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HOSTETTLER, ERNST. Tess as the Archetype of the Earth Goddess in Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles. (1967) Directed by Dr. Randolph M. Bulgin. pp. 80.

Chapter I sees Thomas Hardy's novels, especially Tess of the D'Urbervilles, as tragedies which lie outside the mainstream of the literary thought of his century. The rise of the English Novel was largely influenced by John Locke's philosophy of free will and by his concept of "tabula rasa." Hardy has approached the problem of man's development from a different point of view. Through Darwin's theory of evolution it became evident that man had a genetic inheritance which preceded the later manifestations of his free will. This genetic potential has the ingredients of a tragic development, because it has many of the implications of the classical concept of Divine Providence. This view led again to the recognition of archetypal patterns which were preserved in mythology and in classical literature. Hardy used these archetypal images again, not according to the classical concept of tragedy, but according to a linear development where time governs the theme and structure of the novel. We will see that time, as Hardy understood it, has archetypal significance as well. We recognize this when we define the meaning of the archetype and its genealogy.

Chapter II presents the views of analytical psychologists, and especially of C. G. Jung, who have formed the hypothesis of analogical patterns in the unconscious mind. They posit the existence of "primordial images," or archetypes, which are present in the unconscious mind of every person and exist

a priori to individual experiences. These archetypal patterns can be detected in the life and religion of primitive man, where the Goddess of the Earth is the symbol for the matriarchal forces which ruled the tribe. A close relative to this female god is the magician, a feminine type of male, who, through superior intellectual powers, gains the leadership of the tribe. The Goddess ruled by instinct while the magician gained his power by conscious reasoning. Here we already see the conflict which we will encounter in the later stages of mythology and also in Hardy's novel. The magician could rule the tribe for the benefit of all--then his endeavor was good--or for his own gain, which was detrimental to the tribe. This points to the duality of the magician; he can be either a God or a Devil. This conflict is depicted in the sagas of Greek mythology where Zeus gained supreme power and exercised it in his dual role as God and Devil, and thus subjected Demeter, the Goddess of the Earth, and Persephone, the Goddess of Agriculture, to his omnipotent power.

Chapter III shows Tess to be like Demeter and Persephone, with the resemblance too pronounced to be a mere coincidence. Thus, Tess, the female with her natural instincts, is in conflict with all the forces which tend to frustrate this intuition. And the symbol for this force is Alec, who appears in the novel as the archetype of the devil.

Chapter IV deals with this conflict in greater detail. Hardy's conscious use of time as the fourth dimension underscores the importance of Tess' intuition and instinct, which are also inherent in the Goddess of the Earth. Her antagonists do not possess this intuition or have it only in a rudimentary degree, and thus the reason for the conflict becomes clear: representatives of the primarily masculine consciousness pitted against the unconsciously governed feminine creative force.

Approved by

Randolph M. Belger
Director

APPROVAL SHEET

TESS AS THE ARCHETYPE OF THE EARTH GODDESS
IN HARDY'S TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro,
Greensboro, North Carolina.

by

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Thesis

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This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, North Carolina.

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¹Ernest Bennet, Jr., Thomas Hardy's Universe (Boston, 1924), p. 38.

revolutionary thought--that destiny can be controlled by the individual, that goodness can be gained through deeds--was bound to have far-reaching consequences, and we can trace the results of Locke's logic in the English Novel from its be-

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

When we study the literature of the nineteenth century, we come immediately to realize that Thomas Hardy, the creator of "Wessex", has an attitude toward his time that sets of his work apart from that of his contemporaries. Many of his novels, especially Tess of the D'Urbervilles, are tragedies and thus seems to lie outside the mainstream of the literary thought of his century. From the beginning of the English Novel to the time of Hardy's major works, the philosophy of John Locke dominated the important minds of the country. Locke's idea that man is inherently good, and his concept of "tabula rasa" established the fact that the individual has more power over his destiny than the preceding period that believes, with its dominant ground-tone of Providence as the power which shapes the course of human events.¹ This idea that man is inherently good and is his own master points to the importance of how he adjusts to his "Umwelt," of how he reacts to different sensations from the outside. Such a

¹Ernest Brennecke, Jr., Thomas Hardy's Universe (Boston, 1924), p. 38. When we look back to the time of Chaucer, we see that his allegories were patterned according to the classical image. Not only form and style were copied from the classics, but also--mainly through Chaucer's translations of Boethius--their philosophy was incorporated

revolutionary thought--that destiny can be controlled by the individual, that goodness can be gained through deeds--was bound to have far-reaching consequences, and we can trace the results of Locke's logic in the English Novel from its beginning.

Two of related developments are important if we are to embark on a study of Hardy's major work and on an analysis of the difference between him and his predecessors and contemporaries.

The first and most important change was the emergence of individualism. This is not surprising when we consider Locke's contention that each man is master of his own fate. If such a contention were valid, then a host of different characters could come into being, wholly unaffected by genetic influence and by the rigidly molded personality types of the past. Such a change in the conception of the growth of a human being could not fail to influence the work of the creative mind. But such a change came only gradually, and we have to keep in mind that several factors were involved before the literary trends of the nineteenth century were firmly established.

When we look back to the time of Chaucer, we see that his literary form and his allegories were patterned according to the classical image. Not only form and style were copied from the classics, but also--mainly through Chaucer's translation of Boethius--their philosophy was incorporated

in Chaucer's poetry. Beside the classical influence, the Church with its teachings tended to reinforce the rigidity of existing literary ideas and forms and to emphasize their typical aspects.

But strangely enough, medieval poems were not the only attempts to bring archetypal themes to the attention of the people. There existed and had evolved over a great length of time a form of drama without any literary precedent at all. R. J. E. Tiddy writes:

While everything suggests that our drama arose from Pagan rites connected with Nature religion, it is quite certain that Christianity broke its development. The Christian drama must have had a far greater prestige than the pagan. But there is no doubt that the pagan drama, if, as I think, it had got as far as being drama in pre-Christian times, must have retained a warm place in the hearts of the simpler part of the community, and it is probable that the clergy treated it with tolerance so long as it did not come near the sacred places of their cult.²

This pagan drama, the Mummer's Play, the Sword Dance, and the Morris Dance and other English ludi were, in the strictest sense, non-literary. Yet, as Tiddy says, they had a warm place in the hearts of the people and thus persisted and made their influence felt on the Miracle Plays of the Church, and, later upon the emergence of the Morality Plays. The increasingly class-conscious literary aristocrats with their humanistic education in the ancient

²R. J. E. Tiddy, The Mummer's Play (Oxford, 1923), p. 90.

traditions formed their drama according to the Senecan play; they had no further use of the pagan material which was considered the crude expressions of illiterate peasants. Thus we have the curious fact that the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama borrowed many of their subjects from a classical background. They neglected the native folk elements with their rich symbolic content of archetypal patterns.

Only Ben Jonson tried to augment the purely classical sources when he included some of the material of the English ludi in his masques. He recognized the archetypal patterns which were revealed in myth and ritual. Jonson continued to wage a single-handed battle in favor of classicism until the Elizabethan drama was drawing near the end of its magnificent course.

Then came the Reformation and the breakdown of the old order through the findings of Copernicus and Kepler which explained the universe in a new way. In a similar fashion, Locke developed his philosophy, and the people were conditioned to accept a concept which was no longer restricted by the old rules. Only then could literature begin to explore and describe its characters from a realistic point of view, and only then did it become apparent that life has many faces and is not bound wholly to the set patterns of classical typology. But the breakthrough did not come until Locke had plowed the ground and the seed could begin to sprout.

... of Fielding, which made Comedy emerge as the

The second development is a matter of form. Individualism and realism could not emerge in classical literature. The situation only changed after Locke's philosophy was understood by the writers. Locke's position was not an isolated one. On the Continent Kant and Schopenhauer were much concerned with the free will of man, and they developed its application in their respective philosophies. Like a log in the fire, a new thought had smoldered and then suddenly broke into open flame, which threw its influence like shadows over two centuries.

Thus, when the English Novel began its rise, authors could draw, however indirectly, on philosophical thought which had parted with the pattern of certain rigid archetypal patterns and tragic situations, and the characters of the novels could be depicted in a realistic way as individuals who were largely permitted to pursue their own independence. The old tragic concept had lost its influence and the new experience of human life could come to the surface.

This is not to say that tragedy disappeared after Locke's philosophy became known. But it can be stated that the tragic situations were not patterned any more according to classical concepts. The rise of the novel was characterized by the psychological approach of exposing human weakness through Comedy instead of Tragedy. It is this psychological realism, cf. Fielding, which made Comedy emerge as the

dominant mode in the English Novel. When we examine Hardy's work, we see that he again has reverted to the pure form of tragedy in his important novels. Should this be taken as a retrogression into the older classical forms? This is not the case. Hardy's obvious realism would refute this contention. Then Hardy must have had another reason for the introduction of his tragical themes, and before we can embark on a serious study of Tess of the D'Urbervilles, we have to search for this reason.

Hardy's themes, again, are very much concerned with the destiny and fate of man; but for him fate is depicted in a way which is not solely dependent on divine power alone. A new element has entered into his perception, just as a new element was added to his environment. This new outlook sets him apart from the Victorian age and connects him more closely to the literary thought of the Twentieth Century and to pre-historic times, too. Can we assume, then, that the introduction of this new element was provoked by some new thought which had consequences analogous to the philosophy of Locke on the emergence of the novel?

Such an influence is recognizable in Hardy's work. In 1859 Darwin's Origin of Species was published. In this book, Darwin traced the scientific laws of evolution and the survival of species. The development of man, in his opinion, was guided by biological factors that were inherent in the species and not subject to man's power. In Darwin's theory,

the "survival of the fittest" was stressed, and through this process a natural selection would gradually lead to a superior species. Long continuance of natural selection would gradually eliminate the weak. Thus the scientific foundation for the "struggle of existence", as Spencer coined it, was developed.

Darwin's theory is in opposition to Locke's philosophy. The concept of "tabula rasa" implies that there are no inherent influences present before a human's birth, and his contention that man's mind is like a white sheet of paper which can be filled out according to the free will of the emerging personality is no longer valid after Darwin. There is no doubt that man, according to Locke, has a free will, but the development of a personality, even if the concept of the free will is unimpaired, has to follow the laws and patterns of human evolution. If we state the problem simply, then we can say that the biological inheritance of man is present a priori to the individual experience of free will. It is not necessary for our purpose to determine exactly the workings of this biological inheritance from our ancestors, but we have to keep in mind that Darwin's hypothesis, so far as it contradicts Locke's philosophy, can be regarded as a basis for a different psychological interpretation of human development.

In the terms "survival of the fittest" and "struggle

of existence," we are confronted again with the basic situation of inherent tragedy. If we can find the Darwinian influence in Tess, then it will be evident that Hardy again has had a reason to revert to tragedy, not as a matter of choice, but as a necessity to conform with the tragic implications of Darwin's assumption.

Hardy's description of Tess' troubles seem to indicate that he was well aware what new insight could be drawn from Darwin's hypothesis and its application to the human tragedy. For him, inheritance and folk customs gave a more solid foundation for the themes of his novels than the old belief in Divine Providence and in the concept of man's free will.

Grimsditch gives this description of Tess' situation:

Tess is born of shiftless parents, and not trained at all. John Durbeyfield is utterly weak and foolish, without industry, self-control or common-sense. He can work on occasion, but the mood is not always with him when needed; his favourite diversion is to fuddle at the inn, and when he learns his illustrious ancestry his behaviour is so absurd as to place him very near the borders of sheer feeble-mindedness. His wife, Joan, however, while she has certain solid virtues as a housewife, displays weakness not only in resolution and intelligence, but also in principle.³

But Hardy goes even further into Tess' ancestry, for, as Grimsditch says: "It is hinted that Tess' troubles perhaps

³Herbert W. Grimsditch, Character and Environment in the Novels of Thomas Hardy (New York, 1962), p. 31.

began long before she was born, in the lawless lives of her aristocratic ancestors, whose blood sometimes runs all too warmly in her veins."⁴

Grimsditch makes it evident that Hardy has emphasized some influences in Tess' life which would seem to go beyond Darwin's theory.

It will be the purpose of this thesis to trace this influence and to see if it conforms with the archetypal pattern of the Goddess of the Earth.

⁴Ibid., p. 30.

Analytical psychology has opened new avenues in understanding the human psyche; especially important here are the studies of Dr. C. G. Jung and his hypothesis of analogical patterns in the unconscious mind. Maud Bodkin describes the core of Jung's hypothesis thus:

The special emotional significance possessed by certain poems--a significance going beyond any definite meaning conveyed--he attributes to the stirring in the reader's mind, within or beneath his conscious response, of unconscious forces which he terms 'primordial images,' or archetypes. These archetypes he describes as 'psychic residues of numberless experiences of the same types,' experiences which have happened not in the individual but to his ancestors, and of which the results are inherited in the structure of the brain, a priori determinants of individual experiences.¹

Gilbert Murray, who has compared the tragedies of Hamlet

¹Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (New York, 1958), p. 1.

CHAPTER II

THE DEFINITION OF ARCHETYPES AND THEIR GENEALOGY

That Tess can be regarded as deriving from an archetypal image is not of primary importance. The first consideration of this chapter, therefore, is to study Hardy's imagery and to allege the sensus allegoricus as an independent movement below the surface of the novel. Before we are able to trace archetypal patterns and their relationship with each other, we have to develop a definition and a genealogy of the expression "archetype."

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¹Maud Bodkin, Archetypal Patterns in Poetry (New York, 1958), p. 1.

and Orestes for such similarities of "almost eternal durability," says of archetypal patterns: "When such themes as stirred the interest of primitive man move us now, they will tend to do so in ways which we recognize as particularly profound and poetical." He says further, "...that they are deeply implanted in the memory of the race, stamped as it were upon our physical organism. We say that such themes are strange to us. Yet there is that within us that leaps at the sight of them, a cry of the blood which tells us we have known them always."²

But Murray uses still stronger terms to underscore the persistence of archetypal patterns within the life of a community or race:

In plays like Hamlet or the Agamemnon or the Electra we have certain fine and flexible character-study, a varied and wellwrought story, a full command of the technical instruments of the poet and the dramatist; but we have also, I suspect, a strange, unanalysed vibration below the surface, an undercurrent of desires and fears and passions, long slumbering yet eternally familiar, which have for thousands of years lain near the root of our most magical dreams. How far into the past ages this stream may reach back, I dare not even surmise; but it seems as if the power of stirring it or moving with it were one of the last secrets of genius.³

Both of these statements about the unconscious mind and the definition of archetypes were written by sophisticates

²Ibid., p. 2.

³Gilbert Murray, "Hamlet and Orestes" in The Classical Tradition in Poetry (Oxford, 1927), pp. 239-40. Hereafter cited as Murray.

with a literary background. It is essential that we also consider a more scientific formulation of the same point of view, because Jung's hypothesis can easily lead to misunderstanding. Ira Progoff says:

Jung's conception of the unconscious has been open to much misinterpretation mainly because he used a highly misleading terminology. In particular, the phrase 'collective unconscious,' one of Jung's pivotal terms, has led to a great deal of misunderstanding. Because of the word 'collective,' it has often been understood to mean a kind of a communal unconscious, something like a 'group mind.' But that is very far from Jung's meaning. Actually, the significance of the word 'collective' in his thinking is a contrast to the word 'personal,' and Jung uses it to convey the idea that the human being contains psychic materials whose reality is prior to the fact of individuality. It is collective rather in the sense that as something generically present in man, it is collectively held by all men. This is to say, these materials are present in potentia because they are inherent in the psychic structure of the individual, both from a biological and historical point of view, and in the course of the individual's life, depending on his experiences, some of them will be actualized and developed on the surface of the conscious.⁴

It is interesting to examine Jung's own definition: "We mean by collective unconscious a certain psychic disposition shaped by the forces of heredity; from it consciousness developed. In the physical structure of the body we find traces

⁴Ira Progoff, Jung's Psychology and its Social Meaning (New York, 1953), pp. 53-54. Hereafter cited as Progoff.

by W. S. Doh and Cary F. Hayes (New York, 1953), p. 165. Hereafter cited as Jung.

⁵Ibid., p. 166.

of earlier stages of evolution, and we may expect the human psyche also to conform in its make-up to the law of phylogeny."⁵

But archetypal patterns, coming from the collective unconscious, have to be explained in still another way to be fully understood. Jung says:

If we consider Goethe's Faust, and leave aside the possibility that it is compensatory to his own conscious attitude, the question that we must answer is this: In what relation does it stand to the conscious outlook of his time? Great poetry draws its strength from the life of mankind, and we completely miss its meaning if we try to derive it from personal factors. Whenever the collective unconscious becomes a living experience and is brought to bear upon the conscious outlook of an age, this event is a creative act which is of importance to everyone living in that age. A work of art is produced that contains what may truthfully be called a message to generations of men. So Faust touches something in the soul of every German. So also Dante's fame is immortal, while the Shepherd of Hermas just failed of inclusion in the New Testament canon. Every period has its bias, its particular prejudice and its psychic ailment. An epoch is like an individual; it has its own limitations of conscious outlook, and therefore requires a compensatory adjustment. This is effected by the collective unconscious in that a poet, seer or a leader allows himself to be guided by the unexpressed desire of his times and shows the way, by word or deed, to the attainment of what everyone blindly craves and expects--whether this attainment results in good or evil, the healing of an epoch or its destruction.⁶

⁵C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Deh and Cary F. Baynes (New York, 1953), p. 165. Hereafter cited as Jung.

⁶Ibid., p. 166.

The most important work of the unconscious mind, then, from Jung's point of view, is the poet's visionary creation and its acting as a compensatory adjustment to history. If the work of art is genuine, the vision not derived, or of secondary importance, then the vision represents a deeper and more impressive experience than individual passion, and it can be classified as primordial experience. It is thus an imitation of an archetypal pattern, which, as Murray says, "vibrated below the surface an undercurrent of desire and fears and passions," until a poet brings them to the surface, "wrought into the fabric of our most magical dreams."

As Murray seems to imply, even the most magical dreams woven into the fabric of a poet's vision have only been slumbering and have, for thousands of years, lain near the root of our most intimate emotions. So, to gain insight into the archetypal patterns with which Hardy is concerned, we too have to go back thousands of years to the very beginning of the development of those archetypes he has used to imitate the tragic action of his novel.

This is not an easy task. Human beings have inhabited the earth for millions of years. Yet man's history, if we base our research on written records, does not reach farther into the past than six thousand years. Earlier records of man do exist, but they are only sculptures, paintings and other works of art, which can not be considered as precise means of communications. They do, however, contain symbolic

value and thus record the imitation of a psychic process in a tangible form. If we apply Jung's contention that creative art is the emergence of the collective unconscious into living experience, then we have the key to understand the symbols of their art and how it affected human beings living in the ages past. Going back to the symbolic art of primitive man must necessarily lead to the root of the archetypal patterns which persist in man's unconscious mind.

R. Lowe Thompson, in The History of the Devil, has traced the genealogy of the devil, and Satan's archetypal significance can be easily recognized. There is, however, one more archetype which has developed as a counterforce to the devil, or was even known and venerated before the emergence of the devil as a supernatural being. It is the Goddess of the Earth, often referred to as the Goddess of Fertility, the Goddess of Maternity, the Goddess of the Hearth, the Moon Goddess, and finally, in Greek mythology, as the Goddess of Agriculture. The names are different, but the genealogy and the essential meaning are the same.

Thompson's discussion of the archetypes of the Goddess of the Earth and of the devil is highly suggestive.⁷ Very early in his exposition Thompson makes an important statement:

Amongst the various factors which have led to man's pre-eminence, few are more important than those which tend to strengthen his gregarious

⁷R. Lowe Thompson, The History of the Devil (New York, 1929), pp. 1-90. Hereafter cited as Thompson.

impulses and bind together a group of men into a more effective social unit. In early days, and especially during a glaciation, the family hearth would be a most effective focus, and around it a huddled group could develop their language and a corporate sense. Next to the fire there is, perhaps, in man's leisure hours, no material bond that is more powerful than the social meal.⁸

Immediately, the importance of the woman as keeper of the hearth became evident. But the woman had not only the task of caring for the social unit. A second, more crucial necessity than the abundance of food was that the tribe have an adequate supply of young hunters from fertile females. When both of those conditions were achieved to a high degree, we can speak of the ideal female of primitive man. Such a perfect woman, pictured in symbolic form as the Goddess of the Hearth and the Mother of Man, was often presented in the form of a statue with generous breasts and fruitful hips, holding a cornucopia in her hands. One such statue, an unusually typical one, was found in one of the caves at Laussel, and it can be regarded as an idealization of the true female.

Thompson goes on to write about the biological situation of primitive man and about his emerging concept of religion, and he says that such a belief springs from three fundamental impulses which can be found in every living creature, namely:

⁸Thompson, p. 8.

The impulse of Race-Maintenance and those of Self-Maintenance, which may, for my present purpose, be realized as the impulse to Feed, and the impulse toward Self-Preservation. More briefly, we can say that the savages are driven by a desire to breed to feed and to avoid death. We have, then, in the magic of the hunters, rites which aimed at good hunting; rites which secured the fertility of the tribe; and burial rites which avoided the dire problem of personal extinction by assuring man of his survival after death.⁹

It is interesting that survival after death was considered essential to the psychological welfare of cave men, and this very concern with life after death has survived and is now the main preoccupation of all major religions. We can talk here of the archetype of resurrection and of rebirth. This concept may be as old as man, and it supports Jung's assumption of primordial archetypal patterns.

There is one more aspect to the importance of the female. Thompson speaks of "breeding, feeding and avoiding death," as the savage's main concern. Two of those functions are solely the responsibility of the female, as we have seen. The third function, "avoiding death," belongs to the spiritual leader of the tribe, as Thompson points out. The predominance of the woman, then, is founded on biological and historical fact and is implanted in the memory of the race as a symbol of survival. At what time the ideal female was elevated to the stature of a Goddess, as the "Urmutter" of man, no one can say, but the surviving bas-relief from Laussel leaves no doubt that this female

⁹Thompson, p. 79.

was regarded as a Goddess, and that sculpture is in fact the first concrete evidence of the Goddess of the Earth as a mythical symbol.

In Thompson's exposition of the tribal life of ancient man there is no indication that the male attained such a prominent position as the female. This is because the males were primarily occupied with hunting of animals for food. Problems did not arise for the male until food animals became scarce, and then it became the responsibility of the hunter and the test of his ingenuity to make kills in adverse conditions. Hunting skills were, as Thompson points out, mainly dependent upon the physical fitness of the hunter. The male in his prime was the model of the good hunter, and such a man could attain leadership qualities only through his physical superiority. What about the males who lacked this fitness? Were they relegated to inferior roles in the tribe, or did they have to descend to a kind of slave status?

Thompson thinks so; but it was not the case for all the physically unfit. He makes a convincing case that at least some of them were able to balance their physical weaknesses with a keen mind, that is to say, with creative ability. This creative male, in his opinion, would have to be classified as a feminine type of male, since creativity is always psychologically linked with femininity. Out of the few of such feminine types of males, there emerged a leader whose creativeness

gave him a psychological superiority which even the strongest and fittest of the hunters could not match. Thompson calls this kind of man the magician, or the spiritual leader of the tribe. What others could not do, he performed with his magic powers. "The magician, then, is the protector of the stone age society,"¹⁰ Thompson says, and his importance is made clear by the following:

In the Cavernes des Trois Frères, which contains a gallery of over four hundred pictures, while at the far end, painted high up so that it dominates the entire chamber, is the picture called the 'Sorcerer,' or as I prefer to call it 'The Magician.'¹¹

And the picture of this magician is thus described by

Sollas:

It represents a remarkable combination of the horns of a stag, a face like an owl's, a long beard, the ears of a wolf, the tail of a horse, the paws of a bear, and the feet of a man. The body and thighs are striped probably to represent the pelt of some animal. It seems to symbolize in one person fleetness, wisdom, penetrating vision, and strength. Whether these attributes were attributed to the wizard himself or to some mythical being, it is impossible to say.¹²

Thompson makes another distinction among the magician's powers. The true magician, in his original function, represents

¹⁰Thompson, p. 26.

¹¹Thompson, p. 16.

¹²Thompson, p. 28.

magic as an orthodox affair with rites and observances that are carried out for the good of the community as a whole. But when the magician, as a protector of society, exercises his powers for his own good, and practices magic to satisfy his own gain to the detriment of the society he is to protect, then this individual must be called a sorcerer.¹³

"The imaginative interpretation of the devil from the beginning of the stone age cult to the popular conception of the devil, in fact with horns, hoofs and a tail," says Thompson, "holding high revelry at night, and rites that were riddled through with fear...",¹⁴ derives its roots, its form and substance from deep in the past. So, through the ages, the conception of the devil as an individual with supernatural powers used for his own gain, has endured, and this archetypal pattern can be traced in the history of mythology to the magician of the stone age.

The tracing of the Goddess of the Earth image in later times is more difficult. The Goddess with the cornucopia has had a different development than the archetype of the Devil. Between the stone age and the iron age there are very few records, which is probably due to the vast population shifts during the last ice age, as Thompson points out.

¹³Thompson, p. 26.

¹⁴Thompson, p. 126.

The idea of the cornucopia as the symbol of the Earth Mother comes to the surface again early in Greek mythology. As the fable tells, Zeus, the divine child, was concealed after his birth from his father Kronos, who had eaten his other children immediately after they were born. This concealment was aided by a dance of the Kouretes who distracted Kronos. Zeus was not nursed by his natural mother, but by a goat called Amaltheias, which nourished the infant from her horn, which was known as Cornu Copiae.¹⁵

Thompson stresses the fact, that we have here a horned beast older than Zeus, who was the Father of Gods and Men, and that this female goat referred to a common origin, the ancient Goddess of the Earth with the cornucopia.¹⁶ The personification of the Goddess of the Earth, or the "Mother of all Things," in Greek mythology is Demeter (Ceres), the daughter of Kronos and Rhea, and thus a sister to Zeus. The marriage of Zeus to Demeter is of special significance, because Zeus approached her in the form of a snake, and the result of this union was Persephone (Proserpina), the Goddess of Vegetation. The story of Persephone is important, as a short resume will show.

¹⁵Jane Ellen Harrison, Themis (London, 1963), p. 247.

¹⁶Thompson, p. 65.

Persephone was forcibly carried away by Pluto, God of the Infernal Regions, and taken to Hades as his wife. Demeter went to search for her daughter, but could not descend into Pluto's region. She then withdrew to a deep cave and began her mourning. The disappearance of Persephone and the absence of Demeter from her duties threatened the people with famine, and they prayed and clamored for her aid. The Goddess vowed that nothing should grow on earth with her permission, as long as her daughter was detained in Hades. In despair the people then besought Zeus to pity their sufferings and to allow Persephone to revisit the upper world once more. Zeus consented to Persephone's return upon the condition that she had not touched any food during her sojourn in the Infernal Regions. As Persephone was about to be released, however, it turned out that she had eaten some pomegranate seed that very day, and thus Zeus decreed that for every seed she had eaten she should spend one month of every year in her husband's kingdom. For this reason Persephone was condemned to spend one half of every year in Hades. Thus it came about that the earth bloomed and brought forth fruit, but when the six months were over, the skies wept and all nature mourned when Persephone had to return to Pluto. But the moment Hades' portals closed behind her, Demeter retired to her deep cave, whence no entreaties could draw her.¹⁷

¹⁷H. A. Guerber, Myths of Greece and Rome (New York, 1893), pp. 183-95.

The legends of Zeus, Demeter, and Persephone stand in marked contrast to what we know of the Earth Goddess during the last post-glacial period. The only remaining link seems to be the cornucopia; but there are other things which are not so obvious, and they can only be explained in a historical context. We have seen that stone age society was largely concerned with breeding, feeding, and avoiding death. The two most important functions were the sole responsibility of the female, while the third one was entrusted to the competence of the magician, who was, to cite Thompson again, a feminine type of male. This points to the fact that such a society functioned as, and was dominated by, a matriarchal household, where the symbol of the Mother, i.e., the Goddess of the Earth had a universal power. Gilbert Murray speaks of an "almost uniform type of Goddess, Earth Mother or maiden, worshipped through Western Greece and Asia Minor in pre-hellenic times, with such relations celebrated in saga, between hero and mother--or guardian goddess, as witnessing by their beauty to the civilizing power of the religious system connected with the matriarchal household."¹⁸

If such conditions existed in pre-hellenic times, and if we consider Thompson's and Murray's arguments as valid, then an explanation has to be found for the change from the

¹⁸Murray, pp. 99-100.

age of matriarchy to the age of Zeus, who ruled with a patriarchal system of unequalled severity.

The problem has to be approached on two different levels. The first, seems to be connected with historical development, the second, influenced by a psychological reaction. Early man's life was solely dependent on hunting. The cave man's skill did not go beyond fashioning stone and bone weapons, and agricultural activities, included the tending of domesticated animals were unknown. The men of the tribe were fully occupied with hunting, and therefore they had no other functions in the tribe. They did not sow, yet they could hunt whatever the wild animal population had to offer.

The change which brought a new order came with the arrival of the iron age. The invention of iron tools made agriculture possible, and the domesticated animals reduced the hunt's importance as the sole support for food. The population density was no longer predetermined by the number of wild animals, but as the population increased, the concern with the necessary "Lebensraum" for a rapidly rising, growing tribe had to be taken into consideration. The men, freed from the task of hunting for food exclusively, had a new responsibility thrust upon them; the acquisition and defense of an adequate territory for the tribe. This was a necessity; but the instinct for a secure territory was not only economically motivated, but also had a psychological motivation, like the fight of the animals to secure their breeding grounds. So we

have the emergence of the warrior group from the former hunter group, and from this time on the motivation of the warrior was different from that of the hunter of the stone age, where the dominant force was centered in the symbols of the Goddess of the Earth and the Magician. Most interesting is the ascendancy of the magician as the head of the tribe, not only in his spiritual capacity, but also in a political sense, as the supreme, omnipotent ruler.

Can we then regard Zeus as an embodiment of the old concept of the Magician? The fable gives us the answer. Zeus approached Demeter in the form of a snake. The snake has always been the mythological symbol for the Devil. Furthermore, the snake is a phallic symbol, probably linked here to Zeus' efforts to bring Demeter and her offspring under his power. And third, since the snake sheds her skin periodically, she symbolizes duality. In effect, then, the last symbol shows Zeus' duality as the benevolent magician on the one side, and as a sorcerer on the other. Thompson says of the psychological forces of the emerging Gods: "For a while he may be content to rule, primus inter pares, like Zeus or Odin; but sooner or later, when he gains supreme power or when his chosen seek an absolute conquest of new lands, the indigenous gods, especially those so ancient and so rude that they can find no place in any pantheon, become identified with the devils and evil spirits of the new

creed."¹⁹

The omnipotent God, then, can not only relegate rival gods to the status of impotence, but he also assumes the power to turn matriarchy into something inferior, and saddle the Goddess of Vegetation with the blame that the changing seasons did not adequately provide for his subjects. Thus Persephone's eating of the pomegranate seed against Zeus' will had the same consequences for Hellenic society, as Eve's eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge, which also was against God's will. Here we have a close parallel between the Greek and the Judeo-Christian mythology. The change from the "Paradise of the Hunters," to the agricultural age is thus explained in mythological terms. This came about, as both myths say, through the sin of the Goddess of the Earth, and the "Mother of Man," for eating something which was forbidden by the God-Head. The eating of the fruit, then, provides the psychological explanation for a change from the pure and beneficial to the impure and injurious, affecting society or the individual. But in both cases the disaster is reversed by a sacrifice. In the Greek myth Persephone pays through her stay in Hades during the barren season, and in the Christian myth Christ cancels the "Sin of Man," i.e. Eve's fall, on the Cross.

¹⁹Thompson, p. 82.

If we analyze the imaginative experience of the Greek and Christian myth, it can simply be explained as the tragic conflict between the Goddess of the Earth and the Magician in his duality as benefactor or sorcerer, and this tragic conflict can only be resolved through a sacrifice whose atonement offers opportunity for a renewed life. This concept, sacrifice (decay) and the resulting new life (rebirth), as depicted in Persephone, is known in mythology as the rebirth-archetype.

It is through such a collective representation, coming to us out of the distant past, but maintaining a powerful influence within the poet's imaginative work, that I hope to trace Tess' importance in Hardy's novel. The poet's instincts become evident at once in his description of Tess. A few examples will serve here to show what I mean. In the harvest scene (XIV) he writes of her son: "The luminary was a golden-haired, beaming, mild-eyed God-like creature, gazing down in the vigour and intentness of youth upon earth that was brimming with interest for him."²⁰ The mother herself is described as wearing a pale pink jacket, "...and she being

²⁰Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D'Urbervilles (New York, 1935), p. 109. Hereafter cited as Tess. All quotations in the text are from the edition of Harper & Brothers.

²¹Walter A. Fifer, Folkways in Thomas Hardy (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937), p. 19. Hereafter cited as Fifer.

the most flexous and finely drawn figure of them all."²¹ Later, when the harvest folk cease to work and sit down for their noon meal at the end of the shock, one of the laborers, a red handkerchief tucked into his belt, offers Tess a cup of ale to drink. But she does not accept his offer. After the meal Tess goes aside to suckle her child. "The men who sat nearest considerately turned their faces towards the other end of the field, some of them beginning to smoke; one with absent-minded fondness, regretfully stroking a jar that would no longer yield a stream."²² Within a few paragraphs the image of Tess is rich with implication. Her son is the God-like child, from a mother described as the finest of them all. The motive of the pure woman, of the god-like being is evident; but the image of her wearing a pale pink jacket is even more directly connected with her symbolic descentance from the Gods, because she is the only female who displays the color sacred to Donar, the Teutonic God of the Hearth and to his full sister Freya, Goddess of the Earth.²³ The laborer with the red handkerchief, offering her a drink of ale is turned down with good reason. The man too is

²¹Tess, p. 111.

²²Tess, p. 113.

²³Ruth A. Firor, Folkways in Thomas Hardy (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1931), p. 154. Hereafter cited as Firor.

linked to Donar through his red handkerchief, and Tess' refusal possibly has an ironic significance, because the cycle of the Goddess which she represents is not yet advanced enough for her to accept a gift from a male.

Hardy's realistic description of Tess can be deceptive in its simplicity. There is more behind the poet's prose than his realistic approach would suggest. At our first introduction to Tess at the May-Dance in the village of Marlott, Hardy says: "The forests have departed, but some old customs of their shades remain. Many, however, linger only in a metamorphosed or disguised form. The May-Day-Dance, for instance, was to be discerned on the afternoon under notice, in the guise of the club revel, or 'club walking,' as it was there called."²⁴

Of all the women present, only Tess emanates the image of virginity and pureness. "She was a fine and handsome girl--not handsomer than some others, possibly--but her mobile peony mouth and large innocent eyes added eloquence to color and shape. She wore a red ribbon in her hair, and was the only one of the white company who could boast of such pronounced adornment."²⁵

²⁴Tess, p. 10.

²⁵Tess, p. 12.

Here again we have motives from the old folk customs, like the May-Dance, which have their origin in the Donar-Cult. Tess, the pure, is fittingly singled out wearing the pronounced adornment, the red ribbon--Donar's color again. The meaning, metamorphosed as it is, comes through, and the appearance of Tess' drunk father at the May-Dance, bragging about his descent from the fabulous D'Urbervilles and spoiling her happiness, sets the theme firmly in focus for her ironic wanderings from the May-Dance to the Stone of Sacrifice at Stonehenge. We will see more of Hardy's metamorphosed ideas which run below the surface, when we try to analyse the sensus allegoricus in the following chapter.

tragic method--linear in organization--differs radically from the classic concept of tragedy in Orestes and Hamlet, with its triad of antagonist--protagonist--antagonist. Here the tragic action, presented as a conflict between three people, can be regarded as a self-contained unity, and this tragic triangle fits within the classic concept of the circle as a symbol of unity.

Hardy, too, has used the triad with Tess, Alec, and Angel, but there is an important difference. The tragic action never includes the interplay of Tess and her two antagonists at the same time. Angel has never met Alec and therefore a conflict between the two principal male characters does not exist, at least not on the surface. Because of this difference,

CHAPTER III

ARCHETYPAL SYMBOLISM IN TESS, ANGEL, AND ALEC

Hardy's tragic motivation for Tess' wanderings over the earth is central to every aspect of the novel. There are many roads over which Tess has to travel and in each case her journeys lead her to a new cycle in her life which was fore-ordained, as the night which follows day.

Tess' life is patterned according to a linear development, from the May-Dance to the Stone of Sacrifice at Stonehenge, from Creation to Death and on to Resurrection. This bold new tragic method--linear in organization--differs radically from the classic concept of tragedy in Orestes and Hamlet, with its triad of antagonist--protagonist--antagonist. Here the tragic action, presented as a conflict between three people, can be regarded as a self-contained unity, and this tragic triangle fits within the classic concept of the circle as a symbol of unity.

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Hardy's tragedy does not conform to the classical image of tragedy and there is no tragic unity which could be contained in a circle. Tess' wanderings, however, reveal Hardy's novel as linear in development, with the element of time governing the cycles. And those cycles can be regarded as a continuous flowing time in a sine curve, where a cycle begins with a rising curve indicating favorable circumstances for Tess, and a falling curve when she has to fight against adversities.

It is for this reason that the time sequence is central to every aspect of Tess' life, and Hardy has been criticised for the accidental and co-incident events which would seem to be the "least credible of fictional devices" he could have used.¹ If those events are only regarded as a technical device, the criticism might be warranted, but when we try to explain them from a psychological point of view, as consistent with Hardy's allegorical treatment of Tess as the Goddess of Earth, then we have to prove that those events are a logical part of life with archetypal significance, not only for her, but for all human beings.

When the novel begins we know nothing of Tess' childhood history. Only in the third chapter, after the Durbeyfield household is introduced in its shabby surroundings, does the poet indicate some of the problems Tess had to cope with in her youth:

¹Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel (New York, 1961), p. 204. Hereafter cited as Van Ghent.

All those young souls were passengers in the Durbeyfield ship--entirely dependent on the judgement of the two Durbeyfield adults for their pleasures, their necessities, their health, even their existence. If the heads of the Durbeyfield household chose to sail into difficulty, disaster, starvation, disease, degradation, death, thither were these half-dozen little captives under hatches compelled to sail with them--six helpless creatures, who had never been asked if they wished for any terms, much less if they wished for it on such hard conditions as were involved in being of the shiftless house of Durbeyfield. Some people would like to know whence the poet whose philosophy is in these days deemed as profound and trustworthy as his song is breezy and pure gets his authority for speaking of 'Nature's holy plan.'²

If one wishes to point to an example of the helplessness of Tess' human estate and of her formidable handicaps in life, then this paragraph seems to touch the bottom of hopelessness. Yet Hardy speaks of nature's "holy plan," in which rebirth follows death in a cycle that flows continuously and where the shadows are present whenever there is light. Tess' life is painted in light and shadows by Hardy. One day she is pointed out at the dance around the maypole as innocent, virginal and a worthy offspring of the gods, but the next day the beginning of the tragedy has already touched the purity in her:

The morning mail-cart, with its two noiseless wheels, speeding along these lanes like an arrow, as it always did, had driven into her slow

²Tess, p. 24.

and unlighted equipage. The pointed shaft of the cart had entered the breast of the unhappy Prince like a sword, and from the wound his life's blood was spouting in a stream, and falling with a hiss into the road. In her despair Tess sprang forward and put her hand upon the hole, with the only result that she became splashed from face to skirt with the crimson drops.³

Hardy immediately comes to the significance of the accident with a description of the resulting change:

The atmosphere turned pale; the birds shook themselves in the hedges, arose, and twittered; the lane showed all its white features, and Tess showed hers, still whiter. The huge pool of blood in front of her was already assuming the iridescence of coagulation; and when the sun rose, a hundred prismatic hues were reflected from it. Prince lay alongside still and stark; his eyes half open, the hole in his chest looking scarcely large enough to have let out all that had animated him.⁴

The dilemma of Tess, after the death of Prince, is at once evident in the second paragraph, "as the atmosphere turned pale." The change from the child with the peony mouth and innocent eyes at the May-Dance, to the blood-splattered Tess, is mythological, for it places her in a dramatic relationship with a nonhuman being, where her destiny is subject to powers beyond her control. It is Hardy's special gift to employ purely realistic action to reveal the mythological connection he wishes to attribute to Tess' personality. The

³Tess, p. 35.

⁴Tess, p. 36.

fact that Prince has been killed will certainly have consequences for Tess and her family. But when we analyse the facts which have led to Prince's death, and point out their symbolic meaning, then we are able to connect this mythological significance with the forces to which Tess is subjected, and which, from this moment on will lead Tess over the roads of her country, according to the "holy plan" of nature of which Hardy has spoken.

In the first two sentences of the paragraph describing the accident, the words "arrow," "shaft," and "sword" follow in short order. The road itself is straight as an arrow and may thus have contributed to the excessive speed of the mail-cart. Shaft and sword, as Hardy has used them here, have a phallic meaning, as they always have in mythology. When the accident is regarded with this significance in mind, then Prince's death and his decay becomes a symbol for a gradual turn of events in Tess' life. This change has its beginning at the May-Dance, the old fertility rite of her ancestors, and with the accumulation of further phallic symbols, Tess' sexuality awakes. This is further indicated in the paleness which sets in and which showed Tess still whiter. The pool of blood, too, which turns ugly with the iridescence of coagulation has the same significance. But this is not the only meaning of the phallic symbol as Hardy has used it. When we remember the legend of Zeus, Demeter and Persephone,

the mating of Demeter with the snake (Zeus in disguise) and Persephone's acceptance of the pomegranate seed from Pluto (the Devil), then Tess' future ordeal is related to the same motive. Demeter's marriage to Zeus made her subject to his power, and as Goddess of Agriculture she was bound by the natural cycles of decay and rebirth, as was her daughter Persephone.

When we regard Prince's death as a result of the same phallic forces which preceded the fall of Demeter and Persephone, then Tess' sin would have the same consequences as those of the Greek goddesses, that is to say she would have to enter a period of decline, followed by a time of spiritual rebirth and happiness, according to the cyclical changes of the earth. Unless such a development can be established in the novel, there would be little merit in regarding Tess as the archetype of the Goddess of the Earth.

The fatal elements of the accident, caused by the coincidental meeting of the mail-cart and by Tess' own negligence, have thus two different consequences. First the family, through the death of Prince, loses an animal necessary to their business, and second, Tess' fortunes will enter into a cycle of decline. The sharp contrast "of the pure maiden" dancing around the maypole, which is still another phallic symbol, and the blood-splashed girl holding her hand on the

horse's wound is an ironic dramatization of the duality of the phallic forces which we will encounter throughout the novel.

Tess' guilt feelings over the loss of the horse are primarily responsible for her giving way to her father's urging that she seek help from the D'Urberville family, a distant branch of the old Stoke-D'Urbervilles dating back to Norman times. And so she finds herself travelling for the first time on the road to Tantridge, the parish in which the vague and mysterious Mrs. D'Urberville has her residence. "Far behind the corner of the house--which rose like a geranium bloom against the subdued colours around--stretched the soft azure landscape of The Chase--a truly venerable tract of forest land, one of the few remaining woodlands in England of undoubted primaeval date, wherein Druidical mistletoe was still found on aged oaks, and where enormous yew-trees, not planted by the hand of man, grew as they had grown when they were pollarded for bows. All this sylvan antiquity, however, though visible from the slopes, was outside the immediate boundaries of the estate."⁵

So Tess not only goes back to a country where the ancient order is still intact, but where its mysticism can be

⁵Tess, pp. 42-43.

felt and seen. She visits a family to which the Durbeyfields were related by blood and by effigies under Purebeck-marble canopies, as Parson Tringham told to John Durbeyfield. When Tess first sees the D'Urberville estate in its new splendor she becomes disturbed. "'I thought we were an old family; but this is all new!' she said, in her artlessness. She wished that she had not fallen in so readily with her mother's plans for 'claiming kin,' and had endeavoured to gain assistance nearer home."⁶

Tess' endeavor of 'claiming kin' with her old relatives turns out somewhat different from what she expected. The only relative of the old D'Urbervilles with whom she comes into contact is a young man named Alec who walks her around the grounds to pass the time. The greenhouses are full of ripening strawberries and Tess accepts them from Alec's hand. When she can consume no more, he fills her a little basket and adorns her breast and hat with roses and heaps her basket with others in the prodigality of his bounty. "She obeyed like one in a dream,"⁷ under his spell.

When she goes home again, without a promise of assistance, Alec walks back to his tent, "...sat down astride on a

⁶Tess, p. 43.

⁷Tess, p. 47.

¹⁰Tess, p. 50.

chair reflecting, with a pleased gleam in his face. Then he broke into a loud laugh. 'Well, I'm damned! What a funny thing! Ha--ha--ha! And what a crumby girl!'"⁸

After Tess enters the van to take her back to Marlott, "she did not know what the other occupants said to her as she entered, though she answered them; and when they had started anew she rode along with an inward and not an outward eye."⁹ In her reflecting mood she moves her chin and a thorn of the rose remaining on her breast accidentally pricks her chin. "Like all the cottagers in Blackmoor Vale, Tess was steeped in fancies and prefigurative superstitions; she thought this an ill omen--the first she had noticed that day."¹⁰ The ill omen Tess is thinking about is again the phallic symbol of the thorn, but there are other symbols, in these passages, not so obvious ones, and therefore Tess is not conscious of their importance. Tess knows about the meaning of the thorn because the people of the vale have kept the superstitious significance alive in their old tales, but there were other things she does not fully realize to be as important as the thorn-incident--yet, judging from her feeling, her intuition tells her that something was there

⁸Tess, p. 49.

⁹Tess, p. 50.

¹⁰Tess, p. 50.

that she can not understand, something that will be harmful to her. This comes out when she talks to her mother after her return: "I'd rather not tell you why, mother; indeed I don't quite know why."¹¹

What is it that had aroused her fear? We have to go back to Alec to find out what has troubled Tess. Alec seems to be a normal man when he steps out from the dark triangular door of the tent, smoking a cigar. "She [Tess] had dreamed of an aged and dignified face, the sublimation of all the D'Urberville lineaments, furrowed with incarnate memories representing in hieroglyphic the centuries of her family's and England's history."¹² Reality and her dream image of a D'Urberville does not agree, neither does she expect that Alec would immediately accept her as a genuine D'Urberville and address her, moments later, as "my pretty Coz'."¹³ Alec's aggressiveness goes a good deal further, however. Not only does he feed her strawberries with his own hand, but he adorns her with roses and takes her into the tent for

¹¹Tess, p. 52.

¹²Tess, p. 45.

¹³Tess, p. 46.

¹⁴Tess, p. 47.

a light lunch.

He watched her pretty un-conscious munching through the skeins of smoke that pervaded the tent, and Tess Durbeyfield did not divine, as she innocently looked down at the roses in her bosom, that there behind the blue narcotic haze was potentially the 'tragic mischief' of her drama--one who stood fair to the blood-red ray in the spectrum of her young life. She had an attribute which amounted to a disadvantage just now; and it was this that caused Alec D'Urberville's eyes to rivet themselves upon her.¹⁴

What is the meaning of this scene in the garden of the D'Urberville estate and Tess' dream-like trance?

Hardy answers this question; not by direct narration, but by implication. The scene is full of mythological haze, and it is necessary to cut through this veiled mystery for its proper meaning. He uses symbols which have their origin in several different periods of mythology. The red roses and the strawberries, as well as the blood-red ray in the spectrum of her young life point to Donar and Freya again. So does Tess' luxuriance of aspect and her fullness of growth indicate her closeness to Freya, the Goddess of Fertility. Tess' acceptance of the strawberries--hot-house grown and of the 'British Queen' variety--from Alec who feeds them to her as to a child, indicating her total submission to his power, has a parallel in Milton's fall of Eve. Does Hardy wish to

¹⁴Tess, p. 47.

indicate that Alec has to be regarded as the tempter, the devil? The implication is certainly there.

The description of Alec gives us the answer: "He had an almost swarthy complexion, with full lips, badly moulded, though red and smooth, above which was a well-groomed black mustache with curled points, though his age could not be more than three--or four-and-twenty. Despite the touches of barbarism in his contours, there was a singular force in the gentleman's face, and in his bold rolling eye."¹⁵ This description of Alec is strikingly similar to that of Goethe's Mephistopheles, and his cigar, another phallic symbol, connects him to Lucifer and the snake in still another way. But Hardy is not content with this realistic image of the devil. He shows him to us in his natural surroundings--hell. It is in the smoke-pervaded tent, in the blue narcotic haze, where he is in his element and where the tragic drama of Tess has its beginning with her acceptance of the devil's fruit. Her dream-like state indicates that she feels her danger intuitively, but her conscious mind cannot fathom the meaning of Alec's behavior. We will see later that this failure of conscious judgement has still other consequences as well.

The connection between Tess and the drama of Demeter and Persephone, the likeness of Alec as the snake in the Christian

¹⁵Tess, p. 44.

myth, and finally the mythological relevancy in the images of Zeus, Lucifer, and Alec are too tightly woven into the story to be disregarded as a mere coincidence. From this viewpoint, Hardy's imitation of the action is firmly guided by the archetypal patterns of the Goddess of the Earth and the devil, and nowhere in the story can we find a deviation from this principle. As long as Tess stands under Alec's influence, she seems to be, like Demeter and Persephone, living in a world of decay and hopelessness. As soon as Alec's influence vanishes, then Tess returns to a world of growth, of fermentation and of harvest, until the skies begin to weep again, and black birds fly over the earth, signaling Tess' return to the lower regions according to the cycles she has to follow. There are many such cycles in the novel, and Alec's influence is only responsible for the lower part of the curve Tess has to travel in her wanderings over the earth. There are other forces at work, however, which have to be identified before a critical evaluation of the novel's symbolic meaning can be undertaken.

What happened under the primaeval yews and oaks of The Chase Hardy does not say directly. Darkness and silence ruled everywhere, and Tess' guardian angel is not in sight, "perhaps, like that other god of whom the ironical Tishbite spoke, he was talking, or he was pursuing, or he was in a journey, or he

was sleeping and not to be awakened."¹⁶ Her dwelling was the darkness, like Pluto's underworld, and when she emerged, the seeds, which would bring a new cycle, grew within her.

The time Tess spends at home after she has left the darkness of The Chase brings about her spiritual recovery. "The only exercise that Tess took at this time was after dark; and it was then, when out in the woods, that she seemed least solitary. She knew how to hit to a hair's-breadth that moment of evening when the light and the darkness were so evenly balanced that the constraint of the day and the suspense of the night neutralize each other, leaving absolute mental liberty. It is then that the plight of being alive becomes attenuated to its least possible dimensions."¹⁷ Thus Tess begins to recognize the meanings of the light and the darkness, and it is through this conscious recognition that she is able to judge the relationship between her and the world she is living in:

A wet day was the expression of irremediable grief at her weakness in the mind of some ethical being whom she could not class definitely as the God of her childhood, and could not comprehend as any other.

But this encompassment of her characterization, based on shreds of convention, peopled by phantoms and voices antipathetic to her, was a sorry

¹⁶Tess, pp. 90-91.

¹⁷Tess, pp. 107-08.

and mistaken creation of Tess' fancy--a cloud of moral hobgoblins by which she was terrified without reason...Feeling herself in antagonism, she was quite in accord. She had been made to break an accepted social law, but no law known to the environment in which she fancied herself such an anomaly.¹⁸

Fortified by the healing influence of the natural surroundings of her home, she is able to draw the wisdom of her being a child of nature's law, and the hurt of the social stigma loses its sting. When the harvest scene (XIV) follows, we find Tess in her natural element, at the height of her power and a worthy personification of Persephone. She is accepted by the cottagers quite naturally as the symbol for which she stands, and even those same village folks think it quite normal to defend her: "There were they that heard a sobbing one night last year in The Chase; and it mid ha' gone hard wi' a certain party if folks had come along."¹⁹

But the cycle again reverses itself after the harvest scene, the end of the Goddess of Agriculture's stay in the upper world, to that of decay and death. That this reversal comes so suddenly within the image of the action is one of Hardy's most powerful ironies, conveying the inevitability of Tess' tragic cycles. The death of her child, the name SORROW Tess uses to baptize her, and the refusal of the

¹⁸Tess, p. 108.

¹⁹Tess, p. 114.

parish parson to give her a Christian burial are set in sharp ironical contrast to her former stature in the harvest field. The parson, a religious hypocrite, appearing at the low point of Tess' cycle, as a spiritual brother to Alec, underscores the justification of Tess' antagonism toward social law.

After a break of several years, a time span of which we know nothing of Tess' spiritual development, we find her again at the Crick dairy. It is the same Tess, yet her states of mind have changed: "One day she was pink and flawless; another pale and tragical. When she was pink she was feeling less than when pale; her more perfect beauty accorded with her less elevated mood; her more intense mood with her less perfect beauty. It was her best face physically that was now set against the south wind, ..."20 which blows on her way to the farm where she was to work as a dairymaid.

Here Tess' duality is cleverly underscored and we know, by "her best face physically," that her cycle is at its peak. It is on the dairy farm that Tess comes into personal contact with Angel Clare, and only she remembers the scene at the May-Dance several years before: "The flood of memories brought back by this revival of an incident anterior to her troubles produced a momentary dismay lest, recognizing her also, he should by some means discover the story."21 They have met

²⁰Tess, p. 134.

²¹Tess, p. 144.

before, like two leaves floating in a wind; but Tess is headed downward, and Angel is literally carried away by his brother's derogatory remarks about the heathen's dance, until his shape is lost in the fading evening light. Already at Marlott, it was evident that their paths shall not converge, and Tess' longing can not find fulfillment. Angel's reaction toward Tess at this early point in the story might be called a mere coincidence, but when we have established the forces of his motivation by gaining insight into his reasoning, we will see that Hardy has made his actions fully consistent with his character.

Angel Clare rises out of the past not altogether as a distinct figure, but as an appreciative voice, a long regard of fixed, abstracted eyes, and a mobility of mouth somewhat too small and delicately lined for a man's, though with an unexpectedly firm close of the lower lip now and then; enough to do away with any inference of indecision. Nevertheless, something nebulous, preoccupied, vague, in his bearing and regard, marked him as one who probably had no definite aim or concern about his material future. Yet as a lad people had said of him that he was one who might do anything if he tried.²²

Hardy's careful analysis of Angel will later give the key to Angel's place in the novel and to his behavior toward Tess. His interest in her, the fresh and virginal daughter of nature, becomes at once evident. But the shadow which is cast over their relationship--and Tess can not be regarded as the

²²Tess, p. 147.

responsible partner--is there from the beginning, expressed through Hardy's imagery:

It was a typical summer evening in June, the atmosphere being in such delicate equilibrium and so transmissive that inanimate objects seemed endowed with two or three senses, if not five. There was no distinction between the near and the far, and an auditor felt close to everything within the horizon. The soundlessness impressed her as a positive entity rather than as the mere negation of noise. It was broken by the strumming of strings.²³

With his flair for the dramatic contrast, Hardy again uses the description of nature to convey psychological meaning. Everything is in equilibrium, and Tess feels it all as a positive entity--as when she felt the evenly balanced neutralization of day and night--as a unity in ultimate perfection that could not last over an extended period of time. And then this unity of perfection is broken by the strumming of the strings. With a short symbolic description, the peak of Tess' emotional curve is reached and then the subtle downward motion begins, until the door of the underworld would close again behind her.

Tess had heard those notes in the attic above her head. Dim, flattened, constrained by their confinement, they had never appealed to her as now, when they wandered in the still air with a stark quality like that of nudity. To speak absolutely, both instrument and execution were poor; but the

²³Tess, p. 157.

²⁴Tess, pp. 157-58.

²⁵Tess, p. 158.

relative is all, and as she listened Tess, like a fascinated bird, could not leave the spot. Far from leaving she drew up towards the performer, keeping behind the hedge that he might not guess her presence.²⁴

There is fear again, the same fear which made her hesitate to seek employment on the D'Urberville estate. There is the warning inner voice again, the same intuitive certainty of impending disaster. Yet the same urging, which had driven her toward Alec's influence against her better judgement, is still within her breast and she has to follow the path which will conform to her natural cycle.

The outskirts of the garden in which Tess found herself had been left uncultivated for some years, and was now damp and rank with juicy grass which sent up a mist of pollen at a touch; and with tall blooming weeds emitting offensive smells--weeds whose red and yellow and purple hues formed a polychrome as dazzling as that of cultivated flowers. She went stealthily as a cat through this profusion of growth, gathering cuckoo-spittle on her skirts, cracking snails that were underfoot, staining her hands with thistle-milk and slug-slime, and rubbing off upon her naked arms sticky blights which, though snow white on the apple-tree trunks, made madder stains on her skin; thus she drew quite near to Clare, still unobserved of him.²⁵

This introduction of Tess' other antagonist is even more impressive and is executed with a more penetrating dramatic imagery than is the description of Alec and his surroundings. Van Ghent says:

²⁴Tess, pp. 157-58.

²⁵Tess, p. 158.

The weeds, circumstantial as they are, have an astonishingly cunning and bold metaphorical function. They grow at Talbothays, in that healing procreative idyl of milk and mist and passive biology, and they too are bountiful with life, but they stain and slime and blight; and it is in this part of Paradise (an 'out-skirt of the garden'--there are even apple trees here) that the minister's son is hidden, who, in his conceited impotence, will violate Tess more nastily than her sensual seducer: who but Hardy would have dared to give him the name of Angel, and a harp too?²⁶

This judgement of Angel seems to sound unduly harsh.

Hardy's characterisation of Angel supports this assumption to a certain extent, but after analyzing his spiritual development, one finds that he is not at all like Alec, who never deviates from his archetypal satanic pattern. When we reflect on Angel's description and try to form an opinion about his character, then several of Hardy's colorful touches will bring out a picture which is different from that of Alec, and most of all embodies a meaning which alone brings the moral of the story to its conclusion.

His aimlessness, the mobility of his mouth--somewhat too small and delicately lined for a man's--a long regard, an appreciative voice, always too much taken up with his own thoughts to notice girls, his playing the harp, can only mean one thing: he is a feminine type of male.

When we recall Thompson's description of the natural Angel's development from a young boy without any definite functions of the feminine male and the use of his creative

²⁷Thompson, p. 160.

²⁶Van Ghent, p. 201.

powers to perform magic, we see what potentialities are implicit in Angel's personality. They can be either good or bad, according to his stage of development, or dependent upon his ultimate goal in life. Hardy makes two distinct references to emphasize the importance of this possibility. First he says that people thought that Angel could do anything if he tried, and secondly Tess has formed some definite conclusions about Angel:

But she knew that was only because, like Peter the Great in a shipwrights yard, he was studying what he wanted to know. He did not milk cows because he was obliged to milk cows, but because he was learning how to be a rich and prosperous dairyman, landowner, agriculturist, and breeder of cattle. He would become an American or Australian Abraham, commanding like a monarch his flocks and his herds, his spotted and ring-straked, his men-servant and his maids.²⁷

In this vision--and it is a vision of some magnitude, analogous to the vision of Faust before his death--Angel is placed among the Great of History. This is not the mere sentimentality of a simple country girl admiring her beau. It shows the fundamental difference between the two types of feminine males, between the one which seeks destruction for his own pleasure and the other, who, through ordeals and the power of fate is able to attain atonement and purification, thus gaining a place among the great.

Angel's development from a young boy without any definite

²⁷Tess, p. 160.

aim to the mature man coming home from Brazil has to be taken into consideration. Even his father, for whom the boy was spiritually dead, recognizes the change in Angel: "You could see the skeleton behind the man, and almost the ghost behind the skeleton. He matched Crivelli's dead Christus. His sunken eye-pits were of morbid hue, and the light in his eyes had waned. The angular hollows and lines of his aged ancestors had succeeded to their reign in his face twenty years before their time."²⁸

The relationship of Angel to his parents is of crucial importance. Already as a young boy he was different from his brothers, who were destined for the clergy, their father's profession. Angel, the third born, has other inclinations. He tells his father that it might have been better for mankind if Greece had been the source of modern civilization, and not Palestine. The boy's cruel utterance is a death blow to the predestinarian, fundamentalist Calvinist. The pattern which Angel has followed is well known: the boy kills the spiritual relationship between father and son, and as a consequence of this becomes emotionally attached to his mother. What Hardy tries to show here, again in a symbolic way, is the tragedy of Oedipus and its archetypal implications. Angel's mother never lost faith in him, and the boy, without

²⁸Tess, p. 470.

having to be told, knows of his mother's feelings, and he reciprocates to the fullest extent and he comes thus under her total influence. Something of this becomes evident, as Angel returns:

'O, my boy, my boy--home again at least!' cried Mrs. Clare, who cared no more at the moment for the stains of heterodoxy which had caused all this separation than for the dust upon his clothes. What woman, indeed, among the most faithful adherents of the truth, believes the promises and threats of the World in the sense in which she believes in her own children, or would not throw her theology to the wind if weighed against their happiness? As soon as they reached the room where the candles were lighted she looked at his face.

'O, it is not Angel--not my son--the Angel who went away!' she cried in all the irony of sorrow, as she turned herself aside.²⁹

Here we see the natural instinct of the mother pitted against her theology--and Mrs. Clare throws her theology to the winds. She wants her son back where he belongs. But when the candlelight falls on his face, a face changed through sorrow, guilt and fate, then she realizes that the old Angel she knew and loved is gone. The metamorphosis has finally taken place, and it is indeed an irony of sorrow that she has the power to turn herself away from him. Thus, in a short paragraph full of symbolic meaning, the reason for the attachment between mother and son is revealed, and Angel's

²⁹Tess, p. 470.

emergence as a personality free from maternal domination is assured.

Only after the realization of Angel's dilemma can we now understand the tragic state of Tess' marriage, and the reason which leads to her husband's desertion. The description of Blackmoor Vale and the dairy where Tess works is undoubtedly one of the finest in English literature. But it does not carry any special meaning except that Tess, as the symbol of the Goddess of the Earth, is in her natural surroundings, and that Angel, the misguided and troubled young man, comes there to learn his chosen trade, and incidentally to find himself. Tess' vision of his inherent greatness is indeed highly ironical when we follow the story of their courtship and of the breakup of their marriage after both have confessed their sins. Tess' willingness to forgive is only natural, not because she loves her husband, but because she knows that a human being on his way to reach the mountain also has to walk in the valleys. Angel, however, does not see things the same way. He wants to marry a pure woman, according to the image of his mother. This is of course the essential conflict in the Oedipus complex. Tess is pure in her instincts; only her body had been touched by blight, but Angel cannot see the true facts because of his involvement with his mother. Only in his unconscious mind can he see clearly:

Clare came close, and bent over her. 'Dead, dead, dead!' he murmured. After fixedly regarding her for some moments with the same gaze of unmeasurable woe he bent lower, enclosed her in his arms, and rolled her in the sheet as in a shroud. Then lifting her from the bed with as much respect as one would show to a dead body, he carried her across the room, murmuring--'My poor Tess--my dearest, darling Tess! So sweet, so good, so true!'³⁰

Angel speaks these words in his sleepwalking, and after he has gathered her in his arms, he carried her across the frothing waters of the mill-stream and lays her in the abbot's coffin at the Abbey-Church. "Angel then lays down on the ground alongside, when he immediately fell into the deep dead slumber of exhaustion, and remained motionless as a log."³¹

Then Tess tries to wake him up and bring him back to his room:

'Let us walk on, darling,' at the same time taking him suggestively by the arm. To her relief, he unhesitatingly acquiesced; her words had apparently thrown him back into his dream, which thenceforward seemed to enter on a new phase, wherein he fancied she had risen as a spirit, and was leading him to Heaven.³²

Freud had tried to prove that dreams are only a mirror for the conflicts between the conscious and unconscious mind, and we can try to evaluate and explain Angel's behavior.

³⁰Tess, pp. 315-16.

³¹Tess, p. 318.

³²Tess, p. 319.

This dream has a symbolic meaning which foreshadows again the outcome of Tess' tragedy. In his dream Angel clings to Tess' pure spiritual image and he calls her "my dearest darling Tess." This is his unconscious response which is true to his feelings about womanhood. But in his conscious mind there is another component diametrically opposed to his intuitive feeling: "I repeat, the woman I have been loving is not you." "But who?" Tess asks. "Another woman in your shape."³³

Who then is the other woman in her shape? His mother, of course. Hardy's description of the battle raging within Angel's breast follows the psychological pattern of the Oedipus complex, and it falls to Tess' fate to atone for the damage which has been brought upon Angel for his unnatural attachment to his mother. This is the reason why in his dream state he lays Tess' body to rest in the coffin. His only connection after her disclosure of her sin, is with the spiritual image in Tess. But now she is so much below his mother's idealized stature that he can not consent any more to a union with Tess. Thus Tess is made to suffer for Angel's psychological defects, and through her symbolical death and burial in the Abbey vault, he kills and buries his mother and gains freedom from her domination. This is the explanation of the

³³Tess, p. 293.

dream and this is reinforced by the remark in which Angel fancies Tess has risen as a spirit, and is leading him to Heaven.

The psychological relationship between husband, mother, and wife are very complex and Angel's reaction toward Tess is not entirely his fault. It can certainly not be blamed on his conceited impotence, as Van Ghent implies.³⁴

Hardy's implication is not primarily intended to discredit Angel, but to expose the archetypal patterns of the tragic consequences which can exist between mother and son. The ironic truth is, however, that Angel's mother is very much like Tess when she, after her son returns from Brazil, throws her theological principles to the wind and intuitively accepts him again despite "all the dust upon his clothes." Angel can not grasp the meaning of women; in his conceited insistence on purity he is not pure, his mother is not pure, nor is Tess in a calvinistic sense--he wants to form his wife according to a dream. His thinking is very egoistic: "'She is a dear, dear Tess,' he thought to himself, as one deciding on the true construction of a difficult passage. 'Do I realize solemnly enough how utterly and irretrievably this little womanly thing is the creature of my good or bad faith and

³⁴Van Ghent, p. 201.

³⁶Tess, p. 368.

fortune? I think not. I think I could not, unless I were a woman myself. What I am in wordly estate, she is. What I become, she must become. What I can not be, she can not be!"³⁵

Here we see Angel as the messenger of God, climbing down from the cloud-shrouded mountain, declaring with heavenly wisdom what can be and what can not be. The sentences he has worked out in his mind, "as one deciding on the true construction of a difficult passage," have the simplicity and power of a Mosaic law. This shows the contradiction in Angel's inner self. Since he can not judge women by their true merit, he follows the path of psychological compensation. He can not accept his father's pious attitude and rebels against this by killing the father-image and "plunged into an eight-and-forty hour' dissipation with a strange woman."³⁶ But in turn, he accepts his mother whose morals are no less pious than are Mr. Clare's. Yet the same Christian standards he has rejected in his father he demands from Tess. So it is evident that Angel judges males and females in a different way; not on their merits alone, but on principles which rose from past ages, and it is this clash of principles which brings Tess' tragedy to an end.

³⁵Tess, p. 278.

³⁶Tess, p. 268.

Before we can speak about the final solution, or analyse the spiritual forces which resolve the conflict, we have to follow Tess into another ordeal after Angel has abandoned her.

Her stay at the Flintcomb-Ash farm is another low point in Tess' never ending cycles. Nowhere has Hardy described so successfully the mythological meaning of Persephone's stay in the underworld. Tess was bound by contract for her work with Farmer Groby from November until Old Lady-Day, the sixth of April in the following year. There she works in the swede-field, a stretch of a hundred odd acres, "in an outcrop of siliceous veins in the chalk formation, composed of myriads of loose white flints in bulbous, cusped, and phallic shapes."³⁷ She works hour after hour with Marian, a former dairymaid at the Crick Farm. Nobody comes near them in the congealed dampness, except "when strange birds from behind the North Pole began to arrive silently on the upland of Flintcomb-Ash; gaunt spectral creatures with tragical eyes--eyes which had witnessed scenes of cataclysmal horror in inaccessible polar regions of a magnitude such as no human being had ever conceived,..."³⁸ And again Hardy uses a natural contrast

³⁷Tess, p. 363.

³⁸Tess, p. 367.

³⁹Tess, p. 368.

⁴⁰Friedrich Kluge, Stymologische Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache (Berlin, 1903), S. 271.

to emphasise the irony of Tess' banishment: "Your husband, my dear," said Marian, 'is, I make no doubt, having scorching weather all this time. Lord, if he could only see his pretty wife now!'"³⁹

Farmer Groby, the master over this ghastly place, is not described in detail, but the name Hardy chose for him is significant. The word is derived from the Middle English "grobian", which means ruffian. But the genealogy goes back to Latin usage of the pre-Christian grobianus and it has the same meaning as rusticus.⁴⁰ It is interesting that Hardy uses this name. Groby is in fact a personification of Pluto and his underworld, while the interpretation of Tess' ordeal in Flintcomb-Ash can not be understood unless one is aware that Hardy deliberately patterned her cycles in conformity with the archetypal image of the Goddess of the Earth.

Alec's reappearance at this stage of Tess' development is consistent with the pattern already established. He can not gain power over her until her natural cycle is in decline, and this decline is always foreshadowed by some natural calamity. First it was Prince's death, and her second submission to Alec was precipitated by her father's passing. That the natural adversity is death in both cases is again consistent

³⁹Tess, p. 368.

⁴⁰Friedrich Kluge, Etymologisches Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache (Berlin, 1963), p. 271.

with the cycle of the Goddess of the Earth. Even the death of Alec through Tess' hand could be regarded as the beginning of a new and final decline of Tess. But his death, when the symbolic meaning is taken into account, does not fit the normal archetypal image of the devil. When we try to analyze the sensus moralis of the story, the significance of Alec's murder and the conflict which this murder tries to solve will become evident.

the laws of nature, and she has consciously refused to adjust to social customs, since they are out of harmony with the actual world, not she. This is one of Hardy's bold statements, and it is because of these that he was believed to be attacking the Anglican Church.¹ But Lord David Cecil says that Hardy was not primarily concerned with matters of faith, but that the idea of the new man of the future haunted his imagination.² The drama of Tess is not simply a conflict between protagonist and antagonist, or between her and human institutions. Tess is the embodiment of natural forces; thus her antagonists, who in many ways represent the modern world, are in conflict with the laws of nature for which she stands. The root of the conflict, then, seems to lie outside the sphere of the principal characters. Hardy implies this when Marian says to Tess: "You've no faults, deary; that I am sure of. And

¹David Cecil, Hardy The Novelist (New York, 1943), p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 36.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Tess' life and her wanderings over the earth are consistent with the mythological pattern of the rise and decline of the Goddess of the Earth, as we have seen. Intuitively she is bound by the laws of nature, and she has consciously refused to adjust to social customs, since they are out of harmony with the actual world, not she. This is one of Hardy's bold statements, and it is because of these that he was believed to be attacking the Anglican Church.¹ But Lord David Cecil says that Hardy was not primarily concerned with matters of faith, but that the idea of the new man of the future haunted his imagination.² The drama of Tess is not simply a conflict between protagonist and antagonist, or between her and human institutions. Tess is the embodiment of natural forces; thus her antagonists, who in many ways represent the modern world, are in conflict with the laws of nature for which she stands. The root of the conflict, then, seems to lie outside the sphere of the principal characters. Hardy implies this when Marian says to Tess: "You've no faults, deary; that I am sure of. And

¹David Cecil, Hardy The Novelist (New York, 1943), p. 32.

²Ibid., p. 36.

he's none. So it must be something outside ye both."³

Tess, "a pure woman faithfully presented," is held in high regard by the cottagers. This fact is clearly established, and even after her transgression she is accepted again for what she always was. Only three persons cause her sufferings: Alec, Angel, and Groby. These three characters seem to symbolize something which is in conflict with the pattern of Tess' life cycle. What is this force which causes Tess' cyclical decline and final fall? The answer can be found in the way Tess' image is reflected in Angel and Alec. Angel, during his courtship with Tess, sees her this way: "She was yawning, and he saw the red interior of her mouth as if it had been a snake's. She had stretched one arm so high above her coiled-up cable of hair that he could see its satin delicacy above the sunburn; her face was flushed with sleep, and her eyelids hung heavy on their pupils. The brimfulness of her nature breathed from her. It was a moment when a woman's soul is more incarnate than at any other time; when the most spiritual beauty bespeaks itself flesh; and sex takes the outside place in the presentation."⁴

The sensuality of sex, the snake's mouth, the "coiled-up cable" of her hair suggest the perfect embodiment of Eve,

³Tess, p. 360.

⁴Tess, p. 217.

and this interpretation of Hardy's imagery is verified a few paragraphs later: "At first she would not look straight up at him, but her eyes soon lifted, and his plumbed the deepness of her ever-varying pupils, with their radiating fibrils of blue and black, and grey, and violet, while she regarded him as Eve at her second waking might have regarded Adam."⁵

The image of Tess, then, from Angel's point of view, is that of Eve after the fall, and it is no coincidence that Angel proposes marriage to Tess at this time when she appears to him as the incarnation of the fallen woman, who, in such a condition, will be an easy subject for his domination. His later reflections that he will form her according to his own image confirms that Angel never understood that Tess was not like Eve after the fall.

Angel's motivation for regarding Tess as an Eve symbol has to be explained, and the question has to be answered if Angel's contention of Tess' likeness to Eve is to be valid. We can do this best by finding out how Eve has been regarded in the Christian mythology and how she is reflected in literature. Milton gives this picture of Eve:

But to Adam in what sort
Shall I appear? shall I to him make known
As yet my change, and give him to partake
Full happiness with me, or rather not,
But keep the odds of Knowledge in my power
Without Copartner? so to add what wants

⁵Tess, p. 218.

In Female Sex, the more to draw his Love,
 And render me more equal, and perhaps,
 A thing not undesirable, sometime
 Superior: for inferior who is free?⁶

C. S. Lewis makes this comment about Milton's passage:

"Hardly has she swallowed the fruit before she wants to be 'more equal' to Adam; and hardly has she said the word 'equal' before she emends it to 'superior.'"⁷

When we regard Lewis' comment with its cynical undertone, we see the absurdity of Angel's feeling about Tess. Nowhere in the whole novel can any evidence be found to substantiate Tess' striving for superiority and domination--quite the contrary is true. She is the model of a modest soul suffering for the shortcomings of society's sin against the laws of nature, and her image stands closer to that of Christ than to that of Milton's Eve.

Angel's inability to see this probably has two different sources. The first, found in Christian mythology, is the embodiment of original sin in the person of Eve, with the implication of the female's sinfulness and inferiority, superimposed upon Tess. The second, as we have already stated, is Angel's Oedipus complex, which prevents him from seeing Tess as an individual personality in her own right. He admits that he does not understand women, and thus he can not see

⁶John Milton, Paradise Lost (New York, 1935), p. 299, IX 816-24.

⁷C. S. Lewis, A Preface to Paradise Lost (New York, 1961), p. 76.

that his mother and Tess are very much alike. Both act intuitively and make the right decisions by throwing theology to the winds. The image of his mother, in his opinion, is pure, and Tess', after her confession, is impure and therefore conforms to the image of Eve in her sin too. Angel's conclusion is the result of his conscious mental faculties, which stand in contrast to his mother's and Tess' unconscious decisions. The essential core of the struggle, then, is Angel's conscious judgement in conflict with the pure female who corresponds to the image of the Goddess of the Earth in her unconscious psychological disposition.

As we will see Alec's relationship with Tess follows essentially the same pattern. He says to her in the threshing scene in Flintcomb-Ash:

'Tess, my girl, I was on the way to, at least, social salvation till I saw you again!' he said, freakishly shaking her, as if she were a child. 'And why then have you tempted me? I was firm as a man could be till I saw those eyes and that mouth again--surely there never was such a maddening mouth since Eve's!' His voice sank, and a hot archness shot from his own black eyes. 'You temptress, Tess; you dear damned witch of Babylon--I could not resist you as soon as I met you again!'⁸

Here we have the same picture, more crudely limned, which Angel had seen in Tess. The witch of Babylon, to whom Alec refers, is Ishtar, the Babylonian Moon Goddess, mythologically a close kin to the Goddess of the Earth. Both Angel

⁸Tess, p. 411.

and Alec identify Tess with the symbol of Eve, but neither has the intuition to form a clear picture of her representing the natural forces which still influence mankind. Thus, for an explanation of Tess' influence, which they both feel as threatening to their social salvation, they have to fall back upon the Christian myth of Eve's fault and judge her on the purely physical level. They can not comprehend that Tess embodies more than the sexual aspect of the female. Jung says: "Common-sense will always return to the fact that sexuality is only one of the life-instincts--only one of the psychological functions--though one that is without doubt very far-reaching and important."⁹

Jung talks about other life-instincts which are to be taken into consideration, and Hardy examines these in the famous threshing scenes of Tess. Tess is under the influence of Farmer Groby, who has absolute power over her because he knows the truth about Tess' submission to Alec. There is no sexual relationship between her and Groby, yet he abuses her as severely and cruelly as does Alec. Guerard thinks that the description of the threshing is symbolic rather than documentary. According to him it is the vicious struggle between man and machine, between man's nature and modern society.¹⁰

⁹C. G. Jung, Modern Man in Search of a Soul, translated by W. S. Dell and Cary F. Baynes (New York, 1933), p. 121.

¹⁰Albert T. Guerard, Thomas Hardy (Harvard University Press, 1949), pp. 74-75. Hereafter cited as Guerard.

The true importance of the threshing incident has been neglected by the literary critics. Nowhere in the novel does Hardy describe so clearly why Tess is superior to her antagonists. Again the question is answered in symbolic form by comparing the difference between humans and nonhumans. Despite all her distress, Tess is victorious in this struggle with the forces of the machine-age. Though she is dead tired after a full day's work, her moral power is unbroken when she fights off Alec's advances and wounds him with a slap of her heavy gloves. Her instincts protect her, and the irony of killing the rats uncovered at the bottom of the rick, leads to an explanation for Tess' steadfastness against her adversaries. Long before, when she came home from Tantridge, she was able to feel and consciously comprehend the instant when darkness and light were in complete equilibrium. Through this capacity to correlate sensation and instinct, Tess saw the pitfalls of modern society and its sin against the laws of nature. For her, those laws were inviolable, and therefore she could endure even the most severe punishment. Only the rats, who are without the power of reasoning, will perish under the onslaught of society. Thus the symbolic meaning of the threshing digression comes out clearly: Intuition and conscious judgement, combined and in harmony with nature, yield invincibility.

¹¹Carl G. Jung, *Bevengates und Unbewusstes*, Fischer edition (Hamburg, 1963), pp. 77, 89, 131.

This principle, which Hardy developed so superbly in his realistic style in the threshing digression, was later validated by C. G. Jung. He formed the concept of "Ganzheit" (wholeness), as a unity of the mind which consists of four different dimensions: Sensation, thinking, feeling in the conscious level of man's mind, and intuition, which resides in the unconscious mind. The four dimensions together form a quaternity, a unity of mind and soul, which, in Jung's view, is the ultimate perfection an individual can attain.¹¹

With Hardy's symbolism of wholeness confirmed by Jung in psychological terms, we can now judge the relationship between Tess and her antagonists and come to some definite conclusions.

Angel's association with Tess is a fairly simple one. In her vision, as we have already pointed out, Angel is regarded as a potentially great man. He is misguided by his Oedipus complex. His psychological shock after Tess' confession, his cowardly flight from the realities of life, show him a weak man. His subjection to the brutal forces of nature in Brazil--bringing him close to physical breakdown--has a purifying effect and he comes home, not as a weakling but as a man who has proved his endurance. His mother sees as he enters the candle-lighted room, that she has lost him.

¹¹Carl G. Jung, Bewusstes und Unbewusstes, Fischer edition (Hamburg, 1963), pp. 79, 89, 131.

She turns away from her son, and thus symbolically frees him from her domination. After this change, Angel can no longer be regarded as a feminine type of a male. It is this transformation in Angel which substantiates Tess' vision of Angel's potential greatness. This is not a mere coincidence, but a cleverly executed image of the rebirth archetype, as Goethe developed in Faust II. Faust's power comes from the key he has received from the Astrologer, and the key leads him to the Tripod with the incense which evokes his dreams. Taylor says that the Tripod is a symbol of the profoundest wisdom, and that the key attaches to the idea of intuition.¹² Through unity of reasoning and intuition, Faust is able to conceive the picture of the perfect female Helena, the daughter of the Mothers. "Those Mothers," Taylor says, "must of necessity symbolize the original actions of those elemental forces in man, out of which grew the aesthetic development of the race, in whatever form."¹³ Thus Faust too goes back to the archetype of the Goddess of the Earth in his quest for the wisdom of life. Through this wisdom and the vision he has before his death, he sees the Paradise of a new land,

¹²J. W. von Goethe, Faust II, translated by Bayard Taylor (New York, 1870), p. 356. Hereafter cited as Faust.

¹³Ibid., p. 352.

where freedom and existence have daily to be conquered anew. And only there will he see himself "Stand on free soil among a people free."¹⁴ Only through the wholeness of soul and mind is he able to thwart Mephistopheles, and with the guidance of the angels his soul flies to Heaven.

When Faust sees Helena for the first time he says:

How far she was, and nearer, how divine!
I'll rescue her, and make her doubly mine.
Ye Mothers! Mothers! crown this wild endeavor!
Who knows her once must hold her, and forever!¹⁵

Some of the Faustian power seems to be dwelling in Angel after he is reunited with Tess: "'I do love you, Tess--O, I do--it is all come back!' he said, tightening his arms around her with fervid pressure. 'But how do you mean--you have killed him?'" And immediately afterward he exclaims: "'I will not desert you! I will protect you by every means in my power, dearest love, whatever you may have done or not have done!'"¹⁶ Thus Angel's change is complete and his rebirth follows closely the archetypal pattern.

In Alec's spiritual development we find no such patterns, yet he too feels remorse after he has come into contact with Tess and has seduced her. There is the same guilt complex at

¹⁴Ibid., p. 294.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁶Tess, pp. 492-93.

work in Alec as we have found to exist in Angel. And in both cases the result is the same--a flight from reality. When Angel goes to Brazil and is punished by nature's forces, Alec seeks salvation within the Church. Both seek atonement from their sins through self-punishment; Angel succeeds, but Alec's venture ends in failure. Here again Hardy's irony foreshadows Alec's failing endeavor in becoming an itinerant preacher after he is converted by Mr. Clare. Mr. Clare cannot save his son and thus there can never have been a chance of Alec's salvation. Like Faust, Angel and Alec have received a key for the solving of their problems. Intuition tells them that they have to be punished for their sins before they can return to a normal life. Angel finds this wisdom in Brazil where he is subjected to duress; but Alec cannot within the Church. When he sees Tess again the old patterns of the devil are still alive within him, and he remains, from the beginning to the end, the archetype of that dark prince.

Tess' constancy in adhering to the cycle of decay and rebirth is remarkable in the novel's time sequence, and all the forces which are in opposition to this female life instinct, as we have seen, are centered in Alec, Angel, and Groby. Each of the three male characters stands for a different symbol; but the three together represent the masculine consciousness pitted against the unconsciously governed feminine creative force.

This struggle between male and female is the conflict we have been trying to isolate. This conflict is never explicitly stated--its scope is universal and not confined to the principal characters alone--yet it vibrates below the surface and thus indirectly shapes the novel's theme and structure. The female's psychological disposition, with its dominant component of intuition, is in competition with the male's purely conscious orientation. The development of the theme seems to point to the fact that Hardy regarded the female's role in this conflict as more important than the conscious male approach toward the forces which shape our lives. J. J. Bachofen's interpretations of ancient myths tend to support this contention, when he says that the rule of society by women was the original condition of civilization.¹⁷ But his hypothesis of the superiority of matriarchy over patriarchy is inconclusive, and it only tended to open new avenues of thought for psychologists.

That Hardy has chosen to depict this archetypal conflict in Tess' relationship with her antagonists is not surprising since we know that he was deeply interested in the future of the new man. In order to illuminate the problem from a different angle, he had to go back to the "Urmutter" to describe the biological and psychological forces which shaped the

¹⁷Progoff, p. 28.

female character. The biological component was explained by the Darwinian theory, and native folklore and myth, no doubt, supplied the complement for his heroine. Hardy's tendency to mythology was inborn, as Firor implies:

Let us grant, to begin with, that Hardy, like Aeschylus, had a temperamental leaning towards the use of premonitions, omens, ghosts, and prophecies. He was born and spent impressionable years of boyhood and young manhood among people who still thought in a primitive way, upon whose lips an ancient dialect still lived, and in whose hearts lingered the dark, inexplicable fears of prehistoric man. Hardy grew up in this atmosphere; though always above it by reason of a cultivated mother, the forces of a formal education, and a widening acquaintance with the world outside of Wessex, he was none the less a part of his own community, and gloried in the fact.¹⁸

Thus Hardy intuitively shaped his characters into what they are because he shared their environment and ancestry.

In the struggle between male and female, which is the central conflict in the novel, a morally just solution begins to emerge. Alec dies but Angel is saved. Out of this arises a question and the answer is given, again in symbolic form, in the dream incident. We have seen how Angel in his sleep-walking instinctively clings to Tess as the image of the pure woman. When he awakes, the conscious component is stronger,

¹⁸Firor, p. 304.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 343.

²⁰Ibid., p. 344.

and he rejects her. And when he asks Izz to go to Brazil with him--not as his wife, but as his mistress--he has reached his lowest point.¹⁹ But a remark from Izz brings him to his senses: "'Because nobody loves 'ee more than Tess did!...She would have laid down her life for 'ee. I could do no more.'"²⁰

In his dream, Angel rejects Tess' conscious reasoning as sinful, since it is in opposition to that of his mother, but he clings to Tess' pure intuition, which he lacks. He gropes blindly for this intuitive capacity as something he feels he has to possess to achieve greatness. Yet he cannot have one without the other, and thus in his dream carries Tess into the vault at the Abbey. Through this symbolic death of Tess he hopes to gain entrance to heaven with the help of her soul. Angel's quest to gain intuition and to attain wholeness is thus depicted in the dream scene. The scene has the same function as the threshing digression, where the rats, who possess instinct (which is psychologically equivalent to intuition), but not the power of reasoning, are destroyed. Angel, like the rats, lacks one faculty to gain wholeness, and because of this absence of intuition he is in danger of being destroyed.

¹⁹Tess, p. 343.

²⁰Tess, p. 344.

²¹Guerard, p. 108.

Guerard voices a strong objection against the dream scene. He says: "But the sleep-walking of Angel Clare is of course a major scar on the surface of a great book; it is so appallingly sentimental and melodramatic that the problem of plausibility is not worth raising."²¹

Guerard's contention that the scene is overly melodramatic cannot be disputed, but the problem Hardy has touched upon is worthy of consideration. When we regard the incident out of context, then its plausibility may well be questioned, but so could all the other coincidences which appear in the novel. The dream reveals Angel's psychological disorders, while the threshing digression explains the reason for Tess' durability and dogged strength in comparison with the rats, which live solely by instinct. Angel's conflict--and from the description of the dream scene we can evaluate its severity--is tantamount to a neurosis and this he has to solve by purifying himself.

The crisis of the dream scene can also be regarded as the turning point in Angel's development. This becomes evident when he has taken leave of Izz:

But his sorrow was not for Izz. That evening he was within a feather-weight's turn of abandoning his road to the nearest station, and driving across that elevated dorsal line of South Wessex which divided him from his Tess' home. It was neither a contempt for her nature, nor the probable state of her heart, which deterred him.

²¹Guerard, p. 108.

No; it was a sense that, despite her love, as corroborated by Izz's admission, the facts had not changed. If he was right at first, he was right now. And the momentum of the course on which he had embarked tended to keep him going in it, unless diverted by a stronger, more sustained force than had played upon him this afternoon. He could soon come back to her. He took the train that night for London, and five days after shook hands in farewell of his brothers at the port of embarkation.²²

The trip to Brazil, therefore, is not one of the many coincidences, but a necessary catharsis for Angel's ills. We have to look upon Hardy's intuitional powers with some respect, since he was able to recognize and solve Angel's problems, long before the age of Freud and Jung and a generation before psychoanalysis became en vogue.

Hardy's reliance upon intuition and his exploration of time and the unconscious may seem to be surprising, and there are undercurrents of magic in his use of folklore and myth. Firor makes an interesting comment:

It was evident to him that magic, which is only a rude and undeveloped science, sees the world from a point of view exactly opposite to that of religion; in this respect it is like legitimate science. In both magic and science the element of caprice is eliminated from the workings of natural laws; religion, on the other hand, conceives nature as variable, elastic, and subject to a conscious personal power who may be conciliated. Even when magic employs spirits, personal agents of the kind assumed by religion on a far greater scale, the believer in magic treats these agents as impersonal, inanimate, absolute forces, coercing and constraining them by setting them to work out some given effect from a fixed sequence of given causes. Magic fails, not

²²Tess, p. 344.

because of its logic--which is admirable--but because it misconceives the natural laws it seeks to use, and, like all primitive science, reasons on too narrow a set of facts. Modern science, however, owes to magic the fundamental assumption that there are certain invariable and necessary sequences of cause and effect, independent of personal will or caprice.²³

This is reminiscent of Faust's confrontation with magic and with spirits on his way to ultimate wisdom and spiritual salvation. Hardy's theme touches some of the same chords, and for him ultimate wisdom seems to be the combination of consciousness and intuition as it is depicted in Faust.

Two souls, alas! reside within my breast,...²⁴ says Faust, and unless the two souls can be reconciled, ultimate wisdom is unobtainable.

This, it seems to me, Hardy has said in his novel, and unless this is understood, the conflict between those two forces will go on.

The motivation provided by the natural forces of the earth is central to every aspect of the novel, as I already have pointed out. Nature controls its structure, influences the style, and most of all, governs Tess' life cycle. Thus, biologically regarded, Tess as a daughter of this earth is an offspring of the Goddess of Earth, because the same mythological forces and patterns are still active in her instincts.

²³Firor, p. 305.

²⁴Faust I, p. 45.

We can even say that intuition has followed the same evolutionary pattern explained in Darwin's theory of evolution. The forces which have counteracted the evolutionary pattern of intuition are centered in the human consciousness, and Hardy symbolizes these forces by the actions of the antagonists, which have lost most of their intuitive ability or have never possessed it.

It is this struggle between the human conscious and the unconscious mind that the psychologists of this century have tried to analyse. Hardy has tried to answer similar questions and it is from this point of view that Tess' murder of Alec has to be understood. He forces her to a life with him which is contrary to her life instinct, and in which the conflict between male and female can not be resolved. This is again depicted in symbolic form when Tess enters the door of her ancestral sepulcher and finds Alec resting on a grave slab. He says to her: "The old order changeth. The little finger of the sham D'Urberville can do more for you than the whole dynasty of the real underneath."²⁵ Tess consciously ponders her mistake when she says: "Why am I on the wrong side of this door?"²⁶ With the murder of Alec she steps back to the other side of the door, back to the old order-- where she belongs.

²⁵Tess, p. 464.

²⁶Ibid., p. 464.

Thus Tess is true to her instincts to the end, and her sacrifice is not to be taken as an act of vengeance, but as a justification of her belief in female intuitive superiority. But it can also be regarded as a final catharsis and atonement for Angel and for the spiritualized image of Tess, for her sister 'Liza-Lu.

The forces of the Goddess of Earth are still alive in Tess. Her magic contributes, from the beginning, to the spiritual rebirth of Angel, who seems to contain some essential elements of Hardy's imagined future man.

With this development Hardy has again reverted to the archetypal symbolism of Greek tragedy but with the introduction of time as the embodiment of intuition, he has given Tragedy a new form and thus contributed to its rejuvenation.

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