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THE TRANSFORMATION OF GOD:
RELIGION AND CULTURE IN THE POST-DARWINIAN NOVEL

by

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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HOUSTON, TEXAS

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1996
ABSTRACT

The Transformation of God:
Religion and Culture in the Post-Darwinian Novel

Bettie Weaver Roberts

The transformation of God as it develops in late-Victorian British literature comprehends a simultaneous double movement: first, it seeks to deconstruct and to discredit the transcendence of God assumed by pre-romantics, a transcendence that Hillis Miller has argued reaches its culmination in the Victorian period; simultaneously, it embraces an immanence which, though dependent on the dynamics of the romantic movement, moves significantly beyond romantic limitations. This immanence, a force deep within nature and within individual and collective humanity, manifests itself in post-Darwinian dynamics such as Darwin's "struggle for life" and Nietzsche's "will to power." Because these post-Darwinian energies share with the romantics a structure analogous to the idealist Absolute, and because their biological base enables them, unlike the romantics, reliably to unite the physical, emotional, and volitional with the epistemological, they successfully rejoin in a quasi-monistic whole what Descartes had sundered.

George Eliot models her rebellion against the father on her prior rejection of the Christian God she initially reveres but eventually finds inadequate, and this rebellion ramifies from her personal writings to inform the text of Middlemarch. Thomas Hardy, who seeks in both religion and the secular society a post-Darwinian alternative to the transcendence of supernaturalism on the one hand and the abyss of
atheism on the other, details his objections to what Angel Clare calls an "untenable redemptive theolatry" throughout *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. For Henry James, religion correlates psychologically to the intertial drag of his father's influence; yet the Jamesian urge to "live all you can" impels his novelistic career and contributes to the success of Maggie Verver, who in *The Golden Bowl* uses post-Darwinian dynamics to overcome textual transcendences and reunite, through both passion and perception, the components splintered by Cartesian rationalism.
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An original committee member, then-President of Rice George Rupp, took the time to review my original thesis prospectus and to offer encouragement and point out prospective pitfalls. His advice has, in the event, proven invaluable. Prof. Alfred Habegger of the University of Kansas generously shared telephone time in a search for elusive Jamesian phrases. Fellow graduate students Janice Hewitt and Dr. Rosemary Coleman have contributed intellectual fellowship as well as valuable insights and suggestions. Finally, my husband Barry and daughter Brooke Lindsey have borne the project with, for the most part, the equanimity of the saints.
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To the memory of
my grandmother
Mary Haworth Lemmon
and to
Brooke Roberts Lindsey
best of all possible daughters
this work is dedicated
with love and gratitude
"In the living subject, change is wont to be gradual: thus while the serpent sheds its old skin, the new is already formed beneath. Little knowest thou of the burning of a World-Phoenix, who fanciest that she must first burn-out, and lie as a dead cinereous heap; and therefrom the young one start-up by miracle, and fly heavenward. Far otherwise! In that Fire-whirlwind, Creation and Destruction proceed together; ever as the ashes of the Old are blown about, do organic filaments of the New mysteriously spin themselves: and amid the rushing and the waving of the Whirlwind-element come tones of a melodious Deathsong, which end not but in tones of a more melodious Birthsong. Nay, look into the Fire-whirlwind with thy own eyes, and thou wilt see."

Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*
I. Transformation and the Nineteenth Century

"Nothing retains its own form; but Nature, the great renewer, ever makes up forms from other forms. Be sure there's nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form. . . . Though, perchance, things may shift from there to here to there, still do all things in their sum total remain unchanged."


It is now some thirty years since Hillis Miller's *The Disappearance of God* posited the "strange withdrawal of God himself" from the landscape of Victorian letters, a contention that passed soon thereafter into a state of largely uncritical acceptance within Victorian criticism.¹ Morse Peckham's early judgment that the book "has a single theme and it pursues that theme so intensely and so directly that henceforward it will be impossible to deal with any Victorian--or indeed Romantic or Modern--English writer without using it" proved prophetic.² So widespread was its influence that it became common to find the title phrase casually invoked, generally unaccompanied either by reference to Miller himself or by the use of quotation marks that would give the concept a provisional status. That God had indeed disappeared, not merely for the five writers Miller examined, but for Victorian writers and intellectuals as a whole, became a primary critical donnée regarding the period.

Perhaps because of its own phenomenological credentials, Miller's thesis was, and continues to be, spared the assault mounted by later poststructuralisms against antecedent critical models. And certainly the book's central claim, critical genesis aside, was destabilizing
enough to satisfy the requirements of a critical school itself dedicated
to exploding received certainties both textual and cultural. Instead of
scrutinizing Miller's claim, therefore, we have accepted it as yet
another--and possibly the most fundamental--reason for nineteenth-
century Weltschmerz, a distress such that those who lived through it
felt themselves to be "[w]andering between two worlds, one dead,/ The
other powerless to be born."³

Miller argues from a rationalist, post-Cartesian posture that the
immediacy of the divine in the daily world, a staple of Old Testament,
classical, and early Christian eras, has gradually been replaced by a
sense of God's absence rather than his presence. Within the growing
isolation of an early-modern, industrializing Victorian England, the
primary fact has become our disconnection from God or, even more
radically, the possibility that "God himself has slipped away from the
places where he used to be."⁴ The pre-Cartesian unity of mind, nature,
and God has splintered like Humpty-Dumpty, and the best efforts of his
five writers to rejoin through language what rationalism has put
asunder are in varying degrees fruitless. Even the romantic impulse
"to bring God back to earth as a benign power inherent in the self, in
nature, and in the human community" avails them little.⁵ What Miller
calls "so many heroic attempts to recover immanence in a world of
transcendence" is indeed, in this view, foreordained to fail.⁶ God has
become first the eighteenth-century "watchmaker God" and finally, for
post-Romantics, a "Deus absconditus."⁷

But it is time we dusted off this rationalist commonplace and
examined it with new eyes. And to question "the disappearance of God"
as Miller uses the term is actually to examine the issue of divine
transcendence.\textsuperscript{8} Is it true, as Miller argues, that in the nineteenth
century, and most particularly in nineteenth-century literature, the
transcendence of God reached its culmination? that God, after centuries
of becoming increasingly less immanent, came to be perceived as so
radically transcendent that he finally disappeared altogether?\textsuperscript{9} Or is
it possible that, by choosing writers who are primarily mid-Victorians,
Miller has produced a picture of the period that is not only misleading
but radically skewed? Might not another, less distorting lens be found
through which to view the interplay of theological and literary
impulses, an interplay that importantly informs so much Victorian
literature? In what follows I want to construct such a lens: to
suggest that, during the last third or so of the century, a new movement
arose in British literature, a movement that both derived from and
reflected not the essentially negative "disappearance of God," but
rather a more complex phenomenon that I call "the transformation of
God." This transformation comprehends a simultaneous double movement,
a movement of both destruction and reconstruction that operates with
the dynamic of Carlyle's phoenix or Ovid's metamorphosis. Such a
dynamic directly counters the stasis evoked by Arnold— and might, in
fact, be best expressed by altering his own phrase to read "wandering
between two worlds, one dying,/ The other struggling to be born."\textsuperscript{10}

In the first, or negative, phase of the movement, Victorian
literature persistently discredits and deconstructs the notion of God
as transcendent, as radically discontinuous with humanity and the
world; simultaneously, the dualism upon which transcendence is predi-
cated attracts serious reappraisal. A theological construct once embraced as a source of security and as testament to humankind's favored place in the cosmos is subjected to critical, even hostile, scrutiny. The entire concept of a divine "other," set over against humanity and judging it, comes to be viewed less as comfort and more as threat; the nineteenth-century mind perceives with renewed intensity, that is, the age-old problem for theodicy—that the power to save necessarily comprises the power to damn.\textsuperscript{11} The suspicion stirs, in short, that to seek validation from a source external to the self is to subject oneself to a heteronomy, a separate or otherworldly order, inimical to wellbeing or even to life itself. In the second, or constructive, phase, the energy traditionally associated with the concept of God, far from disappearing, follows instead the first law of thermodynamics (itself a product of the century), according to which energy can be neither created nor destroyed.\textsuperscript{12} Through a process of translocation, the "glory and majesty, dominion and power" previously ascribed to an external divinity are now seen to inhere in individual and collective humanity.\textsuperscript{13} Whereas orthodoxy had located this power in an otherworldly transcendence, writers of the late nineteenth century come to view such power not as vanished or lost but rather as inhering in this world—immanent, that is, in the depths of life itself. This force, a force that has its roots deep in romantic immanence yet moves importantly beyond it, may manifest itself in the Darwinian "struggle for existence," the Nietzschean "will to power," or later (and beyond the explicit scope of this work), the Freudian id. The transformation of God thereby includes but is not coterminous with the simple apotheo-
sis of the individual. (Such isolate individualism for its own sake is more congenial to Miller's thesis of modern angst.) For some imagina-
tive writers, instead, this force or energy inheres in both the human and the natural and serves to unite them, to rejoin in a quasi-monistic whole what metaphysical and epistemological dualism had put asunder.

The transformation of God, in short, entails a movement from an increasingly untenable transcendence to a newly viable immanence—a
immanence that nineteenth-century literature consistently seeks to validate, even while that literature simultaneously registers and enacts tenacious resistance from the dying transcendent impulse. Far
from being, then, the century when transcendence reaches its apex, the nineteenth century instead enacts an ongoing struggle to define itself as the century of immanence; and the transformation of God within literature not merely reflects but, through interpenetration with the wider culture, becomes itself an agent of that change.

Such a far-reaching alteration in the Victorians' perception of divinity (and, by implication, of themselves) could not come about overnight, nor did it; the seeds for transformation were planted well before the appearance of On the Origin of Species, and still longer before the work of Nietzsche. I begin by indicating the pertinent changes that occurred, in the course of the century, within the literature itself; this procedure requires a selective examination of certain systems of thought that underlie, inform, and influence that literature at virtually every point. I then devote three succeeding chapters to detailed analyses of one central work by each of three mainstream, late-Victorian novelists in order to discover how transfor-
nation and its implications inform those novels. George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Henry James: all three lived and wrote during the intellectually tumultuous period 1860-1900 or beyond; all were caught up in and variously influenced by the issues that engaged the best minds and permeated the thoughtful discourse of their time. And because the movement from transcendence to immanence becomes involved in and subject to a radical secularization, my selection of these writers requires a presumption neither of orthodoxy nor even of overt religious involvement on their part.

It does assume, however, an ongoing interpenetration of the individual psyche and the broader culture, such that religious implications become internalized and psychologized, and vice versa. If, as Frank Turner has suggested, individual elaboration of religious issues in the Victorian period may profitably be viewed as "a product of social and psychological interaction among human beings rather than as a manifestation of the interaction of human beings with the divine," the inverse is also true. That is, social/psychological issues may be projected onto God and religious issues onto human interactions. It is not, then, necessary to agree with Freud that religion is illusory in order to grant his contention that fathers and God are closely connected in the individual and cultural psyche; and in Middlemarch, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and The Golden Bowl, the God who is Father frequently appears inverted into the Father who is God. Yet each novel in its own way proceeds to dismantle and deconstruct both transcendences, reenacting in the process the compound theological transformation of the century. For as Harold Kaplan remarks, "it is in
literature, even minor literature, that the unmeasured implications of a deep system of belief . . . become accessible."16

Miller's case for God's nineteenth-century transcendence (or disappearance) depends heavily on his insistence that, in contradistinction to the nineteenth century, "our culture, at its beginnings, experienced the divine power as immediately present in nature, in society, and in each man's heart."17 He posits a movement from pre-Socratic and Old Testament time to the present; according to this progression, God is at first perceived as thoroughly immanent but traces a continuum of increasing transcendence until, in the nineteenth century, he finally disappears altogether. The direction of change, in short, is from radical divine saturation of the world to radical divine withdrawal from it. Although the work at hand does not purport to be a history of religion, there is some evidence worth noting to suggest that Miller's approach is, at best, too simple a formulation and therefore misleading as a background to the nineteenth century.

Robert Bellah, in a persuasive essay, has traced the history of what he terms "Religious Evolution."18 According to Bellah, religion falls chronologically into three basic types: the primitive or archaic, the "historic," and the modern. Primitive religion is essentially monistic and hence thisworldly, since it posits no metaphysical realm that is theologically or ontologically distinct from, or superior to, the earthly. At this stage the divine thoroughly pervades (and is coterminous with) the physical world, for the distance implied by a dualistic construct is simply unavailable. And the unity of the divine and the natural is especially complete during worship: "The distance
between man and mythical being, which was at best slight, disappears altogether in the moment of ritual when everywhen becomes now."  

Although Bellah does not use the term "immanence," it is certainly possible to describe his primitive religion as a situation in which the divine is completely and continually immanent in the human realm. A variant of this phenomenon is examined at much greater length by Mircea Eliade, whose *The Sacred and the Profane* elaborates the thoroughgoing sacrality of the world for primitive humanity.  

More important for the subject at hand, though, is Bellah's second main division--what he terms "historic" religion. This type of religion, which displaces the primitive and the archaic, dates from ca. 1000 B.C.E. and comprehends biblical Judaism and Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam. It is characterized precisely by the twin concepts of divine transcendence and the dualistic division of reality and thus gives rise to a rejection of thisworldly in favor of otherworldly values. In Bellah's words, what eventuates is  

the emergence in the first millennium B.C. all across the Old World, at least in centers of high culture, of the phenomenon of religious rejection of the world characterized by an extremely negative evaluation of man and society and the exaltation of another realm of reality as alone true and infinitely valuable.  

In Israel, he notes, "the world is profoundly devalued in the face of the transcendent God with whom alone is there any refuge or comfort."
With the advent of this transcendence, "[t]he cosmological monism of the earlier [primitive] stage is now more or less completely broken through and an entirely different realm of universal reality, having for religious man the highest value, is proclaimed."\textsuperscript{22} It is during this period that the individual first gains a clear conception of self, as well as of a (dualistic) reality standing over against that same self.\textsuperscript{23} Significantly for the task at hand, in Bellah's scheme this situation of thoroughgoing transcendence and dualism begins to break down only with the approach of the nineteenth century.

But Bellah also argues that "no stage is ever completely abandoned; all earlier stages continue to coexist with and often within later ones."\textsuperscript{24} This general principle coheres nicely with Eliade's description of \textit{homo religiosus} of medieval Europe, for whom a considerable element of sacrality continues to imbue all life—but a sacrality derived less from the immanence of the Christian God than from thoroughly assimilated elements of primitivism. According to Eliade, European peasants succeeded in incorporating into their Christianity a considerable part of their pre-Christian religious heritage, which was of immemorial antiquity. It would be wrong to suppose that for this reason European peasants are not Christians. But we must recognize that their religion is not confined to the historical forms of Christianity, that it still retains a cosmic structure that has been almost entirely lost in the experience of urban Christians.
We may speak of a primordial, ahistorical Christianity; becoming Christians, the European cultivators incorporated into their new faith the cosmic religion that they had preserved from prehistoric times.\textsuperscript{25}

The immanence of the divine that Miller posits for medieval Christendom, then, may well be largely due to primitivist remnants rather than to any characteristic proper to medieval Christianity itself. Indeed it can be argued that the genius of westerly-expanding Christianity was precisely its appropriation of the religious situations it found already in place, and that such appropriations contributed substantially to the medieval coextension of Christianity and culture.

Bellah's third major religious category is equally pertinent to the present inquiry; for that type, the modern, is characterized importantly by its rejection of dualism and therefore of transcendence:

In the worldview that has emerged from the tremendous intellectual advances of the last two centuries there is simply no room for a hierarchic dualistic religious symbol system of the classical historic type.\textsuperscript{26}

Extrapolating from Bellah's position, George Rupp goes on to elaborate a typology of modern religious alternatives precisely according to their respective responses to, or reconceptions of, the transcendence and concomitant dualism that characterize Bellah's "historic" religion.\textsuperscript{27} Bellah's scheme thus clears a path for the nineteenth-century
situation I have hypothesized: a transformation from transcendence to immanence so thorough that it ramifies beyond speculative theology to imbue the substance of literature and, through literature, the wider culture.28

Bellah further proposes an unsurprising corollary to the collapse of transcendence, one that furnishes additional support for the transformation I am asserting. That is, he finds a "virtual absence of world rejection" in modern (i.e., romantic and post-romantic) religion, a condition that recalls the state of affairs obtaining in his pre-dualistic, primitive type.29 In another relevant study, Clement C. J. Webb posits a historical continuum of religious change; according to Webb's model, such change since the Middle Ages is characterized by an increasing acceptance of thisworldliness:

From the end of the Middle Ages onwards, the whole drift of thought and practice in western Christendom had been in the direction of an attempt to find within what we call 'this world' that which to the man of the Middle Ages had been on the whole presented as belonging to 'another world' and manifested in 'this world' only through a supernatural intervention from that other.30

While cautioning against the notion that "the history of European thought throughout three or four centuries can be adequately summed up in a simple formula," Webb nevertheless contends that, overall, the basic shift in religious perspective is from one of divine transcen-
dence to one of divine immanence.\textsuperscript{31} He points out that even though the Incarnation was held to represent the union of God and humanity, it remains nonetheless true that "the Incarnation and Atonement thus proclaimed were still regarded as interventions from without."\textsuperscript{32} And it is as a striking contrast to such external manifestations of divinity that the Romantic movement must be understood. For Webb, that is, the movement's significance is precisely that it ushered in

the discovery within civilization of the values
which the religious tradition had affirmed to exist
outside of it, in another world, in comparison
wherewith this world, with its civilization, is a merely transitory and relatively unimportant
phenomenon. In other words it was a movement, so far as theology or the philosophy of religion is concerned, in the direction of immanentism.\textsuperscript{33}

There is, then, a respectable body of thought suggesting that (1) the lost immanence Miller describes is actually characteristic of primitive religious remnants rather than of western Christianity itself, and that (2) the appearance of nineteenth-century immanence is part of a pattern of changes in that direction and not in its opposite. For Bellah those changes are dialectic, while for Webb they are linear, but the implications for the nineteenth century are essentially the same in either case. And it is with the complex Victorian response, particularly its literary response, to the change thus wrought that we have now to deal.
DESTRUCTION

The Victorian Text

It is unquestionably true that, for many thoughtful Victorians, the doubts that pervaded the century concerning the continuing presence of a sovereign and reliable God were felt as bitter personal anguish. Frederick W. Robertson, in a passage emblematic of the crisis, captures the sense of desolation common to the period:

It is an awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are, many of them, rotten, and begins to suspect them all... It is an awful hour,--let him who has passed through it say how awful, when... the sky above this universe [appears to be] a dead expanse, black with the void from which God himself has disappeared.³⁴

And when George Eliot, in her well-known dissertation on God, immortality, and duty, "pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third," F. W. H. Myers reports his own reaction in words that echo Robertson:

it was as though she withdrew from my grasp, one by one, the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fates.

And when we stood at length and parted, amid that
columnar circuit of the forest trees, beneath the
last twilight of starless skies, I seem to be
gazing, like Titus at Jerusalem, on vacant seats
and empty halls,--on a sanctuary with no Presence to
hallow it, and heaven left lonely of a God.\(^{35}\)

While Robertson and Myers allude only to their private crises, for
others the new cosmic isolation was felt as a communal burden. W. K.
Clifford suggests that he is speaking for an entire generation who, he
says, have seen "the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven, to light
up a soulless earth [and] have felt with utter loneliness that the
Great Companion is dead."\(^{36}\) And J. A. Froude evokes the nostalgia that
accompanies grief when his Markham Sutherland mourns, "Oh, for one look
of the blue sky, as it looked when we called it Heaven!"\(^{37}\) Even those
who did not share such feelings could empathize with others so afflic-
ted. Thomas Carlyle, writing to J. S. Mill in regard to a friend's
atheism, commiserates in a striking metaphor, one that indicates
explicitly what is at stake: "Sad enough, to 'look upwards for the
Divine Eye, and see nothing but the empty black glaring bottomless
Death's Eye-socket!"\(^{38}\)

Heartfelt as such requiems clearly are, it is precisely in the
language of these passages that we can discern the obsolescence of the
theological model they are intended to mourn. To begin with, there is
the sense, particularly prominent in Robertson and Myers, that a source
of strength and hope, a source external to self and world, has somehow
been withdrawn. The loss of God is thus felt as the removal of a
"prop" or a "promise." These expressions of a dependence almost
childlike ring curiously anachronistic, occurring as they do well into the century of Wordsworth's *Prelude*, Shelley's *Prometheus*, Byron's *Manfred*, and Tennyson's *Ulysses*. In the face of a growing celebration of the powers of the human, they suggest a collapse back onto the (apparently exclusive) power of God. Equally remarkable is the metaphor, repeated again and again, of the empty heaven, the "Death's Eye-socket" in Carlyle's vivid phrase. Without exception these writers almost reflexively invoke, in their depictions of what has been lost, a cosmography more congenial to the Middle Ages than to their own century, a Ptolemaic universe in which God is above and humanity below, with its attendant implications of cosmic hierarchy.

Are these references to black skies and empty heavens "only" metaphors, "only" language? Or do they, like Coleridge's symbol, participate in that to which they point? It seems to me that the latter is surely true; that such tropes reveal, in the very unreflectiveness with which they are used, the historical incongruence of the concept they propound—that is, the notion of divinity as necessarily and exclusively transcendent. Even Carlyle, whose view of divinity is considerably more complex than a belief in simple transcendence, instinctively assumes that the God rejected by his friend must be the transcendent, and not the immanent, God—and his language reflects that revealing assumption. Taken together, then, the metaphors unwittingly convey a rather extraordinary supposition: namely, that either God is transcendent or he is not at all. And it is this bleak alternative that underlies, I would argue, the obvious despair of their authors.
If Victorians grieving for orthodoxy automatically assume that a lost transcendence is a lost good, other voices are meanwhile raised to express doubts about the nature of such a God and the implications for humanity of a divinity discontinuous with the world. For them, what Nietzsche calls "the siren songs of old metaphysical bird catchers" have lost their allure in matters theological, and the traditional "sovereignty of God" has become the inadequacy, indifference, or even the hostility of God. With surprising frequency, moreover, the mourners of transcendence and those suspicious of it are one and the same. Thus, in a different mood, W. K. Clifford can muse that "if God holds all mankind guilty for the sin of Adam, if he has visited upon the innocent the punishment of the guilty, if he is to torture any single soul for ever, then it is wrong to worship him." Froude's Sutherland, his nostalgia for childhood certainties notwithstanding, can vow, "I would sooner perish for ever than stoop down before a Being who may have power to crush me, but whom my heart forbids me to reverence." In a similar vein, George Eliot's biographers conclude that she terminated her flirtation with Evangelical Christianity precisely because she felt that her relationship with God included too little response on his part ("actual presence, companionship, demonstrations of love") or, alternatively, because of the psychological burden imposed by "the appalling apprehension of eternal damnation." And Alice James's diary suggests that even the idiosyncratic religious views of the James family find themselves at home in this company of critics:
I used to wonder at Father's fulminations against [religion], little dreaming until I came [to England] what vitality [it] had. . . . Imagine a religion imposed from without, a virtue taught, not as a measure of self respect, but as a means of propitiating a repulsive, vainglorious, grasping deity, and purchasing from him, at a varying scale of prices, a certain moderation of temperature through the dark mystery of the future.43

Darwin himself, in a passage initially deleted from his autobiography at his wife's request, states the position most baldly:

I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished.

And this is a damnable doctrine.44

Not only so. Geoffrey Rowell reports that Austin Holyoake, a prominent secularist of the period, goes even further to caution that the very idea of hell "brutalized all who believed in it."45

In the larger public discourse of poetry, similar doubts are raised. Tennyson, for one, wonders, "Why pray/ To one who heeds not, who can save/ But will not?"46 And Arnold's Mycerinus muses that "the circumambient gloom/ But hides, if Gods, Gods careless of our doom."47
Far from serving as the "Great Companion" mourned by Clifford, such a God may even be perceived as the moving power behind human disjunction. This view is expressed by one of the century's most polished (and, thematically, most representative) lyrics, in which the speaker finds himself "in the sea of life enisled" and reaches this dispiriting conclusion about his own and others' insularity:

Who order'd, that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cool'd?
Who renders vain their deep desire?--
A God, a God their severance ruled!
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea.48

Arnold's words confirm that it is unnecessary to wait for the late-century pessimism of Hardy's "Immanent Will" or "President of the Immortals" to find literary perceptions of a hostile transcendence. (And as Northrop Frye points out, Hardy's negative deities owe a direct debt to Blake's "evil, sinister, or merely complacent" gods such as Urizen, Nobodaddy, and others.)49

While individual Victorians expressed personal doubts and poets cultural ones regarding the benignity of a transcendent God, it is Victorian fiction that engages the subject most thoroughly and, at the same time, at the deepest symbolic level. For what we find in the Victorian novel is a deflection in subject from the God of theology to the father buried in the individual psyche. The fiction of the period reveals, that is, a virtual obsession with the difficulties inherent in
fatherhood. Because human fatherhood functions, at levels both cultural and psychic, as the earthly counterpart to divine fatherhood, problems attributed to paternity tend both to reflect and to promulgate prevailing, if incompletely conceptualized, attitudes toward God. It is therefore worth notice that the most prominent attribute common to the mid-Victorian protagonist is his/her status as an orphan. Jane Eyre, Heathcliff, Becky Sharp, David Copperfield, Esther Summerson, Pip: all have their way to make in the world without the help or hindrance of parents or the pre-established identity that the possession of family implies. Shortly before 1860, however, the situation of the protagonist begins to undergo a 180-degree shift with regard to parents, and most especially with regard to fathers. Whereas earlier protagonists tend to regard the absence of a father as a lost good—rather like the lost transcendence mourned by Robertson and others—this new crop of heroes and heroines finds itself in situations that render the condition of Melchizedek a positive blessing by comparison. Suddenly the number of fathers (or father-figures) whose oppressive, dictatorial strategies constitute a virtual curse upon their offspring becomes legion. The tyrannical Dombey who was anomalous in the novel of 1848 appears in retrospect as the harbinger of a new norm, and in 1857 Dickens goes on to demonstrate (in Little Dorrit) that even apparent fatherly weakness can effect a tyranny of its own. But these later fathers follow more in the line of Dombey than of Dorrit; from Sir Austin Feverel with his System to Philip Gosse with his Great Scheme, fathers increasingly seek to impose standards from without that stunt and deform what the children view as their own natural, healthy growth.50 From Henry James's Dr.
Sloper of *Washington Square* to Adam Verver of *The Golden Bowl*, his heroines' fathers and male mentors both create and control, by various combinations of strength and weakness, the world of his protagonists' lives. The role of father-surrogates such as George Eliot's Casaubon is similarly one of domination and oppression. To compare the latter's role vis-à-vis Dorothea to Mr. Rochester's relationship to Jane, or even John Jarndyce's to Esther, is to realize the sea change that has taken place with respect to such figures.\(^5\)

Of George Eliot's and James's father-figures there is much to say, as Chapters 2 and 4 demonstrate. For the moment, however, it should be noted that Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son* and Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* are particularly pertinent in that they explicitly (Gosse) or implicitly (Butler) associate the restrictive effects of paternal domination with the equally restrictive tenets of the religious creed the fathers seek to impose. Thus the father/God analogy becomes unusually forthright in these late-century, autobiographical works. Gosse elaborates the analogy in a passage describing the effects upon his young self when he learns, in spite of the elder Gosse's best efforts to the contrary, that his father is not omniscient:

> Here was the appalling discovery, never suspected before, that my Father was not as God, and did not know everything. . . . My Father, as a deity, as a natural force of immense prestige, fell in my eyes to a human level. . . . But of all the thoughts which rushed upon my savage and undeveloped little
brain at this crisis, the most curious was that I
had found a companion and a confidant in myself.52

The consequence of Gosse's discovery as he tells it is fairly remark-
able. That is, the first dawning of a suspicion regarding the legiti-
macy of the god he has worshipped eventuates not, as we might suppose,
in simple disillusionment, but rather in something more far-reaching--
namely, the first budding of the phenomenon of self-consciousness or,
in Gosse's words, "that existence of two in the depths who could speak
to one another in inviolable secrecy."53 With the realization that the
father is not all-powerful, the self-other awareness that Bellah
associates with transcendence is displaced by an awareness of dualism
within the self, a self-consciousness born of freedom. Certainly for
Gosse, as for many of his contemporaries, true self-awareness (and
consequent self-actualization) can occur only in the wake of liberation
from external authority. Genuine autonomy, it would seem, comes to
pass at the expense of the divine/paternal heteronomy.54

For Butler's part, his rebellion against the father is noteworthy
for both its extremity and its candor. In a forthright notebook entry,
he exclaims, "Those who have never had a father can at any rate never
know the sweets of losing one. To most men the death of his father is
a new lease of life."55 And The Way of All Flesh elaborates Ernest
Pontifex's struggle against a father whose oppressiveness reflects
Butler's perception of his own father and of established authority in
general. The following passage, spoken by Ernest's inner voice and
indicative of self-consciousness in full flower, describes his first
feelings of freedom upon being sent away to school. With this freedom
comes a striking translocation--from father to self--of a power he explicitly associates with divinity:

"Your papa is not here to beat you now; this is a change in the conditions of your existence, and should be followed by changed actions. Obey me, your true self, and things will go tolerably well with you, but only listen to that outward and visible old husk of yours which is called your father, and I will rend you in pieces even unto the third and fourth generations as one who has hated God; for I, Ernest, am the God who made you."56

This exemplary instance of the transformational dynamic as psychologized by Ernest (and probably by Butler) is unusual only in its explicitness and in the amount of self-awareness evinced by the speaker. As Chapters 2 through 4 demonstrate, the model generally operates at a somewhat more subtextual (or less conscious) level.

Nor is Ernest the only character whose role derives from Butler's anti-paternal stance. The forces of fatherhood within this novel, in fact, are so hostile to and so destructive of any formation of identity that Towneley's status as Ernest's ideal is due less to his intrinsic qualities (which are notably shallow) than to the freedom of self-actualization he possesses, a freedom owing solely to his condition as an orphan.57 Left to his own devices, he can perfectly realize such qualities as he does possess (a process Butler credits to the working
of instinct); thus, in his success, he functions as an effective foil to the paternally-burdened Ernest.

The Philosophical Background

These literary misgivings about transcendent authority are not without their more philosophical counterparts; throughout the century, the dualism that accompanies transcendence, and on which it is predicated, comes under unremitting attack. In an early examination of the appearance of Christianity, Hegel concludes that religious dualism arose as a defense mechanism against earthly tyranny:

The despotism of the Roman emperors had driven the spirit of man from the earth, the loss of freedom compelled him to rescue his eternal, his absolute, by taking refuge in the deity; and the spread of misery forced him to seek and expect blessedness in heaven. The objectification of the deity went hand in hand with the slavery of man. 58

To the extent that Hegel's insight corresponds to the reigning Zeitgeist, we might expect that a greater emphasis on, and greater faith in, the possibilities of humanity itself would have a correspondingly negative impact on attitudes toward such dualism; and this, in fact, is what we find. If, in Hegel's formulation, slavery leads to dualism, the inverse proposition also begins to be expressed--that is, that dualism in turn perpetuates psychological and spiritual slavery. J. S. Mill, for instance, concludes that the heteronomous nature of Calvinism is such that, in its eyes,
the one great offence of man is self-will. All the
good of which humanity is capable is comprised in
obedience. . . . To one holding this theory of life
. . . man needs no capacity, but that of surrendering himself to the will of God.59

Mill's confidence in human ability to pit reason against nature in the
interest of progressive good renders such a statement on his part
fairly unsurprising. Yet we find the resolutely ahistorical (and
sometimes antirational) Emerson voicing similar qualms concerning the
dependency bred by religious dualism--particularly dependency on a God
who is perceived as "other" than the human:

Prayer looks abroad and asks for some foreign
addition to come through some foreign virtue, and
loses itself in endless mazes of natural and
supernatural, and mediatorial and miraculous. . . .
prayer as a means to effect a private end . . .
supposes dualism and not unity in nature and
consciousness. As soon as the man is at one with
God, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in
all action.60

And William Hale White's "Mark Rutherford," even while professing
himself a friend to Christianity, explains its operations in words that
reveal the disjunction, not only between the human and the divine, but
within the individual, implicit in a dualistic system:
To philosophy every passion is as natural as every act of saint-like negation, and one of the usual effects of thinking or philosophizing is to bring together all that is apparently contrary in man, and to show how it proceeds really from one centre. But Christianity. . . . laid awful stress on the duality in us. . . . No religion, so far as I know, has dwelt like Christianity with such profound earnestness on the bisection of man--on the distinction within him, vital to the very last degree, between the higher and the lower, heaven and hell.61

Philosophical idealism, meanwhile, offers a remedy for the dualistic divisions that separate humanity from itself, from nature, and from the God of metaphysical theology. That is, the thought of Schelling, Hegel, and their successors posits an Absolute that is immanent in both the human and the natural and thereby serves to unite them with each other and with itself. It is this construct, mediated by Coleridge, that underlies much of romantic poetry, a relationship which I will examine further in due course. Significantly for the immediate purpose, however, the idealist theory tends to differentiate between the function of the Absolute and the God of traditional theology, "if by God be meant, as usually in the language of religion, Another than us, towards whom we can stand in a personal relation."62 In one version of idealist theory, Schelling contends that perfect
revelation of the Absolute would, as Frederick Copleston phrases it, result in the extinction of "the point of view of human consciousness, which presupposes a distinction between subject and object." Although Hegel, for his part, protests this cognitive eventuality, dismissing it as "the night in which . . . all cows are black," Schelling's version would seem to cohere (in terms of religion if not of individual epistemology) with F. H. Bradley's assertion that, with the union of God and the Absolute, God "is lost and religion with him." Dualism is, in other words, an integral part of, indeed a prerequisite for, traditional theological constructs. To move beyond these constructs in search of a post-dualist unity between the human and the natural, between individual and context, as the idealist program attempts to do (whether by eliminating dualism entirely, as Schelling would have it, or through the transformed subject and object offered by Hegel) is, then, necessarily to leave the God of Bellah's "historic" religion behind.

Feuerbach continues Hegel's association of dualism with tyranny by positing a situation whereby we paradoxically (not to say ironically) become the object of our own mental objectification of human qualities, qualities we project outward and label "God." And because the qualities humanity projects onto God are, naturally enough, its best and not its worst attributes, the end result of religion is to debase the human in comparison with the objectified God:

Religion is the disuniting of man from himself; he sets God before him as the antithesis of himself.
God is not what man is--man is not what God is.
God is the infinite, man the finite being; God is
perfect, man imperfect; God eternal, man temporal; 
God almighty, man weak; God holy, man sinful. God 
and man are extremes: God is the absolutely 
positive, the sum of all realities; man the 
absolutely negative, comprehending all negations.67

In view of these polarities, it is little wonder that Feuerbach 
concludes, "To know God and not oneself to be God, to know blessedness 
and not oneself to enjoy it, is a state of disunity, of unhappiness."68

Nietzsche, on the other hand, perceives a related but psychologically inverse dynamic at work in the operation of slave morality, 
whereby we humans project onto God not our true (and positive) nature, 
as Feuerbach has it, but rather our denial of that nature:

this man of the bad conscience . . . . apprehends 
in "God" the ultimate antithesis of his own 
ineluctable animal instincts; he reinterprets these 
animal instincts themselves as a form of guilt 
before God (as hostility, rebellion, insurrection 
against the "Lord," the "father," the primal 
ancestor and origin of the world) . . . he ejects 
from himself all his denial of himself, of his 
nature, naturalness, and actuality, in the form of 
an affirmation, as something existent, corporeal, 
real, as God.69

This analysis, which manifestly anticipates Freud, eventuates in 
consequences for humanity that are, however, nearly indistinguishable
from Feuerbach's. That is, for Nietzsche as for Feuerbach, individual and collective humanity must be the losers in such projective transactions, since the "will to erect an ideal--that of the 'holy God'" inevitably results, for the projector, in "the palpable certainty of his own absolute unworthiness."70 Whereas Feuerbach perceives that the objectification of God serves to dislocate the positive, affective traits (love for self and others) proper to humanity, Nietzsche finds in that same objectification a tragic perversion of the voluntaristic attributes (the will to power) that he sees as universal and that, in fact, enable him to advocate a celebration of life in all its multifarious and contradictory aspects. Both men, then, are impelled by a felt need to translocate back onto humanity those qualities either misplaced (Feuerbach) or misapplied (Nietzsche) in the creation of an objectified God, a God whose very existence, in the face of its dualistic involvement, is now perceived as inimical to the best interests of a newly-respectable humankind.71

RECONSTRUCTION

An uneasy awareness of the pitfalls of transcendence thus comprises a new and insistent motif in texts of the period; nor is this movement confined to literature but is, rather, undergirded by the anti-dualist impulses to be found in the idealists and in the post-idealist thought of Feuerbach and Nietzsche. Such negativism, however, constitutes only half of the nineteenth-century transformation dynamic, as I began by pointing out. Concurrent with the increasingly strident objections to transcendence as a locus of value and power, an equally vigorous trend is discernible in the opposite direction. This countervailing trend--
articulated in literature but again grounded in philosophy—seeks to translocate that same value and power from the metaphysical to the physical, from the supernatural to the natural, from the external to the internal, from the spiritual to the corporeal, from the divine to the human realm. Just as in the transfer of matter and energy, we are dealing not with a force that is lost but with a force that is instead transfigured, so that the qualities previously ascribed to God are perceived to inhere, instead, in individual and general humanity and to pervade the entire arena of human and earthly activity.

The Sacred in/and the Secular

This translocation, however—and here I want to be very specific—does not necessarily entail a complete renunciation of the sacred for the secular. What we discover, rather, in texts both philosophical and literary, is a subtle but distinct commingling of the two. Even in writers most overtly hostile to religion in any traditional sense, there appear significant traces of a religious language and impulse that stubbornly refuse to be expunged. We therefore find in nineteenth-century "secular" texts, from philosophy to late-Victorian novels, a persistent subtext of sacrality, but a sacrality that is overwhelmingly thisworldly in reference. Feuerbach, for example, for all his patent hostility to transcendence, describes the new status he has carved for the human in terms specifically religious: "Homo homini Deus est."72 The predicament of Feuerbach's foremost literary disciple, George Eliot, has been described as "that of the religious temperament cut off by the Zeitgeist from the traditional objects of veneration, and the traditional intellectual formulations."73 T. B. Tomlinson, in a
discussion of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, broadens the reference to suggest that there is a strain of what one might call positive agnosticism in a whole cluster of very different writers, from essayists like Mill and Arnold, through novelists like George Eliot, Conrad, James, even perhaps early Lawrence. . . . It is a philosophy of doubt, certainly, but one that also hints or adumbrates possibilities rather than simply a succession of negations. . . . Hardy's real challenge is to say to us, why assume that nothing is good and valuable unless it is or might be part of an unseen whole?74

Henry James declares, in a mood evocative of Nietzsche,

the religious passion has always struck me as the strongest of man's heart, and when one thinks of the scanty fare judged by our usual standards, in which it has always fed, and of the nevertheless powerful current continually setting towards all religious hypotheses, it is hard not to believe that some application of the supernatural idea, should not be an essential part of our life.--75

And Nietzsche himself, despite his denunciation of the Christianity he associates with slave morality, declares in a similar tone his belief
that "the religious instinct is indeed in the process of growing powerfully—but the theistic satisfaction it refuses with deep suspicion."  

In the area of theology proper, Webb finds what he calls "consciuous immanentism" articulated in the work of the late-century British idealists F. H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet, and specifies that such immanentism

does not content itself with declaring, as [does] the 'agnosticism' of the mid-nineteenth-century, that we have no proof of the existence of a transcendent God... [Instead, it] definitely claims to retain all that men have valued in what they took for communion with a transcendent God, while translating it into terms which recognize that the dwelling of God is not without but within the system of which only by using a mythological phrase can we call him the Creator, since he is rather the immanent Principle of its being.  

Webb's explanation of immanentism makes explicit the same transformational dynamic I find implicit in literature of the period. Immanentism, after the manner of Hegel, removes the possibility of and need for supernatural validation of earthly processes, since "the system" itself is now the locus of all value. By thus translocating the "dwelling of God" from outside to within the sphere of the human, the natural, the physical, immanentism makes it possible once again to
perceive earthly processes and energies as self-validating by virtue of their participation in this ongoing system. I shall argue that those processes include certain nineteenth-century dynamics which otherwise may be perceived as value-neutral or value-negative—dynamics such as the Darwinian struggle for life and the Nietzschean will to power. It is even possible, as we shall see, to view these processes as operating in a manner analogous to the idealist Absolute itself.

It is first necessary, however, to retrace our steps and take passing note of what is doubtless obvious: that the literature of the century from its very beginnings reflects an intensified validation of humanity, and that the equation of the human with the divine permeates Romantic literature especially. Certainly within the world of British letters the translocation of value from God to humanity dates at least to Blake's unequivocal "All deities reside in the human breast." And Wordsworth associates divinity not just with humanity in general but with himself as poet in particular in this claim, from The Prelude, that the proper locus of the epic is internal:

... Of genius, power,
Creation and divinity itself
I have been speaking, for my theme has been
What passed within me. Not of outward things
... but of my own heart
Have I been speaking, and my youthful mind,
... .
This is, in truth, heroic argument.
The divinity Wordsworth asserts is generalized by Northrop Frye in his observation that "the metaphorical structure of Romantic poetry tends to move inside and downward instead of outside and upward; hence the creative world is deep within, and so is heaven or the place of the presence of God." But as Blake's "All deities" and Frye's appeal to depth suggest, this model is subject to inversion, as it is in Byron's Manfred, where the spirits that reside in the depths elide from the divine into the demonic. And as I argue in Chapter 2, George Eliot tends to identify the power contained in her deeper self as not only rebellious but as specifically satanic.

Nor does the human/divine equation cease with the Romantic movement. Although as a general proposition it is true that mid-Victorians tend to suffer a crisis of confidence--partly because of their position half-way between a fading romantic immanence and an emerging post-Darwinian immanence, a situation which goes far to explain the genuine dilemma of most of Miller's writers--it is nonetheless true that validations of things earthly can still be discerned. If, for example, the God Emerson reveres is indeed "incarnate in his own skin," as one critic has remarked, his most noted Victorian correspondent argues for a like divinity at work in the affairs of the world; their correspondence paints a vivid picture of Carlyle, convinced that Emerson and his Transcendentalist friends are in danger of retreat into a virtual metaphysical fog, urging him to "[return] into your own poor nineteenth century, its follies and maladies, its blind or half-blind, but gigantic toilings, its laughter and its tears, and [try] to evolve in some measure the hidden Godlike that lies in it," an entreaty of
which *Sartor Resartus* constitutes an extended exposition.\textsuperscript{82} Even so bleak a poet as Arnold, in that bleakest of poems, *Empedocles on Etna*, can affirm—if only tenuously—the commonplace experiences of human life as the locus of such value as exists at all:

> Is it so small a thing  
> To have enjoy'd the sun,  
> To have lived light in the spring,  
> To have loved, to have thought, to have done;  
> To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes—  
> That we must feign a bliss  
> Of doubtful future date,  
> And, while we dream on this,  
> Lose all our present state,  
> And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?\textsuperscript{83}

No one, however, could accuse Arnold of equating the human with the divine in the manner of the romantics who precede him or the later Victorians who follow him. And it is precisely in the major figures who come to prominence from the 1860s onward that we find a newly vigorous advocacy, sometimes overt, more often covert, of the proposition that the locus of divinity is the human and that world in which women and men live and move and have their being.

George Levine has observed that the animating impulse guiding George Eliot and other post-Darwinians is "to resacralize a world from which God has been dismissed."\textsuperscript{84} Our writers, however, have disparate notions as to just where this human sacrality lies. For George Eliot,
influenced alike by her Evangelical training, with its emphasis on the heart, and by Feuerbach's insistence that "feeling is the noblest, the most excellent, i.e., the divine, in man," humanity's relevant attributes are the affective. Thus when she affirms that "the idea of God, so far as it has been a high spiritual influence, is the ideal of a goodness entirely human (i.e. an exaltation of the human)," it is likely that the goodness to which she refers has its source in what she elsewhere calls "the truth of feeling." We can glimpse here the connection in her thought between ethics and the physicality of emotion, a relationship also evident in Thomas Hardy. And these insights, for George Eliot, in fact imply an ethical imperative: "Heaven help us! said the old religions--the new one, from its very lack of that faith, will teach us all the more to help one another."87

But Hardy, with his interest in the physical, tends also to validate humanity naturalistically and therefore biologically. As Bruce Johnson has argued, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* reflects "Hardy's [positive] Darwinian emphasis on the relatedness of all creatures."88 And David DeLaura, in an examination of his late novels, notes that Hardy's distinction between external and internal forces eventuates in a corresponding value judgment:

Hardy's major ethical contrast ... pervasive in *Tess* and central in *Jude*, is a simple one between an unspecified "Nature," evidently as the norm of some more genuine and personal ethical mode, and "Civilization," identified with social law,
convention, and in the last analysis the moral and intellectual constraints of Christianity.  

Although there will be reason to quarrel with DeLaura's use of the word "ethical" in this context (see Chapter 3), his distinction between nature and civilization is pertinent to Hardy in general and to Tess in particular.

Finally, Henry James exhibits a certain preoccupation with the epistemic and voluntaristic attributes and their potential for good or ill. Stephen Donadio, exploring the thesis that James and Nietzsche share "a central association of art and power," extrapolates from that association to analogize the Jamesian protagonist/percipient to God. In a passage he applies both to Nietzsche and to James's "lucid reflector," Donadio writes that each comes to occupy the center of his own world: as a result, everything in that world is, in one way or another, subordinated to him, and he possesses the power to confer significant value on persons and experiences which in themselves reveal none. . . .

[This experience is] the experience of ordering the world like God.  

There is, then, a noticeable late-century tendency in mainstream writers to voice, implicitly or explicitly, their insistent apprehension of the value of this world, a value that no longer depends on an external God as its source, together with the corollary that would
validate humanity as a locus of worth so complete as to elide into the divine.

**The Idealist Dynamic and the Romantics**

I have already suggested that so thorough a transformation did not simply occur overnight but rather grew out of a century-long movement. And to locate its wellspring more firmly within the century, it is once more necessary to retrace our steps in order to examine both its genesis within the Romantic movement and its connection, through the dynamics of romanticism, to the idealist Absolute. Although that connection, as will become evident, is primarily metaphorical, the idealist model nonetheless provides a structural parallel that serves to link the romantic impulse with the processes and objectives of later dynamics proffered by Darwin and Nietzsche.

According to the idealist model that underlies so much romantic poetry, the subject/object dynamic operating within the human mind finds its analogue within a living nature; and because both mind and nature contain, and are contained by, the Absolute--itself both synthesis and repository of this subject/object dynamic--a union that triumphs over Cartesian dualism becomes possible. Furthermore, this co-inhering life is both organic and progressive, or developmental. And since the system provides for no locus of value outside itself, or distinct from its own progressive manifestations, the construct brings in its wake the proposition that fundamental worth and meaning are, for better or worse, to be found within its operation if they are to be found at all.91 As A. O. Lovejoy explains, the organicism of Schel-
ling's thought includes a new-found unity of finite and infinite, earthly and divine. In Schelling's construct,

[n]ot only had the originally complete and immutable Chain of Being been converted into a Becoming, in which all genuine possibles are, indeed, destined to realization grade after grade, yet only through a vast, slow unfolding in time; but now God himself is placed in, or identified with, this Becoming.\(^2\)

Coleridge, who claims in Schelling "a genial coincidence" with his own thought, unites these same threads of dynamism, development, and meaning when he affirms

that living principle at once the giver and the gift of that anointing faith, which in endless evolution teaches us of all things, and is truth.

For all things are but parts and forms of its progressive manifestation, and every new knowledge but a new organ of sense and insight into this one all-inclusive verity, which, still filling the vessel of the understanding, still dilates it to a capacity of yet other and yet greater truths.\(^3\)

In Coleridge's phraseology, "that living principle" fulfills essentially the function of the idealist Absolute. And in phraseology that suggests the relationship of idealism to romantic poetry, Basil Willey
offers this rendering of Coleridge's theory of the mind's interaction with nature:

... the world is really alive, and not dead; the life we project into it meets a life which is already there, and there is a mysterious link between man and Nature, whereby man, in moulding Nature, can be unfolding Nature in the direction of its own striving.\(^{94}\)

The relevance of this pattern to romantic nature poetry has, of course, been explicated by a number of critics. As Frye puts it, in words that echo Willey's,

the Romantic poet is a part of a total process, engaged with and united to a creative power greater than his own because it includes his own. ... In the Romantic construct there is a centre where inward and outward manifestations of a common motion and spirit are unified, where the ego is identified as itself because it is also identified with something which is not itself.\(^{95}\)

And Joseph Warren Beach, in his comprehensive study of nineteenth-century nature poetry, captures the dynamic succinctly:

The heart of nature-poetry is the sense a man has of his identity with the other manifestations of this living force, and with the living force
itself--his envelopment by and absorption in nature.96

Beach argues what is in effect the disappearance of God from the landscape and the substitution of what he (Beach) sees as a secular, scientific, mechanistic principle. In this connection, he makes the point that Shelley wanted, in his poetry, "to get rid of the theological connotations of the word God." Beach adds, though, that Shelley "could not, of course, any more than other nature poets, get rid of the notion of an active principle working in nature."97 And that is precisely the point. Beach's "active principle," like Coleridge's "living principle" (and Willey's characterization of nature as "alive" and "striving"), is none other than the energy associated with the idealist construct, a construct that can serve as the vehicle of romantic immanence because, as Lovejoy points out, it is itself thoroughly immanentist.

The dynamic to which Willey, Frye, and Beach refer is discernible in such formulations as Wordsworth's "a spirit and pulse of good,/ A life and soul, to every mode of being/ Inseparably linked," or "the blessed power that rolls/ About, below, above," as well as Coleridge's "one Life within us and abroad" or "All-conscious Presence of the Universe!"98 But the locus classicus of the construct is, of course, this passage from "Tintern Abbey":

... a sense sublime

Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting
sun,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all
thought,
And rolls through all things.99

These lines rejoin together what Descartes had put asunder: the
epistemological trinity of mind, matter, and God. And their union is
explicitly credited to that "motion and . . . spirit," a dynamic
presence that can unify because and as it "rolls through all things."
The pervasiveness throughout the passage of words such as "interfused,"
"dwelling," "impels," and "rolls through" serves to suggest the
saturation of the human and the natural by this living force yet
manages to avoid the notion of temporal cause and effect, of antecedent
and consequent, which could insidiously reintroduce the concept of a
power external to the world yet somehow acting upon it. Wordsworth's
"spirit" thus remains thoroughly immanent in character. Coleridge
achieves a similar if less dramatic effect when he continues the "one
Life" theme of "The Eolian Harp":

And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic Harps diversely fram'd,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all.¹⁰⁰

Coleridge's "one intellectual breeze" operates on essentially the same principle as Wordsworth's "spirit," and both reflect the influence of the idealist Absolute.

Emerson, in this creed from Nature, furnishes a transatlantic rendering whose concluding metaphor emphasizes, more clearly perhaps than Wordsworth or Coleridge, the organic element in the process:

that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old.¹⁰¹

The characteristic Emersonian aversion to phenomenal categories distinguishes him from the Britons (e.g., Carlyle), who generally show no such aversion. It also distances him importantly from the post-Kantian Germans, for whom history is exactly the realm in which the Absolute functions. And Emerson's equation of "Supreme Being" with "spirit" makes apparent a problem present but better controlled in his British counterparts: the difficulty (overcome most fully in "Tintern Abbey") to avoid collapsing into the suggestion of a single force
acting in and behind its plural manifestations (see pp. 46-48). What Emerson does do, though, is explicate the inwardness of the process with respect to the percipient and make clear, as does Coleridge, the fundamental value associated with the entire operation.

The idealist construct that peers through these passages is, of course, essentially epistemological. Wordsworth's "in the mind of man" and Coleridge's "one intellectual breeze" testify to that. We find, however, that purely epistemological problems are inadequate to account for the difficulty the Romantics notoriously face in capturing and maintaining the mood evoked by all three passages. If a mode of "knowing" were all that was required, it would indeed seem that the moment of inspiration could be invoked almost casually. Yet the undeniable failure of romantic optimism to sustain itself testifies that such is far from being the case. What we find, instead, is a persistent inability on the part of the poet/percipient to connect the life he finds in nature to a similar impulse within himself. Schelling suggests the character of the problem when he says it is "to the inspired seeker alone" that nature is "the holy, ever-creative original energy of the world, which generates and busily evolves all things out of itself."102 That is, the life in nature is a given, but it requires a corresponding life within the percipient in order to reveal itself. As we have seen, Basil Willey's explication of Coleridge's theory of the mind assumes the necessity for just such a life: "the world is really alive, and not dead; the life we project into it meets a life which is already there."103 Were such a projection not required of the percipient, we might reasonably expect The Prelude, for instance, to
consist of uninterrupted "spots of time," a situation that clearly is not the case.

What we in fact discover is that such romantic failures are not solely, or even primarily, epistemological but include substantial affective and volitional components. Knowing, it turns out, is not a matter of perception merely. Coleridge, gazing at the stars, mourns precisely that "I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!" And Empedocles realizes all too well that Callicles' romanticism is inapplicable to him, since "I alone/ Am dead to life and joy, therefore I read in all things my own deadness." Coleridge addresses a related aspect of the problem when he says that spirit involves an act and that "it follows therefore that intelligence or self-consciousness is impossible, except by and in a will." Knowing is therefore consequent upon feeling, willing, and doing. When the romantic seeks to claim the unity promised by the construct, he finds that his success is contingent upon extra-epistemological factors and is thus a position to be won rather than a possession merely to be claimed. (The Golden Bowl, as we shall see, elaborates a compelling version of this situation.) The entire operation, in fact, proves precariously vulnerable to such imponderables as mood, temperament, and so forth. The experience of the romantics testifies that the individual may indeed participate in an organic whole, as idealism and romanticism insist, but that in order to appropriate this condition of unity, he must first apprehend it with all his faculties—physical, emotional, and volitional as well as mental. And it is precisely this requirement that the romantic percipient fails, again and again, to meet. The passage from "Tintern
Abbey" is remarkable not because it is typical but because it bodies forth an experience that is decidedly rare, an experience that proves increasingly difficult to realize, whether by Wordsworth himself, by later Romantics, or by a mid-Victorian such as Arnold. What romanticism seems to promise as a gift, then, proves in the event to come with unsuspected affective and volitional prerequisites, prerequisites the romantic percipient so frequently lacks.

The Idealist Dynamic and the Post-Darwinians

The well-known failures of romanticism need not detain us longer. I want now to move beyond the romanticism and to suggest that where the romantic construct fails (other than in the exceptional case) to forge the sought-for link between the human and the natural, Darwinian and post-Darwinian constructs succeed remarkably well. My argument is this: that the Darwinian "struggle for life" and the Nietzschean "will to power" provide, in ways suggestively similar, the means to unite the human with the natural, the individual with the world. They do so, moreover, not by positing a condition (affective, volitional, or epistemological) that individual and general humanity must meet, but by arguing for a species-wide dynamic in which each individual, simply by virtue of being alive—that is, grounded in physical reality and all the attributes this reality implies—necessarily partakes. One does not choose, that is, to participate in the struggle for life or to exercise the will to power; such involvement is a given. Darwin's dynamic is physiological, whereas Nietzsche's tends toward the instinctive and psychological; neither, however, is willfully avoidable.\textsuperscript{107} Darwin's claim accordingly is that "there must \textit{in every case} be a
struggle for existence," while Nietzsche insists that "life itself is will to power."\textsuperscript{108} Such universal involvement neatly sidesteps the romantic requirements. John Alcorn makes just this point in a study of "naturists," his term for those writers, beginning with Hardy, for whom "biology replaces theology as the source both of psychic health and of moral authority."\textsuperscript{109} Biology, for Alcorn, importantly replaces romantic epistemology and succeeds where the latter has failed:

Wordsworth's poetic vision presumes a distance between the object (the landscape) and the subject (the poet). The naturist tendency, culminating in Lawrence, is to avoid this subject-object separation by closing the personal subject within the impersonal world of nature.\textsuperscript{110}

Although Alcorn has Darwin primarily in mind, his observation works equally well for Nietzsche; paradoxically, because one is "closed" into it, one cannot will whether or not to exercise the will to power--the relevant word is "how," not "if."\textsuperscript{111}

As I suggested in the opening pages, these emergent forces constitute less a departure from than a variant on the romantic effort to unite self and world. This relationship between the romantics and the post-Darwinians derives from the debt that both owe to the idealist construct. The debt is by way of analogy, since idealism is unfailingly epistemological rather than biological, its organic emphasis notwithstanding. Nonetheless, the debt exists. That is, the struggle for life and the will to power both refer to dynamics that, like the
Absolute, exist both within the individual and in the external world--in nature and in other individuals. And it is the shared nature of the force--the fact that all participate in it--that serves to unite the self with other selves and, indeed, with all life. The idealists' organic metaphor becomes in these late-century forces a physical fact. The one and the many are ineluctably united through a force that manifests itself in each, a force that is at once coterminous with the individual and yet greater than any single individual in whom it is manifested. Frye's observation that the Romantic poet is "united to a creative power greater than his own because it includes his own" thus applies, with an emphasis newly physiological, to the post-Darwinian dynamics.

It is further arguable that these new forces share, with each other and with the Absolute, not only a dynamic but an ontology, and that that ontology is at bottom anti-transcendent. Its name notwithstanding, the Absolute is unfailingly plural rather than singular, a condition the romantics consistently attempt (Wordsworth with more success than, say, Emerson) to convey. As Frederick Copleston points out, "for Hegel the Absolute is not an impenetrable reality existing, as it were, above and behind its determinate manifestations: it is its self-manifestations." And it is no coincidence that he makes exactly the same point about the will to power. Nietzsche, for his part, makes the connection explicit, mounting a conscious anti-essentialist argument in the form of a vivid, extended metaphor:

A quantum of force is equivalent to a quantum of drive, will, effect--more, it is nothing other than
precisely this very driving, willing, effecting, and only owing to the seduction of language (and of the fundamental errors of reason that are petrified in it) which conceives and misconceives all effects as conditioned by something that causes effects, by a "subject," can it appear otherwise. For just as the popular mind separates the lightning from its flash and takes the latter for an action, for the operation of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was free to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything.¹¹⁵

There is, in other words, no abstractable will to power behind the instances of that will; Nietzsche's will, unlike Schopenhauer's, is not the singular noumenon which individual phenomena express but is instead plural and self- rather than other-referential. And Ernst Mayr suggests that Darwin similarly "started from a new basis by completely eliminating the last remnants of Platonism, by refusing to admit the eidos (Idea; type, essence) in any guise whatsoever," a point Gillian Beer echoes in her study of Darwinian and belletristic intertextuality.¹¹⁶ From Darwin's point of view, says Mayr, "only the variation [i.e., the individual manifestation] is real."¹¹⁷
Post-Darwinism in Religious and Secular Thought

The concepts contained in such Darwinist and post-Darwinist systems may be construed, of course, to carry clear theological implications; and these implications, for good or ill, were scarcely lost on theological reformers, troubled traditionalists, or the informed participant/observer of Victorian culture.\textsuperscript{118} Webb notes that "the immediate impact of the idea of evolution on the mind of the religious world in England in the middle of the nineteenth century was apt to subvert all the assumptions . . . commonly made in the preceding period," prominent among which was, in Webb's view, the conviction of the transcendence of God.\textsuperscript{119} Elaborating its implications for theology, Webb connects organicism, evolution, and immanence in a manner similar to Lovejoy's reading of Schelling. Evolution, Webb contends,

seemed, at any rate to some minds, to explain by processes going on within the universe what it had previously been commonly maintained that an intelligent Power beyond and above the Universe was required to account for. If this use of the idea of evolution was to be reconciled with religion at all, it must plainly be by some doctrine of divine immanence, which should replace an instantaneous operation of transcendent divine power, calling the world into existence out of nothing in a form substantially the same from the first as it wears to-day, such as was then commonly supposed to be
implied by the term 'creation', by a gradual
operation of God whereby some simple germ or seed
might be developed into an ever progressively
richer variety of forms.120

And within the century itself, thoughtful observers can be found
who, far from abandoning all pretext of religion in the face of the new
science, seek to reconcile science and theology precisely in the manner
suggested by Webb—that is, by introducing into the conflict the
doctrine of immanence. Unsurprisingly, these students of the problem
tend also to emphasize the developmental or progressive nature of the
process through which that immanence manifests itself. A. P. Stanley,
preaching the funeral sermon on Sir Charles Lyell, argues on behalf of
the "slow 'increasing purpose' of Revelation, through 'sundry times and
divers manners,' working as if with the persistence of unconscious
instinct and the patience of deliberate will towards the fulness of
time."

For Stanley, the spirit of geology and the spirit of the
Bible are analogous, and the work of immanence is through a developing
uniformitarianism as opposed to the catastrophism generally championed
by those who would salvage some version of transcendence. Aubrey
Moore, a contributor to the idealist Lux Mundi, goes further to insist
specifically that uniformitarianism and immanence are, in fact, more
congenial to the spirit of the faith than are catastrophism and
transcendence. Moore argues that evolution

as a theory is infinitely more Christian than the
text of 'Special Creation.' For it implies the
immanence of God in nature, and the omnipresence of his creative power. Those who opposed the doctrine of evolution in defense of 'a continued intervention' of God seem to have failed to notice that a theory of occasional intervention implies as its correlative a theory of ordinary absence. . . . Anything more opposed to the language of the Bible and the Fathers can hardly be imagined.122

In the light of such arguments as Stanley's and Moore's, it is not surprising that contributors to the controversial Essays and Reviews, while less forthcoming than Moore on the subject of immanence itself, nonetheless turn almost instinctively to organic metaphor in their own efforts to reconcile Christianity with post-Darwinian modes of thought; among the volume's contents are essays by Frederick Temple and Benjamin Jowett which apply developmental readings to, respectively, human history and Scriptural revelation.123

Nor were those seeking the reconciliation of Christianity with scientific thought alone in their willingness to ascribe meaning to the evolutionary process. It is just here, in fact, that we first discern the ease with which theological speculation could elide into secularism, sometimes so gradually that the transition becomes almost imperceptible. For the apparently self-validating nature of the process proves appealing to religionists and secularists alike, both of whom tend to be attracted by the telos so readily discernible--in light of the century-long romance with organic, developmental dynamics--in the entire operation.124 As Gillian Beer writes,
The all-inclusiveness of [evolutionary theory's] explanation . . . seemed to offer a means of understanding without recourse to godhead. It created a system in which there was no need to invoke a source of authority outside the natural order: in which instead of foreknown design, there was inherent purposiveness.\textsuperscript{125}

And George Levine reports that even a single organism could evoke much the same response, since

organism, in late-century thought, almost displaces God, for its vital complexity can help explain phenomena that seem merely irrational and fortuitous.\textsuperscript{126}

Precisely this conflation of religious and secular impulses (a conflation similar to that frequently discernible in Nietzsche) is apparent in George Eliot's favorable notice of R. W. Mackey's argument that "divine revelation . . . is co-extensive with the history of human development, and is perpetually unfolding itself to our widened experience and investigation."\textsuperscript{127} Upon reading Darwin, furthermore, she confesses to being most impressed, not by the revolutionary mechanics of natural selection but, on the contrary, by "the mystery that lies under the processes."\textsuperscript{128}

If evolutionary thought could appear benign and purposive to some observers, to others it seemed that Darwin's unique contribution, the
theory of natural selection, postulated a frighteningly unharnessed energy, energy that could be viewed as a type of other, equally sobering, nineteenth-century forces. It is with this in mind that Northrop Frye posits a 'drunken boat' construct, where the values of humanity, intelligence, or cultural and social tradition keep tossing precariously in a sort of Noah's ark on top of a menacing and potentially destructive force. This is the relation of the world as idea to the world as will in Schopenhauer, of ethics to evolution in Darwin and Huxley, of the ascendant class to the proletariat in Marx, and later, of ego to libido and id in Freud.129

What Frye describes is something akin to the force implied by Tennyson's "Nature, red in tooth and claw," a force that threatens from below to generalize itself throughout all of life, while the "surface" values of order, reason, and morality seek to fend it off.130 And although Darwin himself could affirm that "[t]here is grandeur in this view of life," Beer testifies alternatively to "the dismay many Victorians felt at the apparently random . . . energy that Darwin perceived in the natural world."131 Nor is the reason hard to find, as Levine's description would indicate:

to imagine a system in which disorder, dysteleology, and mindlessness are constitutive, and, indeed, the source of all value, is to turn the
Western tradition, with its faith that all value
inheres in order, design, and intelligence, on its
head.132

And although Frye does not include him in his model, it is just this
seemingly uncontrollable, and therefore potentially chaotic, energy
that peers through Nietzsche's explanation of the will to power, an
explanation that has a good deal in common with Darwin's account of
natural selection:

life itself is \textit{essentially} appropriation, injury,
overpowering of what is alien and weaker. . . .
"Exploitation" does not belong to a corrupt or
imperfect and primitive society: it belongs to the
\textit{essence} of what lives, as a basic organic function;
it is a consequence of the will to power, which is
after all the will of life.133

\textbf{The Question of Value and the Celebration of Life}

In the face of these newly discovered forces, forces that promise
to insinuate themselves into all of life, a range of ethical responses
becomes available. It is, on the one hand, possible to decry the
entire enterprise as inherently immoral, an option that is particularly
attractive to adherents of traditionalism, with its emphasis on the
rational and the objective. The ease with which observers (including
Frye and Levine) fall into dualistic metaphor in picturing post-
Darwinian energies and their relationship to tradition, a model for
which neither Darwin nor Nietzsche furnishes support, helps account for
the fact that opponents of post-Darwinism can exhibit a perceptible tendency to defensiveness. Julien Benda, an outspoken twentieth-century opponent of post-romanticism, presents that case in a statement that both anticipates Levine's description and moralizes it:

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of a movement whereby those who for twenty centuries taught Man that the criterion of the morality of an act is its disinterestedness, that good is a decree of his reason insofar as it is universal, that his will is only moral if its [sic] seeks its law outside its objects, should begin to teach him that the moral act is the act whereby he secures his existence against an environment which disputes it, that his will is moral insofar as it is a will 'to power,' that the part of his soul which determines what is good is its 'will to live' wherein it is most 'hostile to all reason,' that the morality of an act is measured by its adaptation to its end, and that the only morality is the morality of circumstances.

At the other end of the philosophical spectrum, of course, is Nietzsche's approach, one in which ethics frankly has no meaning except insofar as it promotes life in all its multifarious and frequently violent aspects:
The falseness of a judgment is for us not necessarily an objection to a judgment; in this respect our new language may sound strangest. The question is to what extent it is life-promoting, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-cultivating.\textsuperscript{136}

This passage, from \textit{Beyond Good and Evil}, calls to mind Nietzsche's much earlier affirmation of "an exuberant, triumphant life in which all things, whether good or evil, are deified."\textsuperscript{137}

Such a celebratory validation of all the aspects of life, particularly when viewed in light of Nietzsche's insistence that the essence of life is struggle and exploitation, exactly captures the implications inherent in a thoroughgoing immanence when carried to its logical extremity; nor is the situation appreciably altered by substitution of secular self-validation for the more overtly religious concept. To state the problem briefly, if all of life is saturated by the divine (i.e., is the final and only repository of meaning), as immanentist models and their secular equivalents would suggest, then all of life becomes worthy of validation. As with any construct tending toward monism, the problem then becomes whether and how to discriminate between competing claims of value. It is no doubt with something like these consequences in mind that Webb confesses, with a touch of wryness, that "the very hint of pantheism aroused a certain nervousness in the English mind."\textsuperscript{138}

And certainly for George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and Henry James—each of whom has earned, to a greater or lesser degree, the label
"secularist"—it is precisely the self-validating nature of such forces which serves as the functional equivalent of immanence, a situation that enables these observers to attribute a fundamental value to post-Darwinian energies, while at the same time celebrating the death of the transcendent God the energies supplant. Yet at the same time, the work of all three writers virtually pulsates with considerations of value, considerations that ramify from the individual to the (narrowly or broadly) social. And although each elaborates it differently, at bottom each writer hints at something I would call "reunion," not so much as a solution to but rather as part and parcel of the process I have called "the transformation of God." That is, only insofar as the forces associated with transcendence are vanquished, whether in religion, in the culture, or in the individual psyche, do the post-Darwinian energies become available. Paradoxically, these energies tend to eventuate not in the anarchy Benda fears but in something like a celebration of human and/or natural community; far from serving as a panacea, however—all three writers are unblinking on that point—they lead, often by the most circuitous (and potentially violent) routes, to a transformed vision of the one in/and the many. Autonomy and community, it would seem, are not, for these writers, opposites but complementary states.

One such approach is George Eliot's (derived from Feuerbach), for whom the entire human community is the highest repository of value; the ethical corollary of this principle is that the individual's highest duty is to aid, or at least to empathize with, her fellows and to remain in harmony with them for the greater good of all. No advocate
of chaos, she nonetheless can advocate a morality of the act, accepting
with Nietzsche the primacy of "doing" over "being" and making clear, as
she does in Middlemarch, that the moral act is possible only by a fully
human, and not merely rational, self (see Ch. 2). Hardy's ability to
claim, near the end of The Mayor of Casterbridge, that "no[t] any human
being deserved less than was given" (or, as Albert Guerard rephrases
it, his conviction that "everybody is good enough"), derives exactly
from his vision of human life as coherent with, for better and for
worse, the larger natural world (see Ch. 3). And James's Maggie
Verver, virtually alone among his protagnists, is able successfully to
combine the forces of Darwinian struggle and Nietzschean power with
those of love and knowledge, passion and perception, in order to
realize a vision that affirms her author's mandate to "live all you
can" (see Ch. 4).

Whether in the human individual, the human community, or the
human/natural community, then, the work of George Eliot, Hardy, and
James does celebrate life--albeit in often devious and subterranean
ways--in just the thoroughgoing manner advocated by post-Darwinian,
immanentist constructs. It does so, moreover, at the very same time
that it insistently deconstructs the role of savior figures and father
figures, the literary counterparts of the supplanted, transcendent God.
Edward Casaubon, Angel Clare, Adam Verver: the roles of each undergo
intense critical scrutiny aimed at elucidating the destructive effects
of power wielded by a divine/paternal "other." Levine correctly
remarks that George Eliot's late work "belongs in the same post-
Darwinian celebration of the divine impersonality of vital energy" as
the work of subsequent vitalists such as D. H. Lawrence.\textsuperscript{141} Beneath a quasi-conventional overlay, an overlay particularly prominent in the work of George Eliot and James, lie subtexts that celebrate those same dynamics we have seen at work in the struggle for life and the will to power. For George Eliot, for Hardy, for James, the forces of life can indeed be brutal. Theodora Bosanquet's observation regarding James is to the point:

\begin{quote}
When [he] walked out of the refuge of his study into the world and looked about him, he saw a place of torment, where creatures of prey perpetually thrust their claws into the quivering flesh of the doomed, defenceless children of light.\textsuperscript{142}
\end{quote}

Paradoxically, however, as I have suggested, in the very midst of the brutality, appears something akin to what Hegel calls "the friendliness of life."\textsuperscript{143} Beer aptly remarks that Hardy "shared with Darwin that delight in material life in its widest diversity, the passion for particularity, and for individuality and plenitude which is the counter-element [to randomness] in Darwin's narrative and theory."\textsuperscript{144} Quite in opposition to Browning's Cleon, who insists that "life's inadequate to joy,/ As the soul sees joy," these writers conclude, often at the deepest structural level, that the potential for, if not always the actuality of, a kind of fundamental joy lies at the heart of life itself.\textsuperscript{145} As a general proposition they tend to prefer, with Swinburne, "an indubitable and living lizard to a dead or doubtful god."\textsuperscript{146} And Lionel Stevenson's observation about Swinburne, vis-à-vis Arnold, is
true to a greater or lesser degree of them as well: "In the discarding of orthodox faith, Arnold saw uncertainty, futility, and loss of confidence in supernatural protection; Swinburne saw progress, emancipation, and escape from fear of supernatural vengeance."147 Far from feeling themselves "in the sea of life enisled," these writers are closer to Nietzsche's triumphant discovery that comes with the realization that "God is dead":

At long last the horizon appears free to us again, even if it should not be bright; at long last our ships may venture out again, venture out to face any danger; all the daring of the lover of knowledge is permitted again; the sea, our sea, lies open again; perhaps there has never yet been such an "open sea"--148

Transformation and Swinburne's "Hertha"

Novels as complex as those I discuss are necessarily multivalent and therefore manifest the "transformation of God" in various imperfect or incomplete ways; they are, after all, works of literature and not philosophical tracts. But before moving on to examine Middlemarch, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and The Golden Bowl, I want to look briefly at the one literary piece of the period that seems to me to embody the double movement of my thesis in a uniquely pure (almost polemic) form. I refer to Swinburne's discursive monologue, "Hertha." The speaker of "Hertha" is the Teutonic goddess of earth or earth-mother, and it is in this voice that the poem opens as nature speaks to humankind. Later
on, the speaker is further particularized as the tree of life. She is
often identified with Yggdrasil, the world-tree that acts as axis mundi
to link earth, heaven, and hell. 149 Underlying each persona, however,
is the notion of a unifying, pervasive, inexorable force out of which
all life springs. This force is both creative and timeless, the source
and sustainer of all that lives or has lived. As critics have noted,
"The intellectual basis of 'Hertha' is the perception of a universe of
continuous, vital transformations," transformations which testify to
"the conservation of energy and the indestructibility of matter." 150
Perhaps more remarkably, Hertha posits herself as the means by which
dualistic divisions, divisions she lays directly at the door of the
transcendent God against whom she argues, can be healed. 151

Beach displays a sound appreciation of Swinburne, particularly the
Swinburne of this poem, when he remarks that

so completely has he assimilated the concept of
evolution that he does not need to use any of the
technical terms of science but has already invented
a highly poetical vocabulary in which to render
what is for him the spiritual gist of evolution,
its bearing upon human conduct and destiny. 152

One of Hertha's opening claims, in fact, is that "First life on my
sources/ First drifted and swam . . . / Out of me man and woman, and
wild-beast and bird." 153 Hertha, however, is more than a force of
simple physiology, as her claims go on to suggest; she is the source,
she says, not only of humanity but of God: "before God was, I am" (15).
She is in some sense the ground of history, through whom the ephemeral
gods humans have created ("the Gods of your fashion," 101) pass, and
pass away; they are but "worms that are bred in the bark that falls
off; they shall die and not live" (105). A feathered Time himself
climbs through her branches, apparently much at home there.

Hertha's argument is that humans, if they will only know it, are
at one with her and with the life she embodies ("find thou but thyself,
thyart I," 35). She urges urges us to accept and appropriate our
inherent divinity and to live freely as we were intended, instead of
enslaving ourselves to established powers:

A creed is a rod,
And a crown is of night;
But this thing is God,
To be man with thy might,

To grow straight in the strength of thy spirit, and live out thy
life as the light. (71-75)

At moments the poem, published a year before The Birth of Tragedy,
waxes positively Nietzschean: "But the morning of manhood is risen, and
the shadowless soul is in sight" (95). We could scarcely want a more
thoroughgoing champion of the human than the speaker of "Hertha."

But what is most distinctive about the poem is its rhetorical
strategy, the same strategy that saves it from the didacticism into
which it otherwise would surely collapse. For Hertha speaks not only
in the language of evolution but also in the language of the Old
Testament; particularly in the opening stanzas, biblical cadences
pervade her speech. We find, for instance, echoes of Psalm 139 ("Hast thou known how I fashioned thee,/ Child, underground?" [41]) and Job ("Who hath given, who hath sold it thee,/ Knowledge of me?" [51]). And she uses those accents to telling double purpose. On the one hand, she argues against the transcendent God with whom we associate such rhythms; at the same time, she posits herself as a substitute for that same inadequate God. She is, moreover, a substitute who, as opposed to the God she would supplant, is immanent in the very depths of life. We thus discover that, just as Hertha's speech participates in biblical rhythms, she insistently arrogates to herself a remarkable number of attributes ordinarily associated with a more traditional divinity.¹⁵⁴ Like God, she takes the initiative in speaking to humanity: she identifies herself, relates her history, tells us where we have gone wrong, and prescribes the course of action we should follow if we are to right ourselves as humans and claim our proper place in the cosmos. Besides being the creative source of life, she further claims the power of salvation and damnation. Appropriately enough, her speech opens with the Judeo-Christian "I am," a nominative that insistently, almost hypnotically reverberates through the early lines of her discourse. She later assimilates herself to Christ as well, as in the phrase "The wounds in my bark" (107).

But whereas the traditional God disjoins, Hertha reunites. Indeed, she presents herself as the sole means of overcoming the dualistic division between the human and the divine, self and other: Hertha, like Emerson's "Brahma," functions as both subject and object; more than that, she partakes in the dynamic that connects the two, as
line 25 below ("the search and the sought, and the seeker") would suggest. In this participatory quality she resembles the idealist Absolute; she also fulfills one criterion that has since been posited (in a modern echo of Schelling) for post-Romantic religious reunion, i.e., "the disappearance of the ordinary subject-object scheme in the experience of the ultimate, the unconditional": 155

I the mark that is missed
And the arrows that miss,
I the mouth that is kissed
And the breath in the kiss,
The search, and the sought, and the seeker, the soul and the body that is. (21-25)

Hertha goes on to contrast her own impulse toward unity with the disjunctive function of the traditional, transcendent God, a God who is external to and set over against the life force she represents:

But what thing dost thou now,
Looking Godward, to cry
"I am I, thou art thou,
I am low, thou art high"?

I am thou, whom thou seekest to find him; find thou but thyself, thou art I. (35-39)

Whereas lines 35-38 depict the radical separation of humanity from the transcendent God, line 39 rests in unity, the rhetorical equivalent of the proposition that 1 = 1 ("I am thou ... thou art I"). Hertha thus
claims immanence for herself, ascribes transcendence to God, then
(inverting the dynamics described by Feuerbach and Nietzsche) insists
that only immanence will serve. Far from being a force that operates
outside the life process, she instead has her being in and of the
natural process--she is the natural process--out of which life
springs.\textsuperscript{156} She is, as Jerome McGann observes, "identical with all her
manifestations," the same characteristic others have attributed to the
idealist Absolute, the will to power, and the struggle for life (see
pp. 46-48).\textsuperscript{157} Her divinity is therefore the divinity of each in whom
she inheres; the poem, a radical validation of things earthly and of
life itself.

As such, it finds its place as a paradigmatic embodiment of the
post-Darwinian translocation of value from God to humanity, even while
retaining the religious overtones implicit in that movement. And
Swinburne's success in capturing what thoughtful Victorians felt is
made clear by a passage that concludes W. K. Clifford's essay, "The
Ethics of Religion." Clifford's lines, published in \textit{Fortnightly Review}
six years after "Hertha," could almost serve (considerations of gender
aside) as a summary of the poem:

\begin{quote}
The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman
deity fade slowly away from before us; and as the
mist of his presence floats aside, we perceive with
greater and greater clearness the shape of a yet
grander and nobler figure--of Him who made all Gods
and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of
history, and from the inmost depth of every soul,
the face of our father Man looks out upon us with
the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says,
'Before Jehovah was, I am!'\textsuperscript{158}

\textbf{Considerations of Method}

Finally, I want to close this introductory survey with a word
about methodological assumptions. I began by supposing that the
patterns of thought and belief current in the period 1860-1900 would
find their way, as Harold Kaplan suggests (pp. 6-7), into the litera-
ture of the age. Because psychocultural interpenetrations would be
apparent not only in the fiction of my writers but in their non-fiction
and personal writings as well, I have sought, in the voluminous letters
and other papers of each, to ferret out their mindsets with regard to
the issues (religious and paternal) involved in transformation. The
texts of the letters have, in every case, proved a mother lode of
information—some straightforward, some requiring a certain amount of
psychological interpretation. Rather than try to impose any specific
psychological theory, I have kept my approach as common-sensical and
unsystematic as possible, emphasizing cultural and personal influences
rather than essentialist models and relying on each writer's own words
to reveal her/his preoccupations.

In adopting this method, I have assumed the applicability of
Hegel's assertion that "every individual is a child of his time [and]
 it is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its
contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can leap
his own age."\textsuperscript{159} At first blush this appears to imply the obvious:
that it is unsurprising to find nineteenth-century writers producing
literature appropriate to, and reflective of, the nineteenth-century rather than of, say, the Renaissance. Actually, however, this position— to the extent that Hegel is correct—then requires us to admit the possibility that the very notion that "every individual is a child of his time" is itself a product of its time; and, as it happens, there is some evidence to suggest that this is largely the case. Although advocates of the position can still be found today (and the current emphasis on cultural studies, interdisciplinary almost by definition, owes at least a partial debt to this assumption), it turns out that this view of the necessary contemporaneity of thought is held virtually as an article of faith within the nineteenth century itself; extrapolating from Hegel's position, both readers and writers of the period tend to assume, indeed to expect, that ideas prominently current will be reflected in works of the pen. Thomas Hardy, for instance, remarks, "By a sincere school of Fiction we may understand a Fiction that expresses truly the views of life prevalent in its time, by means of a selected chain of action best suited for their exhibition." Henry James reveals a similar preoccupation in this contention from "The Art of Fiction":

It is as difficult to suppose a person intending to write a modern English as to suppose him writing an ancient English novel: that is a label which begs the question. One writes the novel, one paints the picture, of one's language and of one's time, and calling it modern English will not, alas! make the difficult task any easier."
A contemporary admirer of George Eliot ascribes less conscious intention to the process when he observes matter-of-factly that she "is, in fact, the peculiar product of this particular age, of this age and no other. She is the crown and blossom of the evolution philosophy"--a statement that, in its automatic invocation of organic metaphor, reflects its own involvement in the age of which it speaks.163

Nor were such assumptions confined to the world of belles lettres. D. F. Strauss, upon receiving from Dr. Robert Brabant a copy of Charles Hennell's An Inquiry into the Origins of Christianity, was so impressed with it that he promptly had it translated into German. And his remarks in a prefatory note to that volume resonate with Hegelian echoes:

That at certain periods certain modes of thought lie as it were in the atmosphere . . . and come to light in the most remote places without perceptible media of communication, is shown, not only by the contents, but by the spirit, of Mr. Hennell's work.164

In "remote" England, meanwhile, Leslie Stephen goes so far as to expand the notion beyond the scope of the intellectual elite and to posit the presence of the same current ideas in the thought of the person on the street. "How is it," he wonders,

that a tacit intellectual cooperation is established between minds placed far apart in the scale
of culture and natural acuteness? How is it that the thought of the intellectual leaders is obscurely reflected by so many darkened mirrors?^{165}

While admitting that he does not understand the reason for what he describes, Stephen nonetheless accepts its existence as fact.

Modern observers also have noted the easy mobility of ideas within the last century and have attempted to account for it. Basil Willey finds the key in the peculiar cohesion of Victorian society:

> It moved in regular orbits . . . from London to the country houses, revolving round certain fixed luminaries. . . . [It included s]tatesmen, bishops, landowners, physicians, lawyers, administrators, freethinkers, scientists, novelists, poets and painters. . . . Within it there was a real interchange of ideas, a real circulation of results; the latest volume of verse, the latest scientific theory, was not just something out of the void: it was the work of [someone] you had met last year at Lady Ashburton's or the Duchess of Argyll's.^{166}

A. O. Lovejoy accounts for the situation somewhat more generally, in a statement that, in contradistinction to Willey's, emphasizes the less conscious elements in the process:

> There are . . . implicit or incompletely explicit assumptions or more or less unconscious mental
habits, operating in the thought of an individual or a generation. It is the beliefs which are so much a matter of course that they are rather tacitly presupposed than formally expressed and argued for, the ways of thinking which seem so natural and inevitable that they are not scrutinized with the eye of logical self-consciousness, that often are the most decisive of the character of a philosopher's doctrine, and still oftener of the dominant intellectual tendencies of an age.167

Certainly George Eliot, Hardy, and James were among the intellectual elite where these assumptions would soonest operate. And when in fact one of Hardy's correspondents writes casually to him as early as 1863 that he (the correspondent) hitherto had no notion that Hardy "considered the pen as one of the weapons of [his] struggle for life," it is difficult not to assume just such an "unconscious mental habit" already at work in reference to Darwin's thought, in view of its entry as a ready metaphor into this rather casual discourse.168 (It goes without saying that the writer expects Hardy to understand his reference.) With such an instance at hand, it seems almost superfluous to inquire into the extent of Hardy's reading or his formal acquaintance with the Origin; his friend's easy assumption speaks for an operative familiarity.

Lovejoy's doctrine is also peculiarly appropriate to the interchange between science, philosophy, and literature, since literature at its best tends to incorporate ideas non-programmatically. W. J. Harvey
has something like this in mind when he argues, "What is a weakness in scientific discourse—is a strength in the world of art." It is just this sort of analogical relationship that Stephen Donadio assumes in his analysis of the narrative impulses common to Henry James and Nietzsche. For Donadio, it is less a question of direct influence than of a manifest and unsurprising similarity between contemporaries.

All this is simply to suggest that we should not be surprised to find dynamics such as the struggle for life or the will to power appearing either overtly or covertly in the writing (whether fictional or personal) of major novelists of the day. The translocation of value from the divine to the human is, I have attempted to indicate, discernible in a variety of writing throughout the century. That this change and the dynamics most prominently associated with it should find their way into serious literary efforts, circulating from culture to psyche and back again, is to be expected, no less so in a century that itself professes the inevitability of precisely such interpenetrations.
Notes


4 Miller, Disappearance 2.

5 Miller, Disappearance 15.

6 Miller, Disappearance 15.

7 Miller, Disappearance 7, 6.

8 One of Peckham's few quibbles with the book is most pertinent here: "Nowhere does Professor Miller undertake to explain what we are talking about when we use the term 'God'" (203). For it is partly in the space of Miller's silence on this vital point that my thesis develops. And Miller's unstated assumption that, for post-Romantics at least, the only God who need be reckoned with is the transcendent God of traditional orthodoxy (because the immanent God, as he argues, is no longer available) puts him in the unlikely company of such early secularists as Feuerbach and Frederick Harrison. It was the latter's outraged review of Essays and Reviews ("Neo-Christianity," Westminster Review, Oct. 1860) that surprisingly charged the writers, from a liberal, agnostic position, with abandoning the faith. As Basil Willey comments, "It was not their 'liberalism' that he disapproved of, but their 'dishonesty' in trying to 'adapt' Christianity to modern thought and yet remain Churchmen... He wants to force them back on to the ground they have evacuated--that is, on to miracle, biblical fundamentalism, etc. That is the only ground that professed Christians may logically occupy" (More Nineteenth Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters [London: Chatto & Windus, 1956] 163-64). Even more remarkably, Feuerbach pauses in the middle of his anthropological (and Hegelian) transformation of Christianity to argue for a biblical literalism so thoroughgoing as to warm the heart of the most devout Protestant bibliolator: "Faith in a written revelation is a real, unfeigned, and so far respectable faith, only where it is believed that all in the sacred writings is significant, true, holy, divine. Where, on the contrary, the distinction is made between the human and divine, the relatively true and the absolutely true, the historical and the permanent,--where it is not held that all without distinction is unconditionally true; there the verdict of unbelief, that the Bible is no divine book, is already introduced into the interpretation of the
Bible,--there, at least indirectly, that is, in a crafty, dishonest way, its title to the character of a divine revelation is denied. . . . A book that imposes on me the necessity of discrimination, the necessity of criticism, in order to separate the divine from the human, the permanent from the temporary, is no longer a divine, certain, infallible book. . . . How true, on the contrary was the conception of the old faith, when it extended inspiration to the very words, to the very letters of Scripture!" (Ludwig Feuerbach, The Essence of Christianity, trans. George Eliot, intro. Karl Barth, Foreward H. Richard Niebuhr [1854; New York: Harper, 1957] 209-10). In a similar spirit, Miller either overlooks or undervalues post-traditional theological alternatives, especially as these alternatives, or impulses, may be found lurking in apparently secular theories, such as those of Feuerbach himself, of Darwin, and of Nietzsche. Such covertly conservative reductionism, which seems to assume that a dead transcendence equals a dead God, may well arise from a psychological impulse that seeks to insure that the father/God against whom the secularist is rebelling stays in his accustomed place. (A father who follows--or worse, joins--his defiant son in his rebellion renders the son's action pointless.) The secularist's wish to keep God in his accustomed transcendent place, and religion frozen in an outdated if traditional orthodoxy, has scarcely been borne out by modern theology, whose practitioners, from late-nineteenth-century liberalism through such otherwise dissimilar moderns as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Paul Tillich, John A. T. Robinson, Harvey Cox, and beyond, have found in (broadly immanentist) thisworldly impulses a practicable alternative to purely secular agnosticism. (These thinkers likely would object to the term "immanence" to describe their positions, because of its negative pantheistic connotations; I offer it here, however, as an umbrella term to designate a variety of post-metaphysical systems.) And perhaps because such alternatives, to the post-Romantic mind, appear more difficult to render obsolete or irrelevant than is transcendence with its unfashionable metaphysical implications, secularists tend, as if instinctively, to protect their position by writing as though, in sounding the death knell of transcendence, they have bested all of theology. By comparison with this notion, the much-maligned Essayists and Reviewers, with their willingness to adapt to their own present, come to appear more prophetic of the most viable direction of theology than they could have known or believed at the time they wrote. (A very recent example of this adaptive theological impulse would be the growth among some feminists of a women's spirituality movement, with such variants as worship of "the goddess," a figure deriving from mythical and natural religious sources, certain forms of resurgent paganism, and even a benign witchcraft; its adherents run the gamut from professing members of mainline denominations to professed opponents of all forms of patriarchal Christianity.)

9 My purpose, here and throughout, is not to argue an objective or ontological change in the status of God--as my quotation from Miller somewhat misleadingly suggests him to be doing--(how indeed would one even begin to make such an argument?) but to trace perceptual or perspectival alterations concerning the location of the attributes traditionally attributed to the godhead.
This double movement is virtually a commonplace in texts written about and within the period. Two authoritative recent observers, for instance, have noted precisely this pattern operating more generally within Victorian life. Basil Willey suggests that the special problem of the nineteenth century was "the reconciling of destruction with reconstruction, negation with affirmation, science with religion, the head with the heart, the past with the present, order with progress" (Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold [New York: Columbia UP, 1949] 188). And Walter E. Houghton, who analyzes these same contradictions at great length in The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870 (New Haven: Yale UP, 1957), explains the operation of the dynamic: "By definition an age of transition in which change is revolutionary has a dual aspect: destruction and reconstruction. As the old order of doctrines and institutions is being attacked or modified or discarded, at one point and then another, a new order is being proposed or inaugurated" (3). A similar dynamic animates M. H. Abrams' thesis in Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature (New York: Norton, 1971), in which he argues that Romantic and post-Romantic poetry internalizes the biblical pattern of the journey from fall through atonement to judgment and apocalypse. Within the century itself, Edward Caird opens his seminal 1883 study of Hegel by observing, "The great movement of thought which characterizes the nineteenth century is a movement through negation to reaffirmation, through destruction to reconstruction" (Hegel [1883; n.p.: Archon, 1968] 1). This same dynamic underlies literary conversion patterns so prominent in the period, patterns for which Carlyle's Sartor Resartus may be considered paradigmatic; it may also be found in Tennyson's somewhat wistful rejection of historical stasis in Idylls of the King: "The old order changeth, yielding place to new" (The Coming of Arthur, line 508; The Passing of Arthur, line 408; The Poetical Works of Tennyson, ed. G. Robert Stange, Cambridge Edn. [Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974] 311, 449).

See, for instance, Job 1.1-2.13. This and all succeeding biblical references are, unless otherwise noted, to the King James Version.


Jude 1.25.

Frank Turner, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith That was Lost," Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief, eds. Richard J. Helmstadter and


17 Miller, *Disappearance* 2.


19 Bellah 28.

20 Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York and London: Harcourt, 1959). For Eliade, the ritual moment actually evokes the sacred, whereas ritual, for Bellah, only intensifies an already-present sacrality. It is important, moreover, not to overstate the similarities between Eliade and Bellah. While it is true that both find the divine saturation of life typical of primitive religion, it is also true, as George Rupp points out (*Beyond Existentialism and Zen: Religion in a Pluralistic World* [New York: Oxford UP, 1979] 27), that the line of development Bellah traces is essentially Hegelian in its dynamic. Eliade's sympathies, on the other hand, are resolutely anti-Hegelian and generally anti-historicist (Eliade 110-13). Eliade thus contrasts primitive sacrality with the modern, profane world, to the detriment of the latter, while Bellah sees modern religion as recapitulating the thisworldliness of primitive quasi-monism.

21 Bellah 22.

22 Bellah 32.

23 Bellah 33.

24 Bellah 24.

25 Eliade 164.

26 Bellah 40.

27 Rupp 32-70.

28 As Chapter 3 indicates, Mary Augusta Ward's *Robert Elsmere*, although written fully from the perspective of "high culture," enjoyed such spectacular popularity as to become the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of Great Britain, and thereby aided in disseminating, at least in middle class circles, the religious problems and possibilities generated by the German higher criticism so well known, through George Eliot's transla-
tions of Strauss and Feuerbach, to the intellectual elites of the cities.

29 Bellah 23.


31 Webb 22.

32 Webb 25. This contention finds support in the prologue to the Gospel of John, with its extra-spatial, ahistoric "Word" (John 1.1).

33 Webb 29 (Webb's emphases).


40 Clifford 2: 224.

41 Froude 13.


severe upon the doctrine of everlasting punishment for disbelief—but very few now wd. call that 'Christianity,' (tho' the words are there.) There is the question of verbal inspiration comes in too" (87, note).


46 "Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind," lines 89-91, Tennyson 5.

47 "Mycerus," line 54, Arnold 5.


50 As Jerome Hamilton Buckley points out, Richard's secret guilt in the burning of Farmer's Blaize's rick serves only to bring out Sir Austin's always-present tendency to play God (Season of Youth: *The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1974] 73). And Edmund Gosse describes the effect of such suffocating external control from the point of view of the victim, using the organic metaphor so typical of the century: "I was like a plant on which a pot has been placed, with the effect that the centre is crushed and arrested, while shoots are straggling up to the light on all sides" (Father and Son: *A Study of Two Temperaments* [1907; New York: Scribner's, 1916] 287).

51 This is not to imply that the relationships in *Jane Eyre* or *Bleak House* are wholly uncomplicated or benign; certainly a wealth of feminist criticism argues to the contrary. My point is simply that it requires a closer look to discern the difficulties in these earlier relationships, whereas in the novels with which I am concerned, the tyranny of the father is manifest and the exercise of power more malign and more one-sided.

52 Gosse 36-38.

53 Gosse 219.

54 Nietzsche characteristically ethicizes the situation that results from such liberation in his dictum that "'autonomous' and 'moral' are mutually exclusive" (*On the Genealogy of Morals, Basic Writings* 495).


57 Daiches' contention that Towneley's "effortless mindlessness . . . arose from [Butler's] bourgeois envy of aristocratic grace" thus bypasses the more important point, i.e., that Towneley's function is to embody the thesis that self-actualization is possible only to those unencumbered by parents, of which the only pure case is the orphan (Daiches 54; see also 55).


62 Webb 119 (Webb's emphasis).


65 Feuerbach conceives of the human species as operating analogously to the Absolute, and thus concludes, much in the manner of Bradley, that "where there arises the consciousness of the species as a species, the idea of humanity as a whole, Christ disappears, without however, his true nature disappearing; for he was the substitute for the consciousness of the species, the image under which it was made present to the people, and became the law of the popular life" (269).

66 Feuerbach's rendering of the dynamic is succinct: "Man--this is the mystery of religion--projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself, thus converted into a subject; he thinks of himself is [sic] an object to himself, but as the object of an object, of another being than himself.
Thus here. Man is an object to God" (29-30).

67 Feuerbach 33.

68 Feuerbach 18.

69 On the Genealogy of Morals, Basic Writings 528.

70 On the Genealogy of Morals, Basic Writings 529 (Nietzsche's emphasis).

71 In a retrospective on the century, an unnamed writer in The Spectator could both confirm and celebrate the assault dualism had sustained throughout the period: "For whatever else may be affirmed of the thought of the century just past and gone, one thing is certain, viz., that all schools tended to the doctrine of philosophic unity, and that the principle of dualism was thoroughly discarded. . . . in all [contemporary systems of thought] there is a strenuous attempt to reach a universal unity. . . . All we contend for is that neither the philosophic nor the religious consciousness could find any rest in a dualistic view of the world. That appears to us to be the most signal and positive outcome of the thought of the last hundred years, and a most vital and important conclusion it certainly is" ("The Spiritual Movement in the Nineteenth Century," 86 [January 5, 1901]: 9-10).

72 Feuerbach 159. Feuerbach's deification of the human, particularly of the human as species, is anticipated by David Friedrich Strauss, who writes in the "Concluding Dissertation" of his The Life of Jesus Critically Examined: "... is not the idea of the unity of the divine and human natures a real one in a far higher sense, when I regard the whole race of mankind as its realization, than when I single out one man as such a realization? is not an incarnation of God from eternity, a truer one than an incarnation limited to a particular point of time[?]" (Trans. from the Fourth German Edition by George Eliot, ed. Peter C. Hodgson [1846; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972] 780). A comparison of Feuerbach's formulation with Freud's approving citation from Plautus (Asinaria II.iv.88), "Homo homini lupus," provides, on the one hand, a short course in the difference between nineteenth-century optimism and twentieth-century pessimism in regard to human nature (Civilization and Its Discontents, trans. James Strachey [New York and London: Norton, 1961] 58). From another point of view, however, Freud's formulation simply serves, in combination with Feuerbach's, to complete a picture of life much as Nietzsche was to envision it: as multi-faceted, contradictory, paradoxical, yet nonetheless worthy of affirmation.

73 Willey, Nineteenth Century 238.


76 *Beyond Good and Evil*, Basic Writings 256.

77 Webb 47-48 (Webb's emphasis).


80 Frye, "The Drunken Boat" 211.

81 John A. Lester, Jr., extends the model by assimilating "downward" to "backward" in time, for the post-Romantics at least, when he suggests, "To reach out with acceptance to the natural world was not only to reach downward, but also to become reunited with a world of age-long duration, through which man was linked with all history, with pagan worship and myth, even with prehistory" (*Journey through Despair 1880-1914: Transformations in British Literary Culture* [Princeton: Princeton UP, 1968] 74).


83 I.ii.397-406, Arnold 60.


85 Feuerbach 9.

on feeling, or "the heart," as a reliable indicator of true religious experience. Terming it a "vital religion," A. O. J. Cockshut defines the Evangelical experience as "a lively conviction of being a sinner, followed by conversion, that is, a belief that Christ had died to save the sinner personally. Without this experience intellectual acceptance of Christian doctrine, church-going and good works were vain. . . . [The Evangelicals] laid all the stress on feeling, not thought" (Religious Controversies of the Nineteenth Century: Selected Documents [London: Methuen, 1966] 3. Cockshut's description echoes William Wilberforce's statement that "what has been required is not the perception of a subtile distinction, but a state and condition of heart" (Practical View of the Prevailing Religious Conception of Professed Christians in the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country Contrasted with Real Christianity, ch. 3, sec. 4, 1797, Cockshut 22). U. C. Knoepflmacher, in a discussion of religious humanism and related schools of the post-1850s, points out that "the starting point for all the new creeds was the human 'heart,'" a basis that suggests a certain debt to both Evangelical and Romantic inwardness (Religious Humanism and the Victorian Novel: George Eliot, Walter Pater, and Samuel Butler [Princeton UP, 1965] 7).

87 The George Eliot Letters (hereafter GEL) 2: 82.


91 My sources for idealist theory are primarily Copleston, vol. 7 (see note 63) and Edward Caird's Hegel (see note 10). In describing the idealist construct so broadly, I have not always attempted to differentiate between Hegel's thought and Schelling's, although I do indicate one aspect of their differences concerning the final state of the subject/object relationship (see p. 26). The definitive statement of the organic, hence telic, quality of philosophy (and by extension of his own system) is, however, Hegel's: "The bud disappears when the blossom breaks through, and we might say that the former is refuted by the latter; in the same way when the fruit comes, the blossom may be explained to be a false form of the plant's existence, for the fruit appears as its true nature in place of the blossom. These stages are not merely differentiated; they supplant one another as being incompatible with one another. But the ceaseless activity of their own inherent nature makes them at the same time moments of an organic unity, where they not merely do not contradict one another, but where one is as necessary as the other; and this equal necessity of all moments constitutes alone and thereby the life of the whole" ("Preface," Phenomenology 68).


94 Nineteenth Century 25 (Willey's emphasis).

95 Frye, "The Drunken Boat" 209-11.


97 Beach, Nature 224.


99 Lines 95-102, Wordsworth, Poetical 2: 262.

100 Lines 44-48, Coleridge 1: 102.

101 Emerson 50.

102 Friedrich Wilhelm von Schelling, "On the Relation of the Plastic Arts to Nature," Critical Theory Since Plato, ed. Hazard Adams (New York: Harcourt, 1971) 446. In the same essay, Schelling goes on to explain the necessity for the life we meet in nature: "For that wherein there is no understanding cannot be the object of understanding; the unknowing cannot be known" (Adams 448).

103 Willey, Nineteenth Century 25.


105 Empedocles on Etna II.320-22, Arnold 70 (my emphasis).

106 Coleridge, Biographia 1: 185.

107 Although Nietzsche insists repeatedly that the will to power is both an instinctive and an organic function (Beyond Good and Evil, Basic Writings 211, 238, 393), he seems at the same time to distance himself from Darwin, evidently because he sees the will to power as a positive or affirmative function, whereas he associates the struggle for life with a negative impulse, i.e., the attempt to avoid death (a contrast perhaps predictive of Freud's eros versus thanatos, or genital versus anal). He also views self-preservation as a byproduct of the
will to power, rather than as a force in its own right: "Physiologists should think before putting down the instinct of self-preservation as the cardinal instinct of an organic being. A living thing seeks above all to discharge its strength—life itself is will to power; self-preservation is only one of the indirect and most frequent results" (211, Nietzsche's emphases).

108 Charles Darwin, On the Origin of Species: A Facsimile of the First Edition, intro. Ernst Mayr (1859; Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1964) 63 (my emphasis); for full text of Darwin passage, see note 133 below; Nietzsche, Beyond Good and Evil, Basic Writings 211 (Nietzsche's emphasis); for full text of Nietzsche passage, see note 107 above.


110 Alcorn 4 (my emphasis).

111 Nietzsche's argument in On the Genealogy of Morals is that the will to power may be exercised directly, by the masters, or it may be inverted, as happens in slave morality, where a sort of power is paradoxically gained through a code of systematic (Christian) weakness. Or it may be exercised through an equally paradoxical combination of strength and weakness, as in the case of the priestly class (Basic Writings 472-84, 552-81).

112 In regard to the Hegelian Absolute, Copleston points out that "we cannot say of any finite mind's knowledge of the Absolute that it is identical with the Absolute's knowledge of itself. For the latter transcends any given finite mind or set of finite minds. . . . [The Absolute] does not exist apart from all finite minds, but it is obviously not confined to any given mind or set of minds" (180).

113 Copleston 170. Hegel concludes an organic metaphor with just this point (see note 91): "this equal necessity of all moments constitutes alone and thereby the life of the whole" ("Preface," Phenomenology 68).

114 Copleston 407.

115 On the Genealogy of Morals, Basic Writings 481 (Nietzsche's emphases). Nietzsche's metaphor is anticipated by Carlyle; writing of "The Hero as Divinity," he describes the "Great Man" as "the lightning, without which the fuel never would have burnt" (On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History (1841), The Complete Works of Thomas Carlyle, 20 vols. (New York: Crowell, n.d.) 1: 247. Although Francis Golffing reports that Nietzsche professed to detest Carlyle, in contrast to his stated admiration for Emerson (intro., The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals [Garden City: Doubleday, 1956] viii), the repetition of the metaphor suggests that Nietzsche may have picked it up in his reading of Carlyle and passed it on unawares.


118 Those interested in the role Comte's positivism played in the formation of attitudes toward Darwinism (and toward the Higher Criticism as well) by the various religious parties to the ongoing disputes should consult Charles D. Cashdollar's excellent study, *The Transformation of Theology, 1830-1890: Positivism and Protestant Thought in Britain and America* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989) 182-205. In an informative chapter, Cashdollar suggests that "As publicity about [positivism] spread throughout Britain and America, it attached itself to Darwinism and to the Higher Criticism, and the odium of Comtism slowed, or even prevented, the reception of those other ideas. It was not . . . impossible for religious leaders to accept either evolutionism or historical criticism, but the reality was that first the theologians had to break them away from Comte and create distinct nonpositivist versions. The more judicious conservatives and the early liberals did just that" (204).

119 Webb 14.

120 Webb 12 (Webb's emphases).

121 A. P. Stanley, "'Sermons on Special Occasions': The Religious Aspects of Geology" (Funeral Sermon on Sir Charles Lyell [Feb. 28, 1875]), Cockshut 249. Stanley's statement reveals, more clearly than most, the thoroughgoing telism of organic theory.

122 Aubrey Moore, *Science and the Faith* (London, 1889) 184-85 (Moore's emphases). Moore's phrase "a continued intervention" refers to the theory that God intervenes *from time to time* in order to bring about periodic catastrophic geological alterations. Moore also conducted what was in effect a one-man crusade against deistic remnants in the thought of those who tried to explain evolution by arguing that God impressed his will at the beginning of the process in such a manner that evolutionary changes could then follow without further intervention. For a discussion of Moore's reaction to evolution in the context of the intellectual tumult triggered by the *Origin*, see Livingston 209-41.


124 Walter Pater's impatient remarks at the end of the century testify to the pervasiveness of the developmental theory throughout the period: "Nay, the idea of development (that, too, a thing of growth, developed in the progress of reflexion) is at last invading one by one,
as the secret of their explanation, all the products of mind, the very mind, itself" (Plato and Platonism: A Series of Lectures [1893; London: Macmillan, 1912] 20-21. One indication of the truth of Pater's complaint is that even so firm an anti-naturalist as J. S. Mill could use the organic metaphor, in a manner worthy of Dickens's anti-utilitarian stance in Hard Times, to argue for the importance of liberty: "Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides, according to the tendency of the inward forces which make it a living thing" (On Liberty, 1859, Mill 18: 263).

125 Darwin's Plots 16. George Levine makes a similar point in Darwin and the Novelists: Patterns of Science in Victorian Fiction (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1988). It is Darwin's metaphors, Levine suggests, that "allowed him to give evidence of design that need not imply a designer. Darwin's revolution inerded precisely in this disanalogy, for it meant that all phenomena were subject to secular, naturalistic study. Nature itself embodies the power formerly attributed to a divine being" (101).

126 Levine, Realistic Imagination 269.


130 In Memoriam 56.15, Tennyson 176.

131 Darwin, Origin 490; Gillian Beer, Darwin's Plots 9. His affirmation of the process notwithstanding, Darwin also notes, "There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings, and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows" (Darwin, Autobiography 87).

132 Levine, Darwin and the Novelists 94.
Beyond Good and Evil, Basic Writings 393 (Nietzsche's emphases). Compare this passage from the Origin: "Hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life. It is the doctrine of Malthus applied with manifold force to the whole animal and vegetable kingdoms" (63).

Dualistic renderings of the dynamic are not exclusive to traditionalists. Contemporary dualistic portrayals in literature, spurred perhaps by a growing interest in psychology as well as by post-Darwinism, include R. L. Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (publ. 1886) and Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (publ. in Lippincott's Magazine, 1890). As chapter 2 indicates, George Eliot's portrayal of these energies within herself is essentially dualistic as well.


Nietzsche, Basic Writings 201 (my emphasis).

Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, Basic Writings 41.

Webb 37.


Henry James, The Ambassadors, Chapter 11.

Levine, Realistic Imagination 271.


"The Spirit of Christianity and Its Fate," Hegel, Early Theological Writings 229.

Gillian Beer, Darwin's Plots 258.


151 Swinburne makes clear his intent with regard to the poem's attack on God when he writes to W. M. Rossetti shortly after its completion that "I have broken the back (not only of God, but) of the poem in question" (*Letters* 2: 79-80).


153 A. C. Swinburne, "Hertha," *Lang* 368-74, lines 11-15. All further references to the poem are to this edition and appear in the text.


156 Ross C. Murfin points out that the phrase "Mother, not maker" (line 67) indicates that Hertha "is not a personal, creative god," i.e., she works from within the process rather than imposing her will on it from the outside (*Swinburne, Hardy, Lawrence and the Burden of Belief* [Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1978] 54).

157 McGann 251.

158 Clifford 2: 243.

160 Debate over this historical method continues to the present. Miller, for example, expresses a view coherent with Hegel's in his "Introduction" to The Disappearance of God: "A great historical transformation remains mysterious, just as does the homogeneity of the culture of a single age. We can neither explain why people stop feeling and believing in an old way, nor why a new way of feeling and believing appears simultaneously in widely separated individuals. The attempt to establish the genesis of historical change usually reveals more about the presuppositions of the historian than about cause and effect relations in the events themselves" (3-4). But Peckham, in his generally favorable review, takes Miller's own presuppositions to task: "My quarrel is that Professor Miller seems to be unaware that a problem lurks in the perception that 'people stop feeling and believing in an old way' and that 'a new way of feeling and believing appears simultaneously in widely separated individuals.' Such a perception reveals as much about 'the presuppositions' of the historian who does the perceiving as it does about the presuppositions of the historian who offers the explanation" (Peckham 204).


164 Quoted in Willey, Nineteenth Century 219.

165 (1876); quoted in Houghton xvi.

166 Willey, More Nineteenth Century 54-55.

167 Lovejoy 7 (Lovejoy's emphasis).

168 H. Bastow to Thomas Hardy, 23 December, 1863 (Dorset County Museum, Bastow's emphasis); quoted in Michael Millgate, Thomas Hardy: A Biography (New York: Random, 1982) 72.

and similarly concludes that "the rhetoric of thermodynamics carries a different sort of authority in an aesthetic criticism than it does in social criticism; the artists and writers tend to use these metaphors as metaphors rather than as laws. Those who use the commonplaces in aesthetic terms do not need them to structure an emerging discipline, do not try to give their criticism the authority of the physical sciences, and do not even recognize such an authority; they are likely to invert the commonplaces science gives them or point out the relation of these commonplaces to non-scientific sources" (Victorian Studies 29 [1985] 59).
II. The Devil Made Them Do It:
George Eliot's Textual Transformations

"Will ye submit your necks, and chuse to bend
The supple knee?" --- Paradise Lost 5.787-88

In 1838, the eighteen-year-old Mary Ann Evans wrote to her friend and mentor Maria Lewis these lines that have become almost emblematic of her Evangelical years:

... for my part when I hear of the marrying and giving in marriage that is constantly being transacted I can only sigh for those who are multiplying earthly ties which though powerful enough to detach their heart and thoughts from heaven, are so brittle as to be liable to be snapped asunder at every breeze.¹

Less than three years later, however, she could affirm to another correspondent that among the "externals (at least they are such in common thought) that I could ill part with" are "the sweet, peace-breathing sights and sounds of this lovely Earth." She goes on to characterize these phenomena, in Blakean fashion, as "an inexhaustible world of delights."² Still later she confides to Sara Hennell her conviction that "this earth is as good a heaven as I ought to dream of."³ Finally, in her essay, "The Future of German Philosophy," we find her rejecting "the attempt to climb to heaven by the rainbow bridge of 'the high priori road,'" in favor of "treading the uphill a
posteriori path which will lead, not indeed to heaven, but to an eminence whence we may see very bright and blessed things on earth."⁴

That the last three passages represent a thoroughgoing reversal of the early stance expressed to Miss Lewis, a movement from otherworldliness to thisworldliness, no student of George Eliot would deny.⁵ Between the first passage and the second, in fact, intervened the so-called "holly war": Mary Ann's refusal to attend church, the struggle with her father as a result of that decision, and her meeting with, and growing friendship for, Cara and Charles Bray, Sara and Charles Hennell.⁶ Where critics differ, though, is with regard to the precise nature of this change. As George Eliot's formalist admirers gave way, in the 1960s, to a new generation of critics who explicated her indebtedness to various intellectual currents, a model of linear discontinuity appeared as a method of describing the change in the future George Eliot's system of belief. Covertly or overtly, implicitly or explicitly, these observers tend to assume that somewhere in Mary Ann Evans's journey from Evangelical Christianity, through Spinozist and Wordsworthian pantheism, to her resting place in religious humanism, a distinctive break occurred. In this view, she discovered that God had disappeared and, good Victorian that she was, found herself peering into the abyss. Then, searching for something to replace her lost faith, she more or less deliberately substituted a new set of beliefs, beliefs informed by the work of Comte, or Feuerbach, or Arnold, or Mill, or some combination of these or other thinkers. Bernard Paris, probably the strongest advocate of this position, also states it the most openly:
The great question for Eliot, as well as for many of her contemporaries and ours, was, how can man lead a meaningful, morally satisfying life in an absurd universe? ... I am not, of course, concerned to show that George Eliot did not believe in God—that is well known—but to see what she put in place of God, how she went about constructing her religion of humanity. 7

Apart from its problematic strategy of backreading modern religious angst into the Victorian mindset, Paris seems to posit a model of belief that is conscious, rational, and above all linear—with a break in the line appearing abruptly at the point of crisis, the appearance of the abyss. The line then resumes, is actually reconstructed, with George Eliot's adoption of a secular, thisworldly creed. Now it is one thing to assume that George Eliot, in abandoning her faith, must have found life absurd; to find evidence that she in fact ever did so is quite another, nor has such evidence been forthcoming. Neither has Paris's position gone wholly uncontested. Ruby Redinger, whose reading of the life is psychological and subtextual rather than rational and textual, suggests an alternative reading of the data:

George Eliot's own final position was that of finding religious value in humanity. The fact that this had also been her first instinct ... is one reason why after her loss of faith, not only in Evangelicalism but in the existence of God, she
could find spiritual fulfillment in the human world alone. She was spared the tortuous despair which afflicted most of her contemporaries who also found it necessary to face the consequences of there being no God. In fact, she was never again to ally or identify herself wholly with any one doctrine or movement, whether religious, philosophical, or social.  

In an observation coherent with Redinger's, Henry Auster says of the novels themselves:

The side of modernism expressed in such phrases as 'connoisseurs of chaos,' the 'imagination of disaster,' 'waiting for the end,' and by the image of the abyss is notably absent from the world of George Eliot's fiction, early and late.  

And when we turn to George Eliot's personal writings, we in fact find something very different from Paris's model at work. The latter, for all its appeal to logic and order, finds very little support in the letters. What we discover, instead, is that George Eliot's mind works according to quite another model, a model she applies both from the midst of crises and in retrospective examination of those crises. In the broad aftermath of her loss of faith, she writes to Sara Hennell of her reliance on the "truth of feeling" in human relationships, then continues:
We find that the intellectual errors which we once fancied were a mere incrustation have grown into the living body and that we cannot in the majority of causes [sic] wrench them away without destroying vitality. We begin to find that with individuals, as with nations, the only safe revolution is one arising out of the wants which their own progress has generated.10

Some five years later, while nursing her long-dying father, she experiences a period of self-doubt and depression vividly documented by her letters to the Brays and Sara Hennell.11 This painful time will require more detailed examination, but for the moment it is sufficient to note that her emergece from despair into renewed health is marked by this interpretation, penned to Sara Hennell, of her ordeal:

All creatures about to molt or to cast off an old skin, or enter on any new metamorphosis have sickly feelings. It was so with me, but now I am set free from the irritating worn-out integuement. I am entering on a new period of my life which makes me look back on the past as something incredibly poor and contemptible. I am enjoying repose strength and ardour in a greater degree than I have ever known.12

And to a friend who had lost her faith, the mature George Eliot was able to counsel:
I should urge you to consider your early religious experience as a portion of valid knowledge, and to cherish its emotional results in relation to objects and ideas which are either substitutes for or metamorphoses of the earlier.\textsuperscript{13}

These passages scarcely suggest the "Pitched past pitch of grief" or "cliffs of fall" of a Gerard Manley Hopkins.\textsuperscript{14} Instead of the linear, the discontinuous, the abysmal, the underlying metaphor in each is one of renewal, of organicism—in a word, of transformation. And it is just such a transformational model, transformational in the manner of Carlyle's phoenix, that I would offer as an alternative to Paris's hypothesis of discontinuity. Far from quarreling with the \textit{content} of George Eliot's mature beliefs, beliefs that have been documented by critics such as Paris, Basil Willey, Michael Wolff, U. C. Knoepflmacher, and George Levine, I want to offer and examine a model for the dynamic that underlies the phenomenon of change itself. This dynamic (which like Redinger's reading is psychological and subtextual) relates to George Eliot's mature intellectual beliefs much as post-Darwinian energies relate to "the values of humanity, intelligence, or cultural and social tradition" in Frye's "drunken boat" concept (Ch. 1, p. 53). Applied by George Eliot to herself in the above passages, it informs not only her letters but the pages of \textit{Middlemarch}. My concern, eventually, will be with the textualizing of this model and the tenuous resolution of the "drunken boat" duality in the story of Dorothea Brooke. But the transformational dynamic which Dorothea embodies and
enacts is itself dependent upon a construct even more fundamental to George Eliot's pattern of thought, and it is to this second construct that I now turn.

Authority and Rebellion

Virtually everyone familiar with the facts of George Eliot's life, from her contemporaries to present-day biographers, has commented on her overwhelming need for an authority before whom she could bow or in whose protection she could rest. Her lifelong friend Charles Bray, through whose set in Coventry she was inducted into the life of the mind, reported that "She was of a most affectionate disposition, always requiring someone to lean upon."\(^{15}\) Her husband and biographer, John Cross, confirmed her "absolute need of some one person who should be all in all to her, and to whom she should be all in all."\(^{16}\) More recently Gordon Haight has concluded, "She was not fitted to stand alone."\(^{17}\) Whereas one observer points out that "She had inherited a strong tendency to reverence from her father, and willingly bowed down before whatever wore the aspect of goodness or greatness," a second goes on to contend that "the underlying principle of her life was a psychological dependency upon an affectionate authority."\(^{18}\) Still more generally, feminist scholars have discovered in her an example of what Dianne Sadoff calls "the nineteenth-century daughter's dependency on paternal approbation."\(^{19}\)

Certainly the text of George Eliot's life supports these conclusions. The number of male authority figures on whom she relied--most of whom she willingly served in arenas ranging from the domestic to the intellectual--is legion: her father, her brother Isaac, Dr. Robert
Brabant, Francis Watts, M. Francois D'Albert Durade, John Chapman.

Haight remarks her "eagerness to serve others anonymously," citing not only her self-effacing labor on the Westminster Review but also her "unsung" work in translating Strauss's Leben Jesu. 20 In recent years, however, as scholars increasingly have delved beneath the text of her life to examine the intricacies of its subtext, tantalizing hints have been forthcoming that suggest the presence of another side of the question. These hints tease us with the possibility that George Eliot's attitude toward such authority figures, and toward her own role in relationship to them, is more complex and more ambivalent than previously thought. Ruby Redinger's penetrating and subtle reading of the life, noted above, has gone far to legitimate speculation in areas hitherto left mostly unexamined. 21 In an examination of Mary Ann's apostasy, the turmoil it generated in the Evans household, and her increased involvement with the Coventry set, Redinger argues that "underlying her rebellion against her spiritual father lay the rebellion against her earthly father." 22 Redinger finds in George Eliot's personality an emotional correlative to such rebellion, in that "her excessive shyness was the not unusual defense against a strong aggressive tendency." 23 And Sadoff discovers within the novels themselves a similar rebellion against paternal authority, a rebellion that in Middlemarch takes the form of narrative subversion:

Her heroine desires a "sort of father" yet defines him as a figure of law and authority; narrative structure seeks to undercut his authoritative word
and so to usurp it textually as the discourse of a male narrator, the authority of a male author.\textsuperscript{24}

My juxtaposition of Sadoff's observation and Redinger's is deliberate and is intended to highlight precisely that interpenetration between the dynamics of art and the dynamics of life implicit in Sadoff's reading. For I want to examine this issue of authority and dependence on it (particularly as that authority elides from the divine into the paternal, the personal) as well as the (paradoxically) concomitant rebellion against it. I shall argue that this bipolar dynamic forms a consistent construct that peers covertly from a variety of George Eliot's writing, early and late, and appears as a fully developed symbol system within \textit{Middlemarch}. Enacted in the novel, it works to release the repressed energy feminist critics have been quick to notice in Dorothea, to facilitate her transformation, and to illuminate George Eliot's concept of just what such transformation entails.\textsuperscript{25} Articulated in personal and nonfictional texts, its embodiment is not only textual but biographical, for it discernibly partakes of events in the life itself.

Neither Redinger's use of the specific term "rebellion," nor mine, is accidental, for the words "rebellion" and "rebel" are among George Eliot's favorites. The complex meaning she attached to them, a meaning that informs their usage throughout her work, is implicit in a revealing passage from \textit{Theophrastus Such}. "To my father's mind, says the narrator,
the noisy teachers of revolutionary doctrine were, to speak mildly, a variable mixture of the fool and the scoundrel; the welfare of the nation lay in a strong Government which could maintain order; and I was accustomed to hear him utter the word "Government" in a tone that charged it with awe, and made it part of my effective religion, in contrast with the word "rebel," which seemed to carry the stamp of evil in its syllables, and, lit by the fact that Satan was the first rebel, made an argument dispensing with more detailed inquiry.26

Here we have, in a few lines, a multivalent symbol system drawn from both theology and literature and put to the service of a conservatism that is avowedly political.27 Nor are the values it embraces as straightforward as might first appear. To begin with, the model posits rebellion as a reaction not to an evil oppression but instead to that which inspires "awe," that which constitutes an "effective religion." Rebellion becomes, by definition, insulation against the divine. Its goal is thus destruction rather than construction, chaos opposing cosmos. The converse also holds true: any authority that inspires rebellion becomes, by association, tinged with divinity. And the layers of authority the passage evokes are themselves revelatory of complex symbolic connections; for the speaker's rhetoric neatly conflates the divine authority against which Satan rebelled, the governmental authority it deifies, and the authority of the father whose beliefs it advances.
Ironically, the passage, far from "dispensing with more detailed inquiry," instead positively clamors for it. For the mention of Satan insistently recalls the Milton whose Satan the romantics deemed the hero of Paradise Lost, as well as George Eliot's own well-known admiration of the poet she termed "my demigod." Moreover, as Gilbert and Gubar's reference to George Eliot's "fascination with the Romanticized figure of Satan" reminds us, the pages of Middlemarch repeatedly associate Will Ladislaw with Shelley— who in turn explicitly idealizes Milton's Satan in his own Prometheus Unbound. Our passage, richly ambivalent, thus ramifies simultaneously in opposite directions; for it powerfully if subversively evokes the heroism of the rebel, heroism that lurks just beneath the surface of apparent evil, even while it proclaims its admiration for authorities paternal, political, and divine. Clearly the matter is not as simple as the narrator believes it to be. Nor are its implications confined to the present context. What George Eliot here furnishes, in fact, is only her most complete statement of a construct that, whether deliberately or inadvertently, consciously or otherwise, informs her writing from beginning to end.

The Godly Father and the Demonic Self

The mature George Eliot who equated authority with divinity in Theophrastus Such and could refer to Milton casually as her "demigod" was only continuing a pattern begun much earlier, for the letters reveal her persistent tendency to slip into religious metaphor when describing her various mentors. During an 1842 correspondence with Francis Watts, with whom she was discussing a proposed translation, she apologized for any indiscreet gestures of affection toward him by
explaining, "I am always inclined to make a father-confessor of you, perhaps because I augur that you have no heart for inflicting heavy penances." During her visit to the home of Dr. Robert Brabant the following year, her letters to Cara Bray and Sara Hennell betray a similar association of fatherhood with divinity. On 8 Nov. 1843, she first crowed to Cara: "What name do you think I have been baptized withal? Rather a learned pun, Deuteram, which means second and sounds a little like daughter. . . . I want nothing but a letter from Father to make me happy." Within two weeks, moreover, she was reporting, "I am in a little heaven here, Dr. Brabant being its archangel." Her worship of Brabant, in fact, became so palpable that even the doctor's blind wife could not fail to perceive it, and the visit was unceremoniously cut short. But the same affinity for religious metaphor enters into Mary Ann's playful defense of her own actions as later given to Sara Hennell: "If ever I offered incense to him," she explains, "it was because there was no other deity at hand and because I wanted some kind of worship pour passer le temps."

As for that most important figure, Robert Evans himself, Redinger argues that

her deliberate dedication to her father, in giving him companionship and nursing him through his long final illness, took the place of the orthodox religion she had put aside.

Finally, Redinger suggests, he became for his daughter "transfigured by his death into an object of piety." And certainly a second passage
from Theophrastus Such supports Redinger's contention, for the narrator
describes his father in phrases evocative of theological and redemptive
associations:

In my earliest remembrance of him his hair was
already grey, for I was his youngest as well as his
only surviving child; and it seemed to me that
advanced age was appropriate to a father, as indeed
in all respects I considered him a parent so much
to my honour that the mention of my relationship to
him was likely to secure me regard among those to
whom I was otherwise a stranger--my father's
stories from his life including so many names of
distant persons that my imagination placed no limit
to his acquaintanceship.36

This deification of the paternal finds its critical analog in
Thomas Pinney's suggestion that "the chief values of the novels are on
the whole conservative, cherishing what is known and familiar, seeking
the good in outmoded forms, and remaining skeptical of all hopes for
swift and inevitable progress."37 In a letter from her mature years,
George Eliot herself supplies the evidence that would support Pinney's
judgment of her impulses, but in a manner that reveals a telling
ambivalence toward the very rebellion she was later to condemn.
Stating her conviction "that the bent of my mind is conservative rather
than destructive," she goes on to record her belief "that denial has
been wrung from me by hard experience--not adopted as a pleasant rebel-
lion. If rebellion is diabolic, as she later suggests, it is
nonetheless attractive, a sentiment she also implies in an early letter
to Maria Lewis. In that letter, she records her concern for her "state
of soul" but nonetheless confesses, "a sight of one being [apparently
an anonymous young man] whom I have not beheld except passingly since
the interview I last described to you would probably upset all." She
then affirms her "desire and prayer to be free from rebelling against
Him whose I am by right, whose I would be by adoption. . . . But all
this I ought not to have permitted to slip from my pen." Such
association of rebellion with the "pleasant" and the implicitly sexual
complicates, without of course invalidating, her purported condemnation
of it in the later passage.

If her assimilation of the forbidden to the alluring reflects a
virtual religious truism, more remarkable is Mary Ann's repeated
association of herself with the diabolic, a connection that tends to
surface whenever her own desires are at stake. The evidence of the
letters suggests, in fact, that we are dealing here with a personality
either so repressed or so fearful of its own hidden energies that it
views the very possibility of self-assertion as nothing short of
demonic. Daring to imply her own unhappiness with the projected move
from the house at Foleshill, a move determined by Robert Evans in
consequence of his daughter's apostasy, she falls easily into the
language of Milton's Satan. "My father," she reports to Cara Bray,

    is bent, at present, more determinedly than is
    usual with him, on leaving Foleshill. . . . Of
course I shall not utter a word of discontent or
claim a voice in the matter of a choice concerning
his abode. I can quite appropriate Satan's
sentiment, "What matter where if I be still the
same."40

Insisting on her own outward compliance, she nonetheless associates her
inner resistance with that original and most notorious of rebels. And
near the beginning of the long period during which she nursed her
ailing father, a still more striking incident transpired, when Sara
Hennell instituted a convention rich in similar symbolic ramifications.
Making her own "learned pun," Sara conflated "Mary Ann" with "Apol-
lyon," the "angel of the bottomless pit" of Revelation and Pilgrim's
Progress, to dub her friend "Pollian."41 Far from resenting the
appellation, Mary Ann adopted it herself. From 31 October 1844, during
the period of her involvement with the Strauss translation, she began
frequently to sign her letters to Sara and the Brays as "Pollian."42
The proximate cause of Sara's inspiration was no doubt her friend's
translation of what one observer terms the "creed-wrecking Leben Jesu,"
but Mary Ann's eager and longstanding espousal of the name suggests
that its fitness transcended, in her mind, its application to her labor
on a single controversial volume.43

If it is true, as Redinger suggests, that nursing Robert Evans
functioned as an effective religion for his daughter, it seems also to
be true that her "Satanic" impulse toward rebellion remained in active
tension with that service. For we find, during this period, a discern-
nible pattern in the letters signed "Pollian" as opposed to those, also
to Sara or the Brays, signed "Mary Ann." The pattern is not absolutely
unvarying, but it is consistent enough to shed some light on Mary Ann's alternating experiences of herself throughout this time of stress. An especially illuminating example occurs during June of 1848, when she appears to go through a crisis of self-doubt and depression, one recorded candidly in her letters to these closest of friends. In a much-quoted communication of 4 June she mourns to Sara Hennell,

> Alas for the fate of poor mortals which condemns them to wake up some fine morning and find all the poetry in which their world was bathed only the evening before utterly gone—the hard angular world of chairs and tables and looking-glasses staring at them in all its naked prose. . . . It seems to me as if I were shrinking into that mathematical abstraction, a point—so entirely am I destitute of contact that I am unconscious of length or breadth, and by the time you see me again, I shall have lost all possibility of giving you any demonstration of a spiritual existence.⁴⁴

And a letter to Charles Bray written the following day confides,

> I possess my soul in patience for a time, believing that this dark damp vault in which I am groping will soon come to an end and the fresh green earth and the bright sky be all the more precious to me. But for the present my address is Grief Castle, on the river of Gloom, in the valley of Dolour.⁴⁵
Both melancholy confessions are signed "Mary Ann"—this in spite of the Bunyanesque metaphors of the second, figures that might lead us to expect an equally Bunyanesque signature. Just two weeks later, however, she reports exultantly to Sara, in the letter quoted on p. 94, that she has experienced a major transformation, has "cast off" her "old skin" and entered on a "new metamorphosis" that brings with it "repose strength and ardour in a greater degree than I have ever known."46 This letter, unlike its two predecessors, is triumphantly signed "Pollian." Such a sequence insistently suggests her association of health and transformation with the diabolic, of misery with the dutiful "Mary Ann."

Still other letters from this same period indicate an inverse relationship between Mary Ann's mental and physical condition and her father's state of health. The brooding letters of 4 and 5 June (above), for instance, follow a series of reports to several correspondents about her father's improved condition.47 Conversely, two letters directly preceding her announcement of metamorphosis reveal that "all his worst symptoms have returned" and that "my poor Father ... is suffering as badly as ever."48 This correlation of the father's health with the daughter's illness, and vice versa, betrays an ambivalence toward Robert Evans that goes far to explain her otherwise baffling confession to Cara Bray, the year after her father's death: "I have often told you I thought Melchisedec the only happy man, and I think so more than ever." Nor is it surprising to find the letter signed, subversively, "Pollian."49
Shortly after her elopement with Lewes (in July, 1854), Milton's Satan makes one last appearance in the correspondence. A letter dated 9 January 1855 finds her reporting, with obvious content, to John Chapman:

We like our Berlin life immensely--an ugly place it must be to any one who comes to it hipped or solitary or what is worse, with a disagreeable companion. But, to make a very novel quotation--"the mind is its own place" and can make a pretty town even of Berlin. The day seems too short for our happiness and we both of us feel that we have begun life afresh--with new ambition and new powers.50

The Mary Ann Evans who inwardly rebelled against her father's wishes has become the "Marian Lewes" who dares the definitive assault against Victorian convention, and the correspondence associates both with the same demonic/romantic rebel. Between the first designation and the last, however, a second name had intervened; for by an apparent conflation of "Mary Ann" with "Pollian," she had become "Marian Evans" in the spring of 1851, shortly before beginning to contemplate the Feuerbach translation.51 It is worth speculating that the embodiment of Pollian indicated by that name change contributed to her ability to defy contemporary sensibilities in embarking with Lewes. It is certainly true that in the immediately post-Lewesian correspondence, "Pollian" abruptly vanishes. He makes his last appearance in a letter
to Sara dated 10 July 1854, a scant ten days before Marian's departure with Lewes; nor does he reappear for more than two years.\textsuperscript{52} Having incarnated Pollian, as it were, in undertaking such a controversial relationship, she seems temporarily to have lost the need to assert the association in print. "Polly," however, remained her nickname to friends, as well as to Lewes himself; for the duration of their life together, his name for her remained "Polly." His own writing is sprinkled with such references, and Haight himself adopts the convention, referring to the couple routinely as "Lewes" and "Polly."\textsuperscript{53} We are thus confronted with what is, to say the least, a highly paradoxical picture: that of an enlightened Victorian intellectual, herself author of a literature devoted to the elucidation of the moral act, answering all the while to a domestic diminutive proper to an original "Hell's angel."

George Eliot's assimilation of her own desires to the demonic, then, predates her alliance with Lewes by more than ten years. Its roots appear to lie, instead, in her unacknowledged impulse toward rebellion against the long service to her father (both before and during his illness), a rebellion that may itself constitute an antitype of her earlier revolt against the God of Christianity. Whatever its genesis, she seems genuinely to have feared the strength of these impulses, for on the eve of Robert Evans's death she cried out to Cara and Charles Bray, in an admission notable for both its passion and its candor:

\begin{quote}
What shall I be without my Father? It will seem as
if a part of my moral nature were gone. I had a
\end{quote}
horrid vision of myself last night becoming earthly
sensual and devilish for want of that purifying
restraining influence.\textsuperscript{54}

It is no doubt with similar anxieties in mind that she could reflect,
after her father's death, "We are apt to complain of the weight of
duty, but when it is taken from us, and we are left at liberty to
choose for ourselves, we find that the old life is the easier one," a
distinction she echoes as late as 1873, when she advocates "willing
obedience" as a safeguard against "the slavery of unregulated passion
or impulse."\textsuperscript{55}

Such confessions and contrasts evoke an almost palpable terror of
the energies submerged in the depths of the personality, energies that
threaten to erupt and to overthrow the forces of order reigning on the
surface.\textsuperscript{56} This evidence is consistent with Calvin Bedient's conten-
tion that George Eliot as novelist "was not at all blind to the
'exuberant inner energies' of life. On the contrary, it was just her
large-eyed anxious glimpse of them that tightened her art into its
habitual seriousness."\textsuperscript{57} But there is another side to the question.
For the evidence suggests that a part of Marian Evans's personality
(the part signified by the "ian" doubtless owed to Pollian) realized,
and positively gloried in, the liberating power of these same impulses.
A full year before her elopement with Lewes, she could write playfully
to Bessie Raynor Parkes, "I sometimes wonder if you expect me to return
calls and repay civilities like a Christian or whether it is suffi-
ciently understood between us that I am a heathen and an outlaw."\textsuperscript{58}
The remark is jolting because it so eerily forecasts her literal
situation after the liaison yet was apparently written from a more primary sense of "difference," a sense fully congruent with her awareness of the (largely suppressed) elements in herself that she could only characterize as demonic.

As Nina Auerbach has argued, the role of outcast was certainly crucial to George Eliot's development. Auerbach, however, emphasizes the relationship with Lewes as primary:

> Whether deliberately, unconsciously, or accidentally, she seems to have composed her own life so that its fitful, rudderless, and self-doubting first half was alchemized into gold when the austere bluestocking became the fallen woman.59

Without denying the importance of the connection with Lewes, a connection that I see as the culminating effect or symptom, I would insist on the presence of a mental construct that precedes both in time and importance that relationship. Wittingly or not, it would appear that Marian Lewes assumed the same causal sequence. For after five years with Lewes she could write these words to Barbara Bodichon, words that Auerbach herself characterizes as "one of the few expressions of glee she allowed herself":

> I am a very blessed woman, am I not? to have all this reason for being glad that I have lived, in spite of my sins and sorrows—or rather, by reason of my sins and sorrows.60
These words are scarcely those of Bedient's "large-eyed anxious" author; rather, they proceed from the same impulse that animates the "Pollian" letters. And the reading of Middlemarch that I propose works to uncover a dynamic which, while both example and explanation of the anxiety Bedient intuits in her work, also furnishes the material for a Pollianesque victory—albeit an incompletely acknowledged one—over the same anxiety it exposes and expresses. Once again we are put in mind of Frye's "drunken boat" construct, with its surface of rationality and order riding uneasily on top of menacing post-Darwinian energies. Within the novel, narrative rationality finds itself at odds with (frequently unacknowledged) subtextual impulses, impulses the narrator attempts to control by the act of aggressive interpretation. Middlemarch, in sum, presents us with a remarkably clear instance of the authority/rebellion construct I have been examining—one that, with its divine/demonic antithesis, informs a fully developed symbol system within the novel. And this construct, narrative efforts to the contrary notwithstanding, eventuates in the liberating transformation of Dorothea Brooke. It further accounts for a deep simultaneous ambivalence toward both Casaubon and Will Ladislaw and thus helps to explain the otherwise puzzling ambivalence of the Finale toward Dorothea's second marriage, itself the conclusion toward which the novel's action has irresistibly tended.

**Authority and Rebellion in Middlemarch**

Bedient is by no means alone in sensing repressed energies just beneath the surface of George Eliot's work. She is prominent among the Victorians about whose fiction George Levine contends that "monstrous
energies are active . . . struggling to be released from contingency, compromise, and the social order." More pointedly, Levine elsewhere finds in George Eliot "the denial of the libidinal energies essential to psychic health." Nor is this repression less common to Middlemarch than to her work as a whole. Lee R. Edwards argues in a feminist mode that Middlemarch "examines the nature and fate of energy in female characters" and concludes that the novel "is finally not an endorsement of this energy but . . . a condemnation of it." Those who examine the triangle of Dorothea, Casaubon, and Will Ladislaw tend to be even more specific. John Hagan suggests that Dorothea's crucial mistake "is to deny the sensuous element entirely by embracing with youthful excess a form of religious asceticism that serves for her the . . . purpose of self-concealment." Others almost intuitively peer beneath the text to seek, in the author herself, the cause of, if not the explanation for, such persistent denial. Barbara Hardy, for instance, argues provocatively,

In Middlemarch George Eliot is dealing with a situation which she cannot even name, and her evasiveness and suggestiveness, her retreat and approach, deserve close attention . . . She is reticent—not, I claim, silent—about the Casaubon marriage. . . . But the novel's truthfulness is not sustained. In Dorothea's relationship with Will we have much more than a refusal to name the passions. We have a refusal even to suggest them.
Freudian critic Laura Emery Comer makes a similar point regarding George Eliot's reticence:

The painstaking detail which leads up to Dorothea's discovery of her passion to herself, the gradual emergence and submergence, the repetition of farewell scenes and discovery scenes, are a measure of the author's reluctance and determination. George Eliot must be deeply involved with [Dorothea's] need to break through resistances.  

John Bayley perhaps comes nearest the truth when he reflects that "there remains at the back of the Casaubon theme something more complex and incongruous than George Eliot can allow for; an unexplored dimension which threatens her balance and meaning."  

It is notable that none of these critics—all writing in essential agreement regarding repression and reticence in the novel—can articulate, any more than George Eliot herself, precisely what it is that the novel represses, beyond Barbara Hardy's general term, "the passions." Their remarks convey a general sense of what Middlemarch itself so strongly suggests: that there is a particularly elusive, or particularly threatening, figure in the carpet of the novel, one which everyone—author, narrator, and critics alike—has agreed not to scrutinize too closely.  

This narrative, authorial, and critical resistance makes it essential, if we are to make sense of the novel, to examine the pattern from its hidden side. That is, by explicating the authority/rebellion
construct, the same construct present in Theophrastus Such and the correspondence, our task is to decode the dynamic operating among Dorothea, Casaubon, and Will Ladislaw—together with the narrator's problematic relationship to that dynamic—in such a way that what previously has been deemed inexpressible (or at any rate has remained unexpressed) in their relationship may see the light of day. That this relationship, like the dynamic of Theophrastus and the letters, comprises in itself a complete symbol system partly explains the difficulty felt by virtually everyone in attempting to articulate it—a difficulty not unlike the one we all encounter in trying to put the content of a dream into words. For the construct, like a dream, is itself a language and must therefore be translated in order to be understood.

Any such translation must begin with the relationship of Dorothea to Casaubon. It is commonly acknowledged, particularly by feminists, that in idolizing the dry old scholar, Dorothea is following the path so well marked by George Eliot in relation to her various mentors. Clearly their relationship is an instance of what Gilbert and Gubar aptly call "the eroticism of inequality—the male teacher and the enamored female student, the male master and the admiring female servant, the male author and the acquiescent female scribe or charac-
ter." And although critics disagree as to the precise identity of the real-life prototype (or prototypes) for Casaubon, most would allow that Dr. Robert Brabant is prominent among the candidates. Certainly the pedant's attraction for Dorothea is expressed in terms similar to those used by Mary Ann Evans in describing Brabant, as well as by those
who were familiar with her relationship to him. Whereas Eliza Lynn Linton could report that Mary Ann "knelt at his feet and offered to devote her life to his service," George Eliot's narrator notes Dorothea's willingness to "[throw] herself, metaphorically speaking, at Mr. Casaubon's feet, and [kiss] his unfashionable shoe ties as if he were a Protestant Pope." Just as Mary Ann could term Brabant an "archangel," Dorothea finds her suitor "as instructive as Milton's 'affable archangel!'" (17). More than that, Dorothea in fact continues a pattern initiated by her creator—that of describing her hero in imagery that is overwhelmingly, almost exclusively, religious. Reflecting on Casaubon, Dorothea admires his "sanctity," variously considering him "a modern Augustine," a Pascal, or a Milton (18, 21, 47). Mrs. Cadwallader, looking on, sniffs, "'She looks up to him as an oracle.'" (67). And when the narrator reports that "it never occurred to [Sir James] that a girl to whom he was meditating an offer of marriage could care for a dried bookworm towards fifty except, indeed, in a religious sort of way," it is apparent that the rejected baronet is more perceptive than he knows (17). The narrator himself, evincing in this early scene an ironic detachment from the action and from both characters involved in it (a stance he will prove unable to maintain, as we shall see), goes on to describe Dorothea's attitude toward Casaubon's every word in a metaphor that evokes a worshiper's relationship to a sacred text:

Dorothea's faith supplied all that Mr. Casaubon's words seemed to leave unsaid: what believer sees a disturbing omission or infelicity? The text, whether of prophet or of poet, expands for whatever
we can put into it, and even his bad grammar is sublime (73).

If such idealizing reverence toward a male authority figure were the whole of the story, the parallels between Dorothea and her author would be merely interesting. But there is significantly more. Early on in the novel, during what passes for the halcyon days of their relationship, Dorothea proposes to learn Greek and Latin so as to be able to read to Casaubon, "as Milton's daughters did to their father." Casaubon's response to this proffered service is to remind Dorothea that "the young women you have mentioned regarded that exercise in unknown tongues as a ground for rebellion against the poet" (47, my emphasis). Now in the context of Dorothea's worshipful devotion, and with the passage from Theophrastus Such in mind, this word "rebellion" sets off loud alarms. With one word George Eliot provides an important clue to Casaubon's structural role in the novel. Through the comparison with Milton, the scholar becomes established as a figure worthy not only of veneration but of its demonic antithesis. And Dorothea's assimilation of herself to Milton's daughters suggests that her role vis-a-vis her husband will carry not only the same demand for obedient service but also the same potential for revolt. The novel's middle pages, in fact, tell at length of Dorothea's inward rebellion against her husband, a rebellion that is none the less real for being suppressed and converted painstakingly into compassion. In her attitude of determined subservience it is difficult not to read the plight of the Mary Ann Evans who nursed her father for so many years. Dorothea, we know, begins by believing, "The really delightful
marriage must be that where your husband was a sort of father, and could teach you even Hebrew if you wished it." (8).

But the real-life father's daughter, as I have indicated, could vent her defiance through the subversive voice of the "Pollian" within, a resource George Eliot fails to provide, at least directly, to Dorothea. What I would suggest, though, is that in the pages of Middlemarch George Eliot furnishes her heroine with a resource that is not internal but external. She provides, that is, an agent who serves as the functional equivalent of her own "Pollian." The agent's role is thus not only subversive but demonic. That agent, of course, is Will Ladislaw. Will's structural role, in contradistinction to his narrative function, is insistently and subversively to induct Dorothea into forbidden knowledge, to separate her from Casaubon, to provide her with critical distance from him, to overthrow him in her regard, to displace him emotionally and physically. Operating textually as a hero of sorts—a hero many have found unsatisfactory—he works subtextually to depose, with diabolic effectiveness, the ironic divinity Casaubon incarnates. In so doing he earns a status that transcends novelistic convention; for he thus becomes the agent who, in George Eliot's symbol system, not only deposes the oppressive father figure but overthrows God himself.  

Will's role as a literary figure who dares to challenge heaven necessarily recalls both Shelley's Prometheus and Milton's Satan. And the names of Shelley and Milton sound through the text of Middlemarch a counterpoint we ignore at some risk. Mr. Brooke, consistent for once, repeatedly insists that Will is "'a kind of Shelley, you know..."
[with] the same sort of enthusiasm for liberty, freedom, emancipation" (263; see also 366). And as Gillian Beer has remarked, "One should always pay attention to Mr. Brooke." Shelley's Prometheus in turn directs us to Milton's Satan, that paradigmatic rebel whom Shelley praised for his "courage and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force" and whom he adopted as the model for his own rebel against God. As it turns out, Will's role indeed owes something to Prometheus; it owes a great deal more, however, to the latter's Miltonic predecessor, that "first rebel" of Theophrastus Such.

Will's likeness to Satan is first of all physical. His curly hair, his association with light (in contradistinction to Casaubon's "rayless" state [155]), and, most importantly, the ability to transform himself are all prefigured in Milton's epic. Like the demonic hero of Paradise Lost, Will readily undergoes transfigurations: "his very features changed their form; his jaw looked sometimes large and sometimes small; and the little ripple in his nose was a preparation for metamorphosis" (155). (As we have seen in the letters, and shall see again in the novel, metamorphosis occupies an important place in George Eliot's textual representations of change.) More significant than physical resemblance, however, is the fact that both Will and Satan are defined as rebels. Not simply the concept, but the word and its derivatives appear repeatedly in connection with both. Before "rebel" was George Eliot's term, it was Milton's. Nor, in this context, can it be traced to biblical sources, for Genesis 3.1 describes the serpent merely as "more subtil than any beast of the field."
The text of *Middlemarch* describes Will, again and again, as that most destructive of creatures, the rebel. It is worth noting that, in a novel that explores in some depth the pitfalls of individual perspec-
tivism, Will's status as a rebel is one assertion on which all points of view would appear to converge. Casaubon, perhaps unsurprisingly, assures himself that Will "was capable of any design which could fascinate a rebellious temper" (307). For once, he and Will agree, for the younger man readily admits to Dorothea, "'I come of rebellious blood on both sides'" (269). And she makes the general charge more specific, pointing out that where he has been rebellious is precisely in reference to "'Mr. Casaubon's wishes'" (269). All three, then, are in rare unanimity concerning the fact of Will's rebelliousness, a judgment in which Mrs. Cadwallader—voice of the county chorus—later concurs (599). Still more telling is the narrator's agreement with them all. This is the same narrator who does not scruple to offer his own perspective as a means, purportedly, of correcting the limited perceptions of the other characters, characters whose subjectivity he depicts in the damning image of the pier glass.77 And this narrator repeatedly declares, and declares approvingly, that Will is rebellious. Describing his political work for Mr. Brooke, he remarks that "the easily-stirred rebellion in him helped the glow of public spirit" (338). When Will angrily rejects Bulstrode's offer of money, the narrator describes him as "strongly possessed with passionate rebellion against this inherited blot" (457). Still later, he finds him "in gloomy rebellion" against the possibility that Rosamond might manage to "enslave" him (571). And when he determines to attend church, we are
told that "he was not without contradictroniness and rebellion even
towards his own resolve" (344), a resolve that he himself characterizes
as "a virtual defiance of Mr. Casaubon's prohibition" (345).

Will's indebtedness to Casaubon intensifies his readiness to rebel
against the scholar. This combination of defiant impulses enacted
against a background of enforced gratitude (reminiscent of Mary Ann's
attitude toward her sick father) constitutes yet another example of his
likeness to Satan. Like Milton's rebel, who

sdeined subjection, and thought one step higher

Would set me highest, and in a moment quit

The debt immense of endless gratitude,

So burthesome still paying, still to ow,78

Will cannot extricate his defiant impulses toward Casaubon from the
debt he has been accruing all along: "If he never said a cutting word
about Mr. Casaubon again and left off receiving favors from him, it
would clearly be permissible to hate him the more" (166). Will, again
like Satan, insists that certain types of freedom are but servitude in
disguise. As he explains the paradox to Dorothea in Rome, "'Mr.
Casaubon's generosity has perhaps been dangerous to me, and I mean to
renounce the liberty it has given me. I mean to go back to England
shortly and work my own way--depend on nobody else than myself'" (165).
This distaste for servitude directly contradicts George Eliot's
expressed preference for "willing obedience" as an alternative to "the
slavery of unregulated passion or impulse." Like the Doppelganger of
Pollian that he is, Will evinces none of his author's fear of self, a
fear that led her to opt for the safety of "duty" over the risks of "liberty" (see p. 109).

**Narrative Hostility, Narrative Complicity**

Before I go on to examine the structural details of Will's subversive function, I want to digress in order to establish an important and related point: that is, the narrator's ambivalence toward the trait of rebelliousness. To begin with, his apparent neutrality on the subject of Will's defiance stands in sharp contrast to his attitude toward rebelliousness as a general rule. In a revealing metaphor describing the medical profession as Lydgate enters it, he refers to that time when disease in general was called by some bad name, and treated accordingly without shilly-shally--as if, for example, it were to be called insurrection, which must not be fired on with blank-cartridge, but have its blood drawn at once (105, my emphases).

This aversion, an attitude the narrator shares with George Eliot, is nowhere more apparent than in descriptions of rebelliousness on Dorothea's part, an attitude gradually engendered by her relationship with Casaubon. And the narrator's resistance to her increasing impulses toward defiance sheds light on Dorothea's ever-present tendency (unlike Will), to shrink from these same insurrectionist urges. Furthermore, it helps explain why the narrator assists at every step Dorothea's avoidance of the issue--a strategy that paradoxically
highlights the fact of her silent mutiny even while purporting to
disallow it. From the moment of her first quarrel with Casaubon,
Dorothea's reaction--mediated, as always, by the narrator--is to deny
the very possibility of any rebellion against her husband, an impulse
that must be near the surface indeed if it requires such prompt and
thorough efforts to quell it:

that new real future which was replacing the
imaginary drew its material from the endless
minutiae by which her view of Mr. Casaubon and her
wifely relation, now that she was married to him,
was gradually changing with the secret motion of a
watch-hand from what it had been in her maiden
dream. . . . Permanent rebellion, the disorder of a
life without some loving reverent resolve, was not
possible to her (144).

Accompanying the denial of rebellious feelings (and the equation of
rebellion with disorder) is the opposition of "rebellion" to "rever-
ent," the same polarity that informs the passage from Theophrastus
Such. The narrator, moreover, offers this polarity in all seriousness,
without any of the distancing irony so evident in the novel's opening
chapters. It is as if the narrator, that implicitly patriarchal
maintainer of textual order, becomes increasingly complicit with
Casaubon's point of view, thus merging what D. A. Miller sees as
narrative "transcendence" with the divine/paternal authority encoded by
Casaubon and by the marriage itself. 79
Once Dorothea is settled at Lowick, it becomes ever more clear that her life is one of unacknowledged defiance, a life in which "the stifling oppression of that gentlewoman's world" (202) combines with Casaubon's aloofness to create what the narrator calls "this nightmare of a life in which every energy was arrested by dread" (275). And Casaubon himself comes to suspect that "Dorothea's silence was now a suppressed rebellion," a suspicion the text confirms almost in spite of itself. By the time we reach the pivotal Chapter 42, where Dorothea's inner revolt against her husband's coldness reaches its peak, the narrator can report that "her ardour, continually repulsed, served, with her intense memory, to heighten her dread, as thwarted energy subsides into a shudder" (311). If her "rebellious anger" at such treatment is understandable enough, the narrator nonetheless treats it in a curiously oblique manner (312). Reporting Dorothea's resentment that she had "shut her best soul in prison, paying it only hidden visits, that she might be petty enough to please him," the narrator adds, with a masterful lack of specificity, "In such a crisis as this, some women begin to hate" (313). Does Dorothea begin to hate? The narrator carefully does not commit himself on this point; but his resolute refusal to interpret (a reticence highly uncharacteristic of this particular narrator) is in itself a form of interpretation—interpretation that reveals, in this case, a reluctance to attribute to Dorothea emotions and motives of which the narrator clearly disapproves. As Dorothea continues to struggle with herself, however, the narrator does make a suggestive interpolation: "The energy that would animate a crime is not more than is wanted to inspire a resolved
submission," a comment that makes it impossible to mistake the degree of defiance involved in Dorothea's self-suppression (313).

This last remark also exemplifies a recurrent tendency—one Dorothea and the narrator seem, at this point, to share—to equate self-assertion with rebellion and rebellion with violence. When, at the conclusion of Chapter 42 (and at the half-way point of the novel), Casaubon meets Dorothea on the stairs and speaks to her in "gentle" tones, the narrator approvingly notes her response, which is to feel "something like the thankfulness that might well up in us if we had narrowly escaped hurting a lamed creature" (314). And if character and narrator assimilate rebellion to violence, it is equally evident that both confuse submission, or self-repression, with compassion. This confusion, in fact, seems to undergird Dorothea's decision to accede to Casaubon's last request. When she at last determines to agree to his unspecified demands, the narrator supplies a telling reason for her decision: "she was too weak, too full of dread at the thought of inflicting a keen-edged blow on her husband, to do anything but submit completely" (352). And again, "She saw clearly enough the whole situation, yet she was fettered: she could not smite the stricken soul that entreated hers" (353). It seems clear that what she fears is an eruption of the violence both she and the narrator associate with rebellion; and it is precisely that fear that motivates both character and narrator all the more strongly toward rebellion's self-repressing opposite.80 At this point, then, we find the narrator not only displaying sympathy for Casaubon's very weaknesses but in virtual control, through fear-driven interpretation, of Dorothea's own point of
view. This fusion of textual viewpoints (a fusion imposed by narrative domination rather than resulting from a dissolution of dualisms) in fact constitutes the fulcrum on which the novel, in this mid-point chapter, could be said to pivot.

Nor is it coincidence that this attitude of stifled hostility, a hostility that leads to a determined, almost perverse compassion, typifies the situation Nietzsche describes as giving birth to "slave morality": that is, the moment when

resentment itself becomes creative and gives birth to values: the resentment of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds, and compensate themselves with an imaginary revenge. While every noble morality develops from a triumphant affirmation of itself, slave morality from the outset says No to what is 'outside,' what is 'different,' what is 'not itself'; and this No is its creative deed. . . . in order to exist, slave morality always first needs a hostile external world; it needs, psychologically speaking, external stimuli in order to act at all--its action is fundamentally reaction.81

Viewed in Nietzsche's psychological terms, Dorothea's compassion, her impulse to pity Casaubon, her devotion to duty, and her own repression of self in the process become in reality reaction formations against a prior impulse toward self-assertion, even violent aggression, that has
been stifled and gone underground. These reaction formations are as much textual as characterological, moreover, receiving their strength in large part because of narrative complicity in them.

In a detailed analysis of the battle Dorothea wages with Casaubon in Chapter 42, David Parker also notes Dorothea's "fantasized violence towards Casaubon and fearful stifling of it." He goes on, though, to suggest a reason for the similarity of the narrator's attitude to Dorothea's. In Parker's view, the source of narrative coyness on the subject of Dorothea's violent impulses can be found in attitudes held by George Eliot herself. In a conclusion congruent with my own speculations, he asserts that the author's own resentment of Casaubon is just like Dorothea's. It too is a dammed-up hostility towards a figure rather like Tom Tulliver in some ways, a hostility that isn't able to express itself except in a diffused, half-suppressed kind of way because it can have no legitimate place in her moral scheme.

George Eliot's defiance toward what such a character represents, then, has been stifled and submerged just as has Dorothea's. The evidence of the letters suggests, though (contra Parker), that this suppression occurs less because of rational moral convictions than in response to the author's own fear of the threat to personal and psychic order such defiance poses, a threat it is the narrator's job to nullify. Once more the radical instability of Frye's "drunken boat" comes to mind.
And certainly the figure to whom Parker assimilates Casaubon is himself as rigid and judgmental as any caricature of an Old Testament God.84 Parker's conclusion does much to account for the dynamics of Chapter 42, and I believe it is essentially correct—but only as far as it goes. What it fails to do is to put the narrator's—and George Eliot's—ambivalence toward Casaubon (an ambivalence characterized, much like Dorothea's, by animosity disguised as empathy) into the wider context of the novel. Nor is the ambivalence—the repression/revelation of palpable hostility together with fear of violence ensuing from that hostility—lessened by the importance of the theological issues symbolically at stake. On the contrary, narrative resistance to would-be mutiny derives precisely from the need to suppress, both textually and psychically, this palpable threat to the divine/paternal order. When the impulses animating Chapter 42 are read back into the remainder of the text, however, we find something more subversive than mere ambivalence at work. It turns out that, narrative resistance notwithstanding, George Eliot as author does not passively or resentfully submit to Casaubon and what he represents; on the contrary, she actively yet subversively opposes them within the text—and opposes them, as I have suggested, in the person of Will Ladislaw. And that is the subject to which I now return.

**Demonic Displacement and the Rebellious Will**

Will first appears in Chapter 9, when Dorothea, Casaubon, Celia, and Mr. Brooke make an introductory tour of Lowick. The epigraph to that chapter—it is one of George Eliot's own—suggests the issues at stake. Its subject is the "struggle" in an "ancient land" for "order
and a perfect rule," and the land in question is not external but internal—"in human souls" (55). The epigraph comments clearly enough on the pending antagonism between Dorothea and Casaubon, a struggle prefigured in the narrator's remark, "A woman dictates before marriage in order that she may have an appetite for submission afterwards" (53). Theirs, however, is not the only contest here introduced. The second battle, that between Casaubon and Will, is equally a duel between the forces of rule and order Casaubon embodies and the potential for disruption introduced by Will's presence, a disruption anticipated by Casaubon's criticism that Will is not even "so far submissive to ordinary rule" as to settle on a specific career (60). More subtle and equally important, however, is the preparation for disruption and displacement that is figured in this scene—not thematically, as in Casaubon's remarks, but spatially. Will's assault on Casaubon's authority is, as we shall see, largely a question of space and sequence within the novel; but nowhere is the issue of space more crucial than in this chapter. For Will comes into view, the narrator reports, when the quartet stroll toward "a fine yew-tree, the chief hereditary glory of the grounds on this side of the house. As they approached it, a figure, conspicuous on a dark background of evergreens, was seated on a bench, sketching the old tree" (58).

The figure, of course, is Will. But the significance of his appearance in this place can only be appreciated in the context of a much later scene. The second scene concerns not the entrance of a character but his exit, from both the novel and from life. The scene is Casaubon's death. Telling Dorothea that he will be "in the Yew-
Tree Walk," Casaubon reminds her that he expects an answer to his unspecified demands (352). When Dorothea goes to join him, determined at whatever cost to submit to his wishes, she enters the walk and finds the time of submission past; for Casaubon is "seated on the bench, close to a stone table," and he is dead (353). The fact that his death occurs in the same vicinity, very possibly on the identical bench (the definite article argues for the presence of a single bench) where Will first appears captures perfectly the displacement of the older man by the younger. Besides its clearly Freudian implications, the situation also oddly evokes Darwin; for the latter, in observations that could almost be a Freudian reading of the natural world, argues that

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each new variety or species, during the progress of its formation, will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them... there will be a constant tendency in the improved descendents of any one species to supplant and exterminate in each stage of descent their predecessors and their original parent. 86
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As it turns out, Will's displacement of Casaubon is spatial in ways not only sexual but emotional and epistemological as well.

Will's first great step in distancing Dorothea from her husband occurs in Rome, during the pivotal conversation in which he reveals Casaubon's fatal ignorance of the German scholarship relevant to his "Key to All Mythologies." Without such knowledge, his life's work becomes worthless; equally important, Dorothea's chief motive in the
marriage, to serve as "lamp-holder" to Casaubon's genius, crumbles into dust (13). Will's revelation occasions a dismay that all Celia's barbs about Casaubon's moles and eating habits have failed to elicit. "Poor Dorothea," says the narrator, "felt a pang at the thought that the labour of her husband's life might be void, which left her no energy to spare for the question whether this young relative who was so much obliged to him ought not to have repressed his observation" (154). The narrative implication that Will, too, should "repress" himself in order to spare Casaubon, anticipates the narrative resistance of Chapter 42. It would seem, in fact, that the narrator's ability to remain dispassionate lessens at precisely the same rate that Dorothea distances herself from Casaubon. Seeing himself, apparently, as a bulwark against chaos, his resistance to Will's incursions on the Casaubon household marches lockstep with the latter's victories in that regard.

Dorothea's concern for the pending collapse of Casaubon's dreams, a concern that prominently includes the effect of that collapse on her own function, only becomes possible, of course, because she has been initiated into a sort of forbidden knowledge--knowledge, ironically enough, about Casaubon's lack of knowledge in the area he most requires it (and in an area where George Eliot's own learning was greatest). And that knowledge brings with it an awareness of her husband's insufficiency that we already know to be the scholar's greatest fear: "Instead of getting a soft fence against the cold, shadowy, unapplausive audience of life, had he only given it a more substantial presence?" (150). Like Eve in her meeting with Satan, Dorothea learns
more than she bargains for. And the effect of this knowledge on her relationship with Casaubon has an unmistakably biblical cast; it distances her from her husband, that is, in ways similar to Eve's postlapsarian distance from Adam. Before the fall, Adam can identify Eve as "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh"; he images her not as Other but as part of himself.\textsuperscript{88} It is only with the advent of knowledge that Adam clearly sees Eve as a separate being. Not only so: his first act upon acquiring a sense of difference, of distinctness from her, is to fix blame: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat."\textsuperscript{89} The knowledge Dorothea obtains from Will has a similarly disjunctive effect on her relationship with Casaubon. The fall into knowledge, that is, is a fall into dualism, for Dorothea as for Adam.

The narrator assures us that Dorothea's "capacity for worshipping the right object" (149), although strained by Casaubon's aloofness toward her and his reluctance actually to write, has remained essentially intact until the scene with Will:

\begin{quote}
With all her yearning to know what was afar from her and to be widely benignant, she had ardour enough for what was near, to have kissed Mr. Casaubon's coat-sleeve or to have caressed his shoe-latchet, if he would have made any other sign of acceptance than pronouncing her, with his unfailing propriety, to be of a most affectionate and truly feminine nature, indicating at the same time by politely reaching for a chair for her that
\end{quote}
he regarded these manifestations as rather crude
and startling (147).

Clearly Casaubon already perceives a distinction between himself and
his wife, one that she has yet to discover. Even during the heat of
their first fight, however, she perceives no dualistic disjunction
between her own reaction and his: "She had not yet listened patiently
to his heart-beats, but only felt that her own was beating violently"
(148-49). After Will's revelation, her attitude changes completely.
That is, she undergoes an irreversible movement from a position of
unreflecting unity with her husband to a new position—a position
defined by its dualistic distance from him, by her perceptions of him
as irremediably Other. The often-quoted passage with which the chapter
ends plainly indicates the extent of this new awareness:

We are all of us born in moral stupidity, taking
the world as an udder to feed our supreme selves:
Dorothea had early begun to emerge from that
stupidity, but yet it had been easier to her to
imagine how she would devote herself to Mr.
Casaubon, and become wise and strong in his
strength and wisdom, than to conceive with that
distinctness which is no longer reflection but
feeling . . . that he had an equivalent centre of
self, whence the lights and shadows must always
fall with a certain difference (156-57).
Although the narrator treats her insight as a form of moral progress—as, in a sense, it surely is—the fact remains that the immediate result of such "progress" is to create a critical distance between husband and wife, a distance that can perhaps be bridged but never again removed. For Dorothea's reaction to the spouse she now perceives as irrevocably Other is precisely Adam's reaction to Eve: her protestations of sympathy notwithstanding, she begins little by little to judge him, an act previously impossible to her. She discovers for herself that critical distance, once established, cannot be rebridged from the opposite direction. Nor is she alone in her journey toward judgment; Will Ladislaw, as will become apparent, assists at every step.

The textual spacing of events within the novel contributes to the growing emotional space between Dorothea and Casaubon. Again and again, Will's appearance precipitates yet another blow to Casaubon's equilibrium and to the precarious self-esteem he so carefully attempts to preserve. This pattern of Will's entry into the text followed by setbacks to Casaubon seems, in fact, almost to take on a life of its own. In a novel that spans some thirty months, from autumn of 1829 to spring of 1832, it is startling to realize that Will's appearance almost invariably precedes, usually by a matter of hours, a weakening of Casaubon's position. So closely are the two events juxtaposed that it is difficult not to suspect a structural subversion of the older man at work in the text. It begins positively to appear that for the aged scholar there is no sanctuary from this "energumen" (the term is Keck's) who pursues him (339).
Dorothea's fall into knowledge occurs in Chapter 21. By the next chapter, the next scene, and the next day, we find Will dining with a delighted Dorothea and a palpably reluctant Casaubon. When Will, discussing one of his paintings, playfully exaggerates its symbolism, Dorothea remarks to her husband, "'What a difficult kind of shorthand! It would require all your knowledge to be able to read it,'" a statement that nicely describes the difficulty the latter confronts in trying to interpret the private code the other two are beginning to share (158). With good reason, Casaubon "'had a suspicion that he was being laughed at. But it was not possible to include Dorothea in the suspicion'" (158). By the chapter's end, Dorothea once more has broached with Will the subject of the Germans, aware all the while of "'an indistinct consciousness that she was in the strange situation of consulting a third person about the adequacy of Mr. Casaubon's learning'" (164). So thoroughly has she accepted Will's view of scholarly requirements that she can speculate aloud upon the sadness of the situation, should Casaubon "'in any way fail in what has been the labour of his best years'" (165).

We next meet the Casaubons in Chapter 28, when they have returned to Lowick. Already Dorothea feels herself suffocating, surrounded by an existence that "'seemed to beat with a lower pulse than her own," trapped in "'a nightmare in which every object was withering and shrinking away from her'" (202). In the next chapter, Will intrudes once more, this time in the form of a letter asking permission to visit. This letter occasions a second major quarrel, in which Dorothea's cry to Casaubon indicates the distance apart they have
traveled: "'Why do you attribute to me a wish for anything that would annoy you? You speak as if I were something you had to contend against'" (208). Nor is the quarrel the only consequence of Will's message; for it is followed within minutes by Casaubon's first attack. The entire incident thus marks the beginning of the end of his professional and marital hopes.

The letter constitutes just one of a series of instances in which Will's presence obtrudes not merely in the house, but more specifically in the spaces emblematic of Casaubon's weak points. And George Eliot makes it clear that Casaubon's self-esteem hinges on two issues only--his competence as a scholar and as a husband:

Poor Mr. Casaubon was distrustful of everybody's feelings toward him, especially as a husband. To let anyone suppose that he was jealous would be to admit their (suspected) view of his disadvantages: to let them know that he did not find marriage particularly blissful would imply his conversion to their (probably) earlier disapproval. It would be as bad as letting Carp, and Brasenose generally, know how backward he was in organizing the matter for his "Key to All Mythologies" (276-77).

In this first instance, the letter arrives in the library, the space sacred to Casaubon's scholarship. The subsequent quarrel takes place in the library, and Casaubon becomes ill in the library. Later, Ladislaw will make his appearance more than once in that same library.
Furthermore, we have known since before Will's introduction that his grandmother's picture hangs prominently in Dorothea's boudoir—a grandmother he so closely resembles, as Celia is quick to point out (241). Will and his proxies thus invade the two areas of Casaubon's life he needs most to protect, and their presence there underscores Casaubon's vulnerability on both points. The fact that Dorothea meets with Lydgate in the library to learn the seriousness of Casaubon's disease merely highlights the physical frailty that serves to accentuate his scholarly and sexual doubts.

I have already shown the extent to which Dorothea confuses submission with compassion at the crisis of her relationship with Casaubon. And while this confusion binds her more closely in service to her husband, it simultaneously reflects the growing emotional distance between them. It first appears, moreover, as a direct result of Will's revelation in Rome; for her immediate response is to feel a "new alarm on his behalf which was the first stirring of a pitying tenderness fed by the realities of his lot and not by her own dreams" (155). Nor is Will slow to take advantage of this tendency in her. Scarcely has he arrived at Tipton Grange until we find him describing Casaubon's self-doubts, in the latter's library, to an attentive Dorothea (Ch. 37). And narrative description of her response to an ever-growing sense of Casaubon's inadequacies further mingles duty with pity, submission with compassion:

She was no longer struggling against the perception of facts, but adjusting herself to their clearest perception; and now when she looked steadily at her
husband's failure, still more at his possible
consciousness of failure, she seemed to be looking
along the one track where duty became tenderness
(267).

Will's feelings in this interview, however, consist of "the unutterable
contentment of perceiving--what Dorothea was hardly conscious of--that
she was travelling into the remoteness of pure pity and loyalty towards
her husband" (269). Will's obvious satisfaction with this turn of
events recalls to mind that his antecedents include not only Milton's
Satan but Shelley's Prometheus; nor is it difficult to hear in his
thoughts an echo of Prometheus's dominant emotion toward Jupiter:
"Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee."91

The interview is not without its direct effect. When Casaubon
arrives home that same afternoon, he is for once bursting with delight,
for he has met with a fellow scholar and received high praise from him,
an occurrence we sense is deservedly rare. But when he hears that Will
has called and, moreover, has decided to stay in the area, Casaubon's
day takes a turn for the worse. Even though Dorothea "presently
recurred to Dr. Spanning and the Archdeacon's breakfast," the damage
has been done: "There was no longer sunshine on these subjects" (271).
This same interview also leads Dorothea to propose the division of
Casaubon's property, a project designed to guarantee, in the narrator's
words, "the further embitterment of her husband" (272). It also spurs
him to make the alteration in his will, an act that will prove fatal to
any remaining illusions Dorothea cherishes about her marriage.
Chapter 30 finds Will and Dorothea again in a library, this time Mr. Brooke's, since Casaubon has forbidden his cousin to visit Lowick. In this interview Will tells her he intends to defy Casaubon's demand that he leave Tipton; and he provides an equation of his own, one of duty with servitude: "'Obligation may be stretched till it is no better than a brand of slavery stamped on us when we were too young to know its meaning!'" (286). Again Will's formulation inverts George Eliot's; it also transposes the values Dorothea and the narrator place on duty and defiance: what they defend as submission is to him a captivity that demands rebellion. The chapter goes on to juxtapose Will's self-styled rebelliousness (287) and the insolence of Brooke's tenant Dagley, a man who, we are told, "had taken too much in the shape of muddy political talk, a stimulant dangerously disturbing to his farming conservatism, which consisted in holding that whatever is, is bad, and any change is likely to be worse" (289). Dagley's momentary conversion from these sentiments mildly prefigures the later rebels of Theophrastus Such.

Chapter 42, as we have seen, details the culmination of the battle of wills between Dorothea and her husband. It also makes clear that the distance between them—a distance textually reinforced with each of Will's appearances—has grown immeasurably, a development that increases the narrator's attempts to force a tripartite sympathy between the various points of view. But narrative efforts to the contrary notwithstanding, Dorothea finds herself fixed in the postlapsarian stance of Adam: the impulse, that is, to lay blame:

in the miserable light she saw her own and her husband's solitude—how they walked apart so that
she was obliged to survey him. If he had drawn her
towards him, she would never have surveyed him—
ever have said, "Is he worth living for?" but
would have felt him simply a part of her own life.
Now she said bitterly, "It is his fault, not mine"
(312).

Dorothea's fearful response to her own feelings is, as I have shown, to
substitute submissive compassion for what is in fact rebellious anger;
but while compassion may lessen the perceived danger, it does nothing,
in Chapter 42 as earlier, to lessen the distance. The text, working
against itself, has used Will's strategy of divide and conquer effec-
tively indeed.

Will trespasses one final time on the living Casaubon's territory
when he determines to attend Lowick church in defiance of the other's
prohibition. In doing so he encroaches on yet another space emblematic
of Casaubon's life. At the same time, the effective separation between
Dorothea and Casaubon remains as complete as it can be while the
scholar lives. No doubt sensing the gulf, Casaubon redoubles his
efforts to dominate her and issues his demand as to "'whether, in case
of my death, you will carry out my wishes: whether you will avoid doing
what I should deprecate, and apply yourself to what I should desire'"
(350). He makes this demand the evening following Will's appearance at
church, spurred in all likelihood by his cousin's irritating presence.
The next morning, though, before Dorothea can give her answer, she
finds her husband dead--dead on the bench in the Yew-Tree Walk.
Casaubon thus leaves the novel in the very place Will earlier entered; the symbolic displacement of the one by the other is complete.

Will's displacement of Casaubon in Dorothea's life, however, requires the rest of the novel fully to effect. And the process includes still more intrusion on Casaubon's former space. Chapter 54 details Will's first farewell to Dorothea, the one that occurs before he gains knowledge of Casaubon's will. Of all their meetings, this one alone takes place in the drawing room at Lowick, the spot Dorothea thinks of as "the most neutral room in the house" (394). And the novel's events work to render this first farewell as meaningless as the room in which it occurs. Their final encounter, however, the one that at last seals Will's victory over Casaubon, occurs once more in the latter's library. Waiting for Will to enter, Dorothea's thought that "she could not receive him in this library, where her husband's prohibition seemed to dwell" (590) quickly gives way to "a sense that she was doing something defiantly daring for [Will's] sake" (591). With this scene, Will's ouster of Casaubon becomes complete. Invading the scholar's space--space that has ramified beyond the scholarly and sexual to include the religious and proprietary--he supplants Casaubon with a thoroughness that evokes both Darwin and Freud. In doing so he frees Dorothea from a life that has become "a virtual tomb," doing for her what she, encumbered as she is by narrative resistance, has been unable to do for herself (348). His intervention, like Pollian's, liberates through defiance of oppressive forces (forces both conjugal and textual); more than that, it sets the scene for self-liberation, in
Dorothea as in Mary Ann Evans, through the process of transformational change.

**Textual Transformation**

For Dorothea's new freedom involves more than just escape from Casaubon's person. It importantly includes a release from the emotional suffocation engendered by her life with him, a condition even Lydgate, beset by troubles as he is, recognizes as one of "self-suppression" (361). The text implies, furthermore, that her liberation consists not merely of escape from her former situation; rather, it includes movement to a new position, but one that grows inexorably out of the old even as it proclaims its difference from its predecessor. And nowhere is this change more evident than at the moment she learns the contents of Casaubon's will:

She might have compared her existence at that moment to the vague, alarmed consciousness that her life was taking on a new form, that she was undergoing a metamorphosis in which memory would not adjust itself to the stirring of new organs. Everything was changing its aspect: her husband's conduct, her own duteous feeling towards him, every struggle between them--and yet more, her whole relation to Will Ladislaw. . . . One change terrified her as if it had been a sin; it was a violent shock of repulsion from her departed
husband, ... [accompanied by] a sudden strange
yearning of heart towards Will Ladislaw (359-60).

This alteration in Dorothea includes, that is, not just a change of
object, a modification of goals, but actual transformation. And George
Eliot, like the post-Darwinian that she is, images this transformation
in terms that are by no means solely epistemological but are also
physical. Dorothea's new life, in other words, constitutes not just a
new way of seeing but a new way of being that ramifies beyond the
constraints of perspectivism (constraints crucial to the narrator's
interpretive powers) to affect all aspects of her life. The passage,
moreover, employs the same metaphor used in Mary Ann Evans's triumphant
description of herself to Sara Hennell. In that letter she pictures
herself as having shed an "old skin" and entering on a "new metamor-
phosis ... a new period of my life which makes me look back on the
past as something incredibly poor and contemptible." Like its
prototype in the letter, the description of Dorothea images physical
change as an inescapable part of psychic or perspectival change.

Nor is it surprising that observers are quick to note the dif-
ference in Dorothea from this moment. The narrator, now that the
perceived threat of violence has been removed, can remark with relief
that her "native strength of will was no longer all converted into
resolute submission" (391). Mrs. Cadwallader, less approving of what
she sees, intuits this freedom from repression but finds it dangerous.
Speaking just as if Dorothea were a rebellious province to be subdued,
she prescribes, "'It will be well for her to marry again as soon as it
is proper. ... I see clearly a husband is the best thing to keep her
in order" (392). More significant than others' reactions, though, are
Dorothea's own acts. For the first time, she finds herself able to
assert her own wishes against Casaubon's demands. In a psychologically
liberating gesture, she writes her long-delayed response to his final
request: "'Do you not see now that I could not submit my soul to yours,
by working hopelessly at what I have no belief in?'" (393). She also
becomes able, as never before, to admit the intensity of her relation-
ship with Will before Casaubon's death, together with the extent of her
resentment toward her husband. This admission, made in the heat of her
interview with Rosamond, constitutes a complete turnabout from her
almost perverse blindness to her own emotions at the time: "'Even if we
loved some one else better than—than those we were married to, it
would be of no use. . . . it murders our marriage—and then the
marriage stays with us like a murder!" (584-85). The statement's
imagery calls to mind the criminal motif lurking just beneath the
surface of her (and the narrator's) earlier struggle to subdue herself
and convert her rage into something less menacing.

Her reactions to Will, and to his supposed betrayal of her, take
on a new quality of honesty in keeping with her admission to Rosamond.
At the height of her misery over what she believes to be his defection,
her emotional reaction is no longer submerged, and its expression is
intensely physical:

she besought hardness and coldness and aching
weariness to bring her relief from the mysterious
incorporeal might of her anguish: she lay on the
bare floor and let the night grow cold around her;
while her grand woman's frame was shaken by sobs as
if she had been a despairing child (576).

As Haight notes, this reaction is impelled "by a paroxysm of sexual
jealousy, which George Eliot had no need to study in any one's let-
ters." Whereas the narrator had purported to veil Dorothea's anger
toward Casaubon under a cover of pity, the torrent of feelings for
Ladislaw breaks through even narrative resistance. Refusing to
characterize him, like Casaubon, as "a detected illusion," Dorothea
seizes the narration to declare him instead "a living man towards whom
there could not yet struggle any wail of regretful pity, from the midst
of scorn and indignation and jealous offended pride" (576). Finally,
her refusal at last to eject Will from her life springs not from
deliberative thought but from "the flood of her young passion bearing
down all the obstructions which had kept her silent" (594).

Of a piece with the physicality of the metamorphic passage and her
subsequent reactions is Dorothea's realization that "she was a part of
that involuntary, palpitating life." (578). The life she sees out of
her window is physical, sexual, biological, and utterly postlapsarian--
a view of "a man with a bundle on his back and a woman carrying her
baby." Dorothea's vision at this moment has been read as virtually
every kind of transformation--Bunyanesque, Carlylean, Hegelian,
Comtean. But the thoroughgoing physicality of this scene takes its
full meaning only in the context of the transformational passage
discussed above. Her immersion into what George Levine calls "the
larger fate of the species," her new-found sense of participation in a
community that is biological before it is moral, becomes possible only
by means of the prior change that directs her view away from Casaubon and a life of mental and physical stasis, toward the dynamism Ladislaw embodies and toward a life that contains, for once, a share of physical expression. Contributing to the motif of rebirth are the springtime imagery that precedes her discovery of Will's supposed duplicity and her decision to discard mourning that follows it (567, 578). The associations of rebirth together with a sort of momentary biological transcendence evoke Nietzsche's insight that "with the potent coming of spring that penetrates all nature with joy, these Dionysian emotions awake, and as they grow in intensity everything subjective vanishes into complete self-forgetfulness." In this instance it is important to emphasize that the "self-forgetfulness" on Dorothea's part leads not to further self-denial but instead to a self-realization unimaginable in the days of Casaubon. (His death, in fact, occurs in spring, a timing that itself portends Dorothea's reawakening.)

Dorothea's reactions after Casaubon's death--her night on the floor, her inability to pity Will, her immersion into "that involuntary, palpitating life," her confession to Rosamond that she murdered her marriage, even her final admission to Will--are in the last analysis involuntary in themselves, the result not of deliberation but of unreflecting necessity (a fact underscored by the temporary co-opting of the narrative voice). The energy so consistently stifled earlier in the story, by Dorothea and by the text itself, begins at last to be released, even if that release is indicated only by the briefest of incidents. (Textual reticence on the subject, at this point, is due not to Dorothea's reluctance but to the reconstituting
vigilance of the narrator, whose ambivalence toward the direction Dorothea's story inexorably takes is never fully overcome—as we shall see.) The source of these involuntary, almost instinctive responses is to be found, once more, in the passage describing her metamorphosis into a new life—a metamorphosis that is consistent not only with the evidence of the Pollian letters but with the post-Darwinian dynamics (the struggle for life and the will to power) detailed in Chapter 1. That metamorphosis in turn becomes possible only through Will's effect, directly or indirectly, on Casaubon: the jealousy he inspires that causes the scholar to alter his will, the wedge he drives between them in giving Dorothea a postlapsarian perspective on her marriage, the physical and emotional displacement of Casaubon he effects within Dorothea (a displacement that in turn overwhelms narrative resistance to physical and emotional facts).

But Will also displaces Casaubon textually, within the novel itself. Narrative reservations on the subject notwithstanding, his rebelliousness carries the day. And that very success, coupled with his name, serves subtly to undermine the novel's persistent criticism of the "will" manifested so disastrously by the other characters. In a very real sense, Middlemarch is about the battle of wills between the individual and the context of his/her life. The Casaubon and Lydgate marriages are themselves internecine battles of will. The attempt to dominate posthumously through the legal means of a "will" is an important aspect of the Casaubon and Featherstone stories. Indeed, the confrontation between Mary Garth and Peter Featherstone over the matter of the second will constitutes, in and of itself, both another battle
of wills and an extended play on the word "will" (Chapter 33). Lydgate's "unmixed resolutions of independence" against the conditions of medical practice in Middlemarch (134), Mr. Brooke's determination to hew an independent political line even while carrying the Liberal standard, Bulstrode's lust for power--all are manifestations of will. In contrast, the characters so frequently deemed normative, Farebrother and Caleb Garth, consistently denounce the exercise of the will. Caleb even remarks, "'For my part, I wish there was no such thing as a will!'" (247). In a novel that resonates with such names as "Lowick," "Brooke," "Lydgate," and "Farebrother," Will's name must be taken seriously indeed. His deposition of Casaubon and the freedom for Dorothea it entails serve, that is, to call into serious question the more general criticism of will that pervades the novel. In this case, as in the case of narrative ambivalence, the text frequently appears at war with itself--much in the manner of the subservient "Mary Ann" and the purportedly demonic "Pollian" of the letters. While Will's victory cannot undo the disaster the other characters' willfulness brings down on their own heads, it should give us pause. It suggests, for one thing, that the conflict between the individual and the general may be more apparent than real, textual evidence to the contrary notwithstanding; for it is only with Dorothea's acceptance of her true position vis-à-vis Will that she enters into the larger life around her--both imaginatively, as "a part of that involuntary, palpitating life," (578) and actively, in her subsequent effort to extricate Rosamond from her own private illusions (579-86). Like much else in the novel, it raises as many questions as it answers. And it raises
them provocatively, holding them in tension with the events the text
describes and the solutions it seems to propose.

The novel's last 250 pages move insistently toward the conclusion
Will's efforts have prepared. The union of Dorothea and Will should
constitute a triumph. Yet the narrator's stance in the "Finale"
retains much of the ambivalence evident in Chapter 42 and works subtly
but effectively to militate against our viewing the marriage as an
unmitigated good. This narrative ambivalence can be (and often has
been) credited in part to the fact that Dorothea does, after all, fail
in her more idealistic (or "theoretic") ambitions—ambitions the
narrator frequently seems to share. Because Ladislaw is not Locke,
Hooker, or Milton, because Dorothea's effect on the world seems
destined to be merely "diffusive," the outcome of her drama appears
inadequate to her talents (613).100 Such passages as the following
embody this narrative reluctance:

Dorothea herself had no dreams of being praised
above other women, feeling that there was always
something better which she might have done, if she
had only been better and known better. Still, she
never repented that she had given up position and
fortune to marry Will Ladislaw. . . . Many who knew
her, thought it a pity that so substantive and rare
a creature should have been absorbed into the life
of another, and be only known in a certain circle
as a wife and mother. But no one stated exactly
what else that was in her power she ought rather to have done (610-11).

Unable to overcome the force of textual impulses, the narrator refuses fully to cede interpretive control.

Gilbert and Cubar provide a clue to the narrator's resistance when they suggest that Dorothea's marriage "is still the most subversive act available to her within the context defined by the author, since it is the only act prohibited by the stipulations of the dead man, and by her family and friends as well."\textsuperscript{101} The construct I have been examining, though, suggests an even more covert reason for narrative ambivalence. In light of the reading I have suggested, there can be little doubt that George Eliot's persistent refusal, embodied textually in the narrator, totally to valorize Dorothea's marriage derives from the position Will Ladislaw occupies in this structure. For all the freedom he bestows on Dorothea, that freedom remains by definition both triumphant and illicit. Will, like Pollian, like the rebels of \textit{Theophrastus Such}, has served to subvert the figure vested, albeit ironically, with divine/paternal authority. And that figure is in turn an antitype of Mary Ann Evans's early objects of worship. The narrator's inability to sustain an ironic view of Casaubon during the depths of the marital strife and his unwillingness to endorse the novel's outcome testify to the seriousness of the issue. And if Dorothea's second marriage vanishes into the margins of the text, it may well be due to its incapacity to thrive under the rather carping view of this conservative, essentially patriarchal narrator. If Will is analogous to the part of George Eliot's personality known as
Pollian, and if Casaubon figures forth the many father figures she so willingly served, it would seem that this narrator corresponds to that portion of George Eliot's psyche which holds the entire construct in place. As such, he has fulfilled the role of a sort of textual superego, a function the reader suspects he would own with some satisfaction.

Will, Pollian, the rebels, and Milton's Satan, it is apparent, are part and parcel of the post-Darwinian forces beneath the surface of Frye's "drunken boat;" conversely, the narrator's dedication to the consciously moral humanism so generally associated with her author would seem to betoken "the values of humanity, intelligence, or cultural and social tradition" (p. 53) floating precariously on the surface. Only at the moment of Dorothea's epiphany and in her assistance to Rosamond that follows does the dualism of the model dissolve. For in spite of, or perhaps indeed because of, the radically liberating function of the post-Darwinian "demons," neither the Mary Ann of the letters nor the narrator of George Eliot's novel can fully acknowledge the implications of their presence.

Yet all the narrator's reluctance cannot entirely disguise the extent and nature of the victory. Dorothea, like Mary Ann Evans before her, does undergo a transformation that liberates, a transformation that affirms her participation in the emotional and biological energies of life. And this change occurs only through the agency of volitional forces emblematic of that first rebellion. For Dorothea in Middlemarch, the tree of knowledge and the tree of life become one. In this connection, it is worth noting again George Eliot's words to
Barbara Bodichon after some five years with Lewes--a relationship that existed beyond the margin of cultural convention even as Dorothea's and Will's marriage exists only beyond the margins of the text. In a mischievous conflation of the sacred and the profane, the mature George Eliot transcends the dualisms of Middlemarch in a few well-chosen words:

I am a very blessed woman, am I not? to have all this reason for being glad that I have lived, in spite of my sins and sorrows--or rather, by reason of my sins and sorrows.\textsuperscript{103}

What those "sins and sorrows" had done for George Eliot, the agency of Will Ladislaw, with all that agency represents, enables her heroine to achieve. And she achieves it in a manner that, like George Eliot's own liberation from God and father, is neither disjunctive nor abysmal but is, instead, transformational and communal.
Notes

1 GEL 1: 6.

2 GEL 1: 133; cf. William Blake, "Energy is Eternal Delight"; "But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer as a sea received the excess of his delights" (The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Blake Pl. 4, 34; Pl. 16, 40).

3 GEL 1: 239.


5 Basil Willey gives what is probably the classic exposition of her spiritual/intellectual journey and its relationship to her century: "Probably no English writer of the time, and certainly no novelist, more fully epitomizes the century; her development is a paradigm, her intellectual biography a graph, of its most decided trend. Starting from Evangelical Christianity, the curve passes through doubt to a reinterpreted Christ and a religion of humanity: beginning with God, it ends in Duty" (Nineteenth Century 204). And Martin J. Sväglic provides a formulation that stresses the paradoxical element in her beliefs, and in the century's: she "epitomizes in her life and works the spiritual history of the nineteenth century, of which there is hardly a more graphic symbol than the image of this intensely serious young intellectual lifting her eyes in sorrow from her careful translation of Strauss's creed-wrecking Leben Jesu and fixing them intently on the crucifix she kept before her" ("Religion in the Novels of George Eliot," Journal of English and Germanic Philology 53 [April 1954], 145-59; A Century of George Eliot Criticism, ed. Gordon S. Haight [Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1965] 287).


8 Redinger 73.


10 *CEL* 1: 162.

11 See *CEL* 1: 263-69.

12 *CEL* 1: 269.

13 *CEL* 6: 120.


17 Haight, *Biography* 530.


20 Haight, *Biography* 91. Mary Ann translated Strauss anonymously; her translation of Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christenthums*, published by Chapman in 1854, featured her own name, Marian Evans, on the title page, for the first and only time (Haight 143).

21 In addition to Redinger's biography, the 1970s saw a subtextual breakthrough in *Middlemarch* criticism with the appearance of J. Hillis Miller's "Narrative and History," *ELH* 41 (1974): 455-73, a deconstructive reading that opened the text to new approaches. Moved by a similar impulse to delve beneath the textual surface, U. C. Knoepflmacher argued in "Middlemarch: An Avuncular View" that the uncles of the novel are ineffectual or perverse versions of "the traditional role of father substitute" (*NCF* 30 [1975]: 55). At about the same time, *Middlemarch* was proving responsive to feminist interpretations (see note 25 below).
22 Redinger 113, 123. Rosemarie Bodenheimer, in "Mary Ann Evans's Holy War: An Essay in Letter Reading" (NCL 44 [1989]: 335-63), analyzes the letters from the "holy war" period but minimizes the rebellion against the father, finding instead a "dance of egotism and repentance," a reading that does not take into account the creation of "Pollian" and its significance in George Eliot's life and work. See also Rosemarie Bodenheimer, The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 1994) 57-84.

23 Redinger 87.

24 Sadoff 3.


26 George Eliot, Impressions of Theophrastus Such (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1908) 33-34.

27 Cross, who quotes the passage early on (1: 4), realizes its importance but takes it at face value only, calling it "the key to a great deal in the mental attitude of the future thinker and writer. It is the foundation of the latent Conservative bias."

28 Blake's familiar formulation appears in The Marriage of Heaven and Hell: "The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true Poet and of the Devils party without knowing it" (Blake Pl. 5, 35). For George Eliot's remark, see GEL 5: 238.


30 GEL 1: 142.

31 GEL 1: 164-65.

32 GEL 1: 165.

33 GEL 1: 225.
34 Redinger 36.
35 Redinger 37.
36 Eliot, Theophrastus Such 29-30 (my emphasis).
38 GEL 4: 472 (my emphasis).
39 GEL 1: 46-47 (George Eliot's emphasis).
41 Haight, Biography 79-80; Rev. 9.11.
42 GEL 1: 182.
43 Svaglic 287 (see note 5 for full reference and entire passage).
44 GEL 1: 264.
45 GEL 1: 265.
46 GEL 1: 269.
47 GEL 1: 259-62.
48 GEL 1: 268-69. An exception to this pattern is a slightly earlier letter (26 April) to Sara Hennell: "Dear Father is so decidedly progressing towards recovery that I am full of quiet joy—a gentle dawning light after the moonlight of sorrow... I feel prepared to 'accept' life nay, lovingly to embrace it in any form in which it shall present itself" (1: 259). These sentiments, or others like them, no doubt inspired Cara Bray's note to Sara informing her of what she would already have known: "Mr. Evans has rallied so much as to give hopes of his recovery. So, of course, Pollian is in a happy mood again; though the poor thing looks as thin as a poker" (1: 259, note 9). I contend that this connection, for all its conventional appropriateness, was less a matter of course than Cara Bray apparently believed. (Mary Ann's letter announcing the improvement and her own pleasure is signed "Pollian").
49 GEL 1: 336.
50 GEL 2: 190; GEL 8: 134; PL 1.254.
51 Haight, Biography 79-80; 137.

52 GFL 2: 165; the "Pollian" letters resume 5 November 1856 (2: 268-69).

53 See Haight, Biography 311, 323, 324. Both biographers point out that George Eliot could be extraordinarily firm regarding the names she wished, or did not wish, to be called, a sensitivity increased by her unconventional relationship with Lewes and by the commotion accompanying the public search for the identity behind the pseudonym. See Haight 228, 243, 267, 269-70; Redinger 255-56, 267, 288, 430. Neither records that she ever objected to being called "Polly."

54 GFL 1: 284.

55 GFL 1: 334; GFL 5: 448.

56 The struggle within the self and the fear of submerged energies so apparent in the letters and, I argue, in Middlemarch, make it difficult for me to credit John Kucich's oddly perverse treatment of repression as a force that, within the Victorian novel, "heightens and vitalizes emotional autonomy, rather than threatening or suppressing it" (Repression in Victorian Fiction: Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, and Charles Dickens [Berkeley: U of California P, 1987] 2-3). The victories for autonomy Kucich thereby intuits are primarily victories by redefinition.


58 GFL 2: 107.


61 Levine, Realistic Imagination 209.


63 Edwards 231 (see note 25).


68 Gilbert and Gubar 506. On the similarity of Dorothea to George Eliot, see 450-51. Sadoff also comments on George Eliot's "figurative fathers" (71).


71 Will's fortune with critics began at such a low ebb that it could only improve, although it has taken a century for it to do so. Richard Holt Hutton, in an influential contemporary review, pronounced Ladislaw "altogether uninteresting" (Spectator 45 [7 December 1872]: 1554-56; George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll [London: Routledge, 1971] 311); Henry James soon followed suit with the judgment that George Eliot's portrayal of Ladislaw was "the only eminent failure in the book" (Galaxy 15 [March 1873]: 424-28; Carroll 355-56). Almost alone in his praise for Will and his relationship with Dorothea was W. D. Howells, who called the second marriage "one of the finest things, and one of the truest things in a book so great that it almost persuades one to call it the greatest in English fiction. . . . I must own him a person of weight by those measures which test the value of precious stones or precious metals" (Heroines of Fiction, 2 vols. [New York: Harper, 1901] 2: 71). Nor does Will fare better with many post-Jamesian moderns. F. R. Leavis dismisses Ladislaw as merely representing "certain of George Eliot's intentions--intentions she has failed to
realize creatively" (The Great Tradition [London: Chatto & Windus, 1948] 75). Gerald Bullett dismisses Will as "palpably not worthy of" Dorothea (George Eliot: Her Life and Books [New Haven: Yale UP, 1948] 244). More recently, W. J. Harvey has termed Will "the weakest thing in the novel" (The Art of George Eliot [New York: Oxford UP, 1962] 195); and A. O. J. Cockshut snorts, "As for her redemption by Ladislaw, believe in that who can" (Cockshut 51), while George Levine more moderately concludes that Will "carries a heavier burden of authority than his lightweight dilettantism would seem to justify" (Realistic 302).

Most of these judgments are overtly or covertly aesthetic in nature, based on a belief that George Eliot, in portraying Ladislaw, failed of her artistic objectives. A second group of critics, however, dams with faint praise. These somewhat more recent observers lean toward the position that Will's inadequacy is precisely what George Eliot intended. Joan Bennett contends, "Marriage with Ladislaw is not meant to be the fulfilment of Dorothea's youthful dreams" (George Eliot: Her Mind and Her Art [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1948] 176), a judgment with which Bernard Paris concurs (Experiments in Life 191-92). Jerome Thale similarly concludes that the second marriage "is of course meant to be a kind of modest fulfillment" (The Novels of George Eliot [New York and London: Columbia UP, 1959] 120). Bert G. Hornback concedes that, while Will "is no longer a dilettante, he is nevertheless not Hooker, Locke, Milton, or Pascal. . . . And he is prepared to work in the real world at doing practical things" ("The Moral Imagination of George Eliot," Papers on Language and Literature 8 [1972]: 389). Some of these critics ground their assertion of Will's purposeful mediocrity in a growing awareness of the pessimism implicit in George Eliot's work, and of Middlemarch's progression from idealism to a more empirical resting place. One contends that "the author's intuitive demand for a deficient and unsatisfying Ladislaw" makes it possible accurately to trace Dorothea's fate in nineteenth-century provincial society (Sr. Jane Marie Luecke, "Ladislaw and the Middlemarch Vision," NCF 19 [1964]: 64). U. C. Knoepfelmacher sums up the positive, if limited, victory Dorothea achieves, one compatible with her constricting circumstances: 'The 'theoretic' enthusiast of the first half of the novel becomes an active healer who mends disrupted human relationships. This, and her marriage to the mercurial Will Ladislaw, a Victorian 'second best,' is the via media, the 'middle march' between her soaring aspirations and the grounding force of a prosaic reality" (Religious Humanism 76). Feminist critics find a similar modesty in the novel's outcome, a modesty they credit to considerations of gender rather than to nineteenth-century pessimism. Kathleen Blake argues that George Eliot intends the reader to feel Dorothea's meanness of opportunity: 'Will is a slight creature beside her" (308). "How little she settles for," Patricia Beer contends (Reader, I Married Him: A Study of the Women Characters of Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot [London: Macmillan, 1974] 179).

The last twenty years have seen, though, an encouraging change in Will's critical fortunes. Gordon S. Haight delivers a definitive defense of Will in "George Eliot's 'eminent failure,' Will Ladislaw," This Particular Web: Essays on Middlemarch, ed. Ian Adam (Toronto and
Buffalo: U of Toronto P, 1975), where he contends, "Pace Henry James, the true hero of Middlemarch is Will Ladislaw" (36). Brian Swann approvingly associates Will with "all those mythic heroes who rescue maidens from dragons or obtain the golden apples of the Hesperides" ("Middlemarch and Myth," NCP 28 [1973]: 213). Others champion Will from perspectives that are less traditional. Sally Shuttleworth applauds the fact that Will "embodies the spirit of creative renewal"; in him, "energy is neither blocked nor dissipated but directly channeled." He thus finds a prominent place in the organismic Shuttleworth examines in the novel (George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Science: The Make-Believe of a Beginning [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984] 167).

Gilbert and Gubar argue, contra Patricia Beer, that "Will is Eliot's radically anti-patriarchal attempt to create an image of masculinity attractive to women" (529). It is with the spirit of these last readings--from a sense, that is, that Will embodies an energy that implicitly threatens the status quo--that I associate my own work.


75 See PL 1.38 and 6.269.

76 The words "rebel," "rebellious," and "rebellion" occur frequently in the Old Testament (but not in the New, a contrast that perhaps reflects the altered perception of the relationship of God to persons explicit in the latter). These words refer variously to individuals, to communities such as cities, and to the entire nation of Israel. I find no instance where rebellion is likened to the diabolic, although in one case (1 Sam. 15.23) it is associated with "witchcraft" (Robert Young, LL.D., Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible [Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982] 796).

77 Two thoughtful studies of narrative epistemology in Middlemarch, J. Hillis Miller's, "Optic and Semiotic in Middlemarch," The Worlds of Victorian Fiction, ed. Jerome H. Buckley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1975) 125-45, and D. A. Miller's, Narrative and Its Discontents: Problems of Closure in the Traditional Novel (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981) 107-93, address the crucial issue of narrative authority. Hillis Miller argues, "What is true for the characters of Middlemarch, that 'we all of us, grave or light, get our thoughts entangled in metaphors, and act fatally on the strength of them', must also be true for the narrator" (144). And D. A. Miller suggests one risk the narrator runs in his quest for authority: "If one perspective
(such as the narrator's) includes a consciousness of others, it may need to subvert or parody them, in order to maintain its difference by an effect of transcendence. Yet if despite its difference it shares a common structure with its rivals, it may be running the risk of self-subversion or self-parody in the very attempt to undercut them" (110).

78 PL 4.50-53.

79 D. A. Miller 110.

80 Lee R. Edwards argues that this fear is also George Eliot's and is the basis of the story of Laure: "By understanding the violence of Laure's energy, the ruthlessness of her power, George Eliot shows clearly what she is most afraid of if she leaves her female characters generally unbridled" (238). And Alice James furnishes a tragic real-life parallel of Dorothea's attitude (as well as a likely explanation for her own neuroses) when she recounts that she "used to sit immovable reading in the library with waves of violent inclination suddenly invading my muscles taking some one of their myriad forms such as throwing myself out of the window, or knocking off the head of the benignant pater as he sat with his silver locks, writing at his table" (The Diary of Alice James 149).

81 Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals, Basic Writings 472-73 (Nietzsche's emphases).


83 Parker 82.

84 The following passage describing Maggie's perception of Tom (The Mill on the Floss, ed. Gordon S. Haight [Oxford: Clarendon; New York: Oxford UP, 1980]) veritably reverberates with negative theological associations; it also pictures a relationship not unlike that between Dorothea and Casaubon. The biographical implications of the passage are worth noting as well, since the relationship between Maggie and Tom was modeled on that of Mary Ann Evans and her brother, Isaac: "Her brother was the human being of whom she had been most afraid, from her childhood upwards: afraid with that fear which springs in us when we love one who is inexorable, unbending, unmodifiable--with a mind that we can never mould ourselves upon, and yet that we cannot endure to alienate from us. . . . In her deep humiliation . . . she almost desired to endure the severity of Tom's reproof, to submit in patient silence to that harsh disapproving judgment against which she had so often rebelled" (425).

85 Higdon provides a valuable list of George Eliot's sources for her epigraphs. The epigraph for Chapter 67, which deals with Lydgate, also is George Eliot's own and, much like the epigraph to Chapter 9, concerns "civil war within the soul," a conflict carried on by "hungry rebels" (see Higdon 141).
86 Darwin, *Origin* 110, 121.

87 In an article on the dissemination of Hegelian religious thought in Victorian England, Kirk Willis reveals the extent of Casaubon's lack in this litany of those who followed the Germans--a group that includes, of course, Casaubon's literary creator: "virtually every early- and mid-Victorian student of German thought was a Whig or Liberal in political allegiance and a reformer in community, Church, and university affairs. From Coleridge to Hare to Lewes to Eliot to Jowett to Green, those British men and women who took the extraordinary step to learn German and who then proselytized on behalf of German literature, history, philosophy, theology, and classical scholarship were self-conscious critics of at least some aspects of Victorian cultural 'orthodoxy'" ("The Introduction and Critical Reception of Hegelian Thought in Britain 1830-1900," *Victorian Studies* 32 [1988]: 111). See also W. J. Harvey's "The Intellectual Background of the Novel," *Middlemarch: Critical Approaches to the Novel*, ed. Barbara Hardy (London: Athlone; New York: Oxford UP, 1967) 25-37, for a discussion of the German work to which Will refers, as well as related background.

88 Gen. 2.23a.

89 Gen. 3.12.

90 Bernard J. Paris suggests that Dorothea's judgment of Casaubon reflects an early stage in her development, one that is surpassed by the end of the novel. The implication is that such judgment is a defect to be overcome, a view that perhaps accepts too readily the narrator's (or George Eliot's) overt sense of things (*Experiments in Life* 187-90).


92 See especially *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (New York and London: Norton, 1950) 119-61. Freud's contention that "the basis of a taboo is a prohibited action, for performing which a strong inclination exists in the unconscious" is congruent with Casaubon's prohibition of the second marriage on penalty of disinheritance (32).

93 Gordon S. Haight, "Poor Mr. Casaubon" 266. Dorothea's capacity for such intense reaction is anticipated in the opening chapter when, after first rejecting her mother's jewelry on "theoretic" social principles, she relents and reserves a portion of the gems for herself.


95 Levine, Realistic 267; see also Shuttleworth 165-68.

96 Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy, Basic Writings 36.

97 This extract from the dialogue of Chapter 33, between Mary Garth and Featherstone, gives some idea of the extent of the word play involved: "'And I've made everything ready to change my mind, and do as I like at the last.' 'I cannot touch your iron chest or your will... No, Sir, I will not... I will not let the close of your life soil the beginning of mine. I will not touch your iron chest or your will... I will not touch your money, sir.' 'I shall do as I like... I shall do as I like.' 'I will not do it... I will not touch your money... I will not touch your keys or your money!" (233-35).

98 U. C. Knoepffelmacher provides a helpful discussion of "will" as a theme in Middlemarch, noting the significance of Ladislaw's name (Religious Humanism 106-15). Felicia Bonaparte, in a pessimistic reading of George Eliot's work, argues that "every novel could well have been subtitled 'Patterns of Will!'" (Will and Destiny: Morality and Tragedy in George Eliot's Novels [New York: New York UP, 1975] 91). On the issues of free will and causation in George Eliot, the standard essay remains George Levine's "Determinism and Responsibility in the Works of George Eliot." Levine and Bonaparte discuss the issue of will in a more technical, philosophical sense, whereas my concern here is simply with will as an exertion of individual force, generally (but not necessarily) involving the attempt to overpower another person.

99 Until recently the critical consensus on the role of the Garth family has been along the lines of David Daiches' judgment that they "provide an important moral centre in the novel" (quoted in Patrick Swinden, ed., Middlemarch: A Casebook [London: Macmillan, 1972] 112). In the 1980s, as contextual considerations have assumed more significance, critics have tended to agree with Arnold Kettle's contrary view that the Garths are inadequate because they, and their values, "have never fought a thorough-going battle with the values of Middlemarch society" (quoted in Swinden, 162). As Sally Shuttleworth puts it, "within the harsh social world of Middlemarch, [the Garths] seem to represent an enclave of pastoral organicism," a condition that "consorts strangely with the dynamic representation of society, where constant changes create fresh difficulties for social integration" (172-73). Alexander Welsh concurs, suggesting that the family's primary role "is to keep well clear of the other heroes and heroines and to rescue from the incongruous effects of a classical education one Fred Vincy, in order to perpetuate their conservative race" (George Eliot and Blackmail [Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard UP, 1985] 231).

100 See Hornback, "Moral Imagination," for a pragmatic statement of this view.
101 Gilbert and Gubar 530.

102 The conflation of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge is, of course, a post-Romantic commonplace, but one that does not lessen in the last third of the century. Gillian Beer points to this impulse in Darwin: "Darwin verifies metamorphosis. He offers a new creation myth which challenges the idea of the fall, and makes the tree of life and the tree of knowledge one, and central to meaning" (Darwin's Plots 115). And when Swinburne endows Hertha with "frondage red-fruited," he performs the same conflation (line 98). Nina Auerbach finds the paradoxical nature of this combination to be a major source of emergent female power during the century: "In looking at the fallen woman . . . we see a power transcending the retrieval of respectability: the alchemical possibilities of the outcast, a half-acknowledge image of revolution and transfiguration, one divine-demonic vehicle of faith in an age of doubt" ("The Rise of the Fallen Woman," NCF 35 (1980): 51-52).

103 GEL 3: 64 (my emphasis).
III. "Everybody is Good Enough":

Tess Durbeyfield and the Quest for Redemption

"... her strong sense that neither she nor any human being deserved less than was given, did not blind her to the fact that there were others receiving less who had deserved much more."---

The Mayor of Casterbridge

In Thomas Hardy we encounter a mind less systematic and ordered than George Eliot's, but one nonetheless capable of holding in tension the most profound contradictions. It seems paradoxical but true that the weakness of this highly paradoxical mind is at the same time its strength. Hardy could, for instance, affirm a consistent human impulse that he variously termed the "'appetite for joy'" or "the invincible instinct towards self-delight," and yet could claim with equal seriousness that "'This planet does not supply the materials for happiness to higher existences.'"¹ He could rail against the metaphysicians, "'These venerable philosophers seem to start wrong; they cannot get away from a prepossession that the world must somehow have been made to be a comfortable place for man,'" yet abjure the label "pessimist."² In defense of his own purported optimism, a meliorism based on "loving-kindness, operating through scientific knowledge," he could denounce his lifelong friend, Frederic Harrison, as one of the "good Panglossians," a mere "so-called" optimist, simply because the latter dared to suggest that his own "philosophy of life" was "more cheerful and hopeful" than that of Hardy's Collected Poems.³

But it is in the area of religion that Hardy's utterances become still more ambivalent, more paradoxical, more difficult to reconcile
with one another. In 1890 he could record in his journal, "'I have been looking for God 50 years, and I think that if he had existed I should have discovered him. As an external personality, of course—the only true meaning of the word.'"\(^4\) Nine years later, however, he could reflect ruefully that "'the conception of a First Cause which the theist calls "God", and the conception of the same that the so-styled atheist calls "no-God", are nowadays almost exactly identical.'"\(^5\)

Finally, Florence Hardy records, with her husband's clear approval, that Hardy

said once—perhaps oftener—that although invidious critics had cast slurs upon him as Nonconformist, Agnostic, Atheist, Infidel, Immoralist, Heretic, Pessimist, or something else equally opprobrious in their eyes, they had never thought of calling him what they might have called him much more plausibly—churchy; not in an intellectual sense, but in so far as instincts and emotions ruled.\(^6\)

Ford Madox Ford confirms Florence Hardy's observation in a telling anecdote from Hardy's later years:

I think one of the most memorable occasions of my life occurred when before the fair-sized house-party at Mr. Clodd's at Aldeburgh, Thomas Hardy made the curiously shy avowal that he was a practicing and believing communicant of the Church
of England. It fell, I believe, on all the rest of the party with a little shock of surprise.\textsuperscript{7}

It well might have surprised them, in view of Hardy's more typical actions; he had, for instance, refused the request of John Moule, son of one of his oldest friends, that he serve as godparent for Moule's little son. On that occasion the novelist had explained, "I should have said yes in a moment if I had been a normal Churchman. But I have a conscientious objection to that & many other ceremonies, & . . . I feel that I must maintain my objection in practice as well as in theory."\textsuperscript{8}

The abundance of such contradictory assertions and practices—many more could be cited—indicates clearly that the task of elucidating Hardy's relationship to religion is a hazardous one. The paradoxical, ambivalent nature of his religious views is not easily amenable to analysis. But the more I ponder, write about, and rewrite about \textit{Tess of the d'Urbervilles}, the more convinced I become that we can make no sense of the novel unless we reconsider the underlying religious preoccupations that inform it and that inform, more specifically, the character of Angel Clare. In itself this is scarcely new ground; David DeLaura defined the terms of discourse regarding the novel in his seminal essay on Matthew Arnold, Hardy, and Clare nearly thirty years ago.\textsuperscript{9} But a flood of newly edited Hardy materials (the seven volumes of the \textit{Collected Letters} are a recent addition) suggests that it is time for a new look at DeLaura's conclusions on this subject so all-important to Hardy criticism.
I want to argue that Angel Clare is, to an even greater extent
than Will Ladislaw in Middlemarch, less a character than a complex,
multivalent textual and rhetorical strategy, a strategy Hardy uses, in
a virtuoso performance, to accomplish a number of varying tasks within
the novel. Hardy's relationship to Clare as character, their similari-
ties and differences, defines much about Hardy's own religious stance,
a stance I would argue differs from and is in some respects more
positive than DeLaura's conclusions would allow. But Hardy also uses
Clare, at a deep structural level, to articulate an anti-Christologi-
cal, anti-redemptive argument that seeks to undermine, relentlessly and
subversively, the doctrinal bases of Christianity itself. The function
of Clare, moreover, forms but part of the negative pole in a dynamic
whereby Tess tends to conspire in her own creation as passive object,
defined and acted upon by religion and society alike. A worshiper in
relation to Clare, she allies herself with the very forces that undo
her. Because she accepts the religious and cultural convention of her
own guilt, she is denied the insight that Albert J. Guerard, paraphra-
sing a passage from the conclusion of The Mayor of Casterbridge, has
called Hardy's central meaning as a novelist: "that no human being, in
his doomed pursuit of happiness, deserves less than is given; that
things not men are to blame; that everybody is good enough."10 A
self-defined Nietzschean slave in relation to Alec, she destroys her
own opportunities for autonomy, such as they are, unconsciously pitting
herself against the "inherent will to enjoy" (238). The dynamics to
which she is subject, that is, render her unable fully to seize the
possibility of Dionysian reunion with nature--a possibility the text
offers as an alternative to its more noxious cultural models—thus setting the stage for a denouement that Hardy pictures as a personal and cultural tragedy.

**Hardy and Religion**

DeLaura, in common with critics before and since, describes Hardy's position as one of antipathy to Christianity, but with emphasis on its "moral and intellectual constraints," an attitude he finds reflected throughout the text of *Tess*. More specifically, however, DeLaura charges that Hardy's special target consists of the so-called "new Christians," heirs of Matthew Arnold who wished to retain the substance of Christian morals and ethics without its concomitant intellectual and doctrinal (i.e., metaphysical) framework. Frederic Harrison had opposed this group in his scathing 1860 review of *Essays and Reviews*, insisting that "No collection of maxims or rules of life can last very long when deprived of dogmatic basis and common intellectual assent." It is with Harrison's attack that DeLaura associates Hardy, arguing that, within the novel, Hardy rejects Angel Clare precisely because of the latter's "imperfect modernism, his slavery in the ethical sphere to custom and conventionality," an attitude Clare holds even while rejecting what he calls the church's "untenable redemptive theolatry" (98).

Clearly, as DeLaura argues, the Essayists and Reviewers sought to reconstruct Christianity from within, altering its dogma while keeping its moral positions intact, and these dual goals are the target (or one of them) of Harrison's attack. But DeLaura also includes among the "new Christians" those belonging to what Hardy dismissed as "the
'Robert Elsmere' school," after Mrs. Humphry Ward's phenomenally popular novel of the same name.\textsuperscript{15} The novel, which appeared in 1888, depicts a young, Oxford-trained clergyman who leaves the Church of England because he can no longer accept the metaphysical aspect of Christianity. Rejecting Christ's divinity, Elsmere retains "the image of a purely human Christ," a Christ whose actions nonetheless constitute an ethical norm, and he goes forth to organize "a new Company of Jesus" in the working-class section of London.\textsuperscript{16} The novel, in its insistence on the purely human, thus has a certain Feuerbachian quality, and gained its popularity precisely because it dealt with the theological issues that increasingly were making themselves felt throughout England.\textsuperscript{17} Dedicated to T. H. Green, it features a character modeled after the popular idealist, an Oxford scholar whose beliefs are a formative influence on Elsmere\textsuperscript{18}.

DeLaura associates the beliefs articulated in \textit{Elsmere} with the goals of the Essayists and Reviewers and suggests that Hardy, like Harrison, is equally opposed to the ideas expressed by both. In this view, Harrison's attack on \textit{Essays and Reviews} reliably mirrors Hardy's own preoccupations:

\begin{quote}
This angry and impatient rejection of reconstructing Christianity from within, common among the new rationalists, is obviously Hardy's life-long attitude--Hardy the naturally religious man, who, for the sake of truth, had made great sacrifices.\textsuperscript{19}
\end{quote}
Hardy's dislike of Clare, then, is based on Clare's own instinct toward religious reconstruction. And the latter, to his detriment, shares with Elsmere a "theism" that consists of "a shadowy residue of idealism and spiritualism which explicitly rejects metaphysics and theology as meaningless." 20 This position, for Clare as for Elsmere, "appeals precisely to men 'who can neither accept fairy tales nor reconcile themselves to a world without faith.' Angel seems to be precisely one of these compromisers, and this is the basis for Hardy's rejection of him." 21 Clare's position, in other words, is less honest than one of out-and-out scepticism, for it hedges its bets, hoping for doctrinal reform from within and meanwhile retaining Christianity's traditional moral basis, a position that goes a long way to help create Tess's tragedy.

DeLaura's approach--his insistence that Hardy rejects the stance he characterizes as Angel's--thus leaves Hardy explicitly in the position of opposing religious reconstruction; as a corollary, it implies that he would have Christianity retain the very theology and metaphysics that the reformers would abandon. Although DeLaura's emphasis is on the specific combination with which he charges Clare and the "new Christians"--of retaining traditional morality while discarding its theological basis--his argument has left the decided impression that Hardy opposes the reformers not merely on the issue of outdated morals but on the reconstructive and theological issues as well. I want to argue that such is far from the case: that Hardy, far from opposing all reconstruction, positively longs for it, a longing he expresses in print several times; and that Elsmere's dismissal of
metaphysics and theology finds equally enthusiastic support in Hardy's thought. Before I do so, however, I want to examine briefly Hardy's relationship to Robert Elsmere and the probable reasons for his evident dislike of the novel as a whole.

The issue of reconstructing religion from within does not, of course, apply to Robert Elsmere, since the protagonist in fact leaves the church because he cannot reconcile his own views with current doctrine and cannot live with himself as a practicing hypocrite. (Some twenty years later, Mary Augusta Ward would change her own position to allow for reconstruction from within, but in 1888 she felt that Robert's departure was unavoidable, and it is that position that the novel develops.) And even assuming, as I do, that Hardy does not oppose the novel's rejection of theology, there still remain several other likely reasons for his overall displeasure. The first is, as DeLaur covers regarding Clare, a certain tendency among the characters in Elsmere to want to have it both ways. Their secular Christianity seems at times to contain all the emotional comfort of traditional thought without the discomfort of the metaphysical baggage proffered by the church. The novel, in fact, tends to equate an easy emotionalism with faith, to elevate the feelings above the intellect in spite of the intellectual rigors the hero undergoes in the process of making his decision. (The two characters who reject the heart in favor of the head lead sterile, miserably arid lives.) And Hardy, for whose psyche the primary emotional fact was that "'Pain has been, and pain is,'" took the emotions far too seriously to approve what comes close, at times, to rank sentimentalism. Certainly the novel's idealistic
optimism would have found little hospitality in Hardy's thought; he specifically rejected as "comforting, but false" the notion that pessimism was yielding to Hegelian expectations of progress.24

In curious ways, the novel actually serves as a bridge between the religious imaginations of George Eliot and Hardy. Mary Ward clearly was steeped in George Eliot's writings; Elsmere contains several obvious rhetorical echoes of Middlemarch, and the emphasis on the emotions as the conduit of religious and ethical impulses is Eliot-esque. Yet the emotional aridity of the more intellectual characters (Elsmere himself always excepted), the difficulty in reconciling the head and the heart, the mind and the body, prefigures such of Hardy's characters as Clym Yeobright, Jude Fawley, and Clare. When Catherine Elsmere, Robert's unyieldingly devout wife, discovers the reality and universality of pain ("the great sea of it one can never touch"), she sounds much like Hardy himself.25 And when Ward describes Catherine as undergoing "that dissociation of the moral judgment from a special series of religious formulae which is the crucial, the epoch-making fact of our day," she articulates Angel Clare's greatest need and greatest failure.26 Finally, the novel insists on the positive value of the soteriological function; the importance that the characters attach to "saving" one another, in the absence of divine redemption, echoes a certain moral preoccupation in Middlemarch (as indicated by Dorothea's triumph in "saving" Rosamond). This emphasis also anticipates one of Hardy's primary doctrinal concerns, albeit a negative one—I refer to a decided hostility to the doctrines of the fall and
redemption that, so I shall argue, informs Tess pervasively from its opening paragraph.

Critics since DeLaura have tended to accept his assumption that opposition to "reconstructing Christianity from within" was "obviously Hardy's life-long attitude." Hardy himself, however, provides considerable evidence that this formulation is misleading. It is true enough that Hardy shows no interest in personally working within the church to update its moribund theology, in the manner of scholars such as Jowett and Pattison. (He is, after all, a writer, not a theologian). But on at least three occasions, he indicates an almost wistful desire that the church not merely update but radically recast its positions into a form differing from that of traditional theology, thereby effecting a metamorphosis that would allow disaffected moderns such as himself (readers of Darwin, Essays and Reviews, and Robert Elsmere) back inside its walls. These statements span a large portion of his adult life and therefore cannot be dismissed as simply a passing phase. In 1885, in a revealing outburst to John Morley, Hardy wonders why it is

that the religious wants of . . . thoughtful people who have ceased to believe in supernatural theology are ignored in the public press? The battle of establishment v. disestabt [sic] is there fought out as between the old fashioned nonconformist & the ordinary churchman; whilst of the growing masses of people who for conscientious reasons can enter neither church nor chapel (I speak of country
places like this) nobody raises up his voice in the
schemes for readjustment.29

The problem, Hardy claims, is that two camps, equally metaphysical,
dominate the religious discourse of the day, whereas the more this-
worldly alternatives, views that would permit those like himself back
into the pews, are resolutely ignored. His target here is certainly
not the "new Christians" of Essays and Reviews or Robert Elsmere, but
rather the Church of England in both its traditional and Evangelical
modes. But the solution he goes on to offer, one which positively
resounds with a desire for reconstruction, consists of a proposition
that neither of the warring parties, with their firmly doctrinal
approaches, would be likely to accept:

I have sometimes had a dream that the church,
instead of being disendowed, could be made to
modulate by degrees (say as the present incumbents
die out) into an undogmatic, non-theological
establishment for the promotion of that virtuous
living on which all honest men are agreed--leaving
to voluntary bodies the organization of whatever
societies they may think best for teaching their
various forms of doctrinal religion.30

These comments imply a criticism of the Essayists and Reviewers only in
their author's evident willingness to move far beyond those 1860
positions; they clearly share with the Essayists a candid recognition
of the necessity for reform. Just what such a church, in Hardy's
vision, would be requires further definition, but his interest in retaining something that goes by the name of "church" is unmistakable. The following letter to Edward Clodd, written in response to Clodd's 1902 biography of T. H. Huxley, confirms Hardy's reconstructive interests:

What is forced upon one again, after reading such a life as Huxley's, is the sad fact of the extent to which Theological lumber is still allowed to discredit religion, in spite of such devoted attempts as his to shake it off. If the doctrines of the supernatural were quietly abandoned tomorrow by the Church, & "reverence & love for an ethical ideal" [Huxley's phrase] alone retained, not one in ten thousand would object to the readjustment, while the enormous bulk of thinkers excluded by the old teaching would be brought into the fold, & our venerable old churches & cathedrals would become the centres of emotional life that they once were. 31

Taken together, these passages point to several important aspects of Hardy's religious thought. To begin with, they suggest a consistent aversion to such terms as "dogma," "doctrine," "theology," "supernatural," and all that they imply. Along with "metaphysics" and "transcendence," these words are clearly associated in Hardy's mind with a discredited otherworldliness and with the God he vows himself
unable to find--the "external personality" who constitutes "the only true meaning of the word." His repeated negative usage of these expressions indicates just how far Hardy would be from rejecting Robert Elsmere on the basis of its devaluation of theology; on the contrary, these passages argue that the novel's position is one he broadly shares.

But there is a positive aspect to his reflections as well. Far from being totally destructive, these comments imply that Hardy would agree with Huxley's conclusion upon reading Sartor Resartus: namely, that "a deep sense of religion [is] compatible with the entire absence of theology." For in their implicit association of the terms "church," "religion," and "emotion," these passages offer the suggestion of a more concrete, physical, thisworldly alternative to the supernatural trappings Hardy so clearly rejects. To begin with, they indicate that, for Hardy, the center of religion is above all a physical place, a locus of value at once communal and earthbound; its proper dimensions are not vertical, as the traditionalists would have it, but horizontal, reaching out to those it presently excludes. In this connection, it is well to remember that the novelist's first vocation was as a restorer of old churches, a fact with some relevance to the topic at hand. And Hardy's association of "emotional life" with the renovated church he envisions confirms an element in his religious stance that critics have long noted. It also associates religion with the sheer physicality of emotional experience; and that the emotional aspects of life were vividly present to Hardy, the entire corpus of his work bears witness. Indeed, his keen awareness of both
the "appetite for joy" and the inevitability of pain would militate against his approval of the relatively facile emotionalism of parts of Elsmere, the easy division into head and heart that makes emotional life appear simple and safe. Hardy's association of religion with emotion is clearly not of this sort; it is, rather, a tough-minded acknowledgment that nothing of importance in life comes easily. And it completes the picture he draws of religion as a physical phenomenon, one rooted in a living body as well as in a spatial location.

In the latter connection, a 1919 remark to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell confirms the concreteness, the unqualified physicality, of Hardy's religious preoccupations even while it provides a rare glimpse into the workings of his own psyche:

My dreams are not so coherent as yours. They are more like cubist paintings & generally end by my falling down the turret stairs of an old church owing to steps being missing.

Hardy's displeasure over the intransigence of doctrine argues that the missing steps in his dream signify the persistent lack of reform and the consequent all-or-nothing, metaphysics-vs.-atheism nature of the debate, a situation that left those like himself with only two alternatives, both of them equally untenable: the (essentially false) choice, that is, between traditional theology, the metaphysics of established doctrine, and no religion at all. In terms of the dream itself, the choices are between the top of the turret (the metaphysical heights) and the hard-found landing of unmediated atheism. Hardy's
ongoing desire to find a midpoint on which he could rest, a position
that would separate metaphysics from religion, is palpable in letters
and dream alike. And that desire clearly separates him from
Harrison, whose essay seeks to yoke the two concepts inseparably
together.

For Hardy, it would appear, the words "church" and "religion"
together denote a force at home in the general and individual life of
the species, one that nourishes both the social and emotional impulses
and reinforces the instinct toward community. "I believe in going to
church," he remarked to J. H. Morgan in 1922. "It is a moral drill,
and people must have something. If there is no church in a country
village, there is nothing." Hardy would appear to agree with this
judgment from Harald Hoffding's The Philosophy of Religion, a passage
he copied into his Literary Notebooks not once but twice:

Many free-thinkers take for granted that human life
would assume richer and stronger forms did religion
cease to exist; but this view . . . rests on the
pre-supposition that psychical equivalents are
always at hand—equivalents in value as well as in
energy.

DeLaura's discussion relies heavily on an association of Hardy
with Harrison, and it is certainly true that the two were close friends
and shared a certain rationalist bias. Yet the letters to Morley and
Clodd reveal still another divergence in their views, one that may well
derive from disparities in education and class. What I refer to is
their respective attitudes toward the mass of humankind and its relationship to Christian doctrine. Harrison's "Neo-Christianity" essay has as its subtext a pervasive distrust in the ability of the average person to withstand assaults on the traditional form of faith. "The mass of ordinary believers," he suggests, "may well ask to be protected from such friends [as the Reviewers], as their worst and most dangerous enemies." He evokes the picture of "the masses [lying] in brutal heathenism" while the reformers within the church destroy the supernatural substructure upon which Scriptural trustworthiness is based. This suspicion regarding the common sense of common persons may well derive from his public school training (King's College School and Oxford), the inherently elitist "Oxbridge" outlook to which the British upper classes are vulnerable.

Whatever its source, it clearly is not a perspective the self-educated Hardy shares. As the remark to Morgan and the passage from Hoffding indicate, Hardy discerned in the availability of religion a clear benefit to the mass of humanity; but his letters to Morley and Clodd are based on the assumption that there are many who share his own attitude, who would adjust quite nicely to an absence of theology, and those persons are not to be found only in the drawing rooms of London or the colleges of Oxford but rather in "country places like this." Because he has successfully rejected the supernatural, he assumes the ability of his rural fellows to do likewise. In these differences of social and educational background may lie an important clue to Hardy's unqualified willingness to tinker with religious machinery, in contra-
distinction to Harrison's surprising conservatism on the same subject (see note 8, Ch. 1, p. 72).

Unlikely as the prospect must have sounded, Hardy long held hopes that the Church of England liturgy might be recast to reflect something like his own view. Toward the end of his life the question of reforming the Prayer Book services became a reality, at which time he offered a third recommendation for change, albeit a more resigned one:

'I am now too old to take up the questions you lay open, but I may say that it has seemed to me that a simpler plan than that of mental reservation in passages no longer literally accepted (which is puzzling to ordinary congregations) would be just to abridge the creeds and other primitive parts of the Liturgy, leaving only the essentials. Unfortunately there appears to be a narrowing instead of a broadening tendency among the clergy of late, which if persisted in will exclude still more people from Church.'

According to Florence Hardy, the Prayer Book as finally revised destroyed Hardy's hopes for the church's modulation in a direction that would "include the majority of thinkers of the previous hundred years who had lost all belief in the supernatural."

**Hardy and Angel Clare**

The fact that Hardy's comments tend to associate the church with the moral impulse does not necessarily argue that he embraces the
traditional moral values of which DeLaura accuses the "new Christians."
On the contrary, Hardy supplies his own moral alternative to tradition-
alism when he affirms, in the letter to Clodd, Huxley's formulation of
"reverence & love for an ethical ideal." This concept, moreover,
surfaces in Tess as Angel Clare's belief in "an ethical system without
any dogma" (274). The criticism Hardy levels at Clare's outdated
morals, a criticism that motivates much of the text of Tess, is not, as
we shall see, aimed at Clare's devotion to ethics in the absence of
dogma. Its target, rather, is his consistent failure to act according
to his own stated beliefs, a failure that prominently includes his
persistent tendency to fall into the idealism that his own formulation
of Huxley's phrase so clearly rejects (202). This is the element that
stubbornly refuses to keep step with his advanced theological opinions,
and it becomes the specific focus of Hardy's attack.

There is, in fact, a sizable body of evidence to indicate that
Hardy identifies with a number of Clare's attitudes, and those
attitudes are not limited to the theological (or anti-theological)
sphere but ramify into the social and ethical arenas as well. These
similarities, though, share a striking common denominator: they all
militate against the idealistic impulse, an impulse Hardy had rejected
in Elsmere and that he rejects, where it appears, in Clare. To begin
with, the novel describes Clare's evolving attitude toward the workers
at Talbothays dairy in these words of clearly experiential cast:

The conventional farm-folk of his imagination--
personified in the newspaper-press by the pitiable
dummy known as Hodge--were obliterated after a few
days' residence. At close quarters no Hodge was to be seen. . . . Without any objective change whatever, variety had taken the place of monotonousness. His host and his host's household, his men and his maids, as they became intimately known to Clare, began to differentiate themselves as in a chemical process. . . . The typical and unvarying Hodge ceased to exist. He had been disintegrated into a number of varied fellow-creatures--beings of many minds, beings infinite in difference (100).

This account closely mirrors a passage from Hardy's essay, "The Dorsetshire Labourer," in which he disparages the popular notion of a typical, rural "Hodge" (the same sort of stereotype that no doubt informs Harrison's vision of the masses' vulnerability to "brutal heathenism"); in that essay, Hardy insists that the visitor acclimated to the area and its inhabitants would find

that, without any objective change whatever, variety had taken the place of monotony; that the man who had brought him home--the typical Hodge, as he conjectured--was somehow not typical of anyone but himself.47

Clare's ability to differentiate individuals, to reject stereotypic norms, clearly gains Hardy's unqualified approval.

As the romance between Clare and Tess progresses, we find him
again rejecting the idealist alternative; meditating on the subject of her lips, he reflects,

But no--they were not perfect. And it was the touch of the imperfect upon the would-be perfect that gave the sweetness, because it was that which gave the humanity (127).

This second particularizing impulse finds its authorial counterpart in a journal entry Hardy composed within a few days of the publication of *Tess*:

'It is the incompleteness that is loved, when love is sterling and true. This is what differentiates the real one from the imaginary, the practicable from the impossible, the Love who returns the kiss from the Vision that melts away. A man sees the Diana or the Venus in his Beloved, but what he loves is the difference.'

Hardy offers a cautionary note on the subject of Clare and idealism, however, when he remarks that the young man "was ever in the habit of neglecting the particulars of an outward scene for the general impression" (101). In an early journal entry, Hardy had ruefully observed, no doubt with himself in mind, "'There is no more painful lesson to be learnt by a man of capacious mind than that of excluding general knowledge for particular.'" The apparently personal nature of this observation serves as further evidence of the close identifica-
tion between Hardy and certain aspects of Clare's character. And when Clare belatedly examines his own rigid moral views toward Tess, we find him again speaking in words his author is soon to second:

Who was the moral man? Still more pertinently, who was the moral woman? The beauty or ugliness of a character lay not only in its achievements, but in its aims and impulses; its true history lay, not among things done, but among things willed (282, my emphasis).

Five years later finds Hardy making an aesthetic point that is in substantial agreement with Clare's moral conclusions. "The truth is," he tells a correspondent, "that an author's means shd [sic] be judged by the light of his aim & end."50

Hardy's attitude toward Clare, then, includes greater sympathy and considerably more identification than Delaura's reading would allow.51 And the subject on which they share the most profound agreement, the one most pertinent to the topic at hand, is yet to be fully examined. As Hardy's letters on the subject confirm, his own religious stance, his "whole instinct in matters of religion," is, like Clare's, "towards reconstruction," or something very like it (98). The "warmest affection" and "deep[est] admiration" Angel holds toward the Church are Hardy's, at one level, as well. When, in the course of describing Clare's theological position, the text of Tess contrasts the "firm" belief of Clare's father, an Evangelical of the old school, with "theological thimble-riggers in the Church and out of it," Hardy may
well be aiming a barb at the idealistic optimism of the "'Robert Elsmere' school," but he is surely not indicting Clare or himself (98).52

The Postlapsarian Construct

Nor is this the extent of their agreement. For the heart of Clare's complaint against Christianity is his charge that its doctrine consists of an "untenable redemptive theolatry." It is crucial to realize that Hardy is not offering this position of Clare's as a bit of so-called "new Christian" sophistry or, in Hardy's own words, "theological thimble-rigging." Quite the contrary. Hardy, as we know, has already rejected doctrine (along with theology and metaphysics) as the anachronism that prevents the church from being viable to him and other moderns. Far from rejecting Clare's position, Hardy instead uses the entire rhetorical strategy of Tess to argue, at a profoundly subtextual level, that Clare's charge is one with which he fully agrees. That is, Hardy proceeds to expose just how "untenable" a "redemptive theolatry" can be. For the belief that the individual requires redemption, so argues the text of Tess, both presupposes her inherent guilt and puts her at the mercy of the god (the "external personality") endowed with the power to forgive. (The axiom of Christian theology that the gap between the individual and God is continually being overcome from the side of God serves to illustrate the dependence the novel claims for the construct.) And in an assault on the apparent intransigence of doctrine, Hardy chooses as his target nothing less than the one theological concept that makes redemption (and Christianity) both possible and necessary, the concept of the fall of humankind--and
through that fall, the more general consequence of sin itself.\textsuperscript{53} This procedure eventuates in a thorough exploration of the matrix of guilt that results from the Christian insistence on the need for redemption. \textit{Tess} is, I would argue, a guilt-saturated text, and the mental world the heroine inhabits is pervaded by the consciousness of her own fallen condition. But it is precisely this idea of the fall that the novel criticizes from its opening lines; and it does so, I shall argue, in radically subversive ways.\textsuperscript{54}

The novel's opening paragraph sets the stage for its critique of the postlapsarian concept. The scene is the one in which the parson, that local embodiment of established doctrine, informs the ne'er-do-well John Durbeyfield that he is in fact descended from a Norman line dating to the time of William the Conqueror. His noble ancestor, as it happens, is one Sir \textbf{Pagan} d'Urberville. This nomenclature is more than a bit of ironic play; rather, the context in which it is introduced works to suggest that this ancestor's nobility consists precisely in the fact that he is pre-Christian and therefore alien to pre- and postlapsarian categories. The entire ensuing conversation in fact plays on the concept of that prehistoric fall. To Durbeyfield's inquiry, "'where be our family mansions and estates?'" the cleric replies, "'You haven't any . . . . though you once had 'em in abundance,'" thereby evoking the expulsion from the garden. To drive the point home, the parson urges him to reflect upon "'how are the mighty fallen'" (7). But the ideal state from which Durbeyfield is excluded, the conversation seems to imply, is not so much Eden as it is the pre-Christian condition signified by the name "Sir Pagan." Once the
concept of Eden and the fall intrudes, it would seem, the result is necessarily Durbeyfield's condition, much as the name "Durbeyfield" is a corruption of "d'Urberville." Nor is it the first state that defines the second. Quite the contrary. It is the glance backward from his current estate to purportedly lost glories that necessarily defines Durbeyfield's lot as inferior, turning Eden into an origin in comparison to which the present becomes deficient.

Similarly, the concept of postlapsarian guilt acquires its opprobrium primarily by comparison to that original innocence invoked by the biblical model. And it is this notion, entering the novel in its opening scene, that pervades Tess's world and consciousness even as it is insistently opposed to an earlier, more amoral view associated with a "pagan" state. Tess, that is, must act out her story as a fallen human, because that is the pattern imposed on her by the Christian scheme of things, a scheme the novel both evokes and criticizes.

The extent to which Tess defines herself in postlapsarian terms is immediately apparent; her sense of guilt reveals itself continually as she attempts to fulfill her responsibilities, real and perceived, in caring for her hapless family. Returning home from the Mayday festivities, she feels "a chill of self-reproach that she had not returned sooner, to help her mother" (16). Her recurring sense that her father's habits reflect on her confirms the inherited nature of her plight; her conviction of guilt, that is, is not merely for herself but is multi-generational, as the legend of the d'Urberville coach will suggest. And an earlier title for the novel, A Daughter of the
D'Urbervilles, emphasizes the importance of the hereditary stain, for
Tess and for the novel as a whole.\(^{56}\) Moreover, her father's incapacity
to sense his own involvement in the familial degeneration decrees that
Tess must feel his culpability for him.\(^{57}\) She thus experiences no
portion of relief from the legacy of guilt, a legacy that is clearly
patrilineal, under which the benighted Durbeyfields labor. On the
contrary, it is upon Tess herself that the entire weight of postlapsar-
ianism unremittingly falls.

Her conviction of her own guilt rises exponentially with the
death of the family horse, Prince, an incident that occurs precisely
because "she thought that she could take upon herself the entire
conduct of the load for the present" (26). Telling us of "the self-
reproach which she continued to heap upon herself for her negligence,"
Hardy emphasizes the extent to which Tess has internalized the lessons
of theology: "Nobody blamed Tess as she blamed herself" (28). This
tendency to fault herself for perceived sins is thus a primary
condition of her existence, a condition symbolized by her father's fall
into the "fall of man." It is no less the \textit{sine qua non} for the
remainder of the plot. For what causes her to acquiesce to her
mother's demand that she "claim kin" to the d'Urbervilles is precisely
a need to expiate her personal wrongdoing: "'Well, as I killed the
horse, mother, I suppose I ought to do something!'" (29). Hardy thus
establishes, early on, her need for expiation and atonement, a need
that will emerge more strongly after her greater "fall" at the hands of
Alec d'Urberville.
It is therefore not surprising that, in the days before and after the birth of her baby, Tess should interpret everything she encounters as a personal rebuke, a moral judgment justly leveled on her sinful self. The sign painter's admonitory biblical slogans strike her "with accusatory horror" (67). Feeling the eyes of fellow churchgoers on her, she "knew what their whispers were about, grew sick at heart, and felt she could come to church no more" (72). Even the woods where she flees for refuge appear to her as "formulae of bitter reproach." That her reactions are purely subjective Hardy hastens to make clear: "the natural processes around her . . . seemed a part of her own story. Rather they became a part of it; for the world is only a psychological phenomenon, and what they seemed they were" (72). She also accepts without question what she assumes to be the religious consequences of her act: "if she should have to burn for what she had done, burn she must, and there was an end of it" (78). (Hardy's repeated claim that "theology and burning have been kindred always" renders the source of her sentiment doubly clear.) 58 Hardy tells us that "like all village girls she was well grounded in the Holy Scriptures" (78-79); therefore, when she chooses the name "Sorrow" for her dying baby, we must assume that she, and not simply Hardy, has in mind the words of God to Eve: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." 59 In other words, she places herself squarely in the tradition of the primordial fall and seems fully prepared, so long as she remains at Marlott, to take the consequences of that fall.

The Redemptive Impulse
Tess's acceptance of the convention of her own guilt eventually impels her, however, to take the step made inevitable by the very doctrine that assures her of her sinfulness; perceiving herself as fallen, she seeks to be redeemed. This impulse, so simple yet so far-reaching in its implications, animates the entire center portion of the novel, the Talbothays section in which Tess meets Angel Clare and falls in love with him. Critics tend either to oppose the ethereal, spiritual Clare to the physical, quasi-demonic Alec d'Urberville, or conversely to assimilate the two; either way, they almost universally have found Angel Clare to be one of the most objectionable and most enigmatic characters in English literature. Suggestively, they tend to associate his offensive moral qualities with just that air of spirituality that makes him so appealing to Tess. One observer, remarking that Clare "will violate Tess more nastily than her sensual seducer," adds, "who but Hardy would have dared to give him the name Angel, and a harp too?" And J. Hillis Miller hints at Tess's potential susceptibility to the redemptive urge when he notes that Hardy's characters, as a group, "are possessed of a longing for God or for something like a God to give order and meaning to themselves and to their world."

It is generally agreed that Tess's reaction to Clare is extreme. As Ian Gregor puts it, from her perspective Angel "is not a man with a biography, he is an occasion of awe." And Bernard Paris associates Tess's own conviction of guilt with Angel's attraction for her when he asserts, "Tess can live with almost any amount of self-condemnation as long as Angel remains God-like and remains hers." For the fact, as
Paris suggests, is quite unblinkable: from the beginning, Tess views Clare not merely as an attractive or even an unattainable man but literally as a god, an assimilation that the text repeatedly makes clear. She thus posits an unbridgeable chasm between herself and him, the same "I am low, thou art high" which so distresses Swinburne in the relationship of the individual to God:65

At first Tess seemed to regard Angel Clare as an intelligence rather than as a man. As such she compared him with herself; and at every discovery of the abundance of his illuminations, of the distance between her own modest mental standpoint and the unmeasurable, Andean altitude of his, she became quite dejected, disheartened from all further effort on her own part whatever (106, my emphasis).

In the thoroughgoing passivity of this passage we can discern echoes of the truism that the gap between the individual and God can never be overcome from the side of the individual. Tess's worship of Clare, instead of spurring her toward autonomy, serves to foreclose that very possibility, an effect that carries important implications for her and for the novel as a whole. And as the relationship between the two deepens, the comparisons of Clare to a god become more overt: he is "so godlike in her eyes" (153), is in fact "him for whom she lived and breathed" (168).66 For her part, Tess looks at him "as if she saw something immortal before her" (162); lives "in spiritual altitudes
approaching ecstasy" (162); and walks in a "circumscribing light" (164). Finally, he becomes quite simply a "divine being" (170).

That Tess subjectively regards Clare as a god is, then, palpable in the surface of the text. And if the attribution of godlike characteristics to Clare were limited only to Tess's observations, we might well account for it by the same means that Hardy accounts for her reaction to nature, namely that "the world is only a psychological phenomenon, and what [he] seemed, [he] was" (72). In this reading, Tess's need for a godlike figure would simply have called one forth. Like her perception of herself as fallen, her apprehension of Clare would be only a "seeming." But in what I would call the deep structure of the text there lies abundant evidence that something more complex is at work here. Hardy, it would seem, is undertaking a project considerably more radical than simply the presentation of a dairymaid's romantic illusions, albeit illusions based on a theological doctrine that imputes guilt without discrimination. For the entire novel from the Talbothays section onward fairly bursts with Christological references to Clare, references which are extrinsic to Tess's perceptions but which the reader clearly is intended to understand. Now what I am not suggesting is that Clare functions as a Christ figure on the novel's narrative surface in anything like the way that, for instance, Billy Budd or Joe Christmas do. Surely if anyone in the novel emerges as a sacrificial victim, it is Tess herself. What I am suggesting is that the character of Angel Clare (like the subtextual relationships among Dorothea, Casaubon, and Will) resembles the figure in the carpet: if we turn the carpet over, a different (but nonetheless related)
pattern emerges. Thus Clare can play two roles simultaneously. On the surface he functions as the earnest, would-be modern whose lapses into idealism subvert his advanced theological views. At a second level, though, in a stunningly ironical inversion of his beliefs at the first level, he fulfills the role not only of godhead but specifically of redeemer; and he does so in a manner so weighted with idealism, and therefore so judgmental, as to bring under serious scrutiny the effect that such a redeemer/redeemed relationship has upon the one who worships. Through a process of "repeat and undermine," what Hardy is doing through Clare is to deconstruct the basis of Christianity by demonstrating that the effect of a figure who redeems is not after all salvific but may instead destroy the guilt-ridden human who seeks forgiveness. In doing so he effectively opposes psychology to theology, with the victory going to the former. The other side of soteriological power, that is, is the power to annihilate. Thus the same Angel Clare who denounces Christianity for its "untenable redemptive theolatry" serves at the same time as the vehicle for exposing just how wrongheaded a redemptive theological construct can be.

There is ample evidence, both textual and extratextual, for making such a claim. Noting that Hardy "rejected centuries-old and threadbare theological dogma but retained a strong attraction for certain unencumbered aspects of the Christian religion," Norman Arkans analyzes Hardy's poetry to discover Hardy's distinctive treatment of the figure of Christ. Examining "In the Servants' Quarters," "The Woman I Met," and "An Evening in Galilee," Arkans finds a refocusing of attention
from the worshipped to the worshiper, a de-emphasis on the divine and a corresponding emphasis on the human:

Hardy's biography [of Christ] issues obliquely from his focus away from Christ towards those engaged with him, his mother, Mary Magdalen, Peter, and Panthera, who stands on the fringes of the myth. By realistically rendering their experience, Hardy diminishes Christ's place in the myth. . . . Christ no longer occupies a position of supreme importance, but one whose value largely depends on his effect on those close by.  

And with particular reference to "The Woman I Met," which tells of the ghost of a former follower who vows her earthly love for Christ after both are dead, Arkans emphasizes "Hardy's deeper sense of the tragedy of human love aroused to a religious pitch." In this poem, as in Tess, it is the female worshiper who suffers from the coldness of the redemptive figure. Here, too, the villain of the piece is not the human Jesus but the transcendent Father, for she makes the Arnoldian charge that "'God your guardian kept our fleeting/ Forms apart!'" Nor is the charge denied. The suffering that flows from the relationship between the saviour and the saved thus becomes directly chargeable to the metaphysical content of the doctrine, the God who comprises the "external personality" and belief in whom inspires untenable redemptive theolatries.
The poem, not published until 1918, reveals the longstanding nature of Hardy's involvement with the problem of imputed redemption and the general consistency of his attitude toward it. And nowhere does that attitude manifest itself more thoroughly or more cogently than in the text of Tess. The novelistic evidence for Clare's assimilation to Christ begins with the matter of his name. The associations of divinity with the name "Angel" are obvious enough. But in a novel that trades heavily on the corruption of a Norman name to its anglicized equivalent ("d'Urberville" to "Durbeyfield"), we are surely justified in reversing the process and inquiring what the significance of Clare's surname would be if it were given the French spelling. (The two-directional movement between the pure Norman and the corrupted, anglicized versions also corresponds to Tess's and Clare's respective roles vis-a-vis one another--she signifying the corrupt and fallen, he the pure and risen.) In French, the name of course becomes clair, or light. Throughout the Gospel of John, the word "light" is continually associated with the second person of the Trinity (as in "I am the light of the world," "the light shineth in darkness," etc.) Milton picks up the association and opens his invocation to the Son with the words "Hail holy Light." And within the novel, Clare is routinely associated with light, as when Tess imputes "illuminations" to his mental processes (106). His name alone, then, gives us some grounds for believing that Hardy is doing something a bit unusual. Nor is it irrelevant that his father is associated with the Church and that he descends on Talbothays almost like a being from another world.
Then there is the matter of the dairymaids at Talbothays. Surely there is nothing in the logic of the story line itself that requires not one but all four dairymaids to be hopelessly in love with Clare. The extreme nature of their devotion exceeds all rational explanation. For Marian, Retty, and Izz, Clare becomes the center of the world. They regard Tess "not only as the favourite, but as the chosen" (my emphasis), a phrase in which Matt. 22.14 reverberates: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (148). When Crick informs the girls that Clare's stay at the dairy will soon be over, they can regard the future only as "the blackness of unutterable night" (131). Upon learning that Clare will in fact marry Tess, they react much as we might imagine the humble people of Galilee to have reacted to Christ: Clare will marry, they reassure themselves, "no fine lady, nobody in silks and satins; but she who do live like we" (167, my emphasis). They form, in effect, a band of worshipful disciples. Their collective despair after his departure is virtually inexplicable on any other grounds.

Clare, like his New Testament prototype, is fond of doing unconventional things on the sabbath, preferring "sermons in stones to sermons in churches and chapels on fine summer days" (120). It is on one of these summer walks that he enacts his own version of a Gospel feat. Encountering the four girls in their Sunday finery on the way to church, he literally walks on water to carry them across a flooded stream. In the novel as it stands, the romantic interest may justify the incident, since Clare gets to carry Tess across in addition to the other three. But apparently the episode's symbolic function was more
important to Hardy than than the physical proximity it made possible; for when the editor of the \textit{Graphic}, where \textit{Tess} first appeared in serial form, objected to the scene, Hardy did not simply delete it, as we might expect, but instead substituted a wheelbarrow in which the girls were ferried across. And surely the vision the scene conjures up in this amended form is far more ludicrous than romantic.

Clare's most significant Christological function, of course, stems from the power Tess grants him to \textit{forgive} her previous sins. Increasingly she comes to feel that one word from him can wipe the slate clean and invalidate her past. Up to and including her wedding day, she wonders repeatedly whether he will forgive her. After the wedding, her adoration and consequent desperation reach new heights: "She tried to pray to God, but it was her husband who really had her supplication. Her idolatry of this man was such that she herself almost feared it to be ill-omened" (181). The climactic scene, the evening of the wedding, is prefigured in the afternoon when a cock unexpectedly crows three times. Hardy here inverts the New Testament situation (Peter's triple denial of Christ before the cock crew), and the cock crows three times before Clare refuses to accept a confessed and penitent Tess. In Hardy's version, it is not the god who is denied, but rather the flawed disciple. And Tess's plea to Clare, "'Forgive me as you are forgiven!'" emphasizes, in its echo of the Lord's Prayer, just this aspect of their relationship (191).

Their wedding supper, in fact, becomes a sort of unconsummated Last Supper: "the two glasses of wine that he had poured out for their supper . . . remained on the table untasted. This was what their Agape
had come to" (193). It is worth noting that, before her confession, they have eaten the bread; the wine is what remains untouched. For both Mark and Matthew specify that it is the blood, not the body, that signifies forgiveness of sins: "this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."79 This intertextual play thus renders all the more ironic Clare's insistence that "forgiveness does not apply to the case" (191).

Clare's refusal to forgive her is grounded in his indestructible moral idealism, the same idealism Hardy has already observed in the young man's tendency to emphasize the general at the expense of the particular (see pp. 182-83). In response to Tess's "I thought that you loved me--me, my very self," he insists that "the woman I have been loving is not you [but] another woman in your shape!" (192). He displays this same attitude early in their relationship, when he envisions Tess as "no longer the milkmaid, but a visionary essence of woman--a whole sex condensed into one typical form" (111, my emphasis). When he persists in calling her "Artemis" and "Demeter," she responds simply by saying, "'Call me Tess.'" This exchange neatly captures the contrast between essence and existence; and although Clare does relent and "call her Tess," his idealism with respect to her never really wavers. (The text notes that, for Clare, her confession causes a change in precisely "the essence of things" [191].) And Hardy's conflation of this idealism with Clare's role as unforgiving saviour is crucial to his dismantling of Christian doctrine; for the essentializing, Platonic, and hence metaphysical aspects of Clare's attitude evoke just that aspect of Christianity Hardy finds most objectionable,
pointing once more to the God of the "external personality . . . the only true meaning of the word." 80 What DeLaura aptly terms Clare's "disastrous moral idealism," then, is of a piece with his role as god, and both are equally destructive. 81

The text underscores the hereditary nature of Tess's culpability, her inescapably postlapsarian guilt, in the scene where Clare hesitates, uncertain finally whether to relent in his condemnation of her. Just at that moment, he spies the portrait of her d'Urberville ancestor, one of many in the long line since Sir Pagan, hanging "over the entrance to Tess's bedchamber." The location emphasizes, for Clare, the nature of her particular transgression, even while his reaction to the picture evokes for the reader her actual innocence: "Sinister design lurked in the woman's features, a concentrated purpose of revenge on the other sex. . . . The check was sufficient. He resumed his retreat and descended" (197). Clare's own attribution of "revenge" to the woman's gaze, and his implicit association of that gaze with Tess, would seem to argue not for her guilt but for her innocence, her essential victimization—else why "revenge"? 82 This scene points up the contradiction between the categories of sinner and victim, a contradiction, however, that the novel will argue is more apparent than real. (Clare's seeming error at this point turns out to rest on considerable, although ironic, textual support, as we shall later see.)

Clare's role in the novel from their wedding night forward evolves into a near parody of the words of the Apostles' Creed: "he descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into
heaven... from thence he shall come to judge." To begin with, Tess and Clare spend exactly three days, by his own count, at the sugges-
tively-named "Wellbridge"—in a situation that can only be termed a
living hell—before he sends her off to her parents and prepares to
depart for Brazil. His words to her before he leaves echo those of
Christ as recorded in the fourth gospel: "I will come to you. But
until I come to you it will be better that you should not try to come
to me!" (212). But before he can embark, he has one last conversa-
tion with one of the dairymaids, Izz Huet. This peculiar encounter,
which notably features Clare's suggestion that Izz run off with him,
occurs after he has parted from Tess for the last time and before his
final departure from England. Izz turns up at the "honeymoon" house,
Clare offers her a ride, and they converse together on the road. If we
remember the role of Izz as one of the early "disciples," this meeting
takes on something very like the character of a post-Resurrection
appearance, another meeting on the road to Emmaus. Because all three
remaining dairymaids have undergone crises precipitated by his original
departure—one becomes a drunkard, another runs away (all in the space
of three days)—Clare leaves some final words of counsel with Izz that
are worth remarking:

"I want you to tell Marian when you see her that
she is to be a good woman, and not to give way to
folly. Promise that, and tell Retty... that
for my sake she is to act wisely and well--remember
the words—wisely and well—for my sake" (226, my
emphases).
The number of occasions on which Christ uses the phrase "for my sake," especially in instructing his disciples, is almost too great to count. The phrase is completely evocative of Christ and, so far as I know, of no one else. The intertextual play in which Hardy engages throughout this scene thus continues the evidence for Clare's redemptive role even as it furthers the irony of Tess's worship of him.

Tess meanwhile waits for Clare's return in the Hardyesque Waste Land of Flintcomb Ash, and Alec d'Urberville, newly converted to Evangelical Christianity, reappears. Her speeches explaining Clare's arguments against Christianity understandably astonish d'Urberville; no doubt they would astonish the reader, too, since Tess has previously shown no interest in theological matters, but Hardy does not give us her words. His perceptive response is, "'whatever your dear husband believed you accept, and whatever he rejected you reject, without the least inquiry or reasoning on your own part!'" (266). When Tess admits, "'I can't say I quite understand that one; but I know it is right,'" she calls to mind those repeaters of creeds who have only the vaguest notion of the implications of their own words (267). Through her proselytizing, though, she fulfills the function of the disciple who spreads the Word in the face of an absent god. What she is actually arguing for, of course, is Angel's (and Hardy's) "ethical system without any dogma," as Alec later makes clear (274). Here the complexity of Hardy's argument requires a distinction: although the text implicitly criticizes Tess's blind loyalty, we are not to suppose that it also criticizes Clare's position as such—only his disastrous
collapse into idealism and consequent failure to live up to his own beliefs. In fact, the narrator's disapproving description of Alec as charged "with the rude energy of a theolatry that was almost ferocious" argues for the text's agreement both with Clare's terminology and with his rejection of what the word "theolatry" denotes (253, my emphasis).

As d'Urberville becomes more persistent and, in the face of her family's poverty, more tempting, Tess writes to Clare in language that resonates with biblical overtones. In words that echo the Christian belief in spiritual rebirth, she asks, "What was the past to me as soon as I met you? It was a dead thing altogether. I became another woman, filled full of new life from you" (279). But the truly remarkable aspect of her letter is contained in her plea to Clare to return: "if you will send me one little line, and say, 'I am coming soon,' I will bide on, Angel--0, so cheerfully!" (279, Hardy's italics). The words she longs to hear evoke those of the penultimate verse of the Book of Revelation, as rendered in the King James Version: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly." In this translation, the word "quickly" connotes both temporality and life. But in one of the more peculiar twists of textual interplay, the Revised Standard Version--issued over fifty years after Hardy wrote Tess--drops the connotation of life but retains the temporal import and thus renders the line in precisely Hardy's words: "Surely I am coming soon." Hardy thus assimilates Clare's long-awaited return to the second coming of Christ; and it is on the question of whether he will in fact return, and the consequences of that return, that the novel's outcome hinges.
And the conclusion of *Tess* in fact derives from Hardy's final inversion of the New Testament story. For unlike his biblical model, Clare at last does return to his most faithful disciple. But like the bridegroom in the parable who "tarried" while the ill-prepared virgins "slumbered and slept," he waits too long; by the time he arrives, Tess has been reunited with Alec d'Urberville, partly in order to save her destitute family.\textsuperscript{87} Clare's initial meeting with Tess at the luxurious spa quarters d'Urberville has let could easily take as its text Mark 13.35-36, a cautionary conclusion to a parallel story: "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Tess, true to the warning in the parable, is quite literally caught sleeping—and under the most compromising conditions:

Tess appeared on the threshold—not at all as he had expected to see her—bewilderingly otherwise, indeed. Her great natural beauty was, if not heightened, rendered more obvious by her attire. She was loosely wrapped in a cashmere dressing-gown . . . , and her well-remembered cable of dark-brown hair was partially coiled up in a mass at the back of her head and partly hanging on her shoulder—the evident result of haste (312-13).

Tess's despair at the sight of Clare stems from the same dilemma that confronts the virgins of the parable: "'I waited and waited for you."
But you did not come!" (313). And it is in a final, frenzied attempt to eradicate her own perceived sin, a sin the text describes as purported condition rather than committed act, that she kills d'Urberville, leaving him to ooze out his life much as the horse had done at the novel's beginning. She makes her motive chillingly clear to Clare in a speech that indicates the extent to which she has internalized the cultural conventions of guilt and atonement, an internalization the novel now reveals as the genesis of tragedy:

"Angel, will you forgive me my sin against you, now I have killed him? I thought as I ran along that you would be sure to forgive me now I have done that. It came to me as a shining light that I should get you back that way." (318)

But by killing d'Urberville in the interest of a destructive ideal, a theological construct on which her world is founded, she brings about her own destruction. For the act that expiates, in her mind, her own sin--a sin figured forth in the body of d'Urberville--is performed solely to gain the "redemption"--Clare's forgiveness--that the postlapsarian doctrine demands. In trying to regain her innocence, an innocence the doctrine of the fall assures her she once possessed, she guarantees only the annihilation of her own physical existence, an existence that is now as doomed as Alec's. Thus does Hardy's revision of the redemptive story conclude--a revision that textualizes the disastrous effects of the doctrine and of the metaphysical, idealistic substructures on which that doctrine rests.
Hardy and Nietzsche

But the redemptive impulse is not the only dynamic in the novel to militate against Tess's survival. For the text of Tess reveals a certain Nietzschean preoccupation, first with the broadly noxious effects of dualism, and secondly with master/slave power polarities. The Nietzschean dynamics, in one aspect, cooperate with the redemptive impulse to ensure her doom. (There is a more positive side to Hardy's involvement with Nietzsche, one that we will examine in due course.) The association of Hardy with Nietzschean values, moreover, is less unlikely than might at first appear. Hardy's relationship to Nietzsche is in fact grounded in his own fascinated ambivalence toward the philosopher. The most apparent feature of his attitude, one easily mistaken for its whole, is a nagging hostility, a state of mind Hardy would reveal in a letter to the Manchester Guardian of 7 October 1914, where he dismisses Nietzsche as "a megalomaniac and not truly a philosopher at all." In a second letter to the Guardian of 12 October, Hardy would further describe him as "an incoherent rhapsodist . . . whom it is impossible to take seriously as a mentor." An undated entry in his Literary Notebooks finds the novelist characterizing as "true enough" a published assertion that Nietzsche's "later utterances were tainted with insanity." In a letter to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell of 26 Sept. 1914, Hardy suggests a reason for his dislike, one that is typical of the writer in his most pessimistic mode:
But it seems to me that Nietzsche, Treitske, Cramb, & all of the school (if it can be called a school) insanely regard life as a thing improvable by force to immaculate gloriousness, when all the time life's inseparable conditions allow only clumsy opportunities for amelioration by plodding compromises & contrivances.\(^{91}\)

Clearly Hardy's objection here is less to force than it is to Nietzsche's relative optimism; like the metaphysicians who would insist that the world must somehow be "a comfortable place for man," Nietzsche's more joyful aspect grates on the philosophically dour element in Hardy's mind.

And yet there is something else at work here. Hardy, it seems, cannot quite let Nietzsche alone; he gnaws at him like a dog at a bone. An entry in the *Literary Notebooks* finds him laboriously translating a passage from the philosopher, a task that seems not to have come easily.\(^{92}\) And a second notebook entry suggests a decided ambivalence toward Nietzsche--a willingness, that is, to entertain a more positive view of his work. It is a long clipping that reviews contemporary opinion of Nietzsche, and its conclusion rings with Nietzschean affirmation even as it qualifies its praise of his work:

We are no disciples of Nietzsche . . . [but] we believe that the real driving force of his system came from the fact that, in protest alike against a false philosophy and a one-sided view of religion,
it reaffirmed with emphasis and faith the worth of
life and the splendor of human destiny. . . .
Nietzsche performed a real service, both to
religion and morality, when he told men to believe
in the glory of things, and bade them shout for the
joy of living.93

No disqualifying comment from Hardy follows the entry. Yet the tenor
of the criticism Hardy does level at him has, overall, a curiously
carping, even obsessive quality, never the crispness of objective
philosophical disagreement. What the tone in fact suggests is that
Hardy recognizes in Nietzsche, latently if not consciously, many of his
own preoccupations, a recognition that he cannot admit even to himself,
perhaps because to do so would contradict his jealously held views on
the difficulties of social and ethical amelioration. Eugene William-
son, by contrast, has suggested that Hardy's "unsympathetic reaction"

This view, while containing a great deal of truth, nonetheless ignores
the powerful role characteristically played by temperament in the
formation of Hardy's philosophical judgments. When we factor tempera-
ment into the equation, Nietzsche's emphasis becomes simply too
optimistic, too intensely joyful, to permit Hardy anything like
conscious assent to his ideas. There is that aspect of Hardy, as I
began by saying, that seems unable to take a hopeful stance or to
approve it in others.
Yet the two nonetheless share similarities of impulse, similarities that resonate throughout the text of **Tess**. It is clear, for instance, that Hardy shares Nietzsche's abhorrence of dualism and its consequences, an attitude that underlies his entire treatment of Clare and the redemptive imperative. Nor is his concern limited to the strictly religious implications of metaphysical constructs. Rather, an acute awareness of an incongruence between the mental and the physical aspects of daily life tends to inform his thought processes. Observing himself in the mirror, he reflects:

>'Am conscious of the humilitating sorriness of my earthly tabernacle, and of the sad fact that the best of parents could do no better for me... Why should a man's mind have been thrown into such close, sad, sensational, inexplicable relations with such a precarious object as his own body!' 

A journal entry of Nov. 1882 speculates that humanity has "'reached a degree of intelligence which Nature never contemplated when framing her laws, and for which she consequently has provided no adequate satisfactions,'" a comment typical of his conviction that human physicality and mental development are at some basic level incompatible. And he would later reject Bergson's thought precisely because he saw in it "only our old friend Dualism in a new suit of clothes." 

What Hardy elsewhere calls the "mutually destructive interdependence of flesh and spirit" makes itself felt in **Tess** in ways that go beyond even the problems posed by the redemptive impulse.
have been quick to note, Tess is "asleep, or in reverie, at almost every crucial turn of the plot," a condition that militates against her efforts at self-determination.\textsuperscript{100} This tendency to dissociate her mind from her body is mirrored by Angel and Alec, who virtually split her in two, one desiring her as spirit only, the other as flesh only.\textsuperscript{101} Tess's self-confessed ability to separate her consciousness from her body and go "'hundreds and hundreds o' miles away from your body, which you don't seem to want at all'" (102), thus affirms her participation in the dualistic problem that confronted Hardy in his looking-glass. And that participation, her alienation from her own body and its functions, contributes mightily to her participation in a second Nietzschean dynamic.

For dualism is not the only Nietzschean polarity to find its way into Tess. On the contrary, Tess cooperates in her own destruction by defining herself precisely according to a master/slave model, a model that finds her playing the role of passive victim to Alec d'Urberville's aristocratic master. Defining herself as guilty with respect to Clare, she repeats the process and views herself as downtrodden vis-à-vis d'Urberville.\textsuperscript{102} Re-encountering Alec after her marriage, she lashes out at him these words of Nietzschean ressentiment: "'You, and those like you, take your fill of pleasure on earth by making the life of such as me bitter and black with sorrow" (256). In her words, both he and she vanish as individuals and are replaced by polarized types, "those like you" and "such as me." Nor do his new intentions toward her alter in any way her outlook. Even a proposal of marriage seems to have no effect on her perceptions of him, for she still can charge,
"'Once victim, always victim--that's the law!'" (275). Just as she had perceived herself helpless before her family's demands, she now finds herself paralyzed by the power differential between herself and d'Urberville. The mental categories through which she views the distribution of power, that is, assure that she can define herself only as Alec's prey. It is paradoxical but true that she manages to see herself as at once guilty and victimized, the two models conflated in her mind in such a way that anything like effective, autonomous action becomes impossible.

For it is as both sinner and victim that she plunges the knife into Alec's heart--as sinner to seek Clare's forgiveness, and as victim to avenge herself on Alec, thereby ironically fulfilling the promise Clare had seen in the eyes of her ancestor's portrait. Internalizing the models operative in her culture, models that define her paradoxically as both guilt-ridden and victimized, she commits the one act that would seem to free her from both models, annihilating their representative in the body of d'Urberville. Yet even as she acts, the Hardyesque noose of circumstance pulls tight, and the ironic consequence of her attempt to eradicate the models is her own destruction, a destruction enacted by the very forces of society that invest both models with their power.

*Nature and Dionysus*

If it is clear enough what Hardy is arguing against, the question still remains: precisely what is he arguing for? Once again, his own words provide the best answer, for an essay that appeared a few months
before *Tess* was published complete contains a clue to the novel's more positive impulses. In it Hardy invokes

the just perception that with our widened knowledge of the universe and its forces, and man's position therein, narrative, to be artistically convincing, must adjust itself to the new alignment. . . . Nothing but the illusion of truth can permanently please, and when the old illusions begin to be penetrated, a more natural magic has to be supplied. 104

Hardy's use of the term "illusion" here is provocatively double-pronged. On the one hand, it refers to the writer's art, a trick of "seeming" essential to creating a sense of vivid reality on the printed page. Equally, however, it refers to a changing nineteenth-century point of view, an increasing sense that the old models of what in fact constitutes reality are no longer adequate. In terms of *Tess*, it points us to the "old illusions" of transcendence, metaphysics, dualisms, and their supportive dogmas, the same illusions Hardy bewails so consistently in his letters. Moreover, the passage tantalizingly suggests an alternative to such illusions, an alternative Hardy here designates as "a more natural magic." The passage thus embodies the same double movement for which I argue, a discrediting of old constructs combined with a movement toward a new model distinguished by its association with the "natural."
This word "natural," then, points us toward the novel's positive pole, suggesting a locus of value capable, perhaps, of countering the destructiveness of the redemptive and victimization models the novel describes as culturally-imposed illusions. That Tess's affirmations center around the natural is scarcely news to the novel's many Darwinian critics, whose work by now forms a substantial body of discourse. Critics involved less exclusively with Darwin, however, have nonetheless discerned in the novel a broadly natural bias that certainly allows for, but is not necessarily limited to, a strictly Darwinian reading of the text. J. Hillis Miller, for instance, finds Tess to be "dominated by a brooding sense of man's atavistic kinship with what is oldest, darkest, and most irrational in nature." A corollary to such kinship, Miller says, is the novel's suggestion that by way of their bodies and in particular their sexual desires men and women are part of nature, driven by the same energies which lead to the growth of plants and animals. . . . Though Tess is 'maiden no more,' unfit for honest society, she is no less what the subtitle of the novel calls her, 'a pure woman,' as pure as any other expression of nature's will to life and reproduction.

DeLaura posits a similar source of value: Hardy's positive ideal, he suggests, "is finally the simple endorsement (predictive of Lawrence) of freer relations between men and women unhampered by the stifling and unnatural standards of a dying civilization." And in a passage with
important implications for *Tess*, naturalism critic Harold Kaplan offers an umbrella definition that would seem to cover my own reading of the novel as an anti-theological tract as well as the values implicit in Miller's and DeLaura's remarks. Significantly, Kaplan's remarks also echo the double movement of destruction and reconstruction found in Hardy's comments on "illusions." "Much of the program of modern critical realism and naturalism in literature," Kaplan suggests, "could be described as the systematic exposure of idealities that are false, demonstrably unrelated to 'natural existence.'" In place of such idealities, he argues, modern naturalism breeds "moral systems, determining 'what is good' according to the norms of power, circumstance, and the **will to live**."108

The positive pole of Kaplan's model thus evokes not only a naturalistic impulse consistent with Darwin but also a volitional impulse resonant with more positive Nietzschean overtones. And I argue that such a model is peculiarly appropriate to describe what is occurring, albeit somewhat unsystematically, in *Tess*. I have examined at some length the "exposure of idealities" Hardy undertakes. But to what extent is the novel's positive bias determined by a "natural" code of value, a code involved with the "will to live"?

There is, to begin with, *Tess's* ineluctable impulse toward self-realization, an urge toward an autonomy that continually contends against the religious and social models that would enslave her. Her defiant return to Marlott, refusing aid from Alec, in the full realization that she is pregnant; her plea to the cleric to transcend religious categories in his dealings with her ("'Don't for God's sake
speak as saint to sinner, but as you yourself to me myself" [82]); her
departure for Talbothays in search of a renewed existence—these
actions militate against the models that press upon her, enabling her
to carve for herself some small space that is not determined by the
forces of what Hardy critically terms "Art." Nor is it coincidence
that in each case her action is impelled by circumstances relating to
some force basic to life. In the first case, birth; in the second,
death; in the third, regeneration, the last undertaken in the grip of
what Hardy calls "[t]he irresistible, universal, automatic tendency to
find sweet pleasure somewhere, which pervades all life, from the
meanest to the highest" (88). Tess, then, is no mere puppet of
circumstance; on the contrary, it is the very complexity of her
reactions—her resistance to socially coded constructs in combination
with her capitulation to them—that defines her as the powerfully
tragic figure that she remains.

The pervasive opposition of art to nature that imbues the novel
from beginning to end leads DeLaura to contend that "Hardy's major
ethical contrast, finally . . . is a simple one between an unspecified
'Nature,' evidently as the norm of some more genuine and personal
ethical mode, and 'Civilization,' identified with social law, conven-
tion, and in the last analysis the moral and intellectual constraints
of Christianity."109 Bernard Paris, reacting differently to the same
set of data, charges that Hardy inconsistently "uses nature as a moral
norm and at the same time regards nature as amoral."110 Explicit in
Paris's charge, and implicit in DeLaura's remark, is the assumption
that any norm in the novel must be, by definition, a "moral" or
"ethical" norm. With respect to most novels, perhaps that is a safe assumption. Yet the situation in Tess, as I have been arguing, is somewhat special. For the very models that press upon Tess, limiting her freedom and finally taking her life, are by any rational definition "moral" models. From one point of view, the entire novel comprises a tract against the tyranny of what constitutes morality itself. Given the circumstances of her existence, Tess's only hope lies in the realm of what would ordinarily be called the "amoral"—or, as Hardy once put it, the "unmoral."111

This appeal to the "unmoral" manifests itself when Hardy tells us that "Most of [Tess's] misery had been generated by her conventional aspect, and not by her innate sensations" (77). When her baby is dying, Hardy reports that "a fresh [sorrow] arose on the natural side of her which knew no social law" (78). But nowhere is this extra-moral standard more evident than in the famous passage describing Tess's relationship to nature:

Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of Guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence. But all the while she was making a distinction where there was no difference. 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 (73).

Here as elsewhere, Tess reveals the extent to which she has internalized the religious codes of her society. Yet the text does not let her perceptions pass uncorrected, as it does in her relationship to Clare. As if to make clear that here alone lies hope, Hardy's narrator specifically repudiates her introjections of the human moral norm, emphasizing that by nature's standards she stands uncharged with trespass. Here, Hardy is saying, the categories of fall and redemption do not obtain. If such a situation is "unmoral," the passage suggests, then so be it; but any inadequacy lies not in nature but in the categories that would dismiss nature on grounds of amorality.

If the novel has a normative moment, in fact, it is in the scene Hardy juxtaposes to this one, as if to emphasize the inadequacy of moral categories within Tess's world. The nursing mother is discovered in a sun-drenched field, working along with laborers of both sexes, a scene the text associates with "the old-time heliolatries," adding by way of endorsement: "One could feel that a saner religion had never prevailed under the sky" (73). In this context, dualistic disjunctions fade, and Tess experiences her own participation in a force that includes her but is at once greater than she: "a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it" (74). Like Dorothea looking out her window at the laboring family, Tess finds in this moment a reunion with life. That neither she nor the novel is
able to sustain it testifies to the force of the cultural models against which she contends.

Moreover, Tess's flight from religious/social constructs is repeatedly associated with a pagan or natural state of things. The "energy and joy" critics have found in Tess is due in no small part to her essentially pagan, thus untainted matrilineal inheritance. Her exuberant new beginning at Talbothays is attributed not to her Durbeyfield taint but to "the energy of her mother's unexpended family" (88). And the May-walking scene at the novel's beginning furnishes an instructive contrast to the postlapsarian condition of the remainder of the novel. As if to posit an alternative to the redemptive model, Hardy shows us a glimpse of life uncontaminated by it. It is only upon returning home that Tess learns the news of Durbeyfield's illustrious forebears, thus his entry into a postlapsarian model. The walk and the dance thus occur in a metaphorically prelapsarian world. Nor is it coincidence that, at the dance, Angel Clare shows up and ignores Tess. Unaffected as yet by pre-and postlapsarian models, she has no need for a saviour, nor does he materialize; later, impelled by guilt to seek redemption, she finds/creates Clare (or he finds/creates her) easily enough. The contrast between Tess as pagan and Tess as fallen sinner is paralleled by a passage that Hardy "heavily marked" in his 1867 edition of On Liberty:

'There is a different type of human excellence from the Calvinistic: a conception of humanity as having its nature bestowed on it for other purposes than merely to be abnegated. "Pagan self-assertion" is
one of the elements of human worth, as well as
"Christian self-denial."  

The May-walking scene, like the regenerative impulse that sends Tess to Talbothays, invokes a deep human capacity for joy reminiscent of Nietzsche's contention regarding Dionysian tragedy—it offers the comfort, he says, "that life is at the bottom of things, despite all the changes of appearances, indestructibly powerful and pleasurable." Similarly, in "The Dorsetshire Labourer," Hardy had opined that "wherever a mode of supporting life is neither noxious nor absolutely inadequate, there springs up happiness, and will spring up happiness, of some sort or other." Here the pessimistic Hardy is in eclipse and we find him in essential agreement with Nietzsche, the same Nietzsche whom, under another aspect, he could accuse of excessive optimism.

Certain highly charged scenes within the novel proper indicate, furthermore, that the primal forces of *eros* and *thanatos* are associated not with civilization or with Christianity but with nature, particularly the primeval nature evocative of pre-Christian Britain. As Tony Tanner remarks, *Tess* impresses us with "the intimate proximity of the bed and the grave." The rape/seduction scene takes place in The Chase, a location Alec describes as "'the oldest wood in England'" (60). The narrator adds his voice to note "the primeval yews and oaks" of the place (62). By virtue of its age, The Chase becomes associated with the noble (and pagan) Sir Pagan d'Urberville, the founder of Tess's line. Similarly, when Tess is arrested, the event does not occur, as we might expect, in a church courtyard, but rather on a
sacrificial altar at Stonehenge. Although "Art" and religion have brought about the arrest, the fact of death itself is linked, by means of this setting, to a more primal, hence more natural realm.

Then there are the deaths of the horse, Prince, and of Alec d'Urberville. Both die by a wound which leaves only a small hole; as a result of both deaths, Tess becomes covered with blood. And both the horse and d'Urberville are sources of energy within the novel; each serves, in his own way, Kaplan's "will to live" (although the horse, old and feeble as he is, represents a corrupted version of the force exemplified by d'Urberville). The horse provides such sustenance as the family enjoys, and d'Urberville becomes its sole means of support during the final portion of the novel. In causing the horse's death, although inadvertently, Tess deprives her family of its only financial resource. In killing Alec, she not only kills the one force that has proved able to assist them; more importantly, she also kills the "will to live" in herself. As Ian Gregor notes, if Alec is in some sense her destroyer, he is equally her creator. The only person in the novel toward whom Tess displays a range of passions, d'Urberville represents the atavistic force Tess seeks repeatedly to repress; but resurface it will, until finally the only escape from such Dionysian energy is physically to destroy it—in a misguided attempt to regain the highly Apollonian Clare. D. H. Lawrence intuits Tess's relationship to d'Urberville in an insightful comment:

She would have lived with her husband, Clare, in a state of abandon to him, like a coma. Alec d'Urberville forced her to realize him, and to
realize herself. He came close to her, as Clare
never could have done. So she murdered him. For
she was herself.\footnote{119}

Such is the force that d'Urberville, phallic cigar and all, embodies
for Tess and for the novel as a whole. And such Nietzschean forces
create their own value, a value deriving from, in Kaplan's phrase, "the
energy they embody."\footnote{120} D'Urberville thus becomes, almost in spite of
himself, emblematic of the life force Swinburne's "Hertha" describes as
flowing through all things; in him, the prosperous if illicit holder of
the title to the degenerate Durbeyfield line, the struggle for life and
the will to power meet and merge. It is therefore ironically fitting
that in causing his death, Tess should cause her own, for the same
force--whether she will admit it or not--animates them both.\footnote{121}

Finally, even the sequence of the novel's chapter titles teases us
regarding the continuous conflict--dialectic, really--between the
Dionysian will to live and the opposing, Apollonian forces (both within
Tess and outside her) that conspire to destroy her life. "Maiden No
More" is followed not, as we might expect, by "The Consequence" but
instead by "The Rally." It is in this last section that Tess experi-
ences a regenerative impulse, goes off to Talbothays, and becomes one
with the life overflowing in that virtual land of milk and honey. "The
Consequence," concluding as it does with her confession to Clare, then
becomes the ironic result of "The Rally" itself, rather than of her
involvement with d'Urberville. Had she not experienced her re-engagement
with life, it could be argued, she would not have encountered
Clare once more nor become involved in that disastrously crypto-
redemptive relationship. The will to live thus carries with it the seeds of its own (temporary) deconstruction, only to stubbornly reconstitute itself later on, as Tess's does when she renews her affair with d'Urberville. "The Woman Pays," which follows "The Consequence" and details Tess's separation from Clare, can also be read as the outcome of the rally itself. "The Convert," an ostensible reference to d'Urberville's brief fling with Christianity, equally well could describe Tess's own conversion to "Angelism." The final section, "Fulfilment," seems to conflate a life-wish and a death-wish, since Tess destroys both d'Urberville and herself in her attempt to regain Clare. The titles thus comment upon one another as well as upon the text, and they reiterate the alternating and opposing forces between which Tess must continually choose.122

If the novel's conclusion offers resolution of such contending alternatives, it lies in the moment when Clare and 'Liza-Lu bend themselves to the ground (330). Once again nature evokes the primal forces of eros and thanatos, in contrast to the living death imposed by the forces of "Art." In this scene, as for those who constantly encounter the earth in walking the novel's compass, the soil seems to provide a reminder of mortality together with a symbolic and literal grounding in life, a testimony to what Gillian Beer calls "the 'recuperative powers' which pervade both language and the physical world" in Hardy's novels.123 The scene's regenerative associations imply the possibility, that is, of a relationship not predicated on the models of guilt and victimization that Tess assumes and internalizes. For 'Liza-Lu, Clare is no Christ; for his part, Clare has abandoned his
idealism in favor of a more experiential ethic, an ethic that questions received moral categories (282). Therein lies the germ of a situation in which redemptive constructs do not obtain, one where everybody, in fact, is good enough.
Notes


2 *Life* 179.


4 *Life* 224.

5 *Life* 303.

6 *Life* 376.

7 Ford Madox Ford, *Mightier than the Sword*. Quoted in Ian Gregor, "Contrary Imaginings: Thomas Hardy & Religion," *Thomas Hardy Journal* 2 (1986): 17. Gregor also cites Hardy's "looking for God" remark but goes on to discuss Hardy's religious imagination in terms that are primarily aesthetic.

8 Thomas Hardy, *The Collected Letters of Thomas Hardy*, eds. Richard Little Purdy and Michael Millgate, 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978-87) 3: 273. (These volumes appear in the notes as *CL*.) In his youth, Hardy had done extensive research during the course of an argument with Henry Bastow regarding the legitimacy of the Church of England's endorsement of infant baptism. Far from criticizing the practice, however, he defended it on experiential grounds, as Florence Hardy reports: "while perceiving that there was not a shred of evidence for infant baptism in the New Testament, he saw that Christianity did not hang on temporary details that expediency might modify, and that the practice of an isolated few in the early ages could not be binding on its multitudes in differing circumstances, when it had grown to be the religion of continents" (*Life* 30).

9 David J. DeLaura, "'The Ache of Modernism' in Hardy's Later Novels" (1967).

DeLaura 397. Hardy's critics of the last twenty or so years generally agree on what amounts to a transformational model regarding Hardy's movement from faithful, would-be cleric to doubting agnostic. In contradistinction to Bernard Paris's reading of George Eliot, they tend not to imagine their subject as peering into the abyss resulting from loss of faith. As Irving Howe remarks, "If there was a radical break between his Christian upbringing and his conversion to philosophical naturalism, there were also strong elements of continuity." Howe suggests that Hardy experienced his "gradual slide into skepticism" as, "at least in part, a kind of liberation" (Thomas Hardy [New York: Macmillan, 1967] 25, 12). F. R. Southertonsttng agrees that "there was no sudden break" (Hardy's Vision of Man [London: Chatto & Windus, 1971] 18). Biographer Michael Millgate finds that Hardy "never did experience a 'loss of faith' of the classic Victorian kind," Millgate 91. Ian Gregor sums up the position when he calls Hardy's reading in the 1860s and 1870s "a classical course in the development of Victorian agnosticism," but insists that it "does not seem to have led in his case to any crisis of belief. There is nothing in his autobiography, for instance, that could be remotely called 'a dark night of the soul'" ("Contrary Imaginings" 19-20).


DeLaura 382.

For an insightful analysis of Harrison's essay, see Basil Willey, More Nineteenth Century 160-67.

CL 1: 176. An entry in Hardy's Literary Notes indicates that he read the novel shortly after it was published, certainly before he began writing Tess (The Literary Notebooks of Thomas Hardy, ed. Lennart A. Bjork, 2 vols. [New York: New York UP, 1985] 1: 211). This edition appears in the notes as "Notebooks."


W. T. Mallock, reviewing Elsmere in the Fortnightly Review for May, 1892, suggests that the novel's popularity reflected "first, the amount of unformulated scepticism prevalent amongst the Christian public; secondly, the eagerness of this public to understand its own scepticism more clearly; and lastly, its eagerness to discover that, whatever its scepticism might take from it, something would still be left it, which was really the essence of Christianity. In other words, the popularity of Robert Elsmere is mainly the expression of the devout idea that the essence of Christianity will somehow survive its doctrines" (quoted by Ryals in his introduction to Elsmere, xxxvi-xxxvii).

19 DeLaura 387.

20 DeLaura 390.

21 DeLaura 390.


23 In a letter printed in *The Academy and Literature*, May 17, 1902, concerning a review of Maeterlinck's *Apology for Nature*, Hardy wrote these words in rejection of natural "theodicy": "'Pain has been, and pain is; no new sort of morals in Nature can remove pain from the past and make it pleasure for those who are its infallible estimators, the bearers thereof" (Life 315).

24 Hardy applied the "comforting, but false" remark to the following passage by the Rev. Sidney A. Alexander, entitled "Pessimism and Progress," from *Contemporary Review* 68 (Jan. 1893): 83, which he copied into his *Literary Notebooks*: "Byronism has almost spent itself. . . . Browning has become the prophet of the rising generation. . . . In philosophy Schopenhauer has given place to Hegel--the hope of cosmic suicide to the thought of a spiritual society, the vision of that City of God to wh. [sic] the race of men is slowly climbing nearer" (Hardy, *Notebooks* 2: 55).

25 Robert Elsmere 265.

26 Robert Elsmere 558.


28 Horace Moule introduced Hardy to *Essays and Reviews* when it appeared in 1860, and probably also to Darwin's *Origin*, which Hardy read shortly after its appearance in 1859 (Life 33; Southerington 17).

29 CL 1: 136.


31 CL 3: 5. In his 1889 essay "Agnosticism," Huxley had declared that religion "ought to mean, simply the reverence and love for the ethical ideal, and the desire to realise that ideal in life, which

32 Life 224. Hardy wrote to Henry Symonds in 1905 that "the fact of a thing being unpleasant does not make it untrue, even if scepticism in transcendental matters should be one of these things. I should say that, upon the whole, whatever may be true, is best known, & not disguised" (CL 3: 157).


34 William R. Rutland claimed long ago, for instance, that "Hardy, for all his claims to be scientific and rational, was primarily a being of emotion." (Thomas Hardy: A Study of His Writings and their Background, 1938 [New York: Russell & Russell, 1962] 70). Irving Howe suggests that, with respect to religion, Hardy was never quite able "to resolve emotionally what he had resolved in his mind" (12). And Ian Gregor has recently insisted that, for Hardy, "'belief' of any kind, christian, agnostic, atheistic, cannot find expression in a set of abstract propositions, but rather in areas of feeling, intimately related to ways of living" ("Contrary Imaginings" 19).

35 Hardy's unblinking attitude toward the power of emotion is well revealed in an 1881 journal entry: "The emotions have no place in a world of defect, and it is a cruel injustice that they should have developed in it" (Life 149).

36 CL 5: 351.

37 Ian Gregor captures this same sense of antipathetic alternatives when he writes, "Hardy had a profound sense of the numinous, and throughout his life, he was continually looking for a language in which to express it. He found the language of 19th century scepticism as alien as the language of 19th century belief--and for the same basic reason, they were too absolutist in their conclusions" ("Contrary Imaginings" 36).

38 Hardy would indicate a desire for such mediation in a journal entry of 1917, in which he wrote: "'Much confusion has arisen and much nonsense has been talked latterly in connection with the word "atheist". I have never understood how anybody can be one except in the sense of disbeliefing in a tribal god, man-shaped, fiery-faced and tyrannous, who flies into a rage on the slightest provocation.'" (Life 376).

39 As Harrison puts it in "Neo-Christianity," the threat of reform is precisely that it strikes at Christianity's metaphysical base: "Now we maintain that Scripture, as such, has either a supernatural basis, or none at all. Any theory of inspiration which ceases to be miraculous, unaccountable, and arbitrary, annihilates it" (316-17).
40 As reported by Millgate 539.


42 "Neo-Christianity" 295, 332. See also 316-17. Harrison's suspicions were shared by R. H. Hutton, who wrote in a review of Robert Elsmere, "'Faith in a being whom it is held safer to address not as God, but as 'Eternal', will never control the mass of men'" (The Spectator, 7 April 1888; cited by Basil Willey, How 'Robert Elsmere' struck some Contemporaries" 64).

43 Harrison, born in 1831, attended King's College School, London, from 1842 to 1849. He then matriculated at Oxford, where he took two degrees. His association lasted from 1849-1856, including a two-year fellowship (Dictionary of National Biography 1922-1930, ed. J. R. H. Weaver [London: Oxford UP, 1937]).

44 In a journal entry some time after 1907, Hardy comments: "That the dogmatic superstitions read every Sunday are merely a commemorative recitation of old articles of faith held by our grandfathers, may not much matter. . . as long as this is well understood. Still, it would be more honest to make these points clearer, by recasting the liturgy, for their real meaning is often misapprehended" (Life 333).

45 Life 431.

46 Life 415.


48 Life 239.

49 Life 55.

50 CL 2: 105.

51 Charlotte Bonica agrees, "Hardy's sympathy for Angel is clear: it is the sympathy of one whose own intellectual conclusions prevented him from belief in any sort of Providence, but who, late in life, described himself as 'churc'h'y'" ("Nature and Paganism in Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles," ELH 49 (1982): 850-51).

52 Hardy's theological agreement with Angel goes far to explain the puzzle DeLaura finds in Clare's attitude: "Somehow," he says, Clare "is exempt from the 'chronic melancholy' commonly afflicting those who have given up belief in Providence" (391; see also 396-97). Clare's cheerfulness is problematic only if we assume that Hardy finds his theology problematic.
DeLaura observes that throughout the novel "Christianity is treated . . . with an unrelenting and unsubtle disparagement" (397). This observation is unexceptionable as far as it goes; for instance, when Tess appeals to the local cleric to validate her baptism of her dying baby and Hardy tells us, "The man and the ecclesiastic fought within him, and the victory fell to the man," we are left in little doubt as to where our sympathies are supposed to lie (82). In such a context, the words "man" and "ecclesiastic" become mutually exclusive, and Hardy surely intends them to be so. My argument is that Hardy's indictment of Christianity, while unrelenting enough, is complex and more subtle than we may have believed.

In arguing that Hardy subverts a biblical and theological concept in Tess, I make no claims for or against intentionality. Rutland supplies a possible argument against it, however, when he observes, with respect to Hardy's language, that "Hardy's use of the Authorized Version was not ordinarily a deliberate, or even a conscious, practice. Its language and its stories had become so much a part of himself that they were a portion of his natural speech" (3). And Hardy's insistence that "Tess of the d'Urbervilles' was not written to prove anything, either about Heaven or Earth" (CL 4: 62) suggests something less than conscious intent, as does his more general claim that "a novel is an impression, not an argument" ("Preface to the Fifth and Later Editions" of Tess [Elledge 2]).

Critics who note Tess's indebtedness to Paradise Lost include Allan Brick ("Paradise and Consciousness in Hardy's Tess," NCF 17 [1962]: 115-34), for whom Tess, Angel, and Alec are models of Eve, Adam, and Satan respectively. Ian Gregor compares the novel's end to the conclusion of Paradise Lost (The Great Web: The Form of Hardy's Major Fiction [Totowa, N. J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1974] 196). More broadly, Andrew Enstice finds that the Wessex novels as a whole portray an antitype of Eden ("The Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge," The Novels of Thomas Hardy, ed. Anne Smith [London: Vision, 1979] 9-22). These critics all see Hardy as simply using the paradisal model; they do not suggest that he attempts to subvert it. More critically, Charlotte Thompson observes a disparity between biblical models and the novel's reality, arguing that "biblical and mythological constructs, formulated two thousand years earlier, impose themselves relentlessly upon a present that they are ill-equipped to define with precision" ("Language and the Shape of Reality in Tess of the D'Urbervilles," ELH 50 [1983] 744). Penny Boumelha observes, "The post-lapsarian world of Tess is attenuated . . . by expulsion from sexuality, and not by the loss of a pre-sexual innocence" (Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form [Brighton: Harvester; Totowa, N. J.: Barnes & Noble, 1982] 126). And according to Mary Jacobus, "it could be argued that the terminology of conventional Christian morality is being ironically misapplied in order to reveal its inadequacy" ("Tess's Purity," EIC 26 [1976]: 320). Conversely, Laura Claridge finds that "the extent to which [biblical allusions] undermine [the] text in Tess has gone unexplored" ("Tess: A Less than Pure Woman Ambivalently Presented," TSLL 28 [1986]: 332). I argue, in the spirit of Thompson, Boumelha, and Jacobus, that it is the novel that subverts the literary/biblical-
I am indebted to J. Hillis Miller for the concept that it is only the second instance (in this case, postlapsarian guilt) that makes the first instance (prelapsarian innocence) into an origin; he uses this model to discuss incidents within Tess itself (Fiction and Repetition [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1982] 136).


The text actually overdetermines Tess's sense of guilt. In addition to the larger model of original sin, the novel presents a textbook portrait of what recent research has shown to be typical of the eldest child of alcoholic and other pathological families. High on the list of characteristics shown by such persons is an overwhelming sense of responsibility and a tendency to assume familial guilt in general. Not only Tess herself, but the Durbeyfield family as a whole, fits the model precisely. See Sharon Wegscheider, Another Chance: Hope & Health for the Alcoholic Family (Palo Alto, Cal.: Science and Behavior Books, 1981) 104-15.

When in 1896 Bishop William Walsham How burned one of Hardy's novels, the latter was impelled to remark that "theology & burning (spiritual & temporal) have been associated for so many centuries that I suppose they will continue allies to the end" (CL 2: 125). Six months later, in a letter to Clodd, he repeated the sentiment, noting that "theology and burning have been kindred always" (CL 2: 143).

Gen. 3.16a. Elledge gives as the source for the name Gen. 35.18, in which Rachel names her son "Ben-oni," or "son of sorrow" (80).

The novel's contemporary reviewers found the character of Clare a thoroughgoing puzzle, although they could also voice reservations about his personal qualities. These reservations prompted an unsigned reviewer in Athenaeum (9 Jan. 1892) to remark that "sometimes one is driven to ask whether the touch of satire suggested by the name has not prompted Mr. Hardy's representation of the character" (R. G. Cox, ed., Thomas Hardy: The Critical Heritage [London: Routledge; New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970] 184). An unsigned review in Saturday Review (16 Jan. 1892), however, found Clare "a mere shadow to the reader" (Cox 190). William Watson, writing in Academy (6 Feb. 1892), pronounced Clare "[p]erhaps the most subtly drawn, as [he] is in some ways the most perplexing and difficult character" (Cox 200). Mrs. Olphant, reviewing Tess in Blackwood's Magazine (March 1892), simply threw up her hands in the face of such inscrutability: "But before Mr. Angel Clare we stand aghast. What is he? . . . The thing must be male, we suppose, since a man made it, and it is certainly original as a picture of a man" (Cox 210). More recently, T. B. Tomlinson cites a "relative blankness" in Angel Clare as a major issue of the novel ("Hardy's Universe" 27). Modern critics more typically have focused on the issue of Clare's less savory personal characteristics. Albert Guerard calls
him "nasty" and "insufferable" (117, 22, 80), Allan Brick terms him "a desiccated monster" (128), while Irving Howe deems him "an intellectual wretch" (122).

Clare's character fares little better in comparison with the less problematic Alec d'Urberville. Andrew Lang declared in a contemporary review that "The villain Alec and the prig Angel Clare seem to me equally unnatural, incredible, and out of the course of experience" (Longman's Magazine [Nov. 1892], Cox 241). Penny Boumelha notes that the two men "are not the opposites that they might at first appear; they are precisely complementary, as is emphasised, not only by Alec's temporary conversion to evangelicism and Angel's momentary transformation into a rake with Izz, but also by the similarities between their ways of gaining Tess's acquiescence" (131). More sympathetically, Mary Jacobus argues that the issue of Tess's purity falsifies the novel, polarizing the characterizations of the two men and our perceptions of them: "A necessary consequence of Hardy's campaign to purify Tess is the character-assassination of Alec and Angel" (325).


63 Gregor, The Great Web 189.


65 "Hertha," 1. 34.

66 Cf. Acts 17.25, "he giveth to all life, and breath," and 17.28, "in him we live, and move, and have our being."


68 Allan Brick notes Tess's "idolatry" of Clare and that he in fact "becomes her Christ," adding, "Angel's Christ-like effect upon her is that of the pale Galilean who has made the world grow grey with his breath" (128). To this point, we agree, but Brick does not assume that Hardy is criticizing Christology, only that he criticizes Clare for not living up to Tess's worship of him. Similarly, Henry Kozicki views Clare as a potential savior who cannot forgive; that is, he fails the model, which remains intact. For Kozicki, the novel's true Christ is the sacrificial Tess ("Myths of Redemption in Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles," Papers on Language and Literature 10 [1974]: 157). Bruce Johnson, however, points to the more critical view when he muses, regarding the novel, "Suppose [humanity] had not been victimized by a Christian talent for ideals that generate guilt and remorse and,
perhaps even worse, forgiveness as their psychological essence" (274-75). And Kaja Silverman finds the novel "trapped within a figural view of history," a view that, she points out, "usually implies a redemptive eschatology," whereas, in *Tess*, "there is nothing redemptive about the operations of historical meaning... nothing that points us toward a happier and more complete state." Silverman agrees that the novel displays a pervasive "anti-transcendentalism" ("History, Figuration and Female Subjectivity in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*," *Novel* 18 [1984]: 13, 15).

69 Norman Arkans, "Hardy's 'Religious Twilight,'" *TSL* 21 (1979): 413.


71 Arkans 423.

72 *Complete Poems* 594.

73 John 8.12; John 1.5. See also John 1.4; 3.19; 12.35; Luke 2.32; Rev. 21.23.

74 *PL* 3.1.

75 See Tomlinson 27.

76 See also Matt. 20.16.

77 Cf. Mark 2.27, "the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath."

78 *Life* 240.

79 Matt. 26.28; see also Mark 14.24.

80 See note 4.

81 DeLaura 391.

82 Calling this moment "a disruption in the [novel's] sexual economy of the look," Silverman suggests that the woman's gaze inverts the novel's order of power, making Clare rather than Tess the object of scrutiny, thus momentarily denying his own subjectivity, a denial that is visited on Tess throughout the novel: "Once again the imaginary viewer is at his post, but far from mastering the spectacle through his gaze, he is now mastered by it" (14).


Rev. 22.20.

Matt. 25.5. Bernard Paris agrees that Tess's sense of responsibility conspires with the culture to destroy her, although he designates Alec, not Angel, as the agent of that destruction: "Tess's second capitulation is in many ways a recapitulation of the first. Her family is again in dire straits; Tess again feels responsible; and Alec again plays very cleverly upon her compulsion to sacrifice herself for the younger children. . . . He satisfies a need she has for punishment and masochistic self-immolation. . . . She has been conditioned by her family and her culture to see submission to a protector as the appropriate way to fulfill her security needs. . . . As Alec's mistress she fulfills her duty to her family, but at a terrible price" ("Experiences of Thomas Hardy" 230-31).


Williamson 409.

Notebooks 2: 75.

CL 5: 50.

Notebooks 2: 240. The notebook entry is not dated, but presumably it predates the availability of Nietzsche in English, which only occurred in the nineties (Rutland 48).

"Was Nietzsche a Madman or a Genius?" Current Literature, 44 (June 1908): 641-44; Notebooks 2: 451.

Williamson 410.

For Nietzsche's comments on Socrates and the physical/mental disjunction, see The Birth of Tragedy, Basic Writings (95, 97). The metaphor of the lightning cited in Chapter 1 points to dualism's incursions into grammar formation (The Genealogy of Morals, Basic Writings 481).

Life 251.

Life 163.

CL 5: 79.

The Return of the Native, Book II, Chapter vi.
100 Boumelha 121. See also Paris, "A Confusion of Many Standards" 67. And Terry Eagleton points up the destructive mind/body split in Hardy's work in "Thomas Hardy: Nature as Language" (Critical Quarterly 13 [1971]: 155-62).


102 Elliott B. Gose finds in Tess "an aggressive-submissive pattern which has its locus in the relations of Alec and Tess but is generalized to include society past and contemporary," a dynamic he however attributes to "Darwinian self-assertion." That this pattern can be read either as Darwinian or Nietzschean testifies to the ways in which the thought of each meets and merges, interpenetrating to inform the natural, thisworldly dynamics of late-century fiction. ("Psychic Evolution: Darwinism and Initiation in Tess of the d'Urbervilles," NCF 18 [1963]: 268).

103 Laura Claridge argues that Alec is falsely portrayed as "the worst sort of villain" and that Tess, in these scenes, virtually victimizes Alec by her perverse characterization of him as wretch (332-33).


105 The most satisfactory Darwinian readings of the novel to date are Bruce Johnson's "'The Perfection of Species' and Hardy's Tess" and Gillian Beer's Darwin's Plots.

106 Thomas Hardy: Distance and Desire 80.

107 DeLaura 395.

108 Harold Kaplan 2 (my emphasis).

109 DeLaura 397.


111 CL 6: 54.

112 Howe 130.


114 The Birth of Tragedy, Basic Writings 59.

115 PW 169.

117 Merryn and Raymond Williams point out the crucial economic importance of the horse: noting that Tess "is the daughter of a haggler or small itinerant trader," they add, "The working capital of this extreme marginal occupation is a horse. When it is killed they have nowhere to go but the labour market" ("Hardy and Social Class," Thomas Hardy: The Writer and His Background, ed. Norman Page [New York: St. Martin's, 1980] 34-35).

118 The Great Web 182.


120 Harold Kaplan 2.

121 Tomlinson argues that "Alec, and the side of Tess that answers instinctively to Alec's flesh and blood qualities, [comprise] the dominant impulse in the book" (146).

122 The titles thus exemplify the pattern of "flux" and "reflux" that Ian Gregor has found so pervasive in the novel (The Great Web 197). And Hardy himself asserted the same principle, itself a rather Nietzschean conception, the year before Tess was published complete: "Things move in cycles; dormant principles renew themselves, and exhausted principles are thrust by" ("Candour in English Fiction," The New Review [January 1890]: 15-21; FW 126).

123 Beer, Darwin's Plots 258.
IV. The Politics of Vision:

Passion and Perception in The Golden Bowl

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,...

Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
--- Eccl. 12.1-3; 6-7.

"Live all you can; it's a mistake not to."
---The Ambassadors

The transformation of God as articulated in the work of both George Eliot and Thomas Hardy has its foundation in concerns that are, to begin with at least, traditionally religious. George Eliot, we have seen, models her rebellion against the father on her prior rejection of the Christian God she initially reveres but eventually finds inadequate. Thomas Hardy, meanwhile, seeks in both religion and the secular society a post-Darwinian alternative to the transcendence of supernaturalism on the one hand and the abyss of atheism on the other. In the work of Henry James, however, transformation finds its expression and enactment in an ongoing struggle between two positions approximated by the passages cited above. Unlike George Eliot and Hardy, and contrary to what the respective sources might appear to suggest, James's competing alternatives are not, in the usual sense at least,
the sacred and the secular; indeed, James evinces little theological, doctrinal, or emotional involvement with established religion, whether as institution or as creed.\textsuperscript{1} I shall argue, rather, that religion serves for James a function which, though broadly cultural, is first and foremost intensely psychological.

I would suggest that the ongoing struggle in the Jamesian text, whether personal or literary, is between two conflicting poles. On the one hand, letters, essays, and novel alike tend to equate father and God in a textualized rendition of paternal transcendence, one that works to foreclose vision and to deny vitality and even life itself. On the other hand, the impulse articulated most succinctly by Lambert Strether persistently seeks and claims life at its fullest and finds its highest value—a value that assumes for James an intensity of such proportions as to evoke both religious ecstasy and Nietzschean joy—in the concrete particularities of individual experience. Moreover, the latter half of The Golden Bowl, with its vivid evocation (pace Tennyson) of "human nature red in tooth and claw," suggests that, for James, such intensity of life is made possible only through the willed application of post-Darwinian dynamics.

I argued in Chapter 1 that the failure of romantic perspectivism to achieve the union of mind and nature, self and other, it so persistently sought lies in its frequent inability to unite the affective and volitional faculties with those of vision, perception, and knowledge (pp. 43-45). And it is precisely within the province of this persistent impasse that we find the entry point to "the transformation of God" in the work of our third writer. This concern so central to
romanticism is equally crucial to James; what he repeatedly terms "perception" on the one hand and "passion" on the other operate—sometimes in tandem, more often in opposition—throughout his work. Something like the possibility of creative union between the two impels Strether's well-known injunction. But as we shall see, James's own determination, and that of the "intense perceivers" of his novels, to be "one of the people on whom nothing is lost" and thereby to "live all you can" repeatedly finds itself impeded by the resistance of the internalized father/God. Indeed, the textual embodiment of this inner inertial drag, in _The Golden Bowl_ as elsewhere in James, exemplifies what I describe in Chapter 1 as the "tenacious resistance" of Victorian texts as a whole to the process of transformation (p. 5). The father in the psyche—a memento, I suggest, of life in the James family and of Henry, Sr., in particular—serves, moreover, less as escape from the abyss than as abyss itself, as James's personal writing vividly demonstrates. James worries the question of these countervailing energies throughout his career, from _Washington Square_ to _Roderick Hudson_ to _The Awkward Age_ and beyond; but it requires _The Golden Bowl_, and the art with which James endows Maggie Verver, to harness the power of post-Darwinian dynamics in order to remake and reunite them in a transformed and triumphant whole.

**The Jamesian Void**

I have already noted the importance of the physicality of place in Hardy's life and views. A related preoccupation appears with respect to James, one that moves beyond sheer physical location to
include the locus of identity. In 1889 William James wrote to his sister Alice these pertinent remarks about their much-traveled brother:

Beneath all the accretions of years and the world, he is still the same dear innocent old Harry of our youth. His anglicisms are but 'protective resemblances'—and he's really, I won't say a Yankee, but a native of the James family, and has no other country.3

Edmund Wilson, however, interprets James's affinity for Europe less as transplantation than as an example of peripatetic:

It is quite mistaken to talk as if James had uprooted himself from America in order to live in England. He had travelled so much from his earliest years that he never had any real roots anywhere.4

What is certain is that James himself evinces a repeated desire for a sense of place, a structure into which he might fit, even while he indicates an almost wistful realization of its lack together with a certain wariness of its dangers. This sense of placelessness may have originated, as Wilson suggests, in the James family's habit of trekking back and forth to Europe all during his childhood, so that Europe seemed, almost from the beginning, as much his home as old New York. Leon Edel points out that James characterized in midlife as "'[v]ery special and very interesting'" the condition of "'the American who has
bitten deep into the apple of "Europe" and then been obliged to take his lips from the fruit."5

As this passage suggests, James seems always to have associated Europe with the fall into experience, into what he himself would come to term "the conditions of life."6 In stark contradistinction to James's view of Europe, though, Edel refers to "the paradise of paternal optimism and cheerfulness in which the Jameses lived," a depiction the novelist would not have faulted.7 Certainly the society of "old New York" in which the family inevitably moved impressed the young Henry as

not conscious--really not conscious of anything in the world; or was conscious of so few possibilities at least, and these so immediate and so a matter of course, that it came to almost the same thing.8

And as he describes it, the featurelessness of expectations within the family itself constitutes a deprivation so total as to recall the "dazzling curtain of light, concealing as darkness conceals, yet of the color of milk or of snow" that so impresses Amerigo regarding the Ververs.9 Indeed, the blankness on this point becomes, for James, its primary characteristic:

Our parents had for us no definite project but to be liberally "good"--in other words so good that the presumption of our being so would literally operate anywhere and anyhow, would really amount in itself to a sort of situated state, a sufficient
prime position, and leave other circumstances comparatively irrelevant.10

Repeatedly James records the lack of specificity operating within the household, particularly with respect to questions of identity and function. The vagueness of the elder Henry's occupation caused his children particular consternation, all the more since the business in which [any] boy's father gloriously was stood forth inveterately as the very first note of our comrade's impressiveness. We had no note of that sort to produce, and I perfectly recover the effect of my own repeated appeal to our parent for some presentable account of him that would prove us respectable.11

To his children's clamors for a self-description that they could present to their friends, Henry, Sr.'s response, "'Say I'm a philosopher, say I'm a seeker for truth, say I'm a lover of my kind, say I'm an author of books if you like; or, best of all, just say I'm a Student,'" proved frustratingly airy and of no help whatsoever in defining themselves to the world at large.12 Nor did it go far to provide the young Jameses with a specific locus from within which they could function. We can glimpse the genesis of a gaping psychic hole in Henry's wistful reaction to such vagueness of identity on his father's part:
To attend strictly to business was to be invariably there, on a certain spot in a certain place; just as to be nowhere in particular, to have to be nowhere, told the queer tale of a lack or of a forfeiture, or possibly even of a state of intrinsic unworthiness.13

The evidence thus suggests that the characteristic Henry, Sr., attributed so famously to Emerson—that the latter was a "man without a handle"—applies even more fully, and by his own repeated insistence, to the elder James himself.14

A similar nullifying incomprehension seemed to reign, on the part of the elder James, whenever Henry or William made so bold as to suggest some particular career in life for himself:

What was marked in our father's prime uneasiness in presence of any particular form of success we might, according to our lights as then glimmering, propose to invoke was that it bravely, or with such inward assurance, dispensed with any suggestion of an alternative. What we were to do instead was just to be something, something unconnected with specific doing, something free and uncommitted, something finer in short than being that, whatever it was, might consist of.15

Not only the choice of careers but even of colleges (Harvard, eventually, for both boys, though Henry did not remain) was met with their
father's impenetrable preference for idea over fact, the general over
the specific: "I marvel at the manner in which the door appears to
have been held or at least left open to us for experiment, though with
a tendency to close, the oddest yet most inveterately perceptible
movement in that sense, before any very earnest proposition in particu-
lar."16

The father who "could answer one with the radiant when one
challenged him with the obscure, just as he could respond with the
general when one pulled at the particular" exercised a similar protocol
with respect to his children's religious upbringing.17 Edwin Sill
Fussell's characterization of young Henry's religious base as "unques-
tionably a liberalized nondenominational American Protestantism rather
than that happy-go-lucky irreligious indifference so blithely imputed
to him" by critics rings ironically true.18 For James reports that
although Henry, Sr., was an inveterate reader of Scripture to his
little flock, he shrank from the prospect of actually encouraging them
to embrace any particular version of Christianity. On the contrary, he
made a virtue of precisely the opposite, insisting that what Henry
wryly refers to as their "pewless state" served to open rather than to
close religious doors to them, so that

we could plead nothing less than the whole privilege
of Christendom and that there was no communion, even
that of the Catholics, even that of the Jews, even
that of the Swedenborgians, from which we need find
ourselves excluded.19
James frankly finds this blithe assurance "beyond comprehension save by the light of the old manners and conditions, the old local bonhomie, the comparatively primal innocence, the absence of complications" furnished alike by the New York of the day and the parental attitude.\textsuperscript{20}

The predictable result, of course, was that the children attended nowhere. James reports that although "our young liberty in respect to churchgoing was absolute and we might range at will, through the great city, from one place of worship and one form of faith to another," it was equally open to them to "on occasion ignore them all equally, which was what we mainly did."\textsuperscript{21} And it is the absence of any specific denominational (or even congregational) identity, together with the emptiness it signifies, as opposed to any unfulfilled religiosity, that seems to have concerned James most:

I was troubled all along just by this particular crookedness of our being so extremely religious without having, as it were, anything in the least classified or striking to show for it. \ldots I [felt] that life would under the common equipment be somehow more amusing; and this even though, as I don't forget, there was not an item of the detail of devotional practice that we had been so much as allowed to divine.\textsuperscript{22}

James goes on to describe a vacancy of detail that again recalls Amerigo's perception of the innocent blankness surrounding Maggie Verver and her father:
I should have been thankful for a state of faith, a conviction of the Divine, an interpretation of the universe--anything one might have made bold to call it--which would have supplied more features or appearances. . . . I take it that I found the sphere of our more nobly suppositious habitation too imperceptibly peopled; whereas the religious life of every other family that could boast of any such . . . affected my fancy as with a social and material crowdedness.23

These lines suggest that the mature novelist may have recalled just this early experience when he compensated the Ververs for other deficiencies of the imagination by making them Catholic, Maggie devoutly so. And it is difficult not to associate his lifelong love for the multitudinous details of existence with precisely that "social and material crowdedness" he attributes to the religions from which he felt himself excluded. Indeed, Robert J. Reilly makes this same equation, not only for Henry but for William as well:

The religious cast of mind that William and Henry share simply rejects the notion of typicality, of fidelity to a norm. A moral agent, for both brothers, is always sui generis. . . . Both brothers show this profound respect for singularity. . . . They have the psychologist's love of endless particularity.24
James's repeated rejection of the generalizing impulse that so imbued the elder James also echoes the anti-idealist aspect of Darwinism (if at a more psychological level), recalling Ernst Mayr's contention that Darwin "refus[ed] to admit the eidos (Idea; type, essence) in any guise whatsoever" and his insistence that "only the variation is real."²⁵

In addition, the perceived need of a place on which to stand and from which to act goes far to account for James's eagerness for life elsewhere as well as his lifelong wanderlust even after permanently settled in England. His place of origin, that same James family of which William had pronounced him a native to the exclusion of all else, appears in light of this evidence primarily as absence or as void. The sense of being nowhere thus nurtured, together with the felt need to escape the pull of the familial abyss (he once wrote to Grace Norton about an upcoming visit home that "It's a good deal like dying"²⁶), seems to have impelled him throughout life not only in regard to geographical choices but also with respect to the importance of perception. In a later discussion we shall find him, for instance, longing "just to be somewhere--almost anywhere would do" and connecting this wish precisely with that acute power of vision which is the defining characteristic of his art.²⁷

The Godlike Father

Fussell points out what is probably obvious: that James's religious metaphors are not arbitrary and meaningless but rather signify. Further, he insists that they often structure, rather than merely embellish, his texts—a contention that James's own emphasis on the
organic structure of art would support (and it is impossible to imagine James, of all writers, using even a syllable merely as ornamentation).\textsuperscript{28} It is therefore worth noting that, even in the personal texts of letters and autobiography, James frequently and almost automatically falls into religious language when speaking of fathers. He relates, on the subject of the elder James's lack of occupation, the incident of a friend who told him "crushingly . . . that the author of his being . . . was in the business of a stevedore."\textsuperscript{29} During his midlife correspondence with Edmund Gosse, he responds to Gosse's report of the death of his own father (the nemesis of \textit{Father and Son} discussed in Chapter 1) with these lines:

Thanks for your letter & the portrait of your father, which is very interesting--such a striking stern--such a fine hard-type. He looks like a theological male sybil offering the world its choice of heaven or hell, with strong probabilities of hell, in that important volume.\textsuperscript{30}

Both Henry and William show an affinity for religious adjectives with respect to Henry, Sr. In an early letter from London, while on an extended trip financed by his father, Henry apologizes profusely for having appeared to overspend "these truly sacred funds."\textsuperscript{31} A few years later, after the elder James had sent him some tale he thought would be grist for his son's fiction, Henry writes to assure his mother that "It is admirable material, and excellently presentd. I have transcribed it in my note book with religious care."\textsuperscript{32} And after the elder James's
death in late 1882 (Mrs. James had died earlier that same year),
William would read a letter over the grave that includes these lines:

As for us; we shall live on each in his way,---
feeling somewhat unprotected, old as we are, for
the absence of the parental bosoms as a refuge, but
holding fast together in that common sacred
memory.33

The letter concludes, "Good-night, my sacred old Father. If I don't
see you again--Farewell! a blessed farewell!"34

This easy Jamesian equation of father and God suggests that the
passage from Ecclesiastes with which I began should be examined for a
relationship to the novel that is more than titular. And as we shall
see, that relationship proves rather to inform James's work and to
shape our own reading of The Golden Bowl. The famous exhortation of
the Preacher begins by associating closeness to God with "the days of
thy youth," a period that is by implication contrasted to the "evil
days" to come. He describes the latter by an extended series of
apocalyptic images, a litany that concludes with the inference that
"the silver cord" shall "be loosed," and "the golden bowl be broken"
immediately before death, when the body returns to dust and the spirit
to God. The passage thereby opposes godly innocence to worldly evil,
an evil that inevitably results in a death both moral and physical. By
implication, then, to leave the Father/father is to court disaster and
annihilation.
The "golden bowl" of the novel, of course, serves as a central, if elusive, image throughout, one that we will return to in due course. For now it is worth noting that in the scene where the bowl is first introduced--the clandestine visit of Charlotte Stant and Amerigo to the antique dealer--Charlotte considers presenting the bowl to Amerigo and, in questioning the proprietor about the bowl's soundness, echoes the words of Ecclesiastes: "'Not even if he should have to say to me "The Golden Bowl is broken"?'" (121). It remains to Fanny Assingham--that omnipresent observer and, I shall argue, manipulator of the novel's four primary participant/observers--to accomplish the eventual smashing of the bowl (in an attempt to smash the knowledge it represents).

The biblical reference to the "silver cord," on the other hand, refers us back to yet another aspect of James's relationship with his father, one we have not yet examined. And that concerns the subject of money. Henry James, Sr., had inherited a substantial fortune for his day, one that should have enabled the family to live comfortably, perhaps into the next generation. But as William's son, Henry III, reported to Percy Lubbock, the eldest Henry "'wasted most of it thro' sheer inattention to what was happening and launched my father and Uncle Henry into the world with the conviction that such things were perversely fatal and beyond their comprehension and control.'"35 The James letters make clear that a large portion of the money must have been expended, first, in the family's repeated forays to and from Europe, then in financing the separate and lengthy travels of the various James children. Certainly none traveled more assiduously than Henry, who made his first extended trip alone in 1869 and another, as
escort to Alice and an aunt, in 1872. (It was only in 1875 that he removed himself to London permanently.) Much of the correspondence from the early trips concerns the amount of money he is spending, an amount that he continually justifies by the need to accommodate ongoing health problems. Typical is this explanation when called to account for his expenses, a report that itself falls back onto biblical language: "I am obliged, of course, on account of the seats, to travel first class. My constant aim is to economise and make my funds minister . . . to my plain physical improvement, for which alone I live and move." The overall impression of the letters from the late 1860s and early 1870s, in fact, is that James's physical complaints served primarily as an excuse to keep him abroad. Had he ever found himself cured, the reader suspects, he might have felt compelled to return to America.

By the early 1870s, as James began earning more money through his writing, he instituted a financial practice that would bind him even more closely to the family (now located in Cambridge, Massachusetts). Because he lived mainly abroad even then, he directed the various American magazines for which he wrote to remit their payment not to him but to his father at the house on Quincy Street. Since he frequently spent more than he took in, he continued to live essentially at the pleasure of, and partly at the expense of, the senior Jameses. As Edel says, the results were that "Quincy Street became Henry's personal cashier, and Henry was held accountable to his family for his expenditures--and, as it seemed, for his life--abroad." The practice was not terminated until 1879 when, at age 36, James paid off the last
money owed his parents and announced in a letter to his mother, "In the future I expect to give you money, not to take it from you!"\textsuperscript{38}

The ensuing financial freedom, though, was apparently experienced by James primarily as insecurity. To the end of his days he worried constantly about going broke, and discussed his fears so persistently that by 1913 Edith Wharton had gained the erroneous impression that James (who had long been comfortably established in Lamb House at Rye and also maintained lodgings in London) was indeed on the verge of destitution. She sent out a plea to her friends asking them to come to his assistance (using the occasion of his seventieth birthday as ostensible excuse) and only halted her efforts upon James's horrified protests when he discovered the plan.\textsuperscript{39} Significantly for our purposes, Edel appropriates the "silver cord" image of Ecclesiastes in discussing James's financial dependence on his parents and his difficulties in extricating himself from it. The phrase "the silver cord" with reference to the house on Quincy Street recurs throughout the midsection of his biography.\textsuperscript{40} If James himself ever used the phrase in print, I have not discovered it. (Edel never overtly associates the phrase with \textit{The Golden Bowl} or Ecclesiastes, which causes me to suspect that James in fact uses it somewhere. The identity of language argues strongly for an undiscovered middle term.)

There remains one more rather enigmatic connection between Ecclesiastes and \textit{The Golden Bowl}, one which I do not profess to understand but which, in its very idiosyncracy, puts beyond doubt James's intentional reference to the passage in titling the novel. And that connection is through the unlikely subject of windows. The
apocalyptic section of the biblical passage includes a reference to the
days when "those that look out of the windows [shall] be darkened."
The Golden Bowl features a series of incidents, each of which is
pivotal placed, that feature people looking out from windows or down
from balconies (always with windows directly behind them). The first
is in an extended metaphor involving Amerigo (69-70), the next two
concern Amerigo and Charlotte (290, 393), and the fourth features
Maggie and Adam Verger (575-78).41

Add to the silver cord of money our discussion of the elder James
as the vortex of a veritable human void--an incarnated absence of place
and identity--and the applicability of the biblical passage to the
novel, even if for purely symbolic purposes, begins to take shape.
What we find is that James's familial experience inverts the values of
Ecclesiastes, in that the innocence and security we would normally
assign to "remember[ing]" one's "Creator" and "the days of [one's]
youth" transmute into the collective Jamesian blankness associated with
the enervating emotional and financial ties to his parents. The very
stability evoked by the opening words thus becomes suspect, even while
the evils threatened start to appear more like the inevitable if
unpleasant experiences of life. As Fred Kaplan puts it, "the crucial
problem" for the young James was none other than "how to save himself
from his debilitating family environment."42 The "sacred" father/God
of the family conversely appears, as I began by saying, not as anti-
thesis to the abyss but rather as the abyss itself. Unlike the father
figures imagined by George Eliot and Hardy, who oppress through the
active exercise of financial, intellectual, or moral power, the father
in James's psyche—and to some extent in The Golden Bowl—instead threatens by both exemplifying and encouraging an evacuation of self. How to escape the backward pull of this vortex in order to become an "ardent observer" and to "live all you can" thus becomes a central motif in James's life and art alike.43 And this is precisely the challenge that faces Maggie Verver, albeit with complications and conflicts of value that render the demands of her task equally difficult but considerably subtler than those faced by her author. Before turning our attention to Maggie, though, we must first examine the importance to James of those key terms, "passion" and "perception"—terms that resonate through his writing and simultaneously gaze backward toward the Romantics and forward to The Golden Bowl, becoming in the process infused with and impelled by post-Darwinian dynamics.

Passion and Perception

I began by stating that James shares with the Romantics a fascination with the importance of vision, perception, and knowledge, together with a desire, not always fulfilled, to unite them with the affective and volitional faculties in order to attain a union of mind and nature, mental and physical, self and other. Of our three writers, none worried this problem more constantly or more forcefully than he. Impelled by the felt need to escape the pull of the Jamesian void, he sought refuge first in his own perceptual faculties and, through them, in his art.44 The crucial importance of perception—to the creation of his work, to his characters, and to life itself—pervades his fictional, critical, and personal writings. His definition of the novel as "a personal, a direct impression of life," his admonition to would-
be writers to "try and catch the color of life itself," his insistence that "the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer," all attest to the importance he attached to the perceptual demands of his work. And he asks no less of his characters, those lucid centers of consciousness, from Roderick Hudson to Maggie Verver, that he alternately terms "the most polished of possible mirrors of [a] subject" and "intense perceivers, all, of their respective predicaments."46

In more personal reflections, James can sound like a failed romantic, forced to settle for the proposition that life is perception merely, but finding life equally impossible on any other terms. In a glance back toward his earlier years, he recalls his sense that "on the day, in short, when one should cease to live in large measure by one's eyes ... one would have taken the longest step towards not living at all."47 Nor does this most dedicated observer flinch from the realization that such an exclusively perceptual relationship to life—even when associated with the all-important attribute of place—has the effect of rendering him more spectator than participant:

just to be somewhere--almost anywhere would do--and somehow receive an impression or an accession, feel a relation or a vibration. He was to go without many things, ever so many—as all persons do in whom contemplation takes so much the place of action.48
And James gives an example of just this sort of spectatorship when he remarks in a letter to William that "It's very pleasant meeting people at the Nortons as thanks to their large numbers, you are lost in the crowd and can see and hear them without having to talk yourself."49

This aspect of James, the writer and the man, has been itself much observed. Stuart P. Sherman attributed it, some eighty years ago, to "his early contact with the Emersonian rather than the Carlylean form of Transcendentalism," adding that "the summum bonum for him is not an action, but a state of being--."50 And Stephen Spender evokes the sacrifices explicit to a too-exclusive perspectivism when he notes that James "was a man whose life was withdrawn far into himself. . . . in spite of his sociability, everything about him convinces one of his ultimate loneliness."51

If these passages argue for the insufficiency of perception in isolation from the other faculties, they also evoke faint visions of the elder Henry, the father who was content to define himself as "Student" or "Philosopher" and who could urge his children to "be" rather than to "do." Fortunately, there is another side of James, one that is far from content to rely solely on vision, and on the knowledge that accompanies vision, as the measure of an activity and a process that is purely mental. Again and again, in discussing his most highly aware (and therefore most insightful) characters, he tends to conflate perception with the very faculties the romantics summon to so little avail. And the word he uses most often to evoke those faculties--uniting the physical, the emotional, and the volitional in a single term--is "passion." Thus when he praises the "passion of intelligence"
common to his characters in *The Princess Casamassima*, he is attributing to them not only the physical and emotional qualities the term "passion" most usually suggests, but also a willed determination with respect to the specific quality--i.e., "passion of intelligence" may equally well be read as "a passion for intelligence" or "a willed determination to be intelligent or to value intelligence." This willfulness, in combination with the perceptual qualities James frequently associates with it, not only posits the union at which the romantics so often fail but also elides easily, by the time of *The Golden Bowl*, into post-Darwinian dynamics. The phrase "passion of intelligence," like another in the *Casamassima* preface, "ardent observer," thus goes, in its implied evocation of "will," beyond even an equation made earlier in the essay: James's sense, that is, of "their 'doing,'" that of the persons just mentioned, as, immensely, their feeling, their feeling as their doing."52

In another context we find James invoking "the passion that precedes knowledge," thereby not simply merging vision with physicality but rather insisting that the physical, the emotional, and the volitional are actually prerequisites to that most important Jamesian imperative--one that resounds throughout *The Golden Bowl*--the mandate, that is, "to know."53 It is not surprising, then, that he claims, as the highest qualification of the critic, what he calls "perception at the pitch of passion."54 Finally, we see him--again in the important *Casamassima* preface--discovering in his characters "the power to be finely aware and richly responsible," again asserting the will as prerequisite to vision--and, in an association that goes beyond the romantic and even the post-Darwinian projects, as prerequisite even to
the moral. And he makes explicit the manner in which this now-inclusive knowledge operates to unite self and world in his claim that "Experience, as I see it, is our apprehension and our measure of what happens to us as social creatures."56

Nor does James limit his association of the mental with the physical, of knowledge with experience, to his characters only. In a letter to Thomas Sergeant Perry describing an early visit to a cathedral at Cologne, he happily claims the very conflation at which Coleridge had failed, exulting that "you seem rather to feel than to see it."57 This union of vision and emotion adds a new dimension to his well-known claim, in "The Art of Fiction," that "Experience is never limited, and it is never complete; it is an immense sensibility . . . . It is the very atmosphere of the mind."58 Neither, we discover, is James making such equations unreflectingly or theoretically; on the contrary, he summarizes the personal significance of precisely such insights in the following passage from "Notes of a Son and Brother":

I was under the impression . . . that life and knowledge were simply mutual opposites, one inconsistent with the other; though hovered about, together, at the same time, by the anomaly that when knowledge impinged upon life, pushed against her, as it were, and drove her to the wall, it was all right, and such was knowledge's way and title; whereas when life played the like tricks with knowledge nothing but shame for the ruder, even if the lighter, party could accrue. There was to come
to me of course in time the due perception that
neither was of the least use--use to myself--
without the other. . . . I didn't at all know how
much I was living, and meanwhile quite supposed I
was considerably learning.59

Nor is this an isolated insight for James. As The Golden Bowl dem-
strates, it is only when and as Maggie acts and thereby begins to live
that she also begins to acquire knowledge, and vice versa. In the
novel as in the above passage, knowledge and life are so inextricably
entwined that it is a fruitless proposition to untangle them.

Finally, the implications of such a unified sensibility, for James
as for the novel, can be traced even as far afield as general social
interaction. For although Stephen Spender's view of James as fundamen-
tally withdrawn is the one we are most accustomed to accept, Ford Madox
Ford, who knew James well during the first years of this century,
offers quite a different perspective--one that flies in the face of
many of our long-held preconceptions about James's supposed aloofness
even while confirming the powers of perception he so cherished:

He had such an extraordinary gift for observing
minutiae--and a gift still more extraordinary for
making people talk. I have heard the secretary of
a golf club, a dour, silent man who never addressed
five words to myself though I was one of his
members, talk for twenty minutes to the Master
about a new bunker that he was thinking of making
at the fourteenth hole. And James had never
touched a niblick in his life. It was the same
with market women, tram conductors, shipbuilders'
laborers, auctioneers. I have stood by and heard
them talk to him for hours. Indeed, I am fairly
certain that he once had a murder confessed to
him.60

This little passage is, so far as I have been able to determine,
virtually unique in the remembrances of, research about, and commentary
on Henry James. Very like this same observer's recollection of Hardy's
late-in-life "avowal" that he remained a communicant of the Church of
England (see Chapter 3, p. 165), Ford's impression of James confounds
our expectations and tosses conventional critical wisdom out the
window. Is this the same man whose "ultimate loneliness" so impressed
Spender? We might well doubt, except for the fact that the picture
James himself portrays of a major character in The Golden Bowl so
nearly matches Ford's own description of the Master. For Charlotte
Stant, reflected in the mind of Amerigo near the novel's beginning, is
described as follows:

Her own vision acted for every relation - this he
had seen for himself: she remarked beggars, she
remembered servants, she recognised cabmen; she had
often distinguished beauty, when out with him, in
dirty children: she had admired 'type' in faces at
hucksters' stalls (114).
Lest we misunderstand, Amerigo is careful to distinguish her reaction in such situations from his own and notes, on Charlotte's behalf, her consciousness of how, below a certain social plane, he never saw . . . . He took throughout always the meaner sort for granted - the night of their meanness . . . made all his cats grey (114).

From the tone of Ford's comments, we can easily imagine his taking the role of Amerigo to James's Charlotte, so similar are the respective social responses. Yet without Ford's contribution (obviously not a recent one by any means), we should scarcely know this side of James exists. In the context of the unified sensibility exhibited by his own realization of the inseparability of knowledge and life (an insight recorded approximately ten years after The Golden Bowl was written), though, such a reaction becomes less surprising and serves to illuminate and inform not only the character of Charlotte Stant but a major component, as well, of his final novel.

The Will to Post-Darwinism

James's lifelong flight from the familial abyss includes, as we have seen, not only severing the "silver cord" of financial ties but also an ongoing ambivalence about illness: did it tie him more closely to the family or make escape via travel more plausible? On the one hand, he could suggest to his father, only half facetiously, that his various ills had worsened precisely as "the result of Alice and Willy getting better and locating some of their diseases on me--so as to
propitiate the fates by not turning the poor homeless infirmities out of the family."

Conversely, the association of illness with travel appears persistently, as when Henry, Sr., urges Alice to make a proposed out-of-town visit "at any expense of health." (Although Alice's biographer notes that this formulation is "hardly an encouraging notion," it was this same conjunction, repeated over time, that apparently did encourage Henry--to leave the country.)

One effect of such a background is that James appears, in one mode, to associate vitality itself with death. He could note, for instance, Minny Temple's "enthusiasm of humanity" and follow immediately with the observation that "She burned herself out; she died at twenty-four." His consolation letter to the widow of Robert Louis Stevenson, who had just died at forty-four, is vivid testament to the same idea (though one wonders what the recipient must have thought):

He had the best of it--the thick of the fray, the loudest of the music, the freshest and finest of himself. . . . It was all intense, all gallant, all exquisite from the first, and the recognition, the experience, the fruition had something dramatically complete in them. . . . There have been--I think--for men of letters few deaths more romantically right.

If living "all you can," for James, brings death, he repeatedly associates writing with simple physical survival. To William he can comment, after Minny's death, "It's the living ones that die; the
writing ones that survive." And George Eliot's death elicits a similar response, this time to his mother: "she, poor woman, had begun a new (personal) life: a more healthy, objective one than she had ever known before. I doubt whether she would have written, but she would have lived." In this instance, the verb "to live" connotes a great deal more than mere survival; but its cost, in James's mind, includes both writing and (since the occasion of the letter is itself a death) long-term physical existence. This aspect of James, it would seem, has made a Faustian bargain such that he receives simple survival via his art, but sacrifices in return the very vitality (a short-lived vitality, in his view) for which he yearns.

But James's art would scarcely have been so successful or so complete had writing been defensive effort merely. On the contrary, he evinces a deep, continual awareness that, in his words, "The panting pursuit of danger is the pursuit of life itself," together with an appreciation for the values embodied in the struggle for life and the will to power. As Stephen Donadio notes, for James it is "the assertion of individual will" that "becomes synonymous not only with self-definition, but . . . with survival itself." Certainly James provides plenty of grist for such a conclusion, as in this notebook entry from 1884: "A mighty will, there is nothing but that!" A self-administered peptalk finds him even more insistent:

The way to do it--to affirm one's self sur la fin--is to strike as many notes, deep, full and rapid, as one can. All life is--at my age, with all one's artistic soul the record of it--in one's pocket, as
it were. Go on, my boy, and strike hard: have a rich and long St. Martin's Summer.70

Nor does he hesitate to share these views. In a condolence letter to Charles Eliot Norton, on the death of Norton's wife, he pens these reflections: "I have in my own fashion learned the lesson that life is effort, unremittingly repeated. . . . The voluntary life seems to me the only intelligent one."71 And he counters Henry Adams's pessimism impatiently in this testament to the power of will, an affirmation the more remarkable because written at an advanced age--only two years before his own death:

I have your melancholy outpouring of the 7th, and I know not how better to acknowledge it than by the full recognition of its unmitigated blackness. Of course we are lone survivors, of course the past that was our lives is at the bottom of an abyss. . . . You see I still, in presence of life (or of what you deny to be such), have reactions--as many as possible--and the book I sent you is a proof of them. . . . It all takes doing--and I do. I believe I shall do yet again--it is still an act of life.72

It is not surprising, then, to find--again in the Casamassima preface--the claim that "What a man thinks and what he feels are the history and the character of what he does."73 And the repeated emphasis James places on willed action recalls Nietzsche's metaphor of the lightning,
wherein he contends that it is impossible to "[separate] strength from expressions of strength," insisting that "there is no 'being' behind doing, effecting, becoming; . . . --the deed is everything."74

The Flight from Innocence and The Golden Bowl

The nature of the "romantic" and the "real," together with the conflicted relationship between them, recurs in James's critical writings and forms a persistent counterpoint within his fiction. "The real," he tells us in the preface to The American, "represents to my perception the things we cannot possibly not know, sooner or later, in one way or another." Conversely, the romantic represents "the things that . . . we never can directly know."75 He goes on to define romance as

experience liberated, so to speak; experience

disengaged, disembroiled, disencumbered, exempt
from the conditions that we usually know to attach
to it and, if we wish so to put the matter, drag
upon it, and operating in a medium which relieves
it, in a particular interest, of the inconvenience
of a related, a measurable state, a state subject
to all our vulgar communities.76

Similarly, questions about the cost of innocence, the risk of knowledge, and the dangers thereby incurred impel his fiction from beginning to end. As early as Washington Square, he insists that treachery, and the knowledge of it, can cut off life in full bloom and leave a young protagonist with no alternative except the protective if suffocating
paternal roof. Roderick Hudson demonstrates again that knowledge, including sexual knowledge, can destroy both physically and artistically. The cost of knowing, for James, invariably includes the cost of knowing oneself deceived: while such knowledge literally kills Roderick, it physically spares Isabel Archer but condemns her to a death-in-life existence. In a reverse progression of sorts, it leads for later protagonists (What Maisie Knew, "The Turn of the Screw," and The Awkward Age) not to death but to a corruption that is at least perceived and perhaps actual.

By the time James returned to his earlier work, though, in preparation for writing the prefaces (begun some two years after the publication of The Golden Bowl), he seems to have had second thoughts about the fate of at least one protagonist; reviewing Roderick Hudson, he muses that Roderick "must either have had less of the principle of development to have had so much of the principle of collapse, or less of the principle of collapse to have had so much of the principle of development." This view anticipates his insistence, in the preface to The Golden Bowl, that "as the whole conduct of life consists of things done, which do other things in their turn, just so our behaviour and its fruits are essentially one and continuous and persistent and unquenchable," and recalls Emerson's aphorism, "We pass for what we are." In this rueful reappraisal of Roderick's character, we also detect the importance of "doing" over "being" affirmed by James himself and by Nietzsche, as detailed above.

I offer the surmise (and it is only that) that the fulcrum for James's change of attitude about his early protagonist, his implication
that the strength originally imputed to Roderick must consistently have expressed itself, lies (artistically, at least) in his then-recent experience of writing The Golden Bowl. For it is here, in this final long novel, that James demonstrates, through the experience and actions of Maggie Verver, that knowledge, even knowledge of profound deception, need eventuate in neither death nor corruption but can serve instead as a vehicle to combine the "romantic" and the "real," in James's definitions of them, to produce a life that is both triumphant and utterly unidealized.

Some ten years before beginning the novel, James jotted a description in his notebook that provides, as he would have said, the "idea" or "donnée" of The Golden Bowl's central situation. Postulating an American father and daughter, exceptionally close, and the state of affairs eventuated by the daughter's marriage, he suggests that

[t]he father doesn't lose the daughter nearly as much as he feared, or expected, for her marriage which has but half gratified her, leaves her des loisirs, and she devotes them to him and to making up, as much as possible, for having left him. . . . [After his own marriage, the spouses] spend as much of their time together as the others do, and for the very reason that the others spend it. The whole situation works in a kind of inevitable rotary way--in what would be called a vicious circle.
This passage evokes a situation of *stasis*, and indeed the novel as completed confers, once the couples are respectively placed (thanks to the textual resistance embodied in Fanny Assingham), a sense of being at least temporarily frozen. In a different context, though, James describes the effects for which he strove in a manner that fits, as well, *The Golden Bowl*: those effects, that is, "of our not knowing, of society's not knowing, but only guessing and suspecting and trying to ignore, what 'goes on' irreconcilably, subversively, beneath the vast smug surface." And it is to Maggie's attempt to know precisely what lies under the "vast smug surface" of her life that we now turn.

The contrast of knowledge with innocence, of the real with the romantic, of the ideal with what James calls the "vulgar communities" of life, imbues the novel from its opening pages and forms the strongest distinction we initially receive between Maggie Verver--the quintessential Jamesian American girl of huge fortune and little experience--and her soon-to-be-husband. Amerigo, a genuine Italian prince of exalted lineage but meager bank account, is presented as "somehow full of his race. Its presence in him was like . . . some inexpugnable [sic] scent in which his clothes, his whole person, his hands and the hair of his head, might have been steeped" (52). His fluency with languages ("he hadn't been able to speak worse even to oblige her" [45]), his worldliness with women ("He liked in these days to mark them off, the women to whom he hadn't made love: it represented . . . a different stage of existence from the time at which he liked to mark off the women to whom he had" [55]), as well as the "'follies,' 'crimes,' and 'infamies'"
imputed to generations of his ancestors stand in contrast to Maggie's mediocre French and sheltered life with her father—an existence that Amerigo characterizes as one of "innocent pleasures, pleasures without penalties" (48). If Amerigo shows a wariness of what he calls "the follies of the romantic disposition" (48), Maggie evinces none, insisting enthusiastically that Mr. Verver's European life as a connoisseur and collector of antiques is "the most romantic thing I know" (49). This uncritical attitude, continued throughout the novel's first half, leads David McWhirter to point out that "Like a baby which cannot distinguish where its self ends and the other begins ... Maggie has no sense of an identity apart from her father." And in fact her contention that being romantic is "'just what makes everything so nice for us!'" because "'we see so much!'" drives Amerigo to qualify her remarks: "'You see too much. ... When you don't, at least ... see too little!'" (48).

Nor is Amerigo alone in his awareness of Maggie's innocence; Fanny Assingham, the anglicized American matron who has virtually arranged the marriage, goes a step further to declare, "'She wasn't born to know evil. She must never know it!'" (94). If Fanny is protective, Charlotte Stant articulates to Amerigo the difficulties of friendship (a friendship of long standing) with such a person as Maggie:

"She does everything herself. And that's terrible. ... unless one's almost as good as she. ... It takes stuff within one, so far as one's decency is concerned, to stand it. And nobody ... is decent
enough, good enough, to stand it. . . . Certainly
such people as you and I are not" (111).

The need to protect Maggie and the difficulties that creates derive, of
course, not simply from her innocence but also from the fact of
Charlotte and Amerigo's previous relationship (broken off for lack of
that Jamesian *sine qua non*, money), an affair of which the Assinghams
are aware but the Ververs are not.

Maggie is more than just passively innocent; as she soon reveals
to her father, she is positively afraid of knowledge, exclaiming that,
with respect to the "wounds and shames" of life, "'what, as I say, do I
know of them? I don't want to know!'" (171). Further, she insists,
"'I live in terror. I'm a small creeping thing'" (168). Amerigo and
Charlotte, meanwhile, display their own disparate attitudes toward the
need for, and risk of, knowledge. When they visit the antique dealer
and consider the golden bowl, the subject arises of a hidden crack in
the crystal. Charlotte relinquishes the bowl reluctantly, impatient
with what she sees as Amerigo's caution: "'Thank goodness then that if
there be a crack we know it! But if we may perish by cracks in things
that we don't know-! . . . . We can never then give each other any-
thing'" (123). To which Amerigo's reply is serene: "'Ah, but one does
know. I do at least - and by instinct. I don't fail. That will
always protect me!'" (123-24). Charlotte's own propensity to confront
life head-on reappears later in the novel, when she scolds him: "'Don't
you think too much of cracks and aren't you too afraid of them? I risk
the cracks.'" Amerigo's sublime confidence in the protection knowledge
provides (a stance that both reflects and criticizes James's own
similar confidence) again surfaces, and he replies, "risk them as much as you like for yourself, but don't risk them for me!" (292). And he shows the same trust in perceptual sufficiency in his initial conversation with Fanny. Insisting that she must remain on the scene to give him guidance in his new role as Verver husband and son-in-law, he explains,

"I'm excellent, I really think, all round - except that I'm stupid. I can do pretty well anything I see. But I've got to see it first... Therefore it is that I want... your eyes. Through them I wish to look even at any risk of their showing me what I mayn't like. For then... I shall know. And of that I shall never be afraid" (61-62).

The Transgression of Vision

The Prince's request, in retrospect, highlights the dangers of relying on knowledge merely, and particularly in substituting someone else's for one's own. Through a naivete otherwise uncharacteristic of him, he requests what he sees as simple aid in navigating uncharted matrimonial seas. But I want to suggest that both he and the other characters receive a great deal more from Fanny Assingham than he intends, and certainly more than critics have attributed to her. Contrary to the long-standing acceptance of Fanny either as a near-transparent mediator of the novel's action or as a reflector whose interpretation, while flawed, remains generally trustworthy, I would argue that, far from reflecting anything at all, Fanny instead appro-
priates the vision of the other characters, not merely substituting her interpretation for theirs, but rather going further to supplant their very perception in favor of her own. The result is that they come to reflect her, not the other way around. What Sharon Cameron points out with respect to Bob Assingham, his willingness to "subordinate his comprehension to his wife's interpretive governance of it"--a process Cameron labels "transgression"--is thus also true of the other characters; and it is particularly true of Maggie and Adam Verver. If Maggie's relationship with her father threatens to become a Jamesian abyss, preventing her from forming an independent identity, it is, so to speak, Fanny Assingham whose shovel helps dig the pit. And certainly Fanny's perceptions and influence, diffused throughout the novel, comprise the bulk of the text's own inertial drag against its own will (and Maggie's) to transformation.

Fanny, we are told, "had in her life two great holes to fill," and these are "her want of children" and "her want of wealth" (65). Whence, we assume, arises her all-absorbing interest in matching an exceedingly eligible Prince (financial considerations aside) with her fabulously rich young friend. Bob Assingham also points out, with the good-natured acuity that is his trademark, that his wife is a veritable Pandarus; as he reminds her, "'you fell violently in love with the Prince yourself. . . . You couldn't marry him, any more than Charlotte could - that is not to yourself. But you could to somebody else - it was always the Prince, it was always marriage!'" (96). Indeed, the novel works to suggest that Fanny virtually regards herself as playing the role of fairy godmother to Maggie's--and eventually Charlotte's--
Cinderella. The word "charming" floats through various conversations with and about Amerigo and the Ververs (67, 178, 311, 312). At one point Fanny justifies her encouragement of the later match between Adam and Charlotte by explaining, "'they were making a mess of such charming material... they were but wasting it and letting it go. They didn't know how to live!'" (313).

If Fanny has been instrumental in making the marriage of Maggie and Amerigo, her interest and influence increase exponentially after Amerigo, Maggie, and Adam Verver arrive back in England. Amerigo has already speculated about Fanny's own ideas as to what his conduct in the marriage should be. Reflecting that if he were to ask her what they (she and the Ververs) "expected him to do," he concludes that she would most likely answer, "'Oh, you know, it's what we expect you to be!'"--a surmised response that recalls the vague expectations evinced for his sons by the elder Henry James (57). And in fact as the marriage unfolds Amerigo's assumption turns out to be correct. During extended visits at Fawns, the Verver country estate, Fanny installs herself--with the Ververs' happy acquiescence--virtually as Amerigo's keeper. When Maggie and Adam retreat from the group for a private talk, Maggie reflects that Fanny

might be trusted... to carry off their absence for Amerigo, for Amerigo's possible funny Italian anxiety; Amerigo always being, as the Princess was well aware, conveniently amenable to his friend's explanations, beguilements, reassurances, and
perhaps in fact rather more than less dependent on
them as his new life . . . opened out (153-54).

Maggie goes on to muse that "the dear woman had come to be frankly and
gaily recognised - and not least by herself - as filling in the intimate
little circle an office that was not always a sinecure" (154). And her
recollections indicate the extent to which Fanny's influence has spread,
not simply as a caretaker to her husband--a man who is, Bob Assingham
later remarks, "in a position in which he has nothing in life to do!"
(235)--but also, and more insidiously, as the person whose perception
and interpretation of Amerigo succeeds in establishing itself, among the
Ververs, as both normative and definitive:

She was there to keep him quiet - it was Amerigo's
own description of her influence; and it would only
have needed a more visible disposition to unrest in
him to make the account perfectly fit. Fanny
herself limited indeed, she minimised, her office;
you didn't need a jailor, she contended, for a
domesticated lamb tied up with pink ribbon. This
wasn't an animal to be controlled - it was an
animal to be, at the most, educated (154).

Maggie's reflections here have as their content not her own percep-
tions, still less any suggestion of her frank passion for Amerigo;
rather, the passage demonstrates the extent to which Fanny is succeed-
ing, already, in defining the marriage--in defining, especially,
Amerigo's role in it (a role to which Fanny's presence is conveniently
necessary). Even more amazingly, Maggie goes on to demonstrate not
that she is unaware of this usurpation but rather that she realizes and
gladly consents to it. Recalling "the impression made on her by a word
of Mrs. Assingham's," she muses,

It wasn't that [she] could be indebted to another
person, even to so clever a one as this friend, for
seeing anything in her husband that she mightn't
see unaided; but she had ever, hitherto, been of a
nature to accept with modest gratitude any better
description of a felt truth than her little limits
- terribly marked, she knew, in the direction of
saying the right things - enabled her to make (155,
James's emphasis).

It starts to appear, then, that Maggie's penchant for subsuming her
identity to others is not limited to her father but now includes this
most intrusive of interpreters. What we are witnessing goes beyond
simple influence to something that amounts to cognitive transgression.

The primary reason, of course, that Amerigo is left to Fanny's
ministrations is the large amount of time Maggie and her father, the
marriage not withstanding, continue to spend together. Adam Verver
seems on occasion to have taken over Amerigo's role as father to their
new little son, as in these regular meetings between Adam and Maggie in
the nursery:

Nothing perhaps in truth had done more than this
united participation to confirm in [Adam and
Maggie] that sense of a life not only uninterrupted but more deeply associated, more largely combined. . . . It was of course an old story and a familiar idea that a beautiful baby could take its place as a new link between a wife and a husband, but Maggie and her father had, with every ingenuity, converted the precious creature into a link between a mamma and a grandpapa (151).

What Verver recalls as "their decent little old-time union, Maggie's and his own," though interrupted initially by Maggie's marriage, threatens to re-establish itself, in good part because Amerigo obligingly gets in the way so little (135). As Verver puts it, "the Prince, by good fortune, hadn't proved angular" (136).

Meanwhile, Fanny's efforts at defining their lives do not stop with her perceptions of Amerigo. It is, I submit, not entirely the narrative descriptions of Adam Verver that make him sometimes seem an oddly ineffectual captain of industry; the situation is rather, once again, that Fanny Assingham succeeds--against all odds, one would think--in redefining him for Maggie, for the reader, and (sometimes) for critics.87 Verver is, after all, a man supposedly capable of having amassed, early in life, one of America's great fortunes—a fortune grand enough to enable him to purchase and carry off the best of Europe's antiquities. And certainly James shows that if Adam is mild at home, he applies the same singlemindedness to his collecting (to which Verver applies the Jamesian phrase, "the passion for perfection at any price") as he had to his business activities (143).
Indeed, Amerigo's initial impression of him, as he tells Maggie before their marriage, is as a man who, if less refined is nonetheless more complete than himself:

'I'm like a chicken, at best, chopped up and smothered in sauce . . . with half the parts left out. Your father's the natural fowl running about the basse-cour. His feathers, his movements, his sounds - those are the parts that, with me, are left out' (46).

Such facts and perceptions to the contrary notwithstanding, Fanny's treatment of him implies an attitude so patronizing and a judgment so counter even to his own unassuming self-appraisal that Verver himself is bemused:

. . . with Mrs. Assingham he never felt quite sure of the ground anything covered; she disputed with him so little, agreed with him so much, surrounded him with such systematic consideration, such predetermined tenderness, that it was almost - which he had once told her in irritation - as if she were nursing a sick baby. He had accused her of not taking him seriously, and she had replied . . . that she took him religiously, adoringly (136-37).
This sort of coddling echoes James's use of religious language with respect to the elder Henry and does nothing to weaken Maggie's own tendency to put her father's needs before her husband's. And indeed, the care and concern she shows for him through much of the novel comports oddly with her romantic idealization of her life with him before marriage and the adventures she remembers their sharing as together they searched out and tracked down obscure objets d'art.

Fanny's solicitude for the neglected Amerigo and Maggie's apparent conviction of her father's helplessness lead the former to hint that they should expand their social life, that they "ought to be greater," in Verver's words (164). According to Maggie, Fanny sees the "social limitations" of their lives as a possible source of boredom to Amerigo, and proposes an expansion of their horizons—"'for'", in Maggie's words, "'the amusement.'" To this, Verver's discerning response is, "'For whose? For Fanny's own?'" (164-65). It is with Fanny's idea in mind, then, that Maggie and Adam invite the socially gifted Charlotte Stant to stay with them at Fawns. Charlotte's invariable poise and her independence in the face of relative poverty lead Maggie to characterize her as "'Great in nature, in character, in spirit. Great in life,'" as well as blessed with "'a great imagination'" (167-68). And we know that she shares with the more sociable side of James an unquenchable interest in people of all walks of life.

Maggie's guilt over having, by her marriage, made Adam vulnerable to predatory women makes Charlotte an even more welcome visitor. But when the less satisfactory guests decamp shortly after her arrival, it is Fanny's comment on the scene--her observation that "'Charlotte
simply cleared them out," because "it's she who's the real thing!"--which most impresses Verver (175, 178). It is Fanny's words, in fact, that make him aware of (if they do not actually cause) his growing admiration of Charlotte's taste and of what he calls "this free range of observation in her" (190). These facts, combined with his own wish not to impose further on Maggie's marriage, lead to his decision to propose marriage. Thus the stage is set for the complications that James had delineated ten years earlier. Production of this particular play may be made possible by Adam Verver's money; but the stage manager and director has been, at every step, none other than Fanny Assingham. And it is she who, to a remarkable extent, has written the script.

The Pitfalls of Perfectionism

If Adam Verver's "passion for perfection" is mainly concentrated on his collections, Fanny Assingham's own similar passion deals directly with the manipulation of human lives. And such vicarious perfectionism suggests that Fanny's name, an amalgamation of three anal puns, is not merely fanciful wordplay but constitutes an apt description of character. As the text demonstrates repeatedly, she well fits both her name and Ernest Becker's description of "what psychoanalysts have called . . . anal character traits":

To say that someone is 'anal' means that someone is trying extra-hard to protect himself against the accidents of life and danger of death, trying to use the symbols of culture as a sure means of
triumph over natural mystery, trying to pass
himself off as anything but an animal.\textsuperscript{88}

It is thus Fanny, much more than Verver, who insists on maintaining
that the glossy flawlessness of her carefully arranged \textit{menage à quatre}
represents reality and not mere appearance. He, at least, can muse a
little guiltily to Maggie that the four of them seem to be "'lying like
gods together, all careless of mankind'" (387), adding that they
"'haven't no doubt enough the sense of difficulty'" and that it's

'as if we were sitting about on divans, with
pigtails, smoking opium and seeing visions. "Let
us then be up and doing"--what is it Longfellow
says? That seems sometimes to ring out; like the
police breaking in - into our opium den - to give
us a shake' (388).

It is, moreover, a characteristic Jamesian twist to demonstrate
not simply that human beings may be treated \textit{as if} they were artifacts
(as Verver occasionally does), but that individual lives may also be
used \textit{instead} of the more usual "symbols of culture" (Verver's art) to
maintain the pretense of ideality demanded by the perfectionist
character. And it is this drama that Fanny's role in the novel goes on
to enact.

Fanny's flight from the Jamesian "conditions of life"--what
Becker's definition would term an escape from the physical, the animal-
is reflected in her question, "'what is \textit{morality} but high inteli-
lgence?'" (101, my emphasis), an equation frequently assumed to be
shared by James. But if we recall James's avowal to Charles Eliot Norton, "The voluntary life seems to me the only intelligent one," we find that, for James, Fanny's equation becomes too simple to cover the question. That is, by combining the two statements and dropping out the quality common to both (intelligence), we arrive at a more truly Jamesian equation, one we have seen in his letters and that the novel's latter half demonstrates so vividly: the equation, that is, between morality and will. Fanny's own highminded attempt to limit intelligence to a conventional (and thereby relatively passive) morality and to ignore the aspect of will thereby works to freeze the foursome precisely within the romantics' impasse of perception devoid of will or body. It also renders all the more ironic the applicability to her of J. A. Ward's conclusion that "Improper intervention in the life of another is virtually the only sin that interested James." Fanny's determination to preserve the presumptive fairy tale she has created thus includes a tendency to indulge in idealistic generalities, a predisposition that becomes more prominent as she is faced with increasingly worrisome facts. When Charlotte informs her at the embassy ball that she and Amerigo are there alone because Maggie and Adam prefer, even more than ever, to remain at home together (the inertial drag of the father-daughter relationship having worsened now that both are married) and that "'Maggie thinks more on the whole of fathers than of husbands,'" Fanny's non sequitur is, "'You ought to be absolutely happy. You live with such good people,'" (221), a formula reminiscent of the senior James. Not content with that, she shortly adds, "'Your situation's perfect'" (223). By whatever name, Char-
lotte's description of the father and daughter suggests that Fanny's infantilizing view of Verver has born fruit: "They were fairly at times, the dear things, like children playing at paying visits, playing at 'Mr. Thompson and Mrs. Fane', each hoping that the other would really stay to tea" (218).

Similarly, Fanny flinches from facing evidence that the "charming" situation she has created, one filled with such "beautiful intentions all round" (315), is in grave danger of disintegration—a flight from knowledge as thorough as Maggie's ever was:

The sense of seeing was strong in her, but she clutched at the comfort of not being sure of what she saw. Not to know what it would represent on a longer view was a help . . . to not making out that her hands were embrowned; since if she had stood in the position of a producing cause she should surely be less vague about what she had produced (235).

But it is precisely Fanny's terror of being "found out" by the Ververs and held responsible for her part in the marriages—her desire "to inter, as decently as possible, her mistake" (242)—that puts her more or less at the mercy of Charlotte and Amerigo and their discretion, respectively, about their relationship (past and present) and her own knowledge of it. As Charlotte realizes and tells Amerigo, shortly before the affair resumes, "'Fanny Assingham doesn't matter'" (257).

If the two couples are far from the blissful quartet Fanny has wanted to imagine, it should also be said that there is remarkably
little that is intentionally vicious in this so-called "vicious circle."
Rather, what seems to happen is that each character initially undergoes
an almost willed evacuation of power—and each does so for the perceived
sake of the other three. What Leo Bersani calls "the exact equivalence
established by James's characters between exercising power and knowing"
has as its counterpart the equivalence between powerlessness and lack of
knowledge.92 Maggie's guilt over seeming to abandon her father combines
with her instinctive avoidance of unpleasant truths to keep her
powerless throughout the novel's first half. What Adam Verver knows,
first and last, is always problematical, but his acquiescence to Fanny's
point of view and Maggie's doting care gives him at least the appearance
of impotence (an impotence that may also be physical, from what
Charlotte tells Amerigo). Amerigo and Charlotte, who initially possess
the most knowledge, are constrained in their ability to use it because
of their very real, and seriously felt, obligations to the Verves,
together with their desire to do as they believe the others want. As
Charlotte says, "'Not to do that, to give back on the contrary all one
can, are just one's decency and one's honour and one's virtue!' (263).
Although Amerigo never falters in his belief in the power of perception,
he too uses those perceptions (both his own and Fanny's) to fulfill the
role the Verves seem to expect of him—and finds himself, as a result,
regarded as a "domesticated lamb tied up with a pink ribbon" (154).
Through the actions of each, that is, runs the thread of Fanny's
definition of them; trying to fulfill, with the best of intentions, that
lady's prescriptions for their mutual life, each ends up playing a part
that is more contrived than real.
Predictably, though, frayed under the strain of continual seeming (and continued neglect by their respective spouses), the cord of Amerigo's and Charlotte's patience snaps. We then find Charlotte, virtually driven from her own home by Maggie's endless presence there, visiting Amerigo and asking plaintively,

"What do they really suppose becomes of one? - not so much sentimentally or morally, so to call it, and since that doesn't matter; but even just physically, materially, as a mere wandering woman: as a decent harmless wife, after all . . . as the best stepmother, after all, that really ever was; or at the least simply as a maitresse de maison not quite without a conscience. They must even in their odd way . . . have some idea' (255).

Amerigo finds his own sense of the ridiculous in their situation as constituted. During a long weekend house party, one of many he and Charlotte attend together in the absence of their mates, he ponders the silliness of his predicament:

Being thrust, systematically, with another woman, and a woman one happened, by the same token, exceedingly to like, and being so thrust that the theory of it seemed to publish one as idiotic or incapable. . . . as if [he] could do anything but blush to 'go about' at such a rate with such a person as Mrs. Verver in a state of childlike
innocence, the state of our primitive parents before the Fall (275).

It is scarcely surprising, then, that in what one observer has termed "a ressentiment protest against their situation," the two reconstitute their former affair. And they do so in full realization that, as Charlotte says, Fanny Assingham has been disarmed--by her own acts and her own suspicions: "'She can't go to [Maggie and Adam] and say 'It's very awkward of course, you poor dear things, but I was frivolously mistaken'. . . . I only say that she's fixed, that she must stand exactly where everything has, by her own act, placed her'" (279).

Vision and Post-Darwinism

As he returns to The Golden Bowl in preparation for the publication of the New York Edition, James ponders the meaning of the verb revise: "To revise is to see, or to look over, again," and goes on to express the hope that, in his revisions, "I shouldn't have breathed upon the old catastrophes and accidents, the old wounds and mutilations and disfigurements wholly in vain." We would look far for a better description than these words by her author of the challenge Maggie Verver faces as she gradually awakens to the facts of her life and begins to distinguish, for the first time, the apparent from the real. In what Oscar Cargil characterizes as "one of the best examples in literature of the dawning consciousness of malignancy in a mind resolutely armed against suspicion of those involved," and from within a situation that Ruth Bernard Yeazell likens to Dorothea Brooke's, Maggie must not only fight the ongoing efforts of the others to continue
the mutual deceptions but--a task she finds even more difficult--confront and wrestle to the ground her own deep reluctance to believe anything but the best about the circumstances of her life. 95 This reluctance echoes the resistance I discussed in Chapter 1 to the enacted transformation of God in the wider culture. For Maggie, of all my protagonists, my revision of Arnold's phrase is especially apt; she is truly "wandering between two worlds, one dying, the other struggling to be born." 96 Her ambivalence recalls, as well, the "reluctance and determination" that Laura Emery Comer associates with George Eliot's portrayal of Dorothea. 97 If James shares in Maggie's conflict, as I believe he does, it is also his tolerance for her struggle that allows her the freedom to resolve it at length.

Maggie's first realization that something is wrong is pictured as "some strange tall tower of ivory, or perhaps rather some wonderful beautiful but outlandish pagoda" that she finds in "the very centre of the garden of her life" (327)--an image that "figured the arrangement," in Maggie's description,

by which, so strikingly, she had been able to marry without breaking, as she liked to put it, with her past. She had surrendered herself to her husband without the shadow of a reserve or a condition and yet hadn't all the while given up her father by the least little inch (328).

Moreover, she realizes, "the latter's marriage had been no more measurably paid for than her own" (328). And it is precisely the
costs—of the marriages and of her own failures of vision—that Maggie proceeds, in endless speculation and with much internal struggle, to count and to begin to pay. "Moving for the first time in her life as in the darkening shadow of a false position," she reflects, "she should either not have ceased to be right—that is to be confident—or have recognised that she was wrong" (329). When Amerigo arrives back in London after the Matcham weekend (where, presumably, the affair has been resumed) and finds her at home rather than at the Ververs—her more usual location—he displays such amazement that she realizes just how wrong she has been, although in precisely what respect takes her much of the rest of the novel to learn: "it had been bitten into her mind, just in an hour, that nothing she had ever done would hereafter, in some way yet to be determined, so count for her" (322). And with that realization she begins her work "to bring about a difference, touch by touch, without letting either of the three, and least of all her father, so much as suspect her hand" (348).

Significantly, it is with this first faint but distinct taste of success that the novel's imagery abruptly changes; and the change thus wrought heralds the emergence, within Maggie and within the novel itself, of post-Darwinian values—a showing powerful enough to compel Catherine Cox Wessel to term the novel "an artistic version of the survival of the fittest." The will to power and the struggle for life, that is, are figured throughout the novel's second half by repeated images of and references to violence. In a confirmation of the (attempted) romantic association of perception, emotion, and will
(as well as James's own equation of knowledge and life), they appear only with Maggie's first hint of clearer vision:

She had put her thought to the proof, and the proof had shown its edge; this was what was before her, that she was no longer playing with blunt and idle tools, with weapons that didn't cut. There passed across her vision ten times a day the gleam of a bare blade (331).

Her reference to "her little crouching posture there, that of a timid tigress" (332) awaiting Amerigo is the first of many wild animal images, one that harkens back to the novel's opening passages, where Amerigo refers to his agent's "bestowal of his company" on Adam Verver "for a view of the lions" (44). Unlike the remainder of Volume One, where Fanny's meekly passive lamb metaphor sets the tone, the references in Volume Two are to animals of the wilder sort. James gives us, for instance, the Principino's introduction at the zoo "to lions and tigers more or less at large" (366), Maggie's sense of opportunity "assault[ing] her . . . as a beast might have leaped at her throat" (488), and Charlotte's figuration as a "splendid shining supple creature" who "out of the cage, was at large" (490).101 There is an "attempted capture and achieved escape" (370), references to "doing active violence, as against the others" (373), to "threat" and "menace" (377), and frequent appearance of "violent" and "violence" (335, 360, 469, etc.). Maggie sees herself as "not unarmed for battle if battle might only take place without spectators" (398).
None of this is accidental, any more than is Maggie's characterization of her physical passion for Amerigo as "vibrat[ing] with a violence" (330). Nor can multiple citations of individual words and phrases quite convey the sense we receive, in reading the novel's second half, that some catastrophic form of violence is imminent in the action as well as immanent in the text. The very qualities that Andre Gide insisted were absent in James--"all the weight of the flesh," "all the shaggy, tangled undergrowth, all the wild darkness"--burst onto the scene, as constant threat if not as physical event.\(^{102}\) Still more does the animality of the atmosphere serve to correct Fanny Assingham's wrongheaded effort to idealize and sanitize their lives, even as the novel's action undercuts her perceptual power. In what a contemporary reviewer called "essentially a hideous struggle," The Golden Bowl provides an excellent example of the Jamesian "violence of fact."\(^{103}\) It also exemplifies what Fred Kaplan describes as James's "increased commitment to the physical basis of life, to an art that created its structure on the building blocks of human nature and human action," in contradistinction to "an art based on abstractions, intellectual or religious." Such abstractions, Kaplan suggests, carry "the bittersweet touch of Swedenborgian illusions, of a world of angels beyond the flesh and blood that daily life provided and that the novel demanded."\(^{104}\) And James in his preface points special attention to the novel's violence, with the help an image that evokes the Coliseum of ancient Rome:

It's not that the muffled majesty of authorship doesn't here \textit{ostensibly} reign; but I catch myself
again shaking it off and disavowing the pretence of it while I get down into the arena and do my best to live and breathe and rub shoulders and converse with the persons engaged in the struggle that provides for the others in the circling tiers the entertainment of the great game. ... [with] each of the real, the deeply involved and immersed and more or less bleeding participants.¹⁰⁵

Nor did James feel constrained, by the early 1870s, from using Darwinian imagery and defending that usage. After William Dean Howells objected to a passage in "The Madonna of the Future" in which a character repeatedly compared humanity to "cats and monkeys" (and the elder Henry consented meekly to its deletion), James wrote his father in disgust, "For what class of minds is it that such very timorous scruples are thought necessary?"¹⁰⁶ Such easy Darwinian acceptance on James's part further serves to discredit Fanny's recoil from anything remotely animalistic (her only metaphor is a lamb); and his equation of "real" with "more or less bleeding" indicates an awareness of life's contingencies totally lacking in her viewpoint.

Maggie has need of all the energy, will, and even ruthlessness implied by these images in order to achieve so much as her next task, a task prerequisite to all the rest. For what she must do is to dismantle and to deconstruct the idealities she has held, both those of her own and those either invented, encouraged, or enhanced by Fanny Assingham. In what is surely one of the most telling images of the unconscious mind
at work to be found anywhere, James shows Maggie mulling over what she terms "her accumulations of the unanswered":

They were there, these accumulations; they were like a roomful of confused objects, never as yet 'sorted', which for some time now she had been passing and re-passing, along the corridor of her life. She passed it when she could without opening the door; then, on occasion, she turned the key to throw in a fresh contribution. So it was that she had been getting things out of the way. They rejoined the rest of the confusion; it was as if they found their place, by some instinct of affinity, in the heap. They knew in short where to go (334-35).

It is the realization of just how much she has postponed "answering," postponed knowing, that propels her to reexamine what she has called "that ideal consistency on which her moral comfort almost at any time depended" (329).

This project reveals at once her own complicity in defining herself (with, as we know, Fanny's encouragement) as a latter-day Cinderella. Recalling how Charlotte came to be part of the family, she remembers that "they had suffered it to be pointed out to them [by Fanny] that if their family coach lumbered and stuck the fault was in its lacking its complement of wheels" (341). Maggie realizes for the
first time that, although Charlotte has fulfilled her stated responsibilities dutifully, she herself has not:

She might have been watching the family coach pass and noting that somehow Amerigo and Charlotte were pulling it while she and her father were not so much as pushing. They were seated inside together, dandling the Principino and holding him up to the windows to see and be seen, like an infant positively royal; so that the exertion was all with the others (342, James's emphasis).

This confrontation with her own laxity causes her to "[see] herself, in the picture she was studying, suddenly jump from the coach. . . . The person had taken a decision - which was evidently because an impulse long gathering had at last felt a sharpest pressure. Only how was the decision to be applied? - what in particular would the figure in the picture do?" (342). In this most Jamesian of questions lies the energy that impels the rest of the novel's action, and Maggie's. At the same time, the portrayed decision attacks the very core of Fanny's perceptual influence over her even while Maggie's "What if I've abandoned them, you know?" (342-43, James's emphasis) tells of a burgeoning sense of responsibility, a sense no longer merely passive. Her simultaneous idealization and protectiveness of her father, though, will take longer to unravel.107

One result of Maggie's dawning sense that "her faculties hadn't for a good while been concomitantly used" is her determination to take
a more active part in the social side of their lives, a duty she has heretofore left to Charlotte: "She would go to balls again - that seemed, freely, even crudely, stated, the remedy" (330). In sporadic bursts of social aggressiveness, she amazes the others with her energy, all the while picturing herself as a sort of late-Victorian Energizer Bunny: "Oh, she was going, she was going - she could feel it afresh" (360, 359, 396). No longer bound by the unrealities of Fanny's Cinderella story, she abandons her long-held belief that whereas "Charlotte was a, was the, 'social success'," she herself "was distinctly not, would distinctly never be, and might as well give it up altogether" (262). Ironically, by becoming less a Cinderella, she becomes more fully the Princess (a title to which she has scarcely lived up heretofore). And this increased energy in the service of newly awakened faculties, both on and off the social scene, leads her for the first time to real knowledge about Charlotte and Amerigo's shared past.

When Maggie stumbles upon the same crystal bowl that Charlotte and Amerigo had considered years before, it is the impression she makes on the shopkeeper--in combination with his still-vivid memory of the other two--that leads her to discover they had been there together. Although Charlotte's lively interest in everyone she meets (the very interest Ford points us to in James) leads the vendor to remember and to betray her earlier meeting with Amerigo, he has occasion to do so only because of his immediate fondness for Maggie. As she proudly tells Amerigo later, "'he liked me, I mean - very particularly!'" (460). James thus endows Maggie with the beginnings of the same sensibility Amerigo so
admires in Charlotte, the quality James shares. The growing similarity
between the two women, in this area as in the province of knowledge,
causes John Carlos Rowe to elaborate what other critics have also seen:
that the "easy distinctions" we are accustomed to seeing between Maggie
and Charlotte "become ever more difficult to make." Rowe goes further
than most, however, to point out that the fusion of the two derives
from the novel's project of inverting customary moral alignments:

the reader, imagining that such decisions are part
of his/her moral commitment to the novel, finds
instead that the novel is working to undermine the
very foundations for moral values that the reader
has drawn from the existing social order. 109

The arrival of the bowl brings with it what Maggie calls "the
outbreak of the definite," giving her for the first time "real know-
ledge" (441, 463). And the very knowledge she had half dreaded,
calling it "a fascination and a fear," gives her what proves to be the
deciding perceptual advantage over the others (422). It is therefore
not surprising that Fanny Assingham takes the first opportunity to
smash the artifact, declaring as she does so, "'Whatever you meant by
it - and I don't want to know now - has ceased to exist'" (448). In
the face of Maggie's direct questions ("'What do you believe, what do
you know?'" [399], James's emphasis), she has continued to lie and to
persist in viewing Maggie in idealized terms, as "'absolutely good and
sweet and beautiful. . . . as outside of ugly things, so ignorant of
any falsity or cruelty or vulgarity as never to have to be touched by
them or to touch them" (401-02). Maggie's incredulous response to this is the measure of her perceptual progress: "'You've only believed me contented then because you've believed me stupid?'" (402). Maggie's new knowledge thereby disempowers Fanny still more, reducing her to the status of willing slave. Just as with Amerigo and Charlotte previously, that lady's fear of being "'quite irretrievably dished'" by the Ververs (whom she persists in seeing as "'really agitated lambs'") renders her increasingly irrelevant (412, 414). But not necessarily wiser. When Maggie tries to explain her sense that Amerigo understands what she is doing and what she wants to accomplish, Fanny supplies her own wrong-headed assumption (one Maggie hastens to contradict): "'A brilliant perfect surface - to begin with at least'" (475). Completing the transfer of perceptual control from Fanny to Maggie, the latter enlists her newly powerless friend to maintain the public fiction that nothing is wrong, a posture that is a striking parody of her previous interpretive appropriation: "She was there inordinately as a value, but as a value only for the clear negation of everything. She was exactly their general sign of unimpaired beatitude" (470).

Maggie's primary concern throughout the novel's second half has been to effect changes without her father's realization of what she is doing or why, in a continuation of her effort to protect him. Even when she considers "sacrificing" their closeness for the sake of their respective marriages, she seems to hear him "bleating" at her "like some precious spotless exceptionally intelligent lamb" the suggestion that she do so, a view that echoes Fanny's conviction of his powerlessness (382). Yet little by little, with many stops and starts, we also
see her emerging from her own self-identification with what she herself has come to perceive as his weakness. When he expresses a liking for the morally dubious Lady Castledean, one Maggie definitely does not share, she realizes with a start that it is "the first case she could recall of their not being affected by a person in the same way" (391). The turning point, for Maggie, comes during their long conversation near the end of the novel, the talk during which Adam suggests that he and Charlotte "will ship" to America and thus leave Maggie and Amerigo to themselves (512, James's emphasis). During this meeting, Verver perceptively suggests that for Maggie to consider that she is "sacrificing" him is tantamount to her confessing that she no longer "believes in" him (i.e., that she has indeed accepted what we know to be Fanny Assingham's definition of him as childlike). His words open Maggie's eyes on the subject as nothing else has done:

It had the effect for her of a reminder - a reminder of all he was, of all he had done, of all ... she might take him as representing, take him as having quite eminently, in the eyes of two hemispheres, been capable of ... He was strong -that was the great thing. [And] to love him with tenderness was not to be distinguished a whit from loving him with pride. It came to her, all strangely, as a sudden, an immense relief. The sense that he wasn't a failure, and could never be, purged their predicament of every meanness (513-14).
Even more striking is the effect this realization has on Maggie's view of herself:

Oh then if she wasn't with her little conscious passion the child of any weakness, what was she but strong enough too? It swelled in her fairly; it raised her higher, higher: she wasn't in that case a failure either - hadn't been, but the contrary; his strength was her strength, her pride was his, and they were decent and competent together (514).

With this late-blooming perception that to identify with her father brings strength rather than weakness, she can truly give him up to his own life--and, equally important, live her own--because he no longer needs her solicitousness and because she can claim for herself his very real power, a power now seen afresh as both worldly and personal.111 These capacities the reader has glimpsed through Verver's own meditations and Maggie's reminiscences, but Fanny's influence and the foursome's arrangement has served to obscure them for much of the novel. Thus Maggie's tendency to collapse into a vacuum of function and identity, a vacuum made attractive by the misconceived perception that her father shares it, is overcome once and for all. What James could only flee from his heroine can watch dissolve into nothingness, to be replaced by an identity and a life--one in which she can draw on, and identify with, the very strengths and talents she had become accustomed to overlooking in her parent.
By bringing into the light, then, those things that James defined as "romantic"—"the things that . . . we never can directly know"—The Golden Bowl makes them at least partially knowable. In doing so it merges the romantic with the real, as James defines them; but it does so without the complete destruction of the romantic that is a staple of his earlier fiction. Experience at the end of The Golden Bowl, that is, has indeed been "disengaged, disembroiled, disemcumbered" from many of the conditions that James finds "drag upon it"—those conditions represented (in James's own life by his father and) within the novel by Fanny Assingham's influence. Nonetheless, far from being totally freed from what he goes on to call "the inconvenience of a related, a measurable state, a state subject to all our vulgar communities," Maggie's experience has served precisely to validate "a related . . . state," to secure a community/communion between her and Amerigo that, if unidealized, equally does not merit the term "vulgar." Indeed, the novel works to show that it is the romantic sensibility itself, with its idealizing perspective, that insists on terming everything outside it as "vulgar." (Similarly, we saw in Chapter 1 that it was the tradition-alists who were most likely to label everything external to transcen-dence—e.g., post-Darwinism—as morally and philosophically disastrous.) The Golden Bowl thus elaborates what James would later call "the close connexion of bliss and bale, of the things that help with the things that hurt" and what Dorothea Krook has termed "the unavoidable, unalterable mixed motive of all human action" in his work.

At the same time the novel validates, in what one critic calls "this weird affirmation, in The Golden Bowl, of the conditions of
life," the post-Darwinian energies Maggie harnesses to gain her victory.\(^{115}\) For Maggie, unlike for Roderick Hudson, Isabel Archer, or the others, neither knowledge nor the passion that impels it brings destruction or death. Instead, Maggie's use of the energies generated by the struggle for life and the will to power (the very strategy so frequently condemned by critics as immoral) eventuates in a life, for the first time, worthy of the word.\(^{116}\) Conversely, it is precisely Charlotte's inability ever to know (or to ask) what the others know that constitutes her defeat. Hence Amerigo's statement, "'She's stupid!'" (565). At the same time, Charlotte's personal and social value, a value Maggie has come to share, is lost on none of them. Maggie and Adam can agree, "'Charlotte's great!'" (576).\(^{117}\) But it falls to the Prince to tie together—for himself, for Maggie and for the reader—the threads of knowledge and power with the endurance and vitality Charlotte continues to represent. In a statement that serves both as testament to what the novel calls the "awful mixture in things" (527) and as a refutation of overly simple moral categories, Amerigo counters Maggie's claim that Charlotte's fate (her lack of definite knowledge) is "'terrible'": "'Everything's terrible, cara—in the heart of man. She's making her life. She'll make it!'" (566). For Amerigo, like James, has learned the lesson of romantic failure: that knowledge, while vital, does not suffice by itself. Maggie's union of perception with passion has demonstrated his own over-reliance on information merely and at the same time reaffirmed the worth of Charlotte's, and now Maggie's own, engagement with life.
 Whereas Chapters 2 and 3 examined the transformation of God with emphasis on the religious, the cultural, and the natural, here in James's Maggie we find that same transformation enacted at a level that is purely human. What was theological and philosophical becomes psychological; what was the natural landscape for the romantics, and the animal world for Darwin, transmutes into human physicality—a physicality that includes aggression, sexuality, and love. But what makes the translocation of the "glory and majesty, dominion and power" (p. 4) possible, for Maggie, is the acquisition of that Jamesian prerequisite, knowledge. And as she realizes, her ability not to remain in innocent ignorance constitutes her own emerging value for Amerigo: "'Look at the possibility that since I am different there may still be something in it for you'" (454). In The Golden Bowl, that knowledge includes both the acquisition of information and the realization of the non-ideal "conditions of life." It also includes, as we see in the rejection of Fanny's influence, the realization—for Maggie and possibly for her author—that it is the acceptance of those same non-ideal conditions that make it possible to "live all you can," or indeed to live at all.
Notes

1 Edwin Sill Fussell points out, in *The Catholic Side of Henry James* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1993), that religious language in James's work is primarily aesthetic and operates at the level of symbol and metaphor (ix).


6 James, AN 347. Near the end of his first year abroad, James wrote to his mother that he had "had a most magnificent holiday and if you should be obliged to bid me desist immediately I should feel as if I had at least bitten the fruit to the core if not wholly devoured it" (*Henry James: Letters* [hereafter HJL] 1: 198). Many years later he records this consequence of his early exposure to Europe: "[I] carried in my sids, buried and unextracted, the head of one of those well-directed shafts from the European quiver . . . the nostalgic cup had been applied to my lips even before I was conscious of it-- . . . that poison had entered my veins. . . . The unnatural precocity with which I had in fine "taken" to Europe was to be revealed to me later on and during another quite languishing American interval; an interval during which I supposed my young life to have been made bitter . . . by too prompt a mouthful--recklessly administered to one's helplessness by responsible hands--of the fruit of the tree of knowledge" (AN 195).


Autobiography 277.

Autobiography 278.

Autobiography 278.

Autobiography 305.


Autobiography 268.

Autobiography 302.


Fussell 16.

Autobiography 133-34. The phrase "pewless state" in this context doubtless refers to something more precise than simple denominational (or congregational) membership; rather, it evokes the practice, once fairly common, of families having literally their own pew in the sanctuary (complete with plaque), generally as a result of long-standing financial support of the congregation. A visitor or unaware member who sat in such a pew was quite likely to be told to move. Whence the old country phrase, now rarely heard, "in the wrong pew." James's use of "pewless state" therefore suggests a discrete, physical lack of place in addition to a symbolic one.

Autobiography 134.

Autobiography 132.

Autobiography 337.

Autobiography 338 (my emphases).


Mayr, intro. to Darwin, *Origin* xx. See p. 48; also notes 108 and 117, Chapter 1. David Plante, in a recent reconsideration of James, suggests that an important aspect of his art was precisely the joining of the general with the specific: "He brought the two together—brought together what Emerson had claimed the divided American could not do, leaving him to choose between the milk pail and the horizon. God knows James saw all the way to the horizon, but from the vantage of the milk pail. And I think he was able to do this because he had the

26 HJL 1: 233.

27 Autobiography 17.

28 Russel 38; James contends in "The Art of Fiction," for instance, "A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts" (54).

29 Quoted in Strouse 17.


31 HJL 1: 115.


34 Edel, Middle Years 62.

35 HJL 1: xxv.

36 HJL 1: 115 (cf. Acts 17.28, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being.")

37 Edel, Conquest of London 130.

38 HJL 2: 237.

39 HJL 4: 652-54; 789-92.

40 Edel, Conquest of London 38, 128, 259.


43 AN 71.

44 The escape (or pursuit) into art is apparently the subject of a dream James recounts in "A Small Boy and Others," in which he surprises an intruder attempting to enter his room and chases the figure energetically through the halls of the Galerie d'Apollon in the Louvre (Autobiography 196-97). Milton A. Mays suggests that this location appears "because it has been at an impressionable age the symbol of life at its most intense" ("Henry James, or, The Beast in the Palace of Art," American Literature 39 [1968]: 483).

45 "The Art of Fiction" 50, 65, 64.

46 AN 70, 71 (James's emphasis).

47 Autobiography 443.

48 Autobiography 17 (James's emphasis).

49 HJL 1: 99.


52 AN 69, 71, 65.

53 AN 149.


55 AN 62 (my emphases).

56 AN 64-65 (my emphases).

57 HJL 1: 32 (James's emphasis).

58 "The Art of Fiction" 52.

59 Autobiography 254-55.

60 Ford Madox Ford, "The Old Man," 1932; Dupee 52.

61 HJL 1: 158.
62 Strouse 68. No doubt this association of travel with illness lies behind James's rather detailed account of his cousin's husband Albert, who dreamed for years of going to Europe and finally did so, but with distressing results: "[T]he ancient worthy . . . disembarked in England . . . only to look about him in vague deprecation and give it all up. He just landed and died" (Autobiography 82-83).

63 Autobiography 284.

64 HJL 3: 498-99. James, at 51, may have been contemplating the prospect of aging but could scarcely have been writing under the onus of age-induced illness. As we shall see, he was capable even in advanced age of being much more positive about the prospects of later life than he appears here.


66 Quoted in Edel, Conquest of London 370.

67 AN 32. This phrase closely echoes the content of James's important Galerie d'Apollon dream (see note 42).

68 Donadio 12.


70 Complete Notebooks 57-58. The same year (1891), James entered in his notebook these further reflections on his art and his relationship to it, noting "the law by which everything is grist to [the artist's] mill--the law, in short, of the acceptance of all experience, of all suffering, of all life, of all suggestion and sensation and illumination," and going on to affirm, "The consolation, the dignity, the joy of life are that discouragements and lapses, depressions and darknesses come to one only as one stands without--I mean without the luminous paradise of art. As soon as I really re-enter it--cross the loved threshold--stand in the high chamber, and the gardens divine--the whole realm widens out again before me and around me--the air of life fills my lungs--the light of achievement flushes over all the place, and I believe, I see, I do" (61, James's emphases).

71 HJL 1: 276.

72 HJL 4: 705-06 (James's emphases).

73 AN 66.

74 Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals, Basic Writings 481. See p. 48 and note 115, Chapter 1.

75 AN 31-32 (James's emphases).
In an otherwise brilliant reading of the novel derived from Foucault's theories, Mark Seltzer, in Henry James and the Art of Power (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1984), oddly denies the novel both fulcrum and dynamism, as when he insists that "Adultery, in The Golden Bowl at least, constitutes marriage" (80). He instead views the entire text merely as static enactment of an "ideology of power," a power that changes hands but never its relationship to the action (95).

James, Novel 78.

James nursed a lifelong love of Italy and seemed to associate it with all that is good and vital in life, including knowledge of and sexuality. Characteristic is his referral to "the loved Italy . . . so much more loved than one has ever been able, even after fifty efforts, to say!" (AN 6). And he pens this reply to Edmund Gosse, who has written him from Italy, on his own (Gosse's) first trip: "Your cry of ecstasy from Orta comes in to me this minute and excites me to that pitch with its arousal of every ineffaceable memory of the land so loved & so lost, that I break off the most pressing occupations to howl back in answer--to screech an unspeakable congratulation. I rejoice with you more than I can say that you've done it. . . . There is none other like it--there is none other to compare to it, & your whole life (let me so comfort you!) will henceforth be poisoned with this one little nibble of the tree of knowledge. You will never be the same again! Your peace is gone. But the torment is owrth all the dungeon-darkness of the innocent past" (Moore 147).


Ora Segal, in The Lucid Reflector: The Observer in Henry James' Fiction (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1969), describes Fanny variously as "the author's deputy" and as "a choric commentator who, though generally profoundly perceptive and intelligent, is yet also often confused and fallible" (196, 197). Segal specifically states that Fanny "never becomes a truly usurping consciousness," a statement that is finally true, but one that is made true only by Maggie's near-heroic efforts--efforts that notably include trying to see around and through Fanny (210). Ruth Bernard Yezell describes Fanny as "a parody of the artist himself," in that Fanny (like Madame Merle of The Portrait of a Lady) "'made' the marriages which form the basis of the plot" (Language and Knowledge in the Late Novels of Henry James [Chicago and London: U
most: "Fanny Assington's exhaustive analysis establishes the status quo
and partly interprets it. Not until the second volume, where Maggie
alone enjoys the dominant consciousness, are these 'arrangements'
challenged, and their way of ordering reality recognized as 'evil'
contradistinction to Bradbury, I would point out that it is not only
Maggie but Fanny herself who calls the arrangements "evil," and the
latter is most certainly not applying that adjective to herself.) Most
critics, though, have had little to say about her or have taken her at
face value as a sort of reader's helper.

86 Sharon Cameron, Thinking in Henry James (Chicago and London: U

87 F. O. Matthiessen long ago condemned James's treatment of Adam
Verver as unrealistic, maintaining that "Mr. Verver's moral tone is far
more like that of a benevolent Swedenborgian than it is like either
John D. Rockefeller or Jay Gould," a view that has been influential
congenial to my argument is Frederick C. Crews's contention that
"surely Adam is . . . likened to God Himself" (The Tragedy of Manners:
Moral Drama in the Later Novels of Henry James [New Haven: Yale UP,
1957]) 107. These assimilations--first to a "benevolent" Swedenborgian
and then to God--both sound, however, like Henry James, Sr. If the
first is consistent with Maggie's tendency to dote on and to worry
about Verver--to infantilize him, somewhat as Fanny does--the second
comports with her initially romanticized view of his power and his
passion for collecting.

88 Ernest Becker, The Denial of Death (New York and London: The

89 AN 347. Fanny's attempt to escape physical reality for and
through the others reflects one pole of a critical spectrum that deals
with the vexed question of sexuality in James's work. At one extreme,
Andre Gide insists that Jamesian protagonists "seem never to exist
except in the functioning of their intellects, they are only winged
busts; all the weight of the flesh is absent, and all the shaggy,
tangled undergrowth, all the wild darkness" ("Henry James," Dupee
251). Frank Moore Cyclopedia is more suspicious: "perhaps, after all, the
man's style was his sufficient fig leaf, and . . . few would see how
shocking he really was. . . . what [he] was up to behind that verbal
hedge of his, though half-suspecting that he meant no good, because a
style like that seemed just the place for guilty secrets" ("In Darkest
James," 1904; Dupee 20). And Edmund Wilson suggests that "What has
been kept out of sight all along . . . and what becomes more sinister
and obscene the more exquisitely it is suppressed, is the simple
existence of sex" (Wilson 396).

In a formulation that recalls Barbara Hardy's criticism of the
passions in Middlemarch, Martha Craven Nussbaum argues that "we have a
sense [in The Golden Bowl] that bulwarks of ignorance are being erected
against some threat that presses in from the world; that knowledge of some truth is not simply absent, but is being actively refused for the sake of beatitude" ("Flawed Crystals: James's The Golden Bowl and Literature as Moral Philosophy," New Literary History 15 [1983] 27). Ruth Bernard Yeazell, on the other hand, suggests that "the sexual reticence of his late fiction is in direct proportion to the felt presence of sexuality as a force at the very center of human life. . . . sexual passion becomes the central mystery, the hidden knowledge which the Jamesian innocent must at last confront" (Yeazell 20).

Finally, Catherine Cox Wessel abandons the avoidance impulse represented by Fanny and earlier critics when she avows that "The Golden Bowl discreetly seethes with as much sexual energy as any best-selling novelist of James's day--or our own--could hope to make genuine" ("Strategies for Survival in James's The Golden Bowl," American Literature 55 (1983): 580.

90 HJL 1: 276 (my emphasis).


94 AN 338, 344-45.

95 Oscar Cargill, The Novels of Henry James (New York: Macmillan, 1961) 406; Yeazell compares Maggie to Dorothea in that she "must awaken from a state of innocence to discover a deeply flawed marriage, and to acknowledge her own responsibility for its failure" (Yeazell 49). And Joseph Warren Beach goes on to elaborate, "In Maggie's case the realization of evil requires a large allowance of time and endless rumination before it can grow complete and assured. For it was just the trait in Maggie that she could not and would not conceive of evil that provoked the situation in which she had to deal with it. So that with her the light breaks very slowly; she will not let it come by more than gradual degrees" (The Method of Henry James, 1918 [Philadelphia: Albert Saifer, 1954]) 257.

96 For Arnold's phrase, see Chapter 1, p. 2, note 3.

97 See Chapter 2, p. 113, note 66.

98 R. P. Blackmur, unlike the more process-oriented critics (Cargill, Comer), likens Maggie's recognition(s) and reversal(s) in the early part of Volume 2 to the protagonists of classical tragedy ("The Loose and Baggy Monsters of Henry James," in The Lion and the Honeycomb [New York: Harcourt, 1955] 275).
99 Merle A. Williams, in Henry James and the Philosophical Novel: Being and Seeing (New York: Cambridge UP, 1993), articulates better than most the reason Maggie must proceed so carefully, the same reason the others respond as cautiously as they do: "They are bound into a rigidly formalized set of relationships, and they cannot (without enormous cost to all) decide not to live in that environment. If any change is to take place, it must operate in and through the established relationships, recasting them and remoulding those who participate in them" (167).

100 Wessel 585.

101 Wessel points out that the animal imagery is not used to portray human sexuality but suggests instead that "in truer Darwinian fashion, [the] characters become animals as they struggle in the difficult, competitive situations to which their passions have consigned them" (581). Half a century before, Stephen Spender had noted (a bit unusually for the time) that "beneath the stylistic surface, the portentous snobbery, the golden display of James's work, there lurk forms of violence and chaos" ("The Golden Bowl," 1936; Dupee 245).


104 Fred Kaplan 141. Stephen Donadio observes that the concept of struggle becomes explicit in The Golden Bowl "again and again ... as pressures mount and hover at the breaking-point until every conversation has the air of an encounter in which the characters are taking their lives into their hands, attacking, circling, backing off, seeking to conceal their intentions and defend themselves" (245). Wessel argues that James's "cynical, modern, post-Darwin vision of the amoral will both concedes to it great practical power and forbids its romanticization" (590). And Reilly points out that the Jamesian world features "people we see as good and those we see as evil, but a little reflection suggests that the difference between them is not to be found in levels of consciousness but where the difference is always said by moralists to reside--in the will" (17).

105 AN 328 (James's emphasis).

106 Matthiessen, ed., The James Family 122; HJL 1: 333.

107 Carolyn Porter sees an even more immediate result of Maggie's reflections: "Merely by recognizing her detached stance, Maggie has already in fact leapt from the coach, even though she does not yet fully comprehend the consequences of that act--chief among which is that she has thereby [already] abandoned her father" (Seeing and Being: The Plight of the Participant Observer in Emerson, James, Adams, and

108 Gabriel Pearson's response to Maggie's sense of energy and power during the Matcham dinner party (359-61), a reaction that equates power with evil and impotence with good, exemplifies the persistent critical impulse to moralize the novel's action: "This is perhaps as clear an enactment of the evil in Maggie as any we are offered. . . . She too can contemplate what it might be to possess" ("The novel to end all novels": The Golden Bowl;" John Goode, ed., The Air of Reality: New Essays on Henry James [London: Methuen, 1972] 347-48).

109 John Carlos Rowe, The Theoretical Dimensions of Henry James (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1984) 63. L. A. Westervelt points out that "whereas Maggie acquires knowledge during the novel, Charlotte has understood the political use of language all along" ("The Individual and the Form: Maggie Verver's Tactics in The Golden Bowl," Renascence 36 [1984]: 153). Mark Seltzer argues, though, that it is a "transfer of knowledge--of the natural desire to know and of carnal knowledge" that is "precisely what takes place" between Maggie and Charlotte (Seltzer 79).

110 Maggie's correction of her, "'The bowl with all our happiness in it. The bowl without the crack,'" although it suggests a retreat into a form of idealism, becomes in light of its context less objectionable than critics have suggested. Nicola Bradbury's correction to Maggie's speech is unexceptionable: "There is no easy, no absolute negation, any more than a final conclusion of the problems of 'process and effect' raised in and through The Golden Bowl. The crack, like the bowl, is precious, and inevitable" (196).

111 Laurence Bedwell Holland makes a similar point in The Expense of Vision: Essays on the Craft of Henry James (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1964): "Only when Maggie is in clear view of the need to separate from him does the novel, in full accord with her affection, render Maggie's tender praise of her father" (392).

112 AN 31-32 (James's emphasis).

113 AN 33 (James's emphasis).


116 In a well-known criticism that pits power against morality in the novel, Joseph J. Firebaugh contends that "In abandoning her innocence, Maggie has become monstrous; coming to knowledge late, she uses it for purely selfish purposes--for ownership and for power" ("The Ververs," Essays in Criticism 4 [1954]: 409. Oddly enough, Firebaugh goes on to equate power with "the preservation of [her own] pre-
conceived idea" and concludes, accurately enough but (from my point of view) for the wrong reasons, that *The Golden Bowl* "is criticism of the very basis on which the notion of the absolute stands" (409, 410). F. R. Leavis, another member of the "anti-Verper" camp, insists that "if our sympathies are anywhere they are with Charlotte and (a little) the Prince, who represent what, against the general moral background of the book, can only strike us as decent passion; in a stale, sickly and oppressive atmosphere they represent life" (160). Sallie Sears compares Maggie to God in a manner similar to my description in Chapter 1 of the transcendent God of theology: "In the figure of Maggie, creator and destroyer become one--a notion that is inherent in the concept of 'creator' anyhow: who has power to make has power to annihilate" (*The Negative Imagination: Form and Perspective in the Novels of Henry James* [Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1968] 178). Dorothea Krock claims to find "the odour of decay in the moral atmosphere of *The Golden Bowl*" and points out that "the completeness of [Charlotte's] subjugation is conveyed in images which, for their sustained violence and ferocity, have no parallel in James's works" (Krock 288, 300).

And Joseph A. Boone socializes post-Darwinist values to turn feminism against itself when he suggests, "In becoming an active crusader for her marriage [Maggie] may rebel against the proscription of 'feminine' passivity, but only by accepting the terms of aggression and conquest valued by a power-obsessed society" ("Modernist Maneuverings in the Marriage Plot: Breaking Ideologies of Gender and Genre in James's *The Golden Bowl*," PMLA 101 [1986] 381).

Even those who praise Maggie fall into conflicted moral categories in discussing her, as does J. A. Ward: "Maggie becomes deceiver, aggressor, and mistress of intrigue to gain her victory. Employing the techniques of the worldly-wise and practical-minded European, Maggie uses evil means to bring about a good end. No other means are available to her" (*Imagination of Disaster* 153).

117 As Sarah B. Daugherty suggests, in "The Golden Bowl: Balzac, James, and the Rhetoric of Power" (*TSLL* 24 [1982]), "in acknowledging Charlotte's greatness, Maggie engulfs her rival, to the point that she becomes her husband's mistress as well as his wife" (80).
Conclusion

As Chapter 1 demonstrates, the transformation of God in British literature of the nineteenth century operates according to the dynamic of Carlyle's phoenix in *Sartor Resartus*: "Creation and Destruction proceed together."¹ The process of moving from divine transcendence to a divine/secular immanence, in literature as in the culture at large, includes at once an ineluctable pressure toward an emergent immanence and a simultaneous resistance enacted by the forces of the waning transcendence. This double movement within the literature and culture of the period mirrors the personal experience of many thoughtful Victorians, those whose own creeds modulated from the religious to the secular. Frederic Harrison, in a typical articulation of the phenomenon, invokes the organicism popular in the century to describe his own transmutation of belief:

As the supernatural died out of my view, the natural took its place and amply covered the same ground. The change was so gradual, and the growth of one phase of thought out of another was with me so perfectly regular, that I have never been able to fix any definite period of change, nor indeed have I ever been conscious of any real change of mind at all.²

Leslie Stephen employs comparable language in describing his own change of attitude: "The old husk drops off because it has long been withered,
and you discover that beneath is a sound and vigorous growth of genuine conviction."

A similar simultaneity of movement appears, we have seen, in Middlemarch, Tess of the d'Urbervilles, and The Golden Bowl. That is, the resistances of tradition and transcendence interweave textually with post-Darwinian energies--the struggle for life and the will to power--in such a manner as to require a patient unraveling not unlike Penelope's fabled task. This commingling is equally apparent whether the forces of transcendence are represented by both God and biological/intellectual father, as in George Eliot, by the metaphysics and dualisms of theology, as in Thomas Hardy, or by the father in the psyche we find in Henry James. Thus Dorothea Brooke's new physical awareness coexists with narrative resistance, Tess dies although the naturalistic values Hardy associates with her survive, and Maggie Verver's victory retains, for some critics, a moral ambiguity that leads her to be termed a "witch," or worse.

Although the transformation of God includes a fair emphasis on romantic individualism, it also moves persistently toward the broader areas of natural and biological community, as the texts of Middlemarch and Tess so powerfully demonstrate. Indeed, it is within these communities, grounded as they are in post-Darwinian values, that transformation locates its most thoroughgoing form of immanence, one capable of overcoming romantic insufficiencies in the same area. Such communities also serve to correct the rationalist focus on alienation, disconnection, and the abyss prominent in such critics as Hillis Miller and Bernard Paris. In contradistinction to what Miller seems to imply,
phrases such as Forster's "Only connect . . ." are premature when applied to the Victorians, either early or late. And for Victorians of the intellectual elite, more traditional communities also continue to hold sway. As James R. Moore points out, even "dissident intellectuals" were forced to confront the communal consequence of their own apostasy: "Whence public and private morality with the decline of hell? If the creeds could not be upheld by force of law--if, on the contrary, the law were seen to be weakening the basis of official ideology--then what hope for the Establishment?" It is in precisely such reservations that we find the source of Frederic Harrison's infamous diatribe against *Essays and Reviews*, with his fear of "the masses [lying] in brutal heathenism" while reformers destroy the metaphysical basis of belief.

Nor is transformation's rejection of post-Cartesian alienation and discontinuity confined solely to literature of the Victorian era. For even when we turn our gaze forward to literature of the succeeding period, we discover that the legacy of transformation is not to be found in the disconnections and estrangements of such writers as Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, or Richard Wright. Rather, the polarities of transformation--the traditionally-sanctioned power of transcendence on the one hand and an emergent, biologically-based immanence on the other--are more nearly imaged by naturalists such as Frank Norris, with his mythic collision of railroads and wheat farmers in *The Octopus*, or in the romantic naturalisms of D. H. Lawrence (*The Rainbow*, parts of *Women in Love*) and the Faulkner of *Light in August* or *The Hamlet*. In these works, a hostile, quasi-Dreiserian external world
takes the role previously held by transcendence, while (unlike in
Dreiser himself) the forces of nature persist in providing, not always
successfully, an immanentist alternative.
Notes


5 James R. Moore 168.

6 "Neo-Christianity" 332.
Bibliography


