as someone on her bicycle, escaping from home and entering a more adventuresome world. In fact, because of the bicycle, woman's dress reformed. The mandatory heavy skirts were cumbersome on the bicycle, so by the mid 1880's, bloomers were worn which lead to a more streamline approach in

women's apparel (Smith 326). Another new machine, the typewriter, epitomized this New Woman as an economic power by linking her to the new technology instead of the archaic labor force. Women could work as clerks, a traditional male occupation, and they excelled at it, showing that women could be viable workers in the new age of technology.

The phenomenon of the New Woman, however, met with violent resistance from many men and women who feared it attacked the social structure of the bourgeoisie at its core--the traditional family structure. One magazine, Lady's Realm(1887), stated that she was a "feminine Frankenstein" who, thankfully, is not "popular" (Calder 164). Others claimed that the new woman would destroy the family. Once women began to enjoy the freedom and power that accompanies earning money, they would not want to give it up to marry, raise children, and accept whatever money their husbands allotted them. Working women would destroy family values and decimate future generations because they scoffed at the sanctity and security of marriage.

Their opposers began to see new women as "gorgon-like creatures" (Calder 164), "devouring females" (Gay II, 417), and sphinxes, Lamias and Vampires (Dijsktra 247-72): all manifestations of the femme fatale. Man's fear of woman and

her hidden sexual appetite is a deeply rooted cultural anxiety that burgeoned with the New Woman and her campaign for political and social freedom (Gay II, 417). Good women who stayed at home were angels, and bad women who yearned for more became femme fatales.

Scores of novels about the New Woman were published reflecting this muddled issue, with most of the new women entering into non-marital relationships and finding that marriage is preferable. The journeys of the new women in Grant Allen's The Woman Who Did (1895), Sarah Grand's The Heavenly Twins (1893), Mona Caird's The Daughter of Dancus (1894), and George Meredith's Diana of the Crossways (1897) all end with the New Woman accepting her traditional fate. Being at the "crossway" lacks security for these heroines.

Yet four novels of the New Woman--Thomas Hardy's Jude the Obscure, George Gissing's The Odd Women, Olive Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm, and Wells' Ann Veronica--challenge the traditional ending. The women in three of these novels--Sue Bridehead, Rhoda Nunn, and Lyndall--do not find happiness in marriage; nor do they find happiness being single; instead, these women suffer for their uncertainties and desires, reflecting a predominant Victorian mode of thinking: punish the errant woman. All

these women are trapped between ideological roles. They do not want to be angels, so they unwittingly become femme fatales who doom themselves and the men around them simply because they have no guide or new model to lead them out of the bifurcation. Only one, Ann Veronica, a New Woman of a generation later than Lyndall, Sue and Rhoda, escapes the femme fatale role because a drastic social change has begun to occur in the early twentieth-century--the acceptance of woman's sexuality but only as a means to further man's evolutionary status through the theory of eugenics. Yet, even though she escapes the fate of her fictional sisters, she is still part of the bifurcation, playing the role of the angelic wife and mother.

NOTES

1. Many critics such as Nina Auerbach in Woman and the Demon, Bram Dijasktra in Idols of Perversity, and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in The Madwoman in the Attic, use the phrases angel/whore, angel/demon and angel/monster when analyzing the bipolarity of the female personality in nineteenth-century literature because, as Nina Auerbach notes, "Discussing each type separately falsifies the fluid boundaries among them" (163). That is, one female can exhibit both extremes; thus, she acts in a bifurcated or split manner. Either she will do as an angel does or fall into the ways of a demon.

2. Although Deroin later escaped to England, Roland was sent to a prison work camp in Algiers where she died in 1852 (Offen 284).

Chapter Two: Sue Bridehead and the Perils of Degeneracy

One literary character who reflects the ideological conundrum surrounding the Woman Question and the New Woman is Sue Bridehead, the bifurcated heroine from Thomas Hardy's last novel, Jude the Obscure. Within the last twenty years, criticism on the novel has shifted from character studies of Jude to psychological analyses of Sue's role. Like other Hardyean heroines, Sue represents beauty and intellect, yet not the lush beauty of Tess Durbefield or Eustacia Vye; instead, Sue's slender, pretty, nervous gestures and scintillating intellect cast her as a New Woman according to Kathleen Blake, Penny Boumelha, and Mary Jacobus. Kathleen Blake (1983) considers Sue an early feminist whose inhibited sexuality evokes tragedy (146-61). Penny Boumelha (1982) concurs with Blake, but she also notes that the narrator and Jude view Sue's sexuality as destructive (140-46). Mary Jacobus (1975) comments that "Sue has much in common with the 'New Woman' of the 1890s," though she wonders "where Hardy stands in relation to feminism" (305).

Other critics believe that they have discovered Hardy's

"true" attitude about women. Alexander Fischler (1985) argues that Sue's "bird-like" quality infers a "pejorative reflection about women" (253). Based on the novel's epigram (1), Fischler concludes that Sue is a coquette who uses and then abandons Jude (260). However, Fischler begins his indictment against Hardy in his 1981 article, "A Kinship with Jobe: Jude the Obscure," when he remarks that Sue must suffer after her children's deaths (531). Eleanor McNees (1989) agrees with Fischler: "Sue must fulfill her penitentional obligation" after the children die (44). Lloyd Fernando (1977) remarks that Sue Bridehead is a New Woman, and Jude the Obscure is an attack on the New Woman. Usually, Hardy's females--Bathsheba, Tess and Eustacia--are admirable and attractive, but Sue is neither. Instead, as the novel states, she is a thin "bundle of nerves" (141-44). Hardy appreciates the well-rounded earth goddess whose tragic flaws reveals in-born angelicism, foiled by man's treachery (146). Finally, T. C. Wright (1989) condemns Hardy for his "explicit generalisations about the nature of women, their superficiality, irrationality and flirtatiousness" (3).

Most of these critics, whether they attack or applaud

Hardy, use Freudian or some type of psychological criticism to reach their conclusions. Yet these psychological analyses ignore the societal cause of Sue's bifurcated personality, the patriarchal culture of the time which continued to uphold the age-old bifurcated view of woman. Likewise, these analyses continually downplay how the novel astonishingly mirrors the enigma surrounding the Woman Question during the fin de siecle: what is Sue and the New Woman in general, angel or devil? Sadly, she is the latter, not a new person independent of the bifurcation, but an extension of its negative side, and every major character in this novel--the narrator, Phillotson, Jude and even Sue herself--condemn Sue as a femme fatale by the tenets of bio-determinism. Although they seemingly admire her intellect, neither Jude, Phillotson, the narrator, nor Sue herself can get beyond Sue's supposed sensual nature inherent, according to bio-determinism, in all women. They continually eroticize her, whether they are attacking or applauding her sexual mores. Thus, they, as well as Sue, do not see Sue as an intellectual being whose sexuality is a part of her, but not all of her. Rather, they see her only as a sexual being who cannot understand nor enjoy her sexuality, yet she must be punished for it.

The narrator of Jude the Obscure discloses a strong bio-deterministic stance toward Sue, although he informs the reader that he is an unbiased observer: "The purpose of a chronicler of moods and deeds does not require him to express his personal views upon the grave controversy above given" (Hardy 298). The narrator's gender is obviously male, but that is not unusual: most Victorian novels have male narrators since a male voice bespoke of reason and authority. However, whether it be a male or female narrator, patriarchal ideology is entrenched in both genders as a reflection of societal truths, and it can be found in a novel published two-hundred years ago or last week.

Bio-determinism seeps through the narrator's commentary from the very beginning. The narrator sees Sue's "nervous temperament"(19) as well as her "excitable nature" by the way her feminine lips quiver and her hands move (138;148). Nineteenth-century medical science adamantly believed that women "naturally" were given to "nervous temperaments" (Romanes 657), and being a New Woman would not cure a woman of her biological inclination to "hysteria," another sign of her inferiority to man, which could attack as a "tremulous response" forcing a completing breakdown and eventual ennui (Gay I, 352). According to bio-medical science, some women

suffering from this neurosis were masking their fear of sex and their own troublesome sexual nature brought on by menstruation: girls knew what their purpose in life was once they began menstruating and knew what they would have to do to fulfill this purpose. Sue is one of these women--terrified of sex.

The narrator remarks that Sue is "sexually frigid" and that she has an "unconsciousness of gender" (Hardy 154) that makes her "childishly ignorant of that side of (men's) their natures which wore at women's hearts and lives" (180). Her frigidity coincides more with the theory that angels dislike sex, find it unclean and only perform it because it is their wifely duty to satiate their husband's desire and to sanctify the reason for marriage, children, than with the femme fatale who understands her base sexuality. Yet Sue is both, and this bifurcated self mixes uneasily in her psyche. She has no middle ground, just extremes, perhaps indicative of society's lack of vocabulary to describe the New Woman. Thus, she is described in accordance with the accepted label used against wayward women, the femme fatale. Though the narrator finds her sexually cold, as do Phillotson and Jude, the narrator discloses that Sue has an effect on men; that is, he sees that Sue is an erotic image to them. After all,

Jude and Phillotson both desire her from the start (109,111,180). In fact, both men's desire for Sue destroys their lives and forces her into the femme fatale role. They are enticed by her sexual coolness. As the narrator states, Sue's sexuality is an "artless power" (158). She is not consciously driving these men to their doom. The narrator does not even care for her looks, calling her a "ganymede" (158), a term which hints at the supposedly adrogynous nature of the New Woman who some hoped, such as writer and social critic Max Nordau, did not represent "the average type of womankind" (Dijkstra 272), for this New Woman did not seem to want men and acted quite mannish by trying to ape and even overtake men in their jobs, their dress and their lifestyle (Dijkstra 273). Perhaps he simply yearned for the Pre-Raphaelite days when women were voluptuous and sloe-eyed, a description Sue does not fit.

Sue fits the New Woman's description succinctly--a slender, sylph-like woman whose boyish sexuality taunts those drawn to the wayward side of feminine nature (Dijsktra 36). Paradoxically, the stronger the late nineteenth-century feminist movement became, the more men feared woman's fatalistic charms. Here is a woman who tears men to shreds as in Arthur Wandle's painting "A Bacchante"; here is

the woman who bears the head of John the Baptist in Gustave Moreau's lush "Salome"; here is the woman who lures man to a watery death in Edward Byrne-Jones' "The Depth of the Sea"; here is Sue Bridehead. Even if Sue followed the other vein of the movement which was headed by one of the female members of the Men and Women's Club, Christabel Parkhurst, (Showalter, Sexual, 25) who challenged women to discard their sexual drives and be a sexless, spiritually superior gender, the same view of New Woman as femme fatale is still relevant. To turn a New Woman away from her sexless state was a game worth playing by many a man. Countless novels beyond the four analyzed here revolve around getting the New Woman to fall in love, disclose her hidden sexual passion, and return her to the traditional fold of marriage and children.

The narrator perhaps likes Sue and surely pities her gender. Although her intellect "scintillates like a star" (348), the narrator discerns that her gender shows her as one of the "weaker vessels" whose "narrowly womanly humours" are a "necessary" given to "her sex" (172). The narrator condemns all women, not merely Sue, to their bio-deterministic fate: "every face . . . (bears) the legend: 'The Weaker' upon it; as the penalty of the sex wherein they

were molded, which by no possible exertion of their willing hearts and abilities could be made strong while the inexorable laws of nature remain what they are" (145). Thus, Sue's very gender antagonizes the narrator to dismiss her as an individual. By seeing Sue only as a woman, not as a person, he too eroticizes her, calling her a "flirt" who will get her comeuppance because, for all her talk, she is "ignorant" of what her place should be (180).

By the end of the novel, Phillotson, Sue's legal husband, feels pity for his erring wife, too. At first, though, Sue captivates him. His love for Sue began during her childhood when he was a teacher in her village. For years, Phillotson kept a charcoal drawing of Sue from childhood (167); now she is a young woman and he "courts" her to become her "suitor" (167) while Jude looks on hopelessly. Sue's "angelic nature, her timidity" (114) draw Phillotson to her as does her intellect, which "sparkles like diamonds," (236) and reveals a Ruskinian mindset behind the kindly pedagogical mask. Phillotson wants as his lifelong companion not merely a beauty but a socially acceptable wife. Thus, his desire that she become a teacher, despite her aversion to this traditional womanly field (114), furthers implicates Phillotson in Ruskinian

ideology. Yet, Sue's sexuality really intrigues Phillotson; he "wants" and "adores" her (180). His age worries him, though. Sue is much younger than he, and a younger suitor like Jude would surely be more attractive to her than a man just past his middle years (115).

Like any newly engaged person, Phillotson fantasizes about what married life with Sue will be--he will open a school and together they will teach. But he must change Sue first, for men must mold women into their proper role, especially these wayward new women, and God, Science and Ruskin give men the power to. Phillotson begins to change Sue so she appears more like a teacher and wife of a schoolmaster by enrolling her in the "nunnery," (137) a teacher's college in Melchester. Sue's fay-like beauty metamorphoses into a parody of a spinsterish school marm: "She wore a murrey-coloured gown with a little lace collar. It was made quite plain and hung about her slight figure . . . Her hair, which formerly she had worn according to the custom of the day, was now twisted up tightly, and she had altogether the air of a woman clipped and pruned by severe discipline. . . " (136). Luckily, the "Training school" is not a success, for it separates Sue from her life of "infancy and freedom" (143), an undoubtedly negative remark

from the narrator who equates Sue's independent streak with that of a child much like Lyndall in The Story of an African Farm. Phillotson accepts Sue's decision not to return there, and he still wants to marry her. For Phillotson, marrying Sue has become a contest; he must not let Jude have her (111-15). However, marriage with Sue is not what he bargained for. Their marriage is a fiasco according to this nineteenth-century tract, The Ethics of Marriage: "Marriage is the union of one man and one woman who are in suitable conditions of health in mind and body, of age and temperament, of convictions, and of taste, to enable them to live together in harmony and happiness" (Gay II, 105). Phillotson's marriage to Sue lacks all these qualities, although in his quest for Sue, he has ignored their differences in temperaments, beliefs and age. Sadly, Phillotson has equated Sue's feelings for a marriage based only on "friendship" with his feelings of love, and the end product is disastrous. By eroticizing Sue and their relationship, he destroys their original platonic friendship. At first, Sue likes Phillotson because he, unlike Jude, seems to see her as an autonomous being. However, Phillotson does not see her this way. Sue has been the erotic object of his affection for years. Now she

is his wife, and in the nineteenth-century, this term meant legal ownership of a woman to her spouse (Basch 17), for the courts and legislative system of England, despite passing laws which protected a married woman's property rights, still viewed woman as being a non-person when it came to rights of self-ownership (Sach 29). But Phillotson discovers that his wife barely tolerates her husband, especially in the bedroom where she would rather "kick" than go to bed with him. In fact, Phillotson sexually repulses Sue so much that she would prefer (and does) sleeping with spiders in the hall closet than with him (225-26). Appalled by Sue's actions, he shouts "it is monstrous that you should feel that way" (226).

He is "bitterly" hurt, and rightly so, according to Christian religious law, English Common Law and the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 (Gay I, 174-78) where he can demand her and even force her to have sex with him (227). Furthermore, he has "given" her "every liberty" (226) and look how she repays his "kindness". And that is how Phillotson perceives Sue. By giving her liberty, not realizing it is hers to have, his reasoning echoes his times where men dole out women's rights as gifts, expecting in repayment, obedience.

Phillotson is no monster, but a representation of man's polarized thinking on the Woman Question. Sue, as a New Woman, confuses him; he does not know how to react to her beyond the already established bi-polar view of Victorian womanhood because he has no guide to follow. Thus, he acts in a pre-established manner. At first, he behaves not only "like a gentleman," acquiescing to Sue's wish to leave him and go live with Jude (238), but also as an advocate of free love without the bonds of marriage: "I don't see why the woman and the children should not be the unit without the man" (238). Free love, though, was not only a fanciful social philosophy but a strong part of a powerful new economic philosophy--woman as an economic entity separate from man. During the late Victorian era, a marriage ideally brought a woman economic security and the chance for social advancement through her husband's career. Yet free love advocates, such as H. G. Wells, believed that for a man, marriage brought only economic hardship (New, 311), forgetting that a woman, as a type of equitable property, was one of man's tangible assets who could appreciate in value and give her husband a stronger social position in the community if she looked and behaved as his "ornament" (Ruskin 103). By acquiescing to Sue's desire to be free,

Phillotson diminishes his own worth in the community, which has enormous repercussions for him. The townspeople conclude that he is unmanly since he "allows" his wife to live with another man. They begin to whisper behind his back and finally shame him in person for letting Sue follow her heart. In the end, he loses his job, his home, and his health, all because he thinks he let a woman undermine his control. The law says that he can force her to stay with him; after all, being legally married to him, she is at his "mercy" (239). But how can he can keep her when she loves another man (236)? Although he feels that Sue's leaving is a "sin," Phillotson admires Sue and Jude's determination to go against custom and live outside of marriage: "The more I reflect, the more I am entirely on their side" (238).

Does Phillotson really believe in free love? No. He is protecting his much affronted dignity, which will be healed once Sue returns to him. He knows that many will think him a "soft fool" (375) for allowing Sue to return to her place as his lawful wife. His reason is not "repentance," but the admittance to the error of "logic" and not "instinct" which follows the construct of bio-determinism and will allow him to regain some of his lost social esteem and possible economic power as the patriarchal

head of the household (236). Phillotson, as a man, is "superior" to a woman intellectually, physically and morally (Darwin 664). Sue, as a woman, must be guided by this stronger being since she is intellectually, physically and morally weaker than he (Romanes 671). Christianity also reinforces his superior position when the vicar of Shaston admonishes him for allowing Sue to leave: "The only thing you can do to retrieve your position and hers is to admit your error in not restraining her with a strong hand" (373). As a man, Phillotson should have forced Sue to stay with him for English common law still claims that he owns her (Sachs 78); instead, he remarks that he let Sue "tempt" him to "misplaced kindness" (Hardy 373). Here Phillotson equates Sue with a femme fatale who has disgraced him socially, morally and economicallly. His desire for Sue and his free-thinking ways undermined his position as a male authority once; it will not happen a second time. Of course, admitting Sue back into his life will not be easy. He has tried to forget her for four years. Now she returns, wanting to use him as her penance for breaking her marriage vows, although her face bears an "aversion" to his touch (405). But Phillotson does not care, for he has won the contest. He accepts her dislike, this woman he has loved

since she was a child, carries her to the bed and tears off her nightgown, knowing that she loathes his touch (405).

Sue also captivates Jude Fawley, another rival for her hand. For Jude, Sue is an "aerial being," "a divinity," and a "vision" of "incarnate loveliness," terms synonymous with woman's angelicism (192,194,222). And, like Phillotson, he too admires her intelligence, her book knowledge, and recognizes that she is a New Woman who does not talk like a shopgirl but converses about Voltaire and Mill and free love (157-58). Sue intrigues him; he has never met anyone so intelligent and yet so radiant or so attractive. And that is Jude's problem: "his interest in her had shown itself to be unmistakably of a sexual kind" (Hardy 103), and this sexual interest causes him to eroticizes her, only seeing her as a sexual being whom he must have. Jude also sees Sue's aerial feminine beauty as a sign of her social class. By having Sue on his arm, Jude will move up in the world because Sue's attractiveness is more socially acceptable. She will be an appreciable asset for him unlike Arabella, his legal wife, whose overt sexuality, voluptuous figure and low-class background hinder his chances to move up the strict British social ladder. (2) Once he awakens Sue's supposedly hidden sexuality, he will try to do what Everard

Barfoot also hopes to do with Rhoda in The Odd Women: change her from this sexually fearful and somewhat adrogynous New Woman into the more traditional model of wife and mother. Yet Jude, with his simple education and itinerant preacher aspirations, sees his desire for Sue as "immoral," she being his cousin, yet he feels powerless to resist his sexual need to have Sue because she has "tempted" him (Hardy 103). Thus, Jude transforms Sue, for all her angelic beauty, into a femme fatale who destroys him.

Trapped between the bourgeois notion of "tender" and "erotic" love (Gay II, 44), Jude's entire dilemma over Sue conceptualizes the late nineteenth-century male's struggle both to overcome passion and desire and succumb to it with unquenchable relish. Put simply, Jude wants to respect Sue, but he also wants to have sex with her. Like Phillotson, Jude's sexual desire for Sue makes her an object to be had, something to be owned (Hardy 264). How does he reconcile himself with this quandary? By believing that Sue's liberated belief in free love is synonymous with her desire for sexual intercourse (271), he changes Sue into his paramour and follows his own bio-determined destiny that admonishes a man for his animalistic sexual drive while excusing him for it. Yet this desire for Sue will be his

undoing because, by transforming her into a femme fatale, Jude becomes the tragic male figure trapped in the fin-de-siecle New Woman's web.

At first, Jude tries to ignore his sexual passion for Sue by following "glandular Christianity" (Gay II, 254); that is, he substitutes his ecclesiastical studies with his physical passion for Sue. Although more common in women, who have a natural weakness for religion (Ellis 258), glandular Christianity displaced sexual need with religious fervor (Gay II, 254-56). Sexuality, a negative drive associated with the femme fatale in this bourgeois society, became a positive force when sublimated with Christianity (286). Yet, through his friendship with Sue, Jude's sexual sublimation begins to take on a new form. No longer are his studies his reason for existence; Sue is. Jude learns from his educated cousin that all his religious fervor and university desires are meaningless because Christianity is archaic and the university will never allow one with Jude's impoverished and ill-educated background to enter its domain: "That may have been my view; but my doctrine and I begin to part company" (220). Although Sue is the spiritual center of his life, Jude wants to fight his sexual feelings for her. If only he "could get over the sense of her sex

. . . what a comrade she would make . . . " (Hardy 158). He tries very hard to forget Sue's sexual presence, even changing his long held belief that "women are to blame" for man's problems; instead, he concludes that "the artificial system of things" (222) checks women's ability to speak and act freely.

Jude has made an ideological leap, but it is short-lived because he cannot escape from his own cultural paradigm. He will never get over the "sense of her sex"; it is his "driving ambition" (Hardy 159). Once sexually attracted to Sue, Jude changes from admiring Sue to conquering Sue, much the same as his rival Phillotson. Jude, for all his espousals of free love (244-45;265;273-84), resembles Phillotson all too well.

The New Woman puzzles him as well, and catches him in both camps when he informs Sue that she now belongs to Phillotson after marrying him, and then reverses his decision, claiming that no one could own her (Hardy 163). Yet he wants to, and his ownership of her becomes his obsession. Likewise, his attitude about Sue's sexuality also reflects a commonly held viewpoint on woman's natural frigidity. As a sexual innocent with Phillotson, Sue's fear of the marriage bed is understandable to Jude since she does

not know what "marriage means" (178). Jude, however, believes that Sue's fear of sex with him is unnatural, infuriating him to the point where he questions her womanhood. But Jude ignores Sue's definition of love--platonic friendship--with all its sentimental niceties. Jude predominantly sees love in a physical manner. Once again, Jude sees Sue is the erotic object of a man's affection, and she does not really love Jude unless she has intercourse with him. It is not enough that Sue has left her husband to live openly with Jude as her companion; he must have all of her or feel that he has nothing (Hardy 265-72). This haranguing her to break their platonic relationship and give into him sexually finally works when he tells her of Arabella's coarse sexuality and then comments that Sue lacks "animal passion" (264). If they are to continue, she must give in; otherwise, he will go mad by hindering his natural instinct. Jude's natural inclination, though, destroys any semblance of Sue's independent nature which equates "celibacy" with "independence" (Showalter 22), a strong trait of the New Woman. Jude hardly notices that by capturing his "bird," he has transformed Sue into a "dull, cowered and listless" woman (Hardy 304). Only after their children are dead and Sue returns to Phillotson does

Jude realize how, by being Sue's "seducer," he has destroyed her (349). Jude wants Sue to be both angel and whore, but Sue cannot handle the intensity of the exchange since there is no middle ground, only extremes. Yet, just as he realizes the consequences of his eroticizing of Sue, he reverses himself and blames Sue's bio-determined womanly nature for most of their problems: "Strange difference of sex, that time and circumstance, which enlarge the views of most men, narrow the views of women almost invariably" (407). From the beginning, "his passion for Sue troubled his soul" (199), but he has pursued her, ignoring her "colossal inconsistency" and her "perverse" nature (181) for Sue also represents a being completely "incarnate," an "angel," which he has to capture as well as sully. He claims she was not worthy of a "man's love" (396), yet he dies obsessing about her, driving himself to an early death because she has returned to Phillotson.

Is Sue a woman, or is she some "fay or sprite, not a woman" as Jude exclaims (Hardy 359)? The difficulty over the bifurcated roles is never so painfully evident as with Sue Bridehead. The novel, which Hardy called "Sue's story" (Bouhmella 138), is Sue's journey through the contrary roles of Victorian womanhood. At the novel's beginning, Sue

appears as a New Woman, an intelligent, independent person whose artistic talents are much in demand. Yet Sue sees herself as a "bad" woman who blames herself for "upsetting men's courses" (Hardy 244), thereby condemning herself as only a sexual object. In the end, Sue's transgression into new womanhood changes her into a sexually repressed neurotic, a creature that both Carl Vogt and Charles Darwin warned would occur when woman tried to overcome her natural limitations (Dijsktra 211). Since woman is backward on the evolutionary scale, when compared to man, her entrance into the male dominion could cause physical and mental degeneration for woman bears the mark of "reversion" (Darwin 696), and her less evolved physical, emotional and intellectual capabilities reflect evolutionary atavism (Dijasktra 212). Sue cannot handle the pressures of the male world. As a woman, she should want marriage and motherhood, her natural vocations according to bio-determinist George Romanes (668). All her talk of free love and independence reverses her into a "clinging vine" (Dijsktra 213) when she faces hardship.

Sue's role as a New Woman emerges early in the novel. Her very job, being an "artist" or "designer of ecclesiastical arts," (Hardy 92) is different from what

most women do, even new women who still worked predominantly as teachers and governesses, but who had made strides in "office and clerical work as well as some manual jobs, such as printing, telegraphy and hairdressing" (Showalter 20). Nor does she talk like a girl; instead her speeches echo Mill's The Subjection of Women. One nineteenth-century critic, Edmond Gosse, stated that "These are men's words in her mouth" (Poole 328). Even as a child, Sue was more the "tomboy" who "would do things that only boys could do" (Hardy 117). And, it is not surprising that her strongest opinions are on marriage and sex. As Elaine Showalter writes, "the . . . New Woman criticized society's insistence on marriage as woman's only option for fulfilling life" (38). At first, Sue seems to strongly agree with this way of thinking. According to William Goetz, Sue finds the whole religious and civil view of marriage confining and questions "the institution of marriage on the grounds of natural morality" (150). Sue tells Jude, "If a marriage ceremony is a religious thing, it is possibly wrong; but if it is only a social contract, based on material convenience," it can be rendered invalid if it "grieves either party" (Hardy 215). Sue wants a marriage created between two people and not governed by religious and social

laws. More importantly, she advocates free love, a relationship without governmental or religious restrictions, but between two people who love and care for one another. She will live with Jude, not as his wife but as she chooses (229).

Yet Sue does not equate free love with sexual love. For Sue, platonic friendship, not sexual passion, strengthens the bond between a man and a woman (152-58). Her celibate state means freedom and a "'silent strike' against oppressive relations with men" (Showalter 22). It gives her power as an autonomous being, not as someone's erotic object. Sue wishes for an "incorporeal" relationship with a man in which she may "ennoble" him to "high aims" (Hardy 158). He will be her "comrade" and she will be his "Venus Urania" (172), the sexually untainted goddess who leads man to heaven. She informs Jude that too often people's "philosophy only recognizes relations based on animal desire. The wild field of strong attachment where desire plays, at least, only a secondary part, is ignored by them" (172). Not that Sue dislikes passion; in fact, Sue finds living passionate, and considers herself so (Hardy 246). Havelock Ellis, another nineteenth-century bio-determinist, admired Sue and other Hardyean heroines'

"untamed instincts" (Poole 335). Edward Carpenter, a friend of Hardy's, claimed woman's "sexual instincts" in Jude the Obscure were "so true to life" (Greenslade 37-8).

If Sue is such a positive example of late nineteenth-century woman's sexuality, than why does she shrink from sexual intimacy with Phillotson and Jude? After all, she states that she has "no fear of men" and that she can mix with them "easily" (Hardy 182), preferring them to women who are intellectually inferior to men (153). Likewise, Sue asserts that "no man will molest a woman unless she invites him" (152), another comment that discloses Sue's own ideological bias against her own sex. Obviously, Sue has fears about sexual intimacy, and she masks her fears with stereotypical remarks. Few books published for women explored female issues such as female sexuality, heterosexual relationships, and female friendship. Instead, most books for women romantized courtship and marriage, left sex education as an "unmentionable" passed on from mother to daughter, and viewed a woman friend as the enemy in the sexual wars. Orphaned as a child, Sue's revulsion over the physical aspect of her marriage to Phillotson discloses more of her old-fashioned beliefs than her new doctrine: "What a woman shrinks from the early days of her marriage--she

shakes down to with comfortable indifference in half-a-dozen years" (Hardy 218).

Nor do her feelings about sex change with Jude. For awhile, she refuses to give into him sexually, saying he is her "incorporeal" lover, a situation that Jude first finds "queer" (247) and then maddening when he begins to lose his self-control (271). Sue only gives into Jude when she becomes fearful that he will leave her to return to Arabella, her arch-rival. After being goaded by Jude, who rants that she has so little "animal passion" (261) and is "sexless" (284), Sue agrees to have sex with Jude. "Very well then--if I must I must. Since you will have it so. I agree . . . I ought to have known that you would conquer in the long run . . . I give in" (271-72). After her marriage with Phillotson, celibacy is Sue's last hold onto her old beliefs and independence. These are gone forever once she becomes Jude's sexual partner. As the narrator states, "she has mentally travelled in the opposite direction" from Jude, becoming more traditional while he becomes more like the old Sue (Hardy 350).

But why did Sue marry in the first place? For all her radicalism, Sue follows tradition. As Venus Urania, Sue regurgitates the old axiom that woman's purpose is to

"ennoble" some man (158); nowhere does Sue want to ennoble herself. She sees her new womanhood as a means to help man be great while she casts herself in the supporting role as the Ruskinian ideal. Sue has another reason as well. Her dalliance with Jude has hurt her "reputation" (162). Engaged to Phillotson, too often Sue appears on Jude's arm. Before she marries Phillotson, Sue wants to break off her engagement with him, but cannot for convention makes her stay committed.

> Then you know what scandals were spread, and how I was turned out of the training school you had taken such time and trouble to prepare me for and get me into; and this frightened me, and it seemed then that the one thing I could do would be to let the engagement stand. Of course I, of all people, ought not to have cared what was said . . . but I was a coward--as so many are--and my unconventionality broke down (227-28).

She marries Phillotson in order not to "hurt" him (205). Acting like a heroine in a gothic novel, Sue states that she is attracted to a man whom she fears and respects, and

Phillotson is one of them (Hardy 159). But there is another, more socially determined reason for Sue's marriage to Phillotson: it will grant Sue a "chance of improving her circumstances and leading a genteel life" (199). Like Phillotson, Sue sees their marriage as an economic boost. It will give her a life she could not have as a single woman. Despite the free love philosophy, Sue adheres to the rules of the patriarchy. Even her relationship with Jude becomes bound by convention. Once it becomes sexual, Sue begs Jude to make their "natural marriage a legal one" (274). He must "have" her the way the law "dictates," not in this free love fashion (Hardy 274), in which she has no power according to Victorian convention.

The longer Sue stays with Jude, the stronger her reversion becomes. She has always considered herself "bad" (139,53,215) with her "aberrant passions and unaccountable antipathies" (211). She sees herself as a femme fatale and blames herself for Jude's downfall (370). Within her, she carries "that inborn craving which undermines some women's morals! . . . the craving to attract and captivate, regardless of the injury it may do the man" (Hardy 359). Sue has eroticized herself right out of her supposed sexlessness. As convention would dictate, sex outside of

marriage finalizes her change into a femme fatale. The death of her children proves her evil, for they were "sin-begotten" (370). "Fate" is punishing her for living out of legal wedlock with Jude and abandoning her legal husband (349).

Through suffering, Sue discovers fundamentalist Christianity: "My children are dead . . . They were sacrificed to teach me how to live! Their death was the first stage in my purification" (Hardy 370). She will return to Phillotson, her legal and spiritual owner, and begin to "mend" her "wicked" ways by submitting to him sexually (367).

Fasting and prayer become daily instruments in her healing process (396). Is this the same woman who brought "pagan dieties" into the "most Christian city" (308)? Sue has become what medical science said she would be if she continued to disobey natural law. Her bio-determined female weaknesses have tumbled her to its lowest depth--the degenerate woman. Nor does her degeneracy make her a fallen woman, a popular Victorian icon. Sue is not emulated but pitied and scorned by many for leaving the man she loves to be with the man she abhors (Hardy 416). Nor does she die, a popular fate of the fallen woman, but lives

a "miserable and staid" life (416). Indeed, Sue has changed into a religious neurotic who uses sex with her husband as a punishment for her past. This perverse glandular Christianity seems strange, but since Sue hates sex, especially with Phillotson, this would be the proper self-punishment for her. Many bio-determinists used religious fanaticism, seen mostly in women, to disclose further woman's low evolutionary place (Ellis 398; Vogt 83). Because women have a "comparatively narrow range of ideas" (Ellis 385), it is of no surprise that she is more susceptible to "influences of the moment" (Ellis 398). Of course, women "have usually been content to accept whatever religion came to hand, and in their fervor they lost the capacity for cold, clear-sighted organisation and attention to details" (Ellis 258). Once Sue loses her children, her guilt overwhelms her and she reverts to ideas she had long since disregarded.

Sue shamefully admits that "her pretty body has been the ruin of me" (Hardy 401). She is a femme fatale who assumes that her own sexuality is destructive to her self and to men. Therefore, it must be suppressed and finally sublimated. Her wish for a "humble heart" and a "chastened mind" (357) seems so different from the radical Sue who had

depth: "You don't know what's inside me" (143). Ironically, Sue's hidden fears and desires were always transparent because she represents both sides of the bifurcated female who thinks in this manner. She is two stereotyped characters meshed together who will never make a complete woman. Never did Sue do a "mental-volte face" (365); her characterization does not have the depth.

Note

1. The epigram from Esdras is as follows: "Yea, many there be that have run out of their wits for women, and become servants for their sakes. Many have also perished, have erred, and sinned for women . . . O ye men, how can it be but women should be strong, seeing they do thus?"

2. Strangely, Arabella is the only survivor of this ill-fated love triangle because she adheres to her womanly nature. That is, she is no angel, but a low-class femme fatale who uses her sexuality to trap Jude into marriage. Later, her predatory nature reaffirms itself when she decides that she wants Jude, especially now that he is with Sue, her rival. Thus, Arabella survives because she stayed within the limits of her bio-determined fate.

Chapter 3: Lyndall and the Aesthetics of Invalidism

Considered to be one of the first novel that examines the New Woman, The Story of an African Farm (1883) is usually favored by critics for its strong feminist stance, but they note that the novel's feminism is so prevalent because Lyndall, the New Woman of the novel, is a fictional representation of Olive Schreiner, an advocate of late nineteenth-century feminism. Cherry Clayton (1983) believes that the novel is "essentially biographical" (22) and Olive Schreiner "wholly identified with her heroine" (30). Jacqueline Banerjee (1988) and Claudia Roth Pierpont (1992) also note the autobiographical elements in the novel (69; 85), but they see Waldo, Lyndall's childhood friend, as yet another autobiographical reflection of Schreiner's personality. Ruth Klevansky (1985) concludes that Lyndall and Waldo are bi-polar representations of Schreiner's personality, with Lyndall being the "bad" (20) side and Waldo her "ideal" self (20-21). Colin Style (1984) agrees with the bi-polarism thesis, but reverses Klevansky's conclusion; that is, Lyndall is the favorable projection

while Waldo is the wallowing "alter-ego" (207). Finally, Gerald Monsman (1985) remarks that neither is good or bad, but simply the "inner" (Waldo) and "outward" (Lyndall) projections of Schreiner's personality (256).

Although this autobiographical reading of the text is certainly applicable, it tends to ignore some of the awkwardness in The Story of an African Farm, which, like Jude the Obscure, The Odd Women, and Ann Veronica, deconstruct the pro-feminist stance; that is, the narrative voice and male characters as well as Lyndall herself cannot separate Lyndall's new womanhood from the traditional bi-polar view of the Victorian woman as either angel or femme fatale. They continually erotize Lyndall who somewhat resembles Sue Bridehead's sylph-like appearance, but is more rpresentative of the "woman-child" (Dijkstra 191), a popular Victorian icon of feminine beauty which reinforced the bio-determined belief that woman, as man's inferior intellectually, physically and emotionally, had more "cultural value" in her adolescent or pubescent state (188) because she was as yet untainted by her approaching womanhood which taxed her mentally and physically, and made her behavior below that of a child's. In fact, children who became emotionally uncontrollable, according to bio-

determinist Harry Campbell (1891), behaved like "grown women" (Dijkstra 157). However, the female child's innocence of mind and purity of body became erotic elements themselves (185-88) which reaffirmed the woman as femme fatale, even under the guise of childhood. Whether a toddler or adolescent, the "sensuous" nature of woman could be recognized in "all stages of childhood" (Dijkstra 194). Paintings of adolescent girls bathing, such as Paul Chabas's "First Bath" (1907) or Carl Larsson's "The Little Girl's Room" (1895), disclosed the lurking sexuality in the female child. Lewis Carroll, an Anglican minister who wrote the childhood fantasy Alice in Wonderland, also enjoyed photographing nude little girls who were "so perfectly pure and lovely" (Dijkstra 106). Thus, Lyndall's sensuous yet child-like appearance, with her "princess" demeanor and petite stature (183), undermines her role as the New Woman, but reaffirms her position as a femme fatale who must be punished for breaking social taboos by becoming the invalid, another socially acceptable role for the Victorian woman which the narrator glorifies, thereby ignoring her original tale--that of a New Woman striving for social and economic power.

Few critics have examined the incongruent narrator of

this novel, but its narrative voice is key not only to its structural flaws but to its view of the New Woman as either angel or femme fatale. Based on autobiographical evidence, the narrative persona appears to be female (Clayton 34). The male pseudonym Ralph Iron that Schreiner hid behind in order to publish her novel could not deter any reader from assuming that the narrative voice is female (Monsman 254) or at least androgynous. After all, so many other women writers, such as Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot, also adopted male pseudonyms in order to get their works published. Whether the narrative voice of The Story of an African Farm is female or not is unimportant when one realizes that, despite its authorship or supposed feminine narrative, the narrator of this novel, like the narrator of Jude the Obscure, appears quite comfortable as the mouthpiece for middle-class Victorian patriarchal ideology which glorifies Lyndall's collapse into invalidism and death as representative of the "spiritually triumphant" (Klevansky 21) angel who ascends into martyrdom.

This narrative voice which applauds her ascent creates a "fragmentary" text (Monsman 264). Unlike the dramatized narrative voices in Jude the Obscure and Ann Veronica, or the seemingly objective narrator in The Odd Women, the

narrative of this novel is a hodge-podge of expository essay, narrative drama and epistolary writing. An undramatized but very subjective narrator, who recognizes herself in both first and second person (Schreiner 105), apparently is telling this story, but too often incomplete frames appear in the narration; that is, too often this over-zealous narrator forgets she is rendering another's point of view but usurps her point of view on that character, which explains why these narratives within the main narration sound no different. Thus, the framing is illusory. Supposedly, Gregory Rose will tell Em and the reader the story of Lyndall's death, yet there is no voice change to Gregory Rose in this passage because, before "he can "speak" (265), the narrator takes over without becoming the "conscious" of that character (James 63), but renders her own consciousness on that character. Even when the narrator does not steal the story from another speaker, the voice still does not change. The Stranger's story, the narrator's expository passage on religion, Waldo's letter and Lyndall's diatribes all sound the same. The characters develop little voice and depth, but are merely one dimensional figures.

Although this narrative ambiguity fragments the text on

a basic story line level, it reaffirms the patriarchal or controlling view of Victorian womanhood, especially where Lyndall is concerned in her role as the New Woman. Instead of giving the reader a person, the narrator has created an ideal abstraction--an "elfin-like beauty" (Schreiner 36) who endorses a romantic feminism while recreating her into an admired Victorian icon. Lyndall might speak the language of the New Woman, but her actions reveal her to be an erotic woman-child who vacillates between being an angel or a femme fatale until finally, "weary" (259) from the world's misery, she romantically succumbs to invalidism.

Woman as invalid was a powerful icon of Victorian art and literature. A woman's physical weakness, aggravated when ill, reinforced two paradoxes: one, that she was spiritually too good for this earth (Dijkstra 25), and two, that her inherent limitations, which made her morally weaker than man (Vogt 82), metamorphosed her pangs of conscience into a physical disability. The cult of invalidism had its proponents, mainly the artist who saw sublime beauty in a woman's weakness. Dozens of paintings illustrate the hollow-eyed woman lying on her deathbed while a family member, usually the stoic husband, mourns her passing. Many of these paintings reinforced an "environment which valued

self-negation as the principal evidence of woman's moral value" (Dijsktra 28). In this society, women "enveloped by illness were the rigid equivalents of spiritual purity . . . They did not merely pursue self-sacrifice to demonstrate their virtue; they personified its virtues through their self-obliteration by means of illness" (28). After all, woman, especially a married woman, was supposed to negate any semblance of individual strength for the sake of her husband and family. To become a "self-denying woman" (Dijkstra 29) lead one to spiritual purity, the role of the ideal woman. Hollow-cheeked, pale and anorexic looking women epitomized the erotically ethereal beauty of the "consumptive sublime" (29), a look that the narrator praises as Lyndall lays dying: "her transparent face, refined by suffering into an almost angel-like beauty" (Schreiner 281).

Not all glorified the invalid; some interpreted her as a sign of woman's ultimate doom--to be a glorified ornament without any self-worth. Many bourgeois women aspired to be invalids, to have that pale, world-weary look; it was charming and elegant and a sign of being "truly feminine" (Dijkstra 29). Instead of young women outside in the sunshine walking strongly in the open air much as Rhoda does

in The Odd Women and what Lyndall yearns that girls may do in the future (Schreiner 189), many women, desiring to be part of the aristocratic leisure class, were now thought to be more feminine if they stayed inside, languishing on couches in darkened rooms. The energetic woman was a "faux pas" (Dijkstra 27) to be immediately feared as one of those new women like Rhoda Nunn, with their "dangerous masculinizing attitudes" (26). One opponent of invalidism, Mrs. E. Lyn-Lindon, wrote in Modern Women (1889) that "less and less every year are the nerves and the muscles, the restless activities of arms and legs, exercised and made to purvey new vigor to the life. The body is allowed to grow stagnant. The life of the woman, even as a mere animal, becomes poor and morbid and artificial" (27). Despite her creation of the invalid Lyndall, Olive Schreiner, in her non-fictional work, Woman and Labor, also attacks this growing cult:

> Then, in place of the active laboring woman, upholding society by her toil, has come the effete wife, concubine or prostitute, clad in fine raiment . . . fed on luxurious viands . . . waited on and tended by the labor of others. The need for her

> physical labor having gone, and mental industry not having taken its place . . . She lay upon her sofa . . . And the hand whitened and the frame softened, till, at last, the very duties of motherhood, which were all the constitution of her life left to her, became distasteful, and, from the instant when her infant came damp from her womb, it passed into the hands of others, to be tended and reared by them. In many cases so complete was enervation, that . . . her existence of inactivity had robbed her of all joy in strenuous exertion and endurance in any form (79-81).

Lyndall's painful physical decline accurately mirrors the Victorian invalid cult. With her "white face" and "dying eyes . . . looking upward" (Schreiner 283), she ascends to martyrdom:

> . . . she would never speak again. Only the wonderful yearning light was in the eyes still. The body was dead now, but the soul, clear and unclouded, looked forth.

> Then slowly, without a sound, the beautiful eyes closed (283-84).

Both Gerald Monsman and Nancy Paxton conclude, without realizing that they condone her invalidism, that Lyndall's death is morally uplifting. Monsman comments that Lyndall welcomes death once she discovers how "helpless" she is in the "human struggle" for existence (265). Paxton concurs with Monsman and remarks that Lyndall, by looking at her self in the mirror before she dies, finds her own "emotional strength and independence" (572). Neither see Lyndall's death reflecting a commonly admired stereotyped view of women, yet neither does the narrator. For the invalid, a painful convalescence was a path towards redemption because it gave her "moral value" by reinforcing the negative nature of woman, especially if she were a mother (Dijkstra 26).

After torturing herself with guilt over not loving her dead infant daughter (Schreiner 278), Lyndall, like Sue Bridehead who finds religion after her children's deaths, begs "God" to ease her "pain," and her pain forces her to admit her bio-determined flaw: "I am a weak, selfish, erring woman" (279). Not only did Lyndall not love her

child, but she bore it out of wedlock, refusing to marry its father, RR. Lyndall might say she has "no conscience" (209;235), but her slow suicide proves she has a very Victorian one. Her refusal to marry RR portrays the attitude of a New Woman who feels free to have sex outside of marriage nor would not marry merely to bear a child (Showalter 23), yet her decline into invalidism invalidates her feminism. Carol L. Barasch argues that Lyndall "destroys herself" (272) by following the destiny of "Darwinian bound biology" (274) which states that woman, in her weaker role, will naturally fall into reversion whenever she tries to break the controlling bounds of her bio-determined destiny--to marry and be a wife and mother. Lyndall has not married, nor does she like motherhood.

In fact, before her decline into invalidism, Lyndall soundsd much like Rhoda Nunn because she too shirks her supposed womanly duty, matrimony, and the trail that leads toward it, love, although, like Rhoda Nunn, she does romanticize marriage, seeing it as the "beautiful external symbol of the union of souls" (Schreiner 190). Her argument against love echoes one extreme doctrine of the New Woman which saw love and marriage as something to be avoided. Once married, a woman loses what little freedom she has

(236). Lyndall lectures to Em, whose views on love resound with Ruskinian philosophy that a woman's love is a "service" to man (180), and opposes Em's bourgeois notion that marriage is the goal of every woman since man's love is destructive:

> . . . a man's love is inconstant and short-lived. A man's love is a fine olive-wood. It leaps higher every moment; it roars, it blazes, it shoots out red flames; it threatens to wrap you round and devour you--you stand by like an icicle in the glow of its fierce warmth. You are self-reproached at your own chilliness and want or reciprocity. The next day, when you go to warm your hands a little, you find a few ashes (184).

While high up on her pedestal, Lyndall argues with Waldo that many women marry in order to have "power" (181) because "women are born without power, something men inherently have" (191). She despises women who use their looks to capture a man or marry for social or economic reasons. Not only are they giving up whatever limited freedom they have as single women, but they are acting like

parasites by exchanging freedom for security. Lyndall sees parasitic women as using their sexual power and expending it upon men (190) in order to receive economic security: "You are our goods, our merchandise, our material for operating on" (192). Yet she is willing to marry Gregory Rose, a man she does not love, so she may have power and security. Knowing that Gregory Rose only admires her for her outward appearance, her child-like beauty and "fair" face (216), she uses her feminine "art" (216) to snare him from Em. Her actions are not only parasitic, but akin to those of a femme fatale who knowingly entraps men with her sensual beauty. Further, her actions with Gregory Rose contradict her characterization as the New Woman who yearns to fight against the confining roles of Victorian womanhood.

Most of Lyndall's commentary on women and their rights to social and economic freedom echoes many manifestoes of the New Woman, but mainly John Stuart Mill's The Subjection of Women. As a New Woman, Lyndall attacks the nonsensical differences between a male's and female's formal education. Although Lyndall does not believe that knowledge can only be derived from formal education, especially books which relate "history" but not "thought" (48), she discovers that for a female, learning from one's environment as well as life's

hardships (48) has taught her more than any formal schooling ever did. Raised by a woman who finds educated women silly (112), Lyndall fights to go to school and wins, but what she finds at school makes her "weary" of this patriarchal social structure which reeks of bio-determinism. She is aghast that "of all the cursed places under the sun, where the hungriest soul can hardly pick up a few grains of knowledge, a girls' boarding school is the worst. They are called finishing schools . . . They finish everything but imbecility and weakness, and that they cultivate" (185). Lyndall discovers that her gender pigeonholes her education. She lives in a time where women are not allowed the same education as men because natural differences in the sexes destined woman to a domestic role. Her body size regulated her amount of intelligence: small body, small brain as Paul Broca concluded.

> We might ask if the small size of the female brain depends exclusively upon the size of her body . . . We must not forget that women are, on the average, a little less intelligent than men, a difference which we should not exaggerate but which is, nonetheless real. We are therefore permitted to

> suppose that the relatively small size of the female brain depends in part upon her physical inferiority and in part upon her intellectual inferiority (Gould 104).

To Broca, it is a given that women are naturally less intelligent than men, and women's physiognomy only adds to their secondary status. Other bio-determinists, using Broca's data, attacked women's demands for education with a vengeance. One man, Gustave Le Bon, adamantly opposed educating women.

> A desire to give them the same education and, as a consequence, to propose the same goals for them, is a dangerous chimera . . . The day when, misunderstanding the inferior occupations which nature has given her, women leave the home and take part in our battles; on this day a social revolution will begin, and everything that maintains the sacred ties of the family will disappear (Gould 105).

Of course, they must be educated, but that education was not

for self-knowledge and growth, but to "enable" women "to understand, and even aid, the work of men" (Ruskin 95).

Bio-determinism granted that learning could tax the female mind, especially once a woman started to menstruate. Woman's limited brain power dissipated when she began physically to develop, for "the development of ovaries, uterus, and breasts drained energy from the finite supply each individual possessed" (Green 116). Too much study, according to one nineteenth-century popular fashion magazine, "endangered" her health (Green 117). John Wiltbank, a nineteenth-century physician practicing in Philadelphia, lectured in 1854 that "(w)oman's reproductive organs are pre-eminent . . . They are the source of her peculiarities, the center of her sympathies, and the seat of her diseases. Everything that is peculiar to her springs from her sexual organization" (118).

Woman is inferior when compared to the standard norm, man; that is what Lyndall learns in school. Her gender makes her inferior, not merely different, and she must fight for the education she wants. While other girls learn sewing and female decorum, Lyndall demands to study beyond this drivel (Schreiner 186). She sits up nights reading books and magazines, trying to learn. As a free-thinker, she

travels, hoping to also learn "some different ways of living, which is more than any book can show one" (186). Lyndall learns the burden of her sex and does not like it: "I am not in so great a hurry to put my neck beneath any man's foot; and I do not greatly admire the crying of babies" (184). Being a woman is a "curse," but she hopes that woman will not always be "branded" by her gender (188). One day a woman will be able to use her intelligence to better herself, not merely to catch a mate (188-90).

Yet try to catch a mate is exactly what Lyndall sets out to do which contradicts her new womanhood. Instead of trying to change things, Lyndall succumbs to the system, using her erotic child-like beauty in a femme fatale manner. Knowing that she has no power as a single female, Lyndall attaches herself to a male, Gregory Rose, who will give her power, although Rose does not seem to be the type who would give power to any female. As a caricature of the bio-determined male, Gregory Rose is a buffoon. While engaged to Em, he informs her that "You were made for me, created for me" (178), a statement that re-emphasizes what bio-determinist George Romanes said about women's role in life: "there also arises in woman that deeply-rooted desire to please the opposite sex which, beginning in the terror of a

slave, has ended in the devotion of a wife" (663). Nor does Gregory Rose believe that a woman can love as deeply as a man, which also supports the bio-determinist attitude that woman's inherent "fickleness" and "vacillation" makes her unable to have the same emotional "depth" as a man (657).

Although born a white male whose masculine superiority should be self-evident, Gregory Rose continually needs to reaffirm his masculinity. He writes to his sister that he has born the ineptitudes of life "not as a woman, who whines for every touch, but as a man should--in silence" (Schreiner 176). Nor does he admire any man who "can't make a woman obey him" (206). Rose states that he dislikes women who drive their own buggies or receive letters from men, both actions which he sees Lyndall do: "It is so unwomanly" (207). If a man lets a woman behave in this manner, then he is a "muff" (207). Yet Lyndall treats him in this manner, ridiculing his intellectual pomposity, calling him a "true woman--one born for the sphere that some women have to fill without being born for it" (197), and he gladly lets her for he is so captivated by her physical beauty. The narrator also finds Gregory Rose effeminate by noting that he writes on pink paper (175), cries that he will die without love (184), pouts when Em breaks their engagement (233), and

dresses as a woman to be near the dying Lyndall (246). Not even his sojourn as Lyndall's nurse makes him more attractive because it does not emphasize his weakness as a man overcome by love for a woman, but his weakness to give up willingly his appearance as a man, which is the traditional bio-determined symbol of strength that the narrator and Lyndall both admire.

To Lyndall, Gregory Rose is not a "real" man, one who puts fear in her heart, for a "real" man has the strength to physically and emotionally overpower her and force her to love him (198). That power belongs to RR, Lyndall's lover, another man who is captivated by Lyndall's child-like beauty and behavior (238), and is willing to have her under any "conditions" rather than not at all (239). In a novel full of caricatures, RR symbolizes the mysterious, handsome and romantic lover whom Lyndall can barely resist (238). Although he repeatedly offers her marriage, Lyndall as a New Woman, refuses. She will not marry him, but she will allow him to "take me away with you, and take care of me" (239). A New Woman would despise being dependent upon any man economically, yet Lyndall fervently desires that someone, even Gregory Rose, to take care of her with or without the bond of matrimony, for despite her yearnings to be free

economically and socially, she cannot move beyond the patriarchal view of Victorian womanhood.

Strangely, Lyndall only sees legal marriage as capitulating to Victorian tradition. Technically, Lyndall is correct, for a married woman could not legally divorce her husband at this time except if she could prove he committed adultery (Basch 18). Living under the romantic tenets of free love will "free" Lyndall from the relationship if it sours (Schreiner 236). Lyndall does not base her comment on this technicality but on a patriarchally formed naivete; otherwise, she would not agree to marry Gregory Rose. However, marrying Gregory Rose would not be marrying a man, only the outward semblance of one. Nor could Rose demand anything from her, neither sex or children (230). Yet, in the eyes of society and within the bounds of the legal system, it would be a marriage and she could not be free of it unless she could prove that the unconsummated marriage was instigated by her husband and thereby be granted a "Decree of Nullity" (Daly 170). Rather, much like Sue Bridehead's reason for marrying Philoston, Lyndall's reason for agreeing to marry this "near man" (Schreiner 197) seems to be primarily economical as well as one of social convention. Since she is not in love with him, he will not

be able to control her as RR could. Instead, she can use him for economic security and social conformity because she will be the wife of a prosperous farmer.

Lyndall does "love" (Schreiner 210) another man, Waldo, but this is a "spiritual" love since he supposedly sees her as a person, not as a sexual ornament or as an "angel" (210). Yet, even their platonic relationship seems strained at times, especially when Lyndall calls him dear, and lovingly kisses him goodbye when he leaves the homestead (224). Whether she is a New Woman or not, Lyndall's intimate actions with Waldo are more akin to a romantic relationship, not a platonic one. Gregory Rose even wonders if they are romantically involved (185). And Waldo's wistful stares at her "beautiful eyes" and small body reaffirm how he romantically wants her (224;262). His death reaffirms that his overt devotion to Lyndall is beyond the formal male-female friendships of the times which usually led to courtship and marriage. Soon after he learns of Lyndall's death, Waldo dies while quietly sitting in the sun (301) since his entire reason for returning to the karoo was for her: "I thought I should be nearer you; and it is you I want--you that the other people suggest to me, but cannot give" (262). By dying, Waldo states that he will no longer

be "separated" from her (286), a remark which sounds more like the lamenting of a star-crossed lover than a childhood friend.

Lyndall, though, would never have Waldo. Even though he is quite attractive in a Byronic manner with his large masculine build, dark locks and blue eyes (163), he is a fieldworker, not a farmer like Gregory Rose or an educated gentleman like RR. Waldo will never be able to compete with the other more economically secure men. He will never be able to offer Lyndall the security she craves, for he will always be a worker, never the master. Lyndall is gender bound, but Waldo is class bound. As the son of a farm worker whom she protects and guides in a maternal manner since he is also an orphan, Waldo is poor, uneducated and weak in Lyndall's eyes and she must protect him from those who are stronger. Unfortunately, he is no "real" man who will be able to take care of her, for he can offer her nothing economically. Nor does she fear him. Rather, acting like a femme fatale, she seems to use him as bait to attract Gregory Rose who detests Waldo's strong, masculine looks (183) as well as the romantic attachment that Waldo has for Lyndall. Indeed, Lyndall exercises all her traditional feminine power within the bounds that the

patriarchal society allows her to have.

Despite her spiritual bond with Waldo, Lyndall's bio-determined sex furthers her reason for not seeing Waldo as a possible mate and for wanting to marry Gregory Rose or have RR take care of her. A woman "is made to lean" on a man; that is her "only hope" for survival (Romanes 663). Being at a lower social status than she, Waldo continually would "lean" on Lyndall as he always has. For Lyndall, women either must be "trodden down" if they differ from the social norm or they must "go with it" (189), and Lyndall decides on the latter because, despite her intelligence, she cannot envision an existence beyond this patriarchally created paradigm which limits her choices in life, so she uses only the power that the patriarchy grants her. Yet neither can the narrator, who like Gregory Rose, RR and Waldo, adores Lyndall's weak, woman-child beauty and cannot give up the mid-Victorian aesthetic standard of female attractiveness: a beautiful woman who is physically, emotionally and intellectually weak. Because of these traits, she is all the more feminine, reinforcing the Victorian ideal of woman which the men in the novel admire and mourn over. Resembling more the glorious invalid than a New Woman, Lyndall's brief existence becomes an icon of ill-fated

beauty in this Victorian melodrama.

Chapter Four: Rhoda Nunn:
The Erotic Spinster

As a contemporary of Thomas Hardy and Olive Schreiner, George Gissing also examines similar themes in his work, especially the Woman Question. Many of Gissing's novels revolve around women and their changing roles in late nineteenth-century British society, but only one addresses the bifurcated view of womanhood and the emerging power of the New Woman to such an extreme--The Odd Women. Of course, critics of The Odd Women also face a quandary: is this novel pro or anti-feminist? What does it say about women? Critics are split over this novel. Some applaud its feminism. Katherine Lineham (1979) remarks that The Odd Women has a "unique boldness of vision." Despite Gissing's "negative experiences of women," his "feminism" comes through because he "sympathetically sponsors a radically feminist and forward looking point of view" (359). Pierre Coustillas (1981) remarks on Gissing's "sensitivity to the fair sex" (21) while David B. Eakin (1979) applauds Gissing's "long-standing sympathy" for woman's social dilemma (16). Finally, Karen Chase (1984) also believes

that Gissing is a feminist and Rhoda is a "new" possibility for the "Victorian heroine" (231). However, others see this novel's gender bias. Alice B. Markow (1981-82) comments that Gissing "deliberately set up situations that would disclose the basic, often biological, inequality of women" (58). Gissing's novel is "unoriginal" where "women's rights" are concerned. His viewpoint smacks of stereotyped bias, disclosing his fear of the New Woman as a "threat to society" (68). John R. Harrison (1981) concurs with Markow, concluding that Gissing's novel reflects much of Gissing's own thought about the dangers of an over-educated woman to weak-minded men who become captivated by a woman's beauty, only later to discover she lacks an intellect to match that beauty. Obviously, the "double standard" is alive and well in Gissing's novels (Harrison 7). Carolyn Perry (1988) notes that Gissing's The Odd Women has a "pervasive" Ruskinian presence, which Gissing advocates (63). William Greenslade (1988-89) goes one step further by noting that Gissing's texts on women read like Herbert Spencer's Education, a mid nineteenth-century treatise that "defined and limited" women "by their function to bear and nurture children" (50). Thus, any other functions, such as thinking, would produce a "deleterious tax on the female

system" (50). Still, other critics take an ambivalent stance, such as Robert L. Selig (1979) and Kathleen Blake (1983), who emphasize that Gissing's personal crisis over women, probably due to his unhappy marriages to Edith Underwood and Nell Harrison, taints a completely sympathetic view of the New Woman (17-18; 79).

All too often, these critics take an autobiographical approach to Gissing's novel or look at it as only a novel about new women, ignoring the blatant fact that it is a marriage novel which focuses, as marriage novels do, on the traditional Victorian sphere of womanhood--courtship, marriage and childbirth--and what happens to women who do not follow this socially bound lifestyle: they are punished. Rhoda, the New Woman of the novel, is punished for being a New Woman by the narrator and by her lover, Everard Barfoot, because she is sexually erotic and uses her sexual nature to try and ensnare Everard into proposing, thereby transforming herself into a femme fatale who must be punished for her womanly wiles much like Sue Bridehead and Lyndall. Yet Rhoda is not the only female punished in the novel. Monica, Virginia and Alice Madden are also punished for their errant behavior. Monica, a woman searching for her independence while trying to break from a loveless

marriage, falls into depravity, while Monica's older sister, Virginia, turns into an alcoholic because of her forced spinsterhood, possibly caused by the great shortage of men between the ages of eighteen to thirty-five during this time period who had died fighting for Great Britain in its numerous wars in the Crimea, India and other parts of the British empire (Fox v). Finally, Alice, another sister, is also condemned to spinsterhood because of her unattractive face and unintelligent mind, which reinforces the belief that a woman's looks are a marketable commodity. Thus, the novel's title, as well as the narrator's story is a sham; although the odd women's social condition interests the narrator, he abandons them for a more socially popular format, the marriage novel, possibly since, like the narrator's in Jude the Obscure and The Story of an African Farm, he has no precedent or guide to help keep the focus on his original idea--the odd women.

According to Nancy Armstrong's Desire and Domestic Fiction, the domestic novel cannot be "understood apart from the history of sexuality" (9). To discuss an eighteenth, nineteenth or twentieth century novel without its sexual, political and gender expectations would be like reading a novel in the dark. Yet is The Odd Women a domestic novel?

Like other domestic novels, The Odd Women deals with "matters of courtship and marriage" (Armstrong 5) because it examines traditional "domesticity"--home life and woman's devotion to it (416). This is a text which supports the ideological belief that women want to marry primarily for economic and social reasons while men want to marry to satiate their desire while living in a Ruskinian dream with the Victorian angel. But this domestic novel has a twist. Unlike past domestic novels which reveal the powers of woman's virtue overcoming the male's "sexual aggression" by transforming it "into middle-class love" (Armstrong 6), The Odd Women discloses the dark side of domesticity and man's subtle aggression against any woman trying to expand her circle of power beyond the hearth. This novel cannot escape the nineteenth-century conventional format: life revolves around mating, and woman's goal is marriage for economic security whereas man's goal is the pursuit of a desirable, intelligent, yet obedient woman. This happens because its narrative voice creates this convention via a textual double standard. Like Jude the Obscure and The Story of an African Farm, The Odd Women reads as pro or at least somewhat feminist novel since it addresses issues pertinent to its time of publication. Yet it is also anti-feminist for the

same reason. The narrative voice has been applauded as being "impeccably objective" (Kennedy 13); it has been described as escaping "undue bias" since "no masculine favourite or scapegoat carries the novel into sexual self-righteousness" (Blake 79). But the narrative voice is trapped in its time, a time where biological determinism, natural law, and social Darwinism were all boiling in the social stew over the New Woman: "the internal composition of a given text is nothing more or less than the history of its struggle with contrary forms of representation for the authority to control semiosis" (Armstrong 23).

Unlike the narrators of Jude the Obscure or The Story of an African Farm, the narrator of this novel tries to be objective and sometimes succeeds, but very often "he" lets his feelings toward a subject or situation become apparent. The narrator wants more for women beyond their "principal function"--to bear children (Gissing 1). The dismay he feels over Mr. Madden never educating his daughters reeks of pessimism: "Dr. Madden's hopes for the race were inseparable from a maintenance of morals and convention such as the average man assumes in his estimate of women" (3). These lines become especially ironic when Madden, who was "so utterly" repulsed by the thought of women working (3),

dies and leaves his six uneducated and unskilled daughters to fend for themselves in a world not accepting of single women. Right away, we feel that the narrator is sympathetic to Odd Women--almost one million of them by the turn of the century (Fox, vi)--because they have no husbands.

He does care for Virginia and Alice Madden, Monica's two lonely spinster sisters, whose celibacy leads them to an early middle age and addles their brains (50). Both women are resigned to spinsterhood and soon abandoned for tertiary roles in the novel until its end when they become surrogate mothers to Monica's child. Alice has "resigned herself to spinsterhood" (50) knowing that her pimply face and dumpy body will never help her in the marriage market. However, Virginia, a "sorrowful image of old maidenhood" (20), reinforces the narrator's stance that prolonged celibacy in weak-willed women leads to other types of degeneracies, as in Virginia's case, alcoholism. Virginia drinks as she has nothing else to do. Life in a drugged state is more appealing than a life of which one is fully cognizant that lacks security--marriage and children. As an odd woman, Virginia, "a lady" who might have been "pretty and erudite" if her father's death and her subsequent life as a lady's maid had not "damaged" her health (10; 17), could have

attracted "any man in search of a wife," which is the goal of every woman (11). Mary Barfoot, the most feminine New Woman in the novel, also has the narrator's approval. Even though she operates, along with Rhoda Nunn, a clerical school for women, her goal is not to merely educate these women but to enlighten them: "We don't desire to end the race . . . We have no mission to prevent girls from marrying suitably--only to see that those who can't shall have a means of living with some satisfaction" (51). The narrator likes Mary because she is more representative of the prevailing ideology of the time "concerning a woman's place" (Markow 65). He comments on her "natural dignity" (Gissing 51), her looks and her "aristocratic taste and dress" (52) and concludes that she is also a "lady," a term implying the definite stamp of social approval, especially in the late nineteenth-century when the term signified the difference between a female of the upper class versus a female of the lower class, a woman. Despite her past, which includes trouble with "poetry" and "love," Mary is still "good natured," an excellent example of a "prophetess of female emancipation" (50). Unlike the elder Madden sisters, whose prolonged celibacy leads them to early degeneration, Mary Barfoot's "mental and moral stamina" assures "her

against such evils of celibacy as appeared in the elder Maddens" (50). Her wealth allows her to sublimate her dormant sexual drive into her feminism, although she is "lonely" at times for male companionship (212).

Nor is the narrator's interest in woman and celibacy happenstance, but another skewed side issue of bio-determinism and one of the main issues of the novel. Late nineteenth-century medical science began to study men and women's differing reactions to sex. Although bound by bio-determinism, science began to wonder about woman's sexual nature. Was sex something she merely tolerated or used to captivate men, or could she really enjoy it? Was she evil if she enjoyed it, an example of Darwin's reversion theory? Was it in her nature, like man's, to be animalistic, or was woman always categorized as a spiritual creature, albeit weak, who fulfilled her Christian duty--bearing children? Hinged to this theory is the contradictory belief that chaste women will mentally and physically break down without sex; that is, the sexually repressed woman could become insane without some outlet to release her nurturing tendencies, which spinsterhood denied (Dijkstra 219). How did science play on both sides of this pseudo-sexual debate? Karl Pearson, a follower of late nineteenth-century

eugenics, sums up the contradictions in this passage from The Ethics of Free Thought (1901):

> Woman's past and present subjection probably depends to a great extent on her presumed intellectual as on her presumed physical inferiority. We must face the problem of her being naturally men's intellectual inferior; her pejorative function of child-bearing may possibly involve this (Brandon 51).

Thus, marriage would save woman, who was too spiritually weak to fight off loneliness which could lead to depravity or masturbation, one of the most studied and vehemently argued issues of the nineteenth-century, which many medical scientists condemned as leading to irreparable insanity (Gay II, 394-400).

During the late nineteenth-century, two opposing viewpoints collided over masturbation--those who saw it as medically and spiritually harmful and those who did not. Both Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud saw little ill in masturbation. Ellis, who would masturbate to study his sperm count (Brandon 43), remarked that the arguments

against masturbation are "pernicious nonsense" (Gay I, 308). Freud noted that the act itself was probably harmless, but the bourgeois notion of sexual propriety made the masturbator feel guilt and shame (309). However, the opponents of masturbation--many medical doctors, pastors and educators (Gay I, 264)--concluded that this "vice of 'self-abuse'" or "self-pollution" would lead to death or insanity as well as damnation in hell or a loss of one's Christian soul. The fear of masturbation in England began with Onania, or the Heinous Sin of Self-Pollution, And all its Frightful Consequences, in Both Sexes Considered which was published anonymously in 1710. By the middle of the eighteenth-century, studies of onania were becoming in "vogue" (Gay I, 285). Samuel-Auguste-Andre David Tissot, a Swiss physician, commented in his work, De'l Onanisme (1758), that "the English onania is true chaos" (285). He noted that "English masturbators fell victim" to an overall loss of mental and physical health, increasing bodily pains, the development of "pus-filled boils," diarrhea, constipation and sexual incontinence (Gay I, 286). In 1812, British physician Benjamin Rush furthered Tissot's indictment against this dreaded ailment, stating that it could lead to "seminal weakness, impotence . . . pulmonary

consumption, dyspepsia, dimness of sight, vertigo, epilepsy, hypochondriasis, loss of memory . . . fatuity, and death" (Gay I, 297). One American physician, George R. Calhoun, stated in his 1858 study on masturbation, that this illness "demoralizes the whole character, and utterly destroys the sexual faculty," especially when it begins in childhood (297). Henry Maudsley, another British medical doctor, stated in his article, "Illustrations of a Variety of Insanity," (1868) that "the world . . . is well rid of the male masturbator" (Gay I, 298).

The female masturbator faired no better in Maudsley's opinion, falling victim to mental breakdown with prolonged self-abuse (300). In fact, masturbation was considered a scourge among women, leading to idiocy and death. Causes of female onania included constipation, menstruation, a husband's impotence, celibacy, romance novels, dancing, sewing machines and riding a bicycle, "the tempter of orgasm" (Gay I, 301).

Medical treatments for both sexes included moderate exercise, soothing baths, hard mattresses and a sensible diet, but could become more severe depending upon the doctor (Gay I, 302). Some women were forced to wear chastity belts; others were hospitalized and bodily restrained to

cure them of this disease. Some had their vulvas cauterized, and there was one case of a seven-year-old child whose doctor "subjected her to a clitoridectomy" for repeatedly masturbating (Gay I, 304). Male patients fared little better; they could be placed in straight jackets, forced to wear penile rings, or suffer cauterization of the head of the penis (Gay I, 304).

The educators and religious communities also attacked masturbation, but focused on satan or loose morals as the culprit. By returning to Christianity, the masturbator could be saved spiritually since masturbation was the first sign of a loss of faith (304). But a lack of faith is not the only reason that masturbation existed; the woman's movement was also to blame. The liberated woman's brash sexual conduct supposedly had increased onania in both sexes. Because she is not following her natural duty for marriage, but trying to live in a man's world, the New Woman suffered from excessive loneliness (Gay I, 304). Conversely, as a perversion which led to degeneration, masturbation also exemplified the decadence of the New Woman who had abortions, condoned free love and had a polygamous sex life (Showalter 171). Yet many a suffragette adhered to celibacy and probably did not profess to practicing

masturbation; they believed that their lack of sex and a sex drive made them superior to men. However, this sexual manifesto of the New Woman is not much different from those opposed to new womanhood who also felt that woman's moral superiority elevated her beyond a mere sexual desire. Many Victorian marriage manuals "asserted that infrequent intercourse was a sign of civilization" (Green 131). In fact, women should be proud they have "comparatively little sexual passion" because it reveals their superior spiritual nature when compared to bestial man (132). Rhoda Nunn, the New Woman of this novel, adheres to this side of the conundrum over woman's sexual nature, seeing woman as a higher, more spiritual being who should not need or desire sex or even love.

> Love, love, love; a sickening sameness of vulgarity . . . In real life, how many men and women fall in love? Not one in every ten thousand . . . There is he sexual instinct, of course, but that is quite a different story . . . The result is that women imagine themselves noble and glorious when they are most near the animals (Gissing 58).

Although the narrator does not directly address the issue of masturbation, he does disclose that celibacy can lead to other degeneracies, such as Virginia's alcoholism, especially since her symptoms of alcholism are are similar to those of a self-polluter (304). Female masturbators supposedly suffered from an onslaught of ill-effects to their disease. They could be listless in nature, having a vacuous look about them which disclosed that whatever intellect they once possessed had been drained by their acts of self-pollution (Gay I, 297). Even their outward appearance could betray their hidden perversion because they also suffered from consumption, edema, trembling and acne (Gay I, 300). As the narrator notes, Virginia has many of these signs:

> A disagreeable redness tinged her eyelids and the lower part of her nose, her mouth was growing coarse and lax, the under-lip hanging a little; she smiled with a shrinking, apologetic shyness only seen in people who have something to be ashamed of--smiled even when she was endeavoring to look sorrowful; and her glance was furtive (Gissing 288).

Yet Virginia is not the only possible sufferer of this dreaded disease. Alice also has a sign of the masturbator, for she re-reads the same romantic novels, which according to Dr. Samuel Gregory (1847), an English physician who was an adamant opponent of masturbation, is yet another sign of the female self-pollutor (Gay I, 301). Thus, their age, their unattractiveness and probably their hidden act of self-pollution makes them more unappealing in general, which is a hindrance to women's primary purpose--to be physically attractive in order catch a mate. And here is the crux of the novel, repeated over and over: a woman's goal is marriage even if she claims to be a New Woman. Repeatedly, the narrator comments on women and their pursuit of available men. Although he sympathizes with lovelorn women, the narrator cannot help but see them as predominately husband-hunting mercenaries, like Mrs. Luke whose ample figure caught her a man despite her age of thirty-eight (Gissing 115-16), or Monica who "drew in her breath silently, then gazes at the distance" (44) when Widdowson revealed his yearly income.

The availability of marriageable men and women's attempts to ensnare them becomes the narrator's focal point through the guise of examining the romance of Rhoda Nunn and

Everard Barfoot in comparison with the courtships and marriages of Monica and Edmond Widdowson, Thomas and Fanny Micklethwaite, and Thomas Barfoot and his wife, who does not even warrant a name beyond the "woman." By foiling Rhoda's and Everard's relationship against these others, the narrator's view of women, new womanhood and marriage becomes quite apparent: women are either angels or femme fatales and the ideal marriage is a Ruskinian one. Neither the narrator nor the other men in the novel can understand a woman unless she is placed in a traditional role by which he may praise or condemn her. Thus, Everard and Widdowson eroticize their respective mates into femme fatales while Thomas Micklethwaite places his wife within the realm of the Victorian "angel" (Gissing 89).

Throughout the novel, the Widdowson marriage is consistently under attack. In fact, the narrator makes a Ruskinian parody of this ill-fated marriage: two people who marry because one is looking for security and the other is looking for beauty. The narrator uses their marriage, which lacks passion and love, as one foil to Rhoda and Everard's love affair, which lacks commitment and strength, to disclose how both are doomed to fail since they lack the main components of a Ruskinian marriage--the subtle

guardianship of a gentleman over an angel.

Monica, like Sue Bridehead, does not understand what marriage means. She used it as a way to escape her job as a draper, never comprehending the emotional and physical intimacy she would now be forced to have with another human being whom she does not know and does not like (Gissing 122). She wants to be "perfectly free" (Gissing 104), but she has married a man who espouses Ruskinian doctrine:

> Woman's sphere is the home, Monica. Unfortunately, girls are often obliged to go out and earn their living, but this is unnatural, a necessity which advanced civilisation will altogether abolish. You shall read John Ruskin; every word he says about woman is good and precious (153).

The narrator understands Monica far more than her husband does, commenting that it had never "occurred to Widdowson that a wife remains an individual" (Gissing 152). Widdowson only sees her as an erotic object which he owns. He thinks that Monica looks upon him as a wise "benefactor," but the narrator discloses that Monica feels imprisoned; she

lacks personal freedom and friends (Gissing 154). Yet Monica's docile nature begins to change as Widdowson further encroaches upon her independence. At first, Monica acquiesces to Widdowson demands, but the more she sees of Mary Barfoot and Rhoda Nunn, the more she realizes how "unnatural" her marriage is. It is not built on love or companionship, but upon obedience--hers (200-01). Nor is her husband the epitome of masculinity, but rather "unmanly" because he so fears her independence (201). Thus, Monica takes a stand, a very strong one: ". . . until you come to think of me as your free companion, not as your bond-woman . . . it won't be possible for us to go on living together" (201).

Monica grows up as the narrator states, and discovers that it is dishonorable to live with someone who she does not love merely because it is "glorified by social precept, enforced under dread penalties" (202). Monica is becoming a New Woman; unfortunately, she is also becoming a femme fatale in her husband's eyes. Monica does not want him anymore, and as her womanly nature makes it apparent that she must have somebody to take care of her, he assumes that she must want someone else, which leads him to accuse her of infidelity: "Liar! Adulteress!" (230). What had been a

prison for Monica has been transformed into a prison for Widdowson who states that their marriage was only "physical" (239), a strange remark coming from a Ruskinite who pursued Monica for her physical beauty, not her love. The narrator concurs with Widdowson by revealing how Monica has turned Widdowson into a "wrinkled" old man (209) who, unfortunately, has been captivated by a femme fatale (Gissing 333).

Widdowson thus becomes the victim as the narrator changes sides in this Ruskinian parody of marriage. Although Monica might believe that she is a "woman in every sense maligned" (Gissing 296), the narrator does not believe her, condemning her for her adulterous thoughts of Bevis which never lead to any action. Trapped in paradigmatic thinking, the narrator hopes that "remorse" will lead Monica to a state of "hopeless grace," thereby condemning her to death before the event takes place (306). What else can you do with the "fallen woman" but condemn? Like Lyndall, Monica must be punished for her errant behavior because she has committed an ideological crime against society. Everyone--the narrator, her husband, her sisters, and even Rhoda Nunn--seems to assume that Monica's death is punishment for toying with Bevis and leaving her husband.

These characters pride themselves on their scientific minds, yet they are still firmly entrenched in biblical justice: sinful thoughts, not only sinful actions, are punishable. Sadly, Monica begins to believe this as well, wanting her "wretched life" to "soon . . . end" (315). Like Lyndall, she wills herself to die because she believes that she is "wicked" (306).

Of course, Monica could not live up to Widdowson's Ruskinian ideal of the perfect woman and the perfect marriage, yet one couple can and do in the novel--Thomas and Fanny Micklethwaite. To the narrator as well as Everard Barfoot, the perfect marriage can exist and this is it (93). Thomas, a mathematician, has been unable to marry Fanny, a spinster for seventeen years, because he could not support them. As any true "angel" (93) would, Fanny patiently waited, even granting Thomas his freedom if he no longer loved her after all this time (92-94). Although she is no longer young, marriage has enhanced Fanny's looks. Before her marriage, Everard notes that "the years had dealt so unkindly with her (124)," a hint to what celibacy can do to a woman. Now, Fanny seems "no longer so distressingly old" (124); in fact, she has a "girlish countenance, a gentle warmth to her cheek" that only young brides have, all the

result of her legal marriage to Micklethwaite (173). The narrator concurs with Everard, stating that marriage "blotted out those long years of sorrow" for Fanny. Through marriage, Fanny has been reborn from an ugly spinster into a lovely and attractive woman which Barfoot appreciates. Moreover, marriage is supposed to save women from spinsterhood as Micklethwaite advocates: "It is the duty of every man, who has sufficient means, to maintain a wife. The life of unmarried women is a wretched one; every man who is able ought to save them from that fate" (93). Micklethwaite reinforces the novel's domesticity by revealing what marriage can do for women: it can remove the physical and psychological degeneracies of celibacy.

For Everard, Fanny and Thomas's marital life is "sacred" (176), a far cry from his brother Tom's marriage to the "woman," an "angel . . . from the wrong quarter, from the nethermost pit" (175), who drags her consumptive husband back to damp England where he dies. Blaming his sister-in-law for his brother's ill-health and subsequent death, Everard condemns many women as femme fatales who get men into their "power" and destroy them (175), a sentiment that echoes the narrator's comments over Widdowson's dilemma. Once, he had been wrongly accused of dishonoring a woman

and now he is quite wary until he meets Rhoda Nunn who, at first, shines like Fanny, and then falls like his sister-in-law. Yet Everard places impossible penalties on women, for he believes that they have too much power over men, especially where social propriety and sexual attraction overlap. He condemns the woman who caused him to be outcast socially without realizing that his actions with her probably socially outcast her as well. He blames her for overreacting to his advances in the carriage, much like one who would blame a woman who is raped for wearing a short skirt which aroused the rapist to attack. Everard seems to think that if she were a lady, she would not have been in the carriage with him in the first place. Likewise, he condemns Rhoda for her conventional attitude about marriage and her predatory female nature, yet he is the one upholding woman and love as aesthetically and economically valued commodities of the society.

Moreover, Rhoda charms are bewildering to Everard. She is a "mystery" to him (195). Of course, Everard claims not to be interested in Rhoda even though he finds her attractive immediately upon meeting her (79). He claims to want to "understand her line of thought" (84). Yet, as he begins to discuss women's suffrage with Rhoda, his feelings

for her change. He claims that her intelligence overwhelms him as do her looks, but he merely is justifying his eroticizing of her. He admires her "long lashes" that "droop over eloquent eyes" and her dark hair (142). He sees her "as a woman and desirable" (143); however, he does not want to be "seriously in love" with Rhoda since he mistrusts women. In fact, it seems that he wants to get even by wondering how it would be to make Rhoda think he is in love with her when he is not (126).

Like a traditionally bio-determined male, Everard sees Rhoda as something to be wooed and conquered once he begins to eroticize her. Yet the more he courts her, the more he realizes that this "fine creature" should not be the brunt of his "joke" (130) because he reads "chastity" in her face, and "one does not break the heart of such a woman" (131). His misogyny takes on another form as he starts to place her on her chaste, angelic pedestal, but he still wishes to bring this bold woman into subjection (146) by demanding they have a free union, although secretly he wants to marry her. Even though he feels that she is his intellectual equal (176), Everard still castigates Rhoda into the role of woman as object, not as individual because she is his "ideal" (176). In his pursuit of her, he forgets

why he claimed to admire her in the first place--her stimulating intellect. Instead, Everard behaves like a gentleman suitor in a marriage novel who continually wears down his beloved's defenses until she falls into his arms (262). And, like any suitor in a marriage novel, he tests his love, and if she fails, he will punish her. He hopes that she will scoff at his marriage proposal, as any New Woman should; then, he will force her to change her mind (262). When Rhoda accepts his proposal, Everard realizes that he has succumbed to "female privilege" (262), and his "ideal" mate (176) is like all other women--"illogical" and predatory (Gissing 321). Rhoda is no angel, but a femme fatale who ensnares him to propose when he wanted just the opposite to happen. She is far different from demure Fanny, and he wonders, if they marry, how long it will be before she bores him (Gissing 266). Later, he compares Rhoda to his new fiancee, a woman of the upper middle-class who looks and acts like the future wife of a gentleman (320), whereas Rhoda, when he later sees her, is mannish and dowdy in comparison (326). At one time Rhoda had "worth" to Everard (Gissing 263), but he de-values her once he sees her as a woman outside the patriarchal standard of feminine attractiveness as she wears a plain dark dress and pins up

her hair tightly in what he believes is an unbecoming manner (Gissing 326).

As he did with Widdowson, the narrator concurs with Everard, who has "become a victim of genuine passion" (266), that Rhoda ensnared Everard within her feminine "power" (277), yet he also finds Rhoda quite attractive:

> She was as yet far from presenting any sorrowful image of a person on the way to old-maidenhood. She had a clear though pale skin, a vigorous frame, a brisk movement--all the signs of fairly good health . . . It was a face that invited, yet compelled, study. Self-confidence, intellectual keenness, a bright humour, frank courage, were traits legible enough; and when the lips parted to show their warmth, their fullness, when the eyelids drooped a little in meditation, one became aware of a suggestiveness directed not solely to the intellect, of something like an unfamiliar sexual type, remote indeed from voluptuous, but hinting a possibility of subtle feminine forces that might be released by circumstance (21).

The narrator discovers that this New Woman is a sexual being and he eroticizes her throughout the text, continually remarking upon Rhoda's attractiveness and wondering what sexual forces must be hidden underneath her chaste countenance. The belief that the aberrant woman had an uncontrollable passion which demanded domination was a fact of Victorian sexual ideology (Munich 30). Rhoda's hidden sexuality represents the alluring power of woman's sexual nature. Even the narrator's description of Rhoda evokes her unleashed sexuality: her open lips and sultry eyes (21) are a common "Victorian sign of erotic pleasure" (Munich 28). Her dark hair, wrapped in "loose vertical coils," seems snake-like and luxurious (Gissing 21), another symbol of the femme fatale. In fact, so much of Rhoda's dark beauty conforms to the sandards of late nineteenth-century Aestheticism, an artistic and literary movement which expressed the intrinsic value of an object through its external beauty. Countless paintings show large, able bodied women either in the throws of orgasmic ecstasy such as William Edward Frost's "Andromeda" (1883), Daniel Tixier's "Spring" (1895), and Arthur Hacker's "Leaf Drift" (1884) or women wanting to pounce upon some helplessly overcome male such as Edward Byrne-Jones's "The Depth of the

Sea" (1885), John Charles Dollman's "The Temptation of St. Anthony" (1897) and Philip Byrne-Jones's "The Vampire" (1897). The Aesthetes "express an anxious interest in female sexuality," no different from other late Victorians (Munich 92).

Like Monica, Rhoda's looks attract the narrator, but her ideals do not. Even though the title and supposedly subject matter of the novel is about women such as Rhoda, the narrator is more interested in Rhoda's love affair with Everard than in her original role. Rhoda's feminism does play into the novel, but only as a commentary on Rhoda's "idealism," which is her downfall (Gissing 265). To the narrator, Rhoda is "very young for her years" (147). At thirty-four years of age, she claims to know what she wants--continued economic independence from any man--but, as the narrator shows, she does not. Instead, Rhoda wants to be in love just as Monica wanted to be in love with Bevis and have him take care of her. Rhoda also wants to feel the "power" of her sex over a man who loves her (277). She wants to be a femme fatale.

The narrator does admire Rhoda whose "ingenious nature" (5) would allow her to rely on no man, giving her the ability to "earn" her own living as one of the

instructors, along with Mary Barfoot, of a professional school for single women that teaches them clerical skills so they may find work beyond the traditional scope of spinsterhood--as a governess, teacher or nursemaid. She is a zealot about women and their need not to marry for security. In her militancy, she sees "odd women" (145) as a nebulous and unskilled workforce which she will "train" to fight the enemy: people who think women cannot be educated, independent, or free-thinkers. She wants to "emancipate women"; that is the goal of her "movement" (87). Yet, in her zeal for new womanhood, she yearns that women's lives be "harder" in order to toughen them up against the opposition (34).

> I wish girls fell down and died of hunger in the streets, instead of creeping to their garrets and the hospitals. I should like to see their dead bodies collected together in some open place for the crowd to stare at (35).

For a feminist, Rhoda spouts a seemingly anti-woman stance. Her elitist view of new womanhood has no place for the ill, uneducated or unintelligent (132). It is a new

womanhood reeking of patriarchalism. Although trying to expose women's hardships in life, Rhoda has no empathy for other women, merely scorn unless they become like her. Except as a "petted pussycat," (143) Rhoda argues that at this moment women should not be "happy" for they are denied so much: an economically independent life from man (143-45). It angers her when a woman marries, as in Monica's case, for it reinforces the traditional belief that a woman is nothing without a man.

Rhoda's lack of empathy for her fellow women is yet another side to the New Woman movement; that is, Rhoda's comments reflect the middle class, social Darwinist perspective. During the late nineteenth-century, social Darwinism, a term first used by Herbert Spencer in The Principles of Sociology (1895), became the popular British catch-phrase for excusing blatant British imperialism in India, Africa and the West Indies as well as for ignoring the desperate economic struggles of the poor and uneducated classes at home (23-74). According to a social Darwinist, Darwin's biological theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest could easily be applied to social classes. That is, there always will be poor people because they lack the survival skills of the more economically comfortable.

There will always be rich people because some are either born rich or are intelligent enough to earn their way into this class. Finally, there always will be a middle class because some people, although they make money, do not have enough class and breeding to upgrade themselves further. In the manner of a laissez faire economist, a social Darwinist accepted the class system as inevitable and, for the most part, unchangeable.

As a middle class idea, the feminist movement mainly focussed on helping the middle class woman, whether she were daughter, wife or mother, to become economically independent from men. The working class women and her low social, economic and educational status was ignored, except for the few "feminist reformists" who saw the plight of the prostitute (Showalter 20), a woman usually from the working class, as a modern day Mary Magdalene who needed to saved from man's lechery. For Rhoda, like any proper social Darwinist, some women will never be saved: they are too weak and "useless" (Gissing 52). Rather, they should be condemned, as she condemns Monica, or at least dismissed as trivializing the cause, as she dismisses Virginia and Alice. If by chance, one of these misfits commits suicide, as one of Rhoda's students does, she feels "no compassion," but

only "indignation" towards the girl (Gissing 132-33), a concise answer from a woman who wants to see them dying in the streets.

Rhoda appears to be what a male narrator would think a feminist would be--cold, driven, a creature with a heart of stone. Even Rhoda's attitude towards marriage reinforces her patriarchal stance, for Rhoda finds women to be the problem in marriage, not men. The woman who marries without first educating herself will lead a life of "shame" and "misery" because she never learned to live for herself (Gissing 99). Her marriage will be a disgrace, and her spouse will lose interest in her, for a marriage is an "alliance of intellects" (99). However, Rhoda notes that men will "marry fools"--coquettish women who sway men into the bonds of matrimony and then reveal their hidden natures as shrewish women who drive men to early graves (Gissing 81).

Supposedly, Rhoda does not believe in marriage for herself, yet she tries to get Everard to propose to her, a move which reinforces the narrator's belief that all women are predatory creatures who desire men only for marriage. Rhoda's predatory instincts emerge immediately after she meets Everard. When Rhoda first appears in the novel, she

has tried to make herself as "plain" as possible or "nun-like" (Gissing 79), although the narrator's erotic description of her suggests that her ploy is not working. Once she discovers Everard's attraction toward her, Rhoda goes to work, as any mercenary unmarried girl would, by making herself more attractive. One night at dinner she wears a brilliant red silk shirt which heightens her pale color (178). Being outdoors also brings out her womanly beauty. Hiking with Everard at her side makes her eyes shine and her skin glow with health, as if she were a heroine in a romance who blooms from the love of a man rather than a New Woman who rejects this romance. But that is what Rhoda really is, a romantic, a believer of bourgeois love who yearns to watch a simple country wedding, a marriage reminiscent of "the golden age" (100).

Because she is a spinster, Rhoda pretends to enjoy her single life. Likewise, she pretends not to want love, but the narrator knows that she wants to "feel" her lover's "arms about her" (264). And, of course, he also knows that, like any woman, Rhoda "secretly" wants to feel "the common triumph of her sex": she wants Everard on his knees (14). The narrator remarks that Rhoda has a triumphant "look" as Everard reveals his love for her (183). Finally, she has

"power" over a man. Indeed, she has "triumphed splendidly" in their mating war by getting Everard verbally to agree to marry, something he was not going to do.

However, Rhoda's triumph is short-lived, and Everard reaffirms his position as the titular head of their ill-fated relationship. Her brief power over Everard causes her to fall in his eyes. She is no Fanny-like angel, but more akin to his vixen-like sister-in-law. Their marriage will be no Ruskinian ideal. He sees her as just another predatory female, a role the narrator already has provided for her. Nor is Monica her foil, but a reflection of her, as well as all women's, inherent dark nature.

Once Everard disappears from her life, Rhoda's brief stint as a femme fatale is over, and she reverts to her plain dark attire and keeps her hair pinned tightly back (323). She does not die like her fellow new woman, Lyndall, but to the narrator, Rhoda's spinsterhood is a living death (336), as is the plight of all single women who are going against their bio-determined destiny. Perhaps that explains the ambivalence so many critics feel over this novel. Rhoda's whole system of independence is a sham, created to help protect her inability to do what biology determines she should do: find a husband, marry and bear children.

Paradoxically, the narrator and Everard condemn her for this very action. Rhoda cannot escape patriarchal convention; nor does she seem to realize how deeply she follows it while claiming to fight it. Then again, none of the women in these novels have this awareness. They all see the New Woman exactly as the patriarchal order wants them to see her.

Chapter Five: Ann Veronica as the "Hysterical Animal"

Despite the novels' anti-feminist stance and the female characters who are confined to a secondary status in life by the tenets of bio-determinism, Jude the Obscure, The Story of an African Farm and The Odd Women reveal how difficult it is to escape the ideological prejudices about gender of the late Victorian era even while their narrative voices try to address the issues of woman's rights and roles. However, one would think, after a generation later, that the novel of the New Woman would have changed; that is, writers would have moved beyond patriarchal bound ideologies because the New Woman movement had changed some things for women, especially in education where women were earning advanced degrees in the sciences and in law, areas once suitable only for men (Sachs 22). Yet even a novel written during the height of the New Woman movement, H. G. Wells' Ann Veronica (1908), still furthers the doctrine of woman as secondary to man because she is the "hysterical animal" (Wells 190). In order to suppress woman's inherent hysterical nature, woman should not seek physical and financial independence; rather,

woman should glorify in her need to be domesticated.

Fortunately, Ann Veronica does not so easily condemn the female protoganist, Ann Veronica, to the roles of either angel or femme fatale although its narrative voice still sees woman as primarily as a sexual creature, not as a thinking one. Like the other narrators, the narrative voice in Ann Veronica perpetuates the traditional view of womanhood: her sexuality and her looks make her aesthetically pleasing as well as marketable. In fact, the narrator repeatedly implies that Ann Veronica's sexual nature reinforces woman's primary reason for her existence--motherhood. Yet in this instance, Ann Veronica may enjoy, even explore, her sexual nature. Unlike the previous novels which view woman's sexuality as disclosing her inherent nature as a femme fatale, Ann Veronica luxuriates in woman's erotic prowess for it emphasizes her ability to "produce sturdy children," according to one of the few Wellsian critics, Patricia Stubbs (189). (1)

The narrator makes much of Ann Veronica's sexual awakening, which coincides with one important change occurring in the New Woman movement during the early twentieth century: a woman did not have to be a celibate, untouched being to be independent from men (Showalter,

Sexual, 29). Finally, the New Woman movement began to argue that woman's sexuality was important, not something to be suppressed or sublimated. Early advocates of new womanhood, such as suffragette leader Christabel Parkhurst and Men and Women's club member Henrietta Miller, argued that woman's superiority lay in her ability to live a celibate lifestyle, an idea akin to the mid-Victorian ideal that angelic wives were spiritual guides for their more earthly husbands and were polluted by sexual intercourse unless it was used to produce to children. According to Parkhurst, woman's more spiritual nature made her "more complete" than man: she had no need, nor does she desire a man whose life revolves around his lustful urges. Henrietta Miller concurred with this reasoning and urged women to practice "female self-restraint" in order to show woman's superiority over man (Showalter, Sexual, 20-25). However, turn-of-the-century feminists, such as Stella Browne, had other ideas and remarked: "Let us admit our joy and gratitude for the beauty and pleasure of sex" (46). Ann Veronica's attitude toward sex and her sexuality resembles this attitude, not the earlier view of the new woman as a spiritual, sexless being that Sue Bridehead and Rhoda Nunn seem to favor. Woman can enjoy sex and explore her sexual feelings for a

man, not just "grin and bear it" as Sue Bridehead did or despise it as a sign of woman's weakness as Rhoda Nunn believed.

Even though Ann Veronica can revel in her sexuality, it is not a by-product of her independence, but it only allows her to enjoy her primary role as wife and mother once she overcomes her feminist's nonsense, such as her yearning for the right to vote (Wells 37), which the British denied to British women until 1918 (Hardy, Sylvia xvii). Many organizations, including the Men and Women's Club and The Fabian Society, studied woman's mysterious sexual nature but from the traditional patriarchal perspective; that is, masculine sexuality was not the problem, woman's sexuality was. Thus, if women were made to feel comfortable in their sexuality and during sex itself, they would be of more use to men and society in general and be willing to do their bio-determined duty as well--bear children and keep the species going. The founder of the Men's and Women's Club, Karl Pearson, felt that "childbearing" was woman's primary function in life; she had no other (Brandon 51). Olive Schreiner, a member of this club, also fervently believed that woman's reason for existence was to be a mother (Labor, 14-56), although in her early years she adamantly disagreed

with Pearson on this matter. After hearing Karl Pearson's paper on "Notes on a Man's View of the Woman Question," in which motherhood reigned supreme, Emma Brooks, another club member, also stated her disagreement: "the assumption of this strong Desire in women for children--so strong that it can only be compared to the mighty impulse of men towards women--it is a most important one; because if such an imperial Desire exists there is an end to the sex question; what remains is a population question" (Brandon 52). Mona Caird, another club member and author of The Morality of Marriage (Dijkstra 123), wondered why there was no man question. Instead, the focus seemed to be on men's dissatisfaction with women's performance sexually and intellectually. Henrietta Miller even resigned when she discerned that the club, despite its proposed purpose, still smacked of patriarchal ideology which ordered women to be silent and submissive: "the same old story of the man laying down the law and the woman resenting in silence, and submitting in silence" (Showalter, Sexual, 48). Miller had learned what many women were discovering. That is, despite their advocacy for new womanhood, many a male feminist like H. G. Wells could only envision this New Woman within the confines of traditional Victorian society.

Like many of his male counterparts, Fabian society member H. G. Wells also clamored for women to be more sexually at ease to further the "endowment of Motherhood," a sexual utopia where women would be a commodity for the state, producing children as their payback for the government's support, while freeing men from their duties as monogamous creatures who must economically care for their dependents (New,323). Perhaps Wells got his idea from William Morris' News from Nowhere (1891), another study of a sexual utopia in which the women of the future no longer want personal and economic freedom but enjoy their womanly pursuits knowing that the "emancipation of women" is a "baseless folly," and "maternity" is the highest honor a woman can have (235):

> The women do what they can do best and what they like best . . . You know that it is a great honour to a clever woman to manage a house skillfully, and to do it so all the house-males about her look pleased (236).

Wherever Wells got his ideas, they were not in agreement with the Fabian Movement, an intellectual think-

tank which melded Christian ideology with Marxist socialism. The Fabians, founded in 1883 by Thomas Davidson, yearned for an "ethical and individual" socialism rather than an "economic or political" one (Pease 26). The Fabians, which included such personalities as George Bernard Shaw, Edward R. Pease, Havelock Ellis and Beatrice Webb, did not envision their organization as the political lobbying system that Wells advocated but as an organization which upheld "the importance of manual labour and religious communion" as well as the belief that all people have a right to education. However, lobby they did, forcing the government to pay closer attention to the rights of the working class by helping to introduce to the House of Commons a variety of bills dealing with the rights of the worker, such as "The Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890" and "The Education Bill of 1902" (Pease 140-52). Without the Fabians, the contemporary British Labour Party would not exist.

Although champions of the common worker, the Fabian society mostly ignored the early New Woman Movement. In fact, Beatrice Webb, a lifelong member of the society, was against women's suffrage for years (Cole 127). Only after Wells attacked the New Woman's right to vote in his paper,

"Faults of the Fabians," (1906), did she change her mind (127). Wells' view of woman as a procreative machine (127) enraged so many of the Fabian's 674 female members that they formed the Woman's Group in 1907. Headed by Mrs. Charlotte Wilson, the Fabian Woman's Group began strongly to support the suffrage movement, holding demonstrations in Trafalgar Square, crashing the House of Commons while its members were in session, and even going to jail when the police informed them that their sex barred them from this government institution (128). Thus, as a whole, the Fabian Society became a well-known supporter of woman's equality, much to chagrin of Wells, who resigned in 1907, only to attack openly the Fabian suffragettes in Ann Veronica.

Usually the suffragette and the New Woman were considered one and the same, but in Ann Veronica, they are not. Throughout the novel, the narrator tries to guide Ann Veronica into realizing the distinction between the two: suffragettes exist because they are too unattractive to get a man, but the New Woman exists in order to match herself with a eugenically superior male. Once together, this New Woman and her super man will create a new race of stronger, more intelligent and definitely more attractive offspring. In Ann Veronica, the suffragettes resemble the early

stereotyped view of the New Woman. These women are "plain, "tired-looking" and "nervous" (105). Almost every suffragette who Ann Veronica meets has a homely face, wears glasses and has no man in her life, especially Nettie Miniver who is quite unattractive and unhealthily thin (98), with her "emotional blue eyes," thick glasses, "pinched" nose and "petulant" mouth (24). Not only is Nettie unattractive, but she does not like men either, a common problem with all suffragettes according to the narrator (Wells 180). Like Rhoda Nunn, sexual intercourse repulses her:

> Bodies! Bodies! Horrible things. We are souls. Love lives on a higher plain. We are not animals. If I did ever meet a man I could love, I should love him . . . Platonically (127).

Yet Nettie, following beliefs formed during the early New Woman movement, does not want to find love or be with any man: "ugh . . . we do not want men . . . They are the brutes . . . Science some day may teach us a way to do without them" (127).

This attitude towards men "chills" (96) Ann Veronica,

who likes men (180) and sees, written in "lights" above her head, the answer for women wanting to be independent from men: the "Endowment of Motherhood" (162) which, according to the narrator, will offer a "complete relaxation of that intense individual dependence for women which is woven into the existing social order" (161). Although a beautiful woman who has men wanting to marry her or become their mistress, Ann shudders at the traditional mating game in which a woman must wait for the man to call: "This vile hovering to catch a man's eye! . . . One could go to him and tell him one loved him . . . If one was free" (162). Thus, Veronica wants Capes but does not want to wait for him to come to her; however, she is not yet ready to go to him because she is so naive about love and marriage (46), so she displaces her sexual drive into the suffragette movement.

At first, Ann Veronica believes that she does not need to marry (49,53,66); instead, she will continue her studies as a biology student and avoid marriage as much as possible, for she concludes that marriage makes women "dull" and makes them "cry" a lot, too (52). According to the narrator, Ann Veronica's view of marriage concurs with what many bio-determinists had to say about women's dislike of the state of marriage: it is "limited and unsystematic" because

"(h)er teachers and mistresses had done their best to stamp her mind with an ineradicable persuasion that it was tremendously important, and on no account to be thought about" (46). Simply put, the narrator thinks that Ann Veronica dislikes marriage because she has never been in love. In a manner similar to Rhoda's realization that she loves Everard, once Ann Veronica realizes her love for Capes, her suffragette leanings will reverse to the male point of view of the Woman Question on woman's sexuality, which is, of course, what happens. In a moment of epiphany, Ann Veronica declares to know why she and all women exist: "This business of love is the supreme affair in life, it is the woman's one event and crisis that makes up for all her other restrictions" (126).

Ann Veronica's beauty helps her in this task to towards marriage and motherhood. Throughout the novel the narrator, as well as various male characters, comment on Ann Veronica's beauty as something to be admired, valued and possibly owned by all of them. She is an erotic object to the narrator who notes that her "aristocratic" (13) or "queenly" dignity (84) naturally accentuates her loveliness: "She had black hair, fine eyebrows, and a clear complexion; and the forces that modelled her features had

loved and lingered at their work and made them subtle and fine. She was slender . . . and walked and carried herself lightly and joyfully as one who commonly and habitually feels well" (5). Whether she is in traditional womanly garb or men's clothes, the narrator finds her quite attractive. Her athleticism, from playing tennis and badminton and riding her bicycle, reaffirms her womanly beauty, a far cry from the aesthetic beauty of the invalid only a generation earlier. Rather, this athletic grace, much like Rhoda Nunn's, reaffirms Ann Veronica's inherent womanly nature, which no garment can hide or change. The narrator sees Ann Veronica as a woman whose very body exudes fertility; she is made for motherhood and neither man's clothing, studying in a traditional manly field, biology, nor aping the suffragettes' cause can hide Ann Veronica's womanliness. A woman, especially a beautiful one, cannot and should not want to escape her bio-determined destiny: to be a wife and mother.

Manning also envisions Ann Veronica in this role, the "most glorious of created beings" (202), yet he envisions all women as Ruskinian Queens: "Womanhood is sacred to me . . . I am a socialist . . . of the order of John Ruskin . . . I would make this country a collective monarchy, and

all the girls and women in it should be the queen" (Wells, Ann 37). From the beginning of the novel, he has wanted to marry her and "carry" her off to some garden where she will find sanctuary from the male-induced ugliness of life (40-1;204). Despite his overt romanticism towards Ann Veronica, which reeks of flowery poetry and sentimental letters, (Wells, Ann 41) he does not see her as a person, but as an object which he desires. Nor does he really know her very well, having only seen her at a few garden parties and teas. But have her he must, for he is overwhelmed by possessing someone who looks so perfect (40-41). Only when she breaks off their engagement does he turn her into a femme fatale who "shatters" his "world" (207). However, as the narrator states, Manning has over-sentimentalized Ann Veronica (204), who knows that she is no Ruskinian Queen and is glad of it (204). Rather, she is a sexual being, and she wants Capes, yet she still has one more man to fight off--Ramage.

From the moment he sees her, Ramage is interested in Ann Veronica (16), scrutinizing her appearance (16; 57) and deciding that this graceful woman (57) could become his "new interest" (57). Yet, like Manning, he ignores Ann Veronica as a person and sees her as an object whom he might have to force a bit to get her into his bed (146). Because he has

lent her money, Ramage believes that he owns Ann Veronica and has a right to her "body" (147). He claims, as Jude did to Sue, that she has ensnared him, yet instead of capitulating to yet another stereotype like Sue or Lyndall, Ann Veronica fights him--literally bruises his jaw--and orders him out of his life (145).

In a refreshing change from the women in the previous novels, Ann Veronica fights these men who try to pigeonhole her into the Victorian bifurcation. They might see her as some erotic object, but she does not. Even her physical evaluation of herself in the mirror, an act traditionally tinged with auto-eroticism, has another meaning as well. Ann Veronica is not falling into narcissistic self-love, but learning to appreciate herself as a woman and as an intelligent being. Unlike Sue, Lyndall and Rhoda, Ann Veronica is a female student in a traditionally male field, biology, and as a student, Ann marvels at her own muscular-skeletal structure and skin, which discloses how far the New Woman's view of the body has changed in just a decade. Not frightened of seeing her body in the mirror or of falling in love with it, Ann Veronica realizes as she studies herself that the human body is beautiful because it links her to all human beings: "I am just one common person" (Wells 131).

Unlike the suffragettes who abhor the body, Ann appreciates its beauty (131). Yet this self-evaluation reinforces the role of the attractive New Woman in Wells' Endowment of Motherhood: as a breeder in his theory of eugenics. A woman this attractive needs to have children not only to perpetuate the species but to advance it once she mates with the right man, as in this case, Capes.

Nor does Ann deny that she is attractive. Her look in the mirror is not egotistical reassurance of beauty, but an acknowledgement of herself as an attractive woman who is facing the "facts": she is beautiful and men are attracted to that (131). She is not afraid of her own attractiveness as Sue Bridehead appears to be, yet she does not use her beauty to ensnare men as Lyndall does. Nor does her beauty only appear when a man is in love with her as Rhoda's does. Rather, Ann Veronica's self-evaluation reflects a positive self-image, something the other three women sorrily lack.

Unlike the other women in the previous novels, Ann Veronica acknowledges herself as a sexual being. Although tinged with auto-eroticism, Ann Veronica's discovery of her sexual nature is not negative in the usual manner; that is, her self-exploration is not an act of self-depravation or moral pollution. Rather, it reveals what Wells and Pearson

and Morris hoped for: woman's discovery of her sexual nature would lead her away from a life of celibate singlehood and back to the marital bedroom. Once Ann Veronica realizes the power of her sexual nature, she decides that she wants and loves Capes, her biology-lab professor, and her thoughts of self-development, formal education and the suffragette movement begins to lessen as her desire builds.

Ann Veronica's appreciation of her own body leads to a positive reinforcement of woman's bio-determined nature as well as reaffirming the narrator's distinction between the beautiful New Woman and the ugly suffragette. However, it also a very different view of woman's sexuality that became more prevalent during this time period. From the 1870's to the early twentieth-century, woman's appreciation of her own body was seen as vanity or even worse, auto-eroticism. Woman gazing at herself in front of the mirror revealed woman was too enamored with her own appearance (Dijkstra 135). Countless paintings during the fin-de-siecle, such as Luis Bonnir's "The Water Mirror" (1900), Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones's "The Mirror of Venus" (1895), Paul Gervais's "The Mirror" (1907) and Antoine Magaud's "A Kiss in the Glass" (1885) show the fascination that mirrors, water and

self-reflection had over women. Many a poet and novelist also picked up on woman's self-admiring gaze. Max Beerbohm sarcastically writes in "The Pervasion of Rouge" that the high point of a woman's day is to sit at her "toilet" and gaze at her "oval face in the oval mirror" (135). In "The Waste Land," (1922) T. S. Eliot also sneers at the woman who is so overcome by her own reflection in a mirror that she never notices that her lover is ignoring her whining (II. ll. 98-110). In Nana (1880), Emile Zola blatantly suggests that a woman's discovery of her own sexuality is auto-erotic:

> One of Nana's pleasures consisted of undressing in front of the mirror on her wardrobe, which reflected her from head to foot. She used to take off all her clothes and then stand stark naked, gazing at her reflection and oblivious of everything else around her. A passion for her body, an ecstatic admiration of her satin skin and the supple lines of her figure, kept her serious, attentive and absorbed in her love of herself . . . she studied other parts of her body, amused by what she was doing, and filled once more with the

> depraved curiosity she had felt as a child (220-22).

Even science had something to say about woman and her mirror. In his study, "Auto-Eroticism: A Psychological Study" (1898), Havelock Ellis remarked of

> . . . that tendency which is sometimes found, more especially perhaps in women, for the sexual emotions to be absorbed, and often entirely lost in self-admiration. This narcissus-like tendency, of which the normal germ in women is symbolized by the mirror, is found in minor degree in some feminine-minded men, but seems to be very rarely found in men apart from sexual attractions for other persons, to which attraction it is, of course, normally subservient. But occasionally in women it appears to exist by itself, to the exclusion of any attraction for other persons (355-56).

If only woman could break her mirror; then her self-absorption could become properly channeled. That is, she could stop trying to care for herself and give her proper

attention to man since woman's "search for selfhood in her mirror of her material being soon blended with man's irritation at woman's failure to sacrifice her ego to his superior being" (Dijkstra 135). After all, if woman were too enamored with herself, she might not need a man for anything, including sex, which is what Freud surmised would happen in his essay "On Narcissism" (555-57).

According with the time period, Ann, as a female, does have narcissistic tendencies. In her quest for independence, Ann Veronica is breaking "man-made laws" (Wells 165) which stipulate that men rule the "wills of women" (164). By playing at being an independent woman, although Ramage supports her, Ann Veronica breaks natural law, too, for Darwin's theory of reversion states that women, once they leave their confines as wife and mother and try to live their lives the same as men, will not be able to handle the stress, for their womanly nature is against them (696). Sue Bridehead becomes a religious neurotic when she tries to break the confines, and Ann Veronica, in her words, is transformed into the "hysterical animal" when she displaces her sexual drive and tries to become a suffragette (Wells 190).

Woman's supposed hysterical nature allegedly derived

from her reproductive organs which make her "passive" by nature relative to man's "active" personality (Freud, "Femininity," 414). According to Havelock Ellis, "many of the symptoms of hysteria can be traced back to a sexual origin (Dijkstra 244). Jean-Martin Charcot, a French psychologist, noted that auto-eroticism of the ovarian region could produce a hysterical or even epileptic seizure (Showalter, Female, 152). Sigmund Freud, in his 1896 study, "The Aetiology of Hysteria," remarked that "hysteria lies in sexual life" (101), and the hysteric's neuroses occurs when the hysteric fights "not wanting to know" the origin of her hysterical nature (270). Even the word "hysteria," from the Greek hysteron meaning womb, linked it to natural feminine weakness. The hysterical female usually suffered from a variety of symptoms: "fits, fainting, vomiting, choking, laughing, (and) paralysis" in such rapidity which was characteristic of the "capricious mind of woman" (130). However, the source of these attacks begins with a pain in the "uterine region," the source of all women's mental and physical problems, once she begins to menstruate, thereby depriving woman of the "energy needed for the proper function of the brain" (Dijkstra 170).

Doctors noted an increase in the female hysteric from

the 1870's to World War I--the "golden age" of hysteria (Showalter 133), but they also found the cause of this disorder--woman trying to expand beyond her limited role and intelligence. Only later, after World War I, did physicians admit, having encountered countless shell-shocked soldiers who suffered from hysteria, that it was not strictly a womanly disorder (Showalter, Female, 132). Until then, doctors believed that women would become hysterical when deprived of their procreative role, especially the spinster who only became a feminist because she felt displaced and lonely without any sexual release, as well as bitter because no man guided her through life's travails (Showalter, Sexual, 34). According to an 1872 study by neurologist Horatio Donkin, the hysterical woman can manifest an "unnatural" and "exaggerated self-consciousness," for the hysteric is "pre-eminently an individualist, an unsocial unit" (Showalter, Female, 134). Yet Donkin did admit that the social "barriers" against women, not just their sexuality, attributed significantly to the development of the hysterical psyche (135), which allowed some women to be bedridden as a ruse to get attention from their family. F. C. Skey, a lecturer on hysteria at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London, remarked just the opposite; that is,

many hysterics develop an energetic and bold demeanor. They are "fearless of danger . . . having plenty of what is termed nerve" (Showalter, Female, 132).

By the end of the nineteenth-century, the most common type of hysteric was the New Woman who was "unconventional" and "rebellious" to the point that many were forced by their families into hospitals and institutions in order to cure them of this malady (Showalter, Female, 144). Many had no choice but to go since they were not autonomous beings legally, but owned by their male guardian, whether it be father, brother, husband or even male cousin. One feminist, Edith Lancaster, was committed to an asylum because she was opposed, according to her physician, to "conventional matrimony" which was brought on by "over-education" (146). Once freed, she still refused to marry and escaped from her father's guardianship to live with, but not marry, a man of her choosing (146).

As a neophyte suffragette, Ann Veronica's night in jail reveals how close she is to becoming this hysterical creature. Yet she thankfully falls into a "fever of remorse" (176) and praises the Victorian angel by realizing that "There is something to be said for the ladylike theory after all," even though she thinks that "The Victorians

overdid it a little" (176). After a night of soul-searching, she even begins to yearn, as Havelock Ellis said all women do, for religion and prayer (179-80), and finally, dissociates herself with the "suffrage movement," much to the narrator's joy who notes that Ann Veronica "found herself in a phase of violent reaction against the suffrage movement" (179). She even notes with distaste that many of the jailed suffragettes are acting hysterically now that they are in prison and calls them "Idiots," thinking that their remarks are similar to "barkings, yappings, roarings, pelican chatterings and feline yowlings interspersed with the shrieks of hysterical laughter" (Wells, Ann, 180). However, more importantly, Ann Veronica learns what the majority of bio-determinists, including the narrator, wanted every New Woman to discover:

> I've got no feminine class feeling. I don't want any laws or freedoms to protect me from a man like Mr. Capes. I know that in my heart I would take whatever he gave . . . A woman wants a proper alliance with a man, a man who is better stuff than herself. She wants that and needs it more

than anything else in the world (180).

Now that she is no longer a suffragette, Ann Veronica clearly sees her role in life: to be with Capes (223). Like Rhoda Nunn, Ann Veronica is quite willing to be a man's lover without being married to him, but her reason is far different. Rhoda wants a free-love relationship because it makes her a femme fatale and places her in a position of power over Everard, whom she wishes to conquer; however, Ann Veronica's reason is not so narcissistic. By becoming her lover, Capes will save Ann Veronica from the "mess" she has made with her life: "In you--if you can love me--there is salvation. Salvation" (221).

Like Lyndall, Ann Veronica sees herself as a "selfish" woman (Wells, Ann, 221), but Lyndall's selfishness leads to invalidism, death and glorification, whereas Ann Veronica's leads to her actual sexual awakening. This awareness is the one main difference between this novel and the previous three: sexual intercourse, "woman's crowning experience" (226), is what transforms Ann Veronica from naive "girlhood" (Wells, Ann, 226) into womanhood. Her appreciation of her sexuality does not turn her into some ravishing femme fatale

who ensnares Capes, but discloses that women also have sexual desires, and this is both Wells' and the narrator's view of the New Woman: a woman who is comfortable with her sexuality and is willing to use it, yet still stays within the boundaries of Victorian womanhood by using her sexuality to produce children, a goal that Ann Veronica finally achieves before the novel ends (255).

As this New Woman, Ann Veronica will gladly be an "abandoned female" for love, and she is not "ashamed" of her sexual feelings or her unmarried status with Capes (Wells, Ann, 226). Indeed, she is no Sue Bridehead who cringes at the thought of being with Phillotson or Jude, and who sees herself as doomed for her adulterous actions. In fact, she willingly gives into her sexual desires and does not become the fallen woman, a popular Victorian icon of womanly frailty whose "stance as galvanic outcast, her piquant blend of innocence and experience, came to embody everything in womanhood that was dangerously, tragically, and triumphantly beyond social boundaries" (Auerbach 150). The fallen woman, as represented by Monica in The Odd Women, usually died because of her sexual indiscretion, but Ann Veronica does not; she thinks she gives herself to Capes freely (243).

Ann Veronica, however, is not free, nor has she ever

been. Whatever independent thoughts she might have vanish once she is with Capes in Europe, and with the narrator's blessing. Moreover, this New Woman sounds very Ruskinian. She enjoys just "giving to him and putting herself in his hand (240), and the narrator concurs that Ann Veronica has a "capacity for blind obedience . . . (and) loved to be told to do things" (243).

In fact, the narrator, that guiding male hand, has tried to steer Ann Veronica to this realization from the beginning. Whenever Ann Veronica begins to fester under some male's dominion, the narrator jokingly chastises her for her erring ways, especially when she tries to leave the house to attend a party, which her father has forbidden her to attend, and ends up banished to her room, fuming like a "corsair's bride at a crisis of emotion" (Wells, Ann, 63). He notes that like any woman, Ann Veronica is petulant when she does not get her way. For all her beauty, the narrator, in a tone similar to RR's when he speaks to Lyndall, sees her in a typical Victorian manner: she is a "sulky, resolute . . . obdurate child" (87). The narrator repeatedly surmises that in her quest for independence, Ann Veronica foolishly ignores her father's dire warnings about life hardships. Ann Veronica thinks that she can go out,

rent a room and easily find work, but she does not realize that there "gaps" in her thinking, which the narrator believes will be filled once she marries Capes. Yet at this point, Ann Veronica ignores his and any man's fatherly advice and childishly declares: "I don't care . . . I'll fight it" (Wells, Ann, 66).

Yet Ann Veronica must learn not to fight against the males who have authority over her, but, as the narrator suggests, against her own naivete and snobbery, which he finds so childish, womanly and immature. He comments that in her naivete, Ann Veronica does not realize that the slatternly dressed women are prostitutes. She sees them merely as poorly dressed creatures whose style of clothes speak of their class. However, the narrator's remark has much more sting, and it is directed toward Ann Veronica: "It did not occur to her that they at least had found a way to earn a living, and had that much economic superiority to herself. It did not occur to her that save for some accidents of education and character they had souls like her own" (78). Although allegedly on her own after she leaves her father's house, the narrator shows that Ann Veronica is a naive snob who overpays cab drivers (79), eats too well on her limited budget (79), and gets into debt to a man,

Ramage, whom she "has given the wrong impression of herself" (112). He alludes that none of this would have happened if she had a man at her side to guide her. However, Ann Veronica idealistically believes that she is like the heroine in George Bernard Shaw's Mrs. Warren's Profession who goes out into the male controlled world and easily makes a place for herself, but the narrator knows better. Despite her college based education, the narrator finds that Ann Veronica thinks "illogically and inconsistently from one urgent consideration to another" (Wells, Ann, 83), which lets her easily be swayed by the suffragettes who see men as the reason for all women's misfortunes (155). Yet the narrator knows that all Ann Veronica needs is a good man to turn her from this wayward path, which is, of course, what happens.

Still, if the narrative had ended here with Ann Veronica's sexual satisfaction with herself and with Capes, the one man who, at one point, sees her as "complete" without being married (194), this would be a monumental novel for its time in its attitude towards woman's sexuality despite the bio-deterministic overtones, which now uses a woman's sexual drive to support the "Endowment of Motherhood." Yet the narrator cannot leave Ann Veronica as

an "abandoned female," so he turns her into a Ruskinian queen and the novel into a domestic one. Like the other narrators, this one cannot see beyond the Victorian view of woman's dual nature. He cannot leave her as a fallen woman because it is socially reprehensible, so four years later, Ann Veronica, happily married and pregnant, is the "beautiful" (255) Ruskinian queen who happily attends to her home. She is the perfect hostess who controls her servants with a firm but gentle hand, is once again her father's little "Vee" now that she is married, a nickname that reinforces the Victorians' penchant for the "woman-child." Moreover, she never looked better to to the narrator and Capes now that she is no longer in "rebellion" (250). Yes, even Capes, once he marries Ann Veronica, begins to see her as an object of aesthetic beauty who has value now that she is pregnant (255). Despite its pretense to the contrary, Ann Veronica ends fulfilling all the requirements of a patriarchal-valued womanhood. By being happily married and pregnant, Ann Veronica is no longer a threat but the enactment of the bio-determined woman.

Yet all these women--Sue, Lyndall, Rhoda and Ann Veronica--are products of a patriarchally created gender ideology which saw the Victorian woman as an aesthetic

ideal, whether as a femme fatale or a Ruskinian queen. This aestheticism valued them not only for their beauty, but also as a marketable commodity (Psomiades 46), and it wanted to continue to value women only in this bifurcated manner, especially when an aberrant type, such as the New Woman, came along.

The New Woman could not escape this binary setup because her creators and believers were products, and in some ways instigators, of this socially acceptable dual picture of womanhood. Even the New Woman's attempts to liberate herself could not escape her delimited view of her own gender. These four novels try to show and value the changes in Victorian womanhood, but they cannot escape the paradigmatic model. Instead, the novels, via the narrators, male characters and even the women themselves reaffirm the model by using the traditional patriarchal valued symbols of womanhood which undermine whatever feminist stance these texts originally had.

Endnote

(1) Few critical analyses exist on Ann Veronica except for Patricia Stubbs's article and Sylvia Hardy's "Introduction" to the Tuttle edition of Ann Veronica. Instead, most works on Wells are biographies and critical studies of his science fiction novels.

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