

ALIENATION AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS IN SIX
CONTEMPORARY BRITISH NOVELS.

by

Wendy M. Tomlin

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Department of English

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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Abstract

This study of six novels by three post-World War II British novelists deals with the philosophical and pragmatic aspects of intimate relationship. Raymond Williams, in The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence, establishes that novelists were among the first to recognise the destruction of the old community by industrialism. Without an alternate conception of community, industrial capitalism imposes itself directly upon the individual, and thus sets harsh limits upon the relationships he or she can create.

One result is the alienation that Karl Marx described as inherent in the marketplace society underpinning Victorian culture; or, in another idiom, the possessive individualism perceived by C.B. MacPherson. The increasing commercialism of society--the propensity, as Adam Smith phrased it, to truck and barter--has encouraged possessiveness, and has debased and alienated the most intimate aspects of human existence, especially sex and love. Sex is a central expression of the essence of life, and hence sexual relationships are adversely affected when they are alienated from love and community. As in the commercial transaction, intimacy in these six novels is vulnerable to the manipulation and the exploitation of one person by another, because there is no willingness to become involved in a reciprocal relationship.

This commentary on the novels of John Fowles, Doris Lessing, and David Storey suggests some tentative conclusions about intimacy in the latter part of the 20th century. The working class novels

generally emphasise traditional relationships; and tell us that individuals who try to discard them (as with Clegg in The Collector, and Machin in This Sporting Life), will lose (or never win) those whom they love. The emphasis upon money alienates them from their basic community, and destroys their integrity. There is no intimacy divorced from the primary social relationship.

Middle class protagonists move away from community as they become dominant in a marketplace society. Their success transforms them into alienated and possessive individualists; and their belated attempt to restore a sense of intimacy is an effort--perhaps tragic--to become whole in a fragmented world. But the relationships occur in a vacuum. Either they fail, as in The Golden Notebook, or the individuals reject intimacy, and flee forward from community into a super-individualism as with Martha Quest in The Four-Gated City.

These novels tell us nothing of a social movement that will give the individual a sense of purpose or meaning: hence the individuals remain isolated, and seem to lose substance. When Leonard Radcliffe, for example (Radcliffe), murders his community out of his need for an absolute, he precipitates his own death. Again, Charles Smithson and Sarah Woodruff in The French Lieutenant's Woman lose their vitality and sexual commitment because Sarah is more concerned to preserve her individuality.

These examples serve to show that temporary and partial relationships are lethal to the spirit. The loss of intimacy is the result, in the end, of the loss of the moral sense. The displace-

ment of the religious impulse to wholeness (the "disappearance" of God") leaves one with the hollow victories of possessive individualism in a fragmented society.

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Introduction

Industrialisation in Britain in the nineteenth century boded more than economic change. As Raymond Williams argues persuasively,¹ it was the agency of a social change which initiated a profound cultural crisis within the community. The mid-century literature of Charles Dickens, the Brontës, and George Eliot, he continues, explores the disintegration of traditional communal bonds, and the increasing isolation and "uncertainty" of the individual. That process of separating man from his community has continued into the twentieth century, where it now involves the fragmentation of the individual. Alienated sex in contemporary literature and film, for example, is a commonplace, and clearly illustrates that sex has been separated from love and relationship, as well as from the traditional stabilising relationships of community and family. This study of six post-World War II British novels will consider how such alienation affects intimate relationships.

The division of life into discrete and disconnected units is one of the key observations of contemporary society. From his studies of Victorian England, Karl Marx concluded that "an alienated form of social intercourse" occurs when a society becomes "a commercial enterprise" which makes "salesmen" of its members.² Marx also held that everything is related to everything else, so that sexual intimacy as an end in itself, for example, is alienation because it is not human. Alienated sex, he wrote, "is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs."³

The commercial society is clearly found in industrial capitalism, Marx noted, and everything, including love and sex, is alienable when it enters the marketplace.

Associated with industrial alienation and isolation in the modern world is an individualism which, C.B. MacPherson asserts in a challenging argument, is strongly possessive in character.⁴ Like many observers, MacPherson recognises that Protestants distorted their principle of salvation, so that it was obtained not through a personal relationship with God, but through material success. Thenceforward, Protestant individualism, he maintains, acquired a possessive quality, which was

found in its conception of the individual as essentially the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to the society for them. The individual was seen neither as a moral whole, nor as a part of a larger social whole, but as an owner of himself....The human essence is freedom from dependence on the wills of others, and freedom is a function of possession.⁵

MacPherson echoes Marx in his summary of industrial capitalism as a system in which "Human society consists of a series of market relations."⁶ The impulse of individualism, therefore, has provided a further basis for alienation.

Another characteristic of possessive individualism, MacPherson argues, was provided by Thomas Hobbes. Believing that relationships were formed through the "fear of other individuals," Hobbes reasoned that the unilateral surrender and submergence of one person to another would be destructive of that person's place and nature.⁷ As a consequence, MacPherson comments, life becomes a series of power struggles. The constant battle for power breaks the customary

bonds between individuals and social groups, thereby further increasing alienation and fragmentation.

In a marketplace, possessive individualist society, therefore, values and ethical principles, relationship and love, as well as physical attributes and property, are all part of the bargaining process. An example of the effects of this dehumanising system is offered by T.S. Eliot in The Waste Land.⁸ Eliot etches a meeting between a typist and a "carbuncular" clerk which has become a classic statement of the spiritually arid sexual experience. For it is perfunctory and lustful, a loveless, joyless ritual enacted only to be immediately forgotten. Without commitment, friendship, or even interest, these two people seem invulnerable even to their own emotional needs. And by extension, this sad coupling of nameless strangers becomes a metaphor for life itself.

This loss of emotional commitment has disturbed other contemporary writers. Thus John Fowles writes that love* is a "giving without return....This is the quintessence the great alchemy of sex is for; and every adultery adulterates it, every infidelity betrays it, every cruelty clouds it."¹⁰ His conception of love appears to include its four classic aspects: sex, eros, philia and agape. And for any kind of relationship to be achieved, whether friendship or intimacy, each element has to be present.

In an alienated society, however, they have become separated

*Defined as "the desire to maintain a relationship irrespective of the sexual and, in the final analysis, any other enjoyment to be got from it."⁹

from each other, and can therefore be bargained for (or away). And through commercialisation, love as wholeness has become a glittering disposable veneer of life, an inevitable casualty in a society of "market relations." Rollo May illustrates the difficulty in his book Love and Will, for the generations succeeding that of Eliot's typists and clerks and Prufrocks are composed of discrete individuals, increasingly afraid of love and commitment.

It is a strange thing in our society that what goes into building a relationship--the sharing of tastes, fantasies, dreams, hopes for the future, and fears from the past--seems to make people more shy and vulnerable than going to bed with each other. They are more wary of the tenderness that goes with psychological and spiritual nakedness than they are of the physical nakedness in sexual intimacy.¹¹

Like Marx and MacPherson, May maintains that such non-intimacy is dehumanising.¹² He then approaches possessive individualism from the Hobbesian perspective: that the fear of spiritual intimacy comes from the fear of losing the inner self. But ironically, May writes:

The paradox of love is that it is the highest degree of awareness of the self as a person and the highest degree of absorption in the other. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin asks in The Phenomenon of Man 'At what moment do lovers come into the most complete possession of themselves, if not when they are lost in each other?'¹³

Contemporary man, however, refuses that insight. Thus in Fowles' novels, and in those of David Storey, love is used as a tool to be evoked at will, not as a means of affirmation. And the trivialisation of love and the fragmentation of society bring Doris Lessing's protagonists to assert that "Love is too difficult."¹⁴ But without love and its wholeness, commitment and deep emotional involvement in a full relationship are well-nigh impossible.

The ramifications of these threads of possessive individualism and alienated love, associated with the disintegration of a common morality and community, run through all of the novels under review. These are: John Fowles' The Collector, and The French Lieutenant's Woman; Doris Lessing's The Golden Notebook, and The Four-Gated City; and David Storey's This Sporting Life, and Radcliffe.* Fowles and Storey examine the dehumanisation and alienation resulting from industrialisation within both working and middle classes. Lessing, on the other hand, begins with the fact of alienation, and uses the sexual relationship to illustrate the madness that results from the loss of loving intimacy.

It should be noted that the amount of outside material on these writers is limited, much of it in the form of book reviews. Fowles and Lessing, however, have offered helpful comments on their own work, which I have used.

*Margaret Drabble also writes of relationship, but I feel that her novels are limited in scope. They deal mainly with the middle-class, university-educated woman. Her novel, The Garrick Year, however, concerns extra-marital, alienated sex, and its effects on a marriage; by delineating the perniciousness of alienated sex, Drabble highlights the enduring nature of genuine intimacy.

John Fowles

A recurrent theme throughout the novels and other writings of John Fowles and Doris Lessing is the impact of society on the creative individual. Such people, the novelists believe, shoulder the continuing process of civilisation, but their freedom to act is being progressively restricted as the twentieth century proceeds. Fowles has written, for example, that his "chief concern in The Aristos is to preserve the freedom of the individual against all those pressures-to-conform that threaten our century."¹ Freedom itself, however, as each of his three novels recognises, is subjected to the internal tensions of ambiguity and paradox, for it is not exercised without the pain of loss. Miranda, for example, loses her physical liberty when she is kidnapped by the collector exercising his freedom. Ironically, however, he loses his freedom at the same time. All the novels are similarly ironic.

Freedom becomes more ironic in the stories when it accompanies possession in either its traditional forms of madness, ownership and passion (as described in William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream²), or the later form of possessive individualism. The two novels under discussion illustrate the progress of this theme of freedom, for they document a fundamental shift in values that occurred with industrial capitalism: the freedom gained in the nineteenth century from feudal servitude changes to the shackled spirit of industrialised twentieth century man.

Shakespeare's madmen, lovers and poets are "possessed" by

"shaping fantasies," and Fowles is conscious of that "magical" heritage when he writes that as an author, he "want[s] to be possessed by [his] own creations."³ He, however, is in control of his fantasies, because he knowingly imposes moral, emotional, and psychological limits on his imagination, and can deliberately introduce ambiguity. His characters, on the other hand, are not consciously knowing, and are possessed by visions which are creative and yet may undermine their sanity and sense of reality. The collector, for example, is possessed by madness as well as passion because his dreams have no inherent moral or ethical foundation.

The Collector⁴ is a horror tale. It consists of two diaries which gradually reveal the increasing terror that develops when Miranda Grey is imprisoned by Frederick Clegg. The two versions of the same events counterpoint each other, and provide a word-stereopticon for viewing the ambiguities of freedom. Through this technique, Fowles heightens suspense, for the reader sees the victim first through Clegg's eyes and senses. The diary form also psychologically intensifies the frustrations felt by the two people, for it makes use of the linear nature of words. The device successfully symbolises the emotional and psychological barriers between Miranda and Clegg by physically dramatising their separateness.

Consistent with Fowles' issue of human freedom, the reader is also blocked from resolving the two points of view. That lack of resolution, however, is also partly the fault of the novel, for the characters are limited, stereotyped, and always subjective. The lack of irony, pointed out by Whitney Balliett in his review for the

New Yorker,⁵ adds to the subjective strength of the tale, but allows no distancing. The story is so horrifying that its literalness leads to a reduced sense of involvement.

In his introduction to his collection of aphorisms, The Aristos, Fowles maintains that in The Collector he tried "to establish the innocence of the Many,"⁶ of which Clegg is a symbol. Clegg is innocent because the industrial capitalist society provides an environment which creates men who are industrialised, uneducated, and alienated. They are consequently not responsible for their choices, for they are not given the training to exercise good judgement. Through lack of control over their environment, Fowles continues, the evil of the Many overcomes potential good.

Thus Clegg is an 'ideal type'; a distillation of the alienated man as a typical product of a capitalist society. And the dehumanisation which accompanies alienation, Fowles seems to be saying, makes Clegg a-moral and therefore non-responsible. Clegg's credibility therefore depends upon the reader's acceptance of the evils accompanying marketplace society. Even as an alienated man, however, Clegg is responsible to the values of the marketplace. First through his white-collar job, and then his abandonment of the family, Clegg rejects the values of pre-industrialism and the working class, and thereby becomes a typical child of the marketplace. Those readers, therefore, who draw back from Fowles' picture of the totalitarian and barbaric elements of twentieth century Britain defeating the civilised by weak democracy are missing the central element of Fowles' truth: Clegg is the logical conclusion of a marketplace society

which has become so corrupted with the need to possess that it compromises its own raison d'être. Thus he cannot let Miranda leave even though his marketplace principles demand that if she wants to be free to function in a larger marketplace, she should be allowed to do so.

Clegg is unable to function consistently, however, because he is infected with the "virus" of inequality (Fowles' "one word" to "sum up all that is wrong with our world"⁷). As a lowly bureaucrat he has been culturally co-opted into the myth of upward mobility, and once moulded by the capitalist world, he becomes both its victim and one of its strongest practitioners. He is disgusted with its contemporary manifestations, however, and firmly comes to believe that if he can create a marketplace for himself and one other person, they will create together a pure and ideal society of equals. His euphoria can thus be easily understood when he wins the football pools, for he now has the means to realise his dream.

He first pays off his fellow Town Hall workers in the manner of the marketplace, then sends his aunt and cousin to Australia. He is alone, and no longer responsible to anyone except himself. But he has neither the native intellect nor the imaginative sympathy to understand the subversive effect of his new idiom of life, and he extracts only the power of possession from his financial freedom.

Clegg has long been possessed by his dream of Miranda, and this is the major possession of the novel. Only from that do we move to his physical possession of her in his house. He kidnaps her in order to fulfill his dream, but because his vision of love is roman-

ticised marketplace possessiveness, no kind of relationship can develop. He becomes increasingly confused once Miranda becomes his prisoner, for she is converted into a piece of property; and her refusal to submit to him finds him unprepared. His romanticism feeds his fantasy and obscures the reality, for he dreams that proximity and declarations of love are sufficient to create the bonds of trust necessary for a loving relationship.

In this situation of possessor/possessed, however, the nature of the association Miranda and Clegg establish is crucial. The novel explores the cruelty of dreams that prevent both protagonists from confronting dilemmas which can only be resolved if the complexities of the situation are seen clearly.

When Clegg captures Miranda as though she were one of his butterflies, therefore, the dream of his fairy-tale relationship is revealed to be hollow. He is unaware, for example, that even in the marketplace, close relationships should be voluntary associations. From the beginning, his dreams have been unreal, for they are woven around an object rather than a person, and the simplicity of Miranda's abduction accentuates his illusions about his new power and its beneficent effects on him. The common interests and mutual attraction which are customary bases for a relationship are, for example, still absent. Miranda cannot act normally under the conditions of a brutal imprisonment, while 'Ferdinand' (her increasingly ironic name for him) only wants to look at her in the delight of possession. As a result, the story details an increasing hatred and cunning and the evolution of mutual terror. Several factors lie be-

hind this frightening impasse.

Neither Clegg nor Miranda has participated in a major relationship, even within a family. As a "salesman" in the marketplace, Clegg is able to evade the knowledge that his pleasure may be based upon cruelty to others, just as he has to kill the butterflies in order to enjoy them. By disassociating his need to possess from his responsibility to the things possessed, he is able to measure and count, and then to control them without being troubled by problems of morality or ethics. Unable to measure his fellow workers at the Town Hall in the same way, he attempts to control them by his contempt for their vulgarity in contrast to his sexual and verbal purity. Their crudity and spontaneity become his measure of their intelligence and worth. His Victorian sniff, however, prevents him from seeing that the vulgarity represents the office workers' refusal to be totally absorbed into the grimness of the commercial enterprise. But winning the football pools seems to justify and confirm Clegg's superiority.

An ambitious young man, he calculates every move to improve his position. Even his sexual desires are measured. They have been strongly repressed, and sex becomes for him a practical issue rather than an essential emotional need. The alienation of sex from love results in Clegg's impotence, however, and pornographic pictures become his substitute for real sexual intimacy. Thus his ideas of romantic love are yoked to impotence and furtive prurience, while beauty is more real when dead or distant than when it is alive and close. By the time of manhood, he is a victim of his own daydreams:

the romantic, dreaming Ferdinand imprisoned in the heart of the earth-bound, pedestrian Clegg. And his alienated impotency has driven him to idealise love and forget the earthiness of sex.

His major relationship is with the butterflies which give him pleasure and do not decay. But it is static, for it depends only upon his passion for collection and develops no further than his passive enjoyment of them. The question of morality remains unasked, for insects have no rights nor do they fight back. Thus the distorted ethic of possessive individualism in the marketplace is well illustrated through Clegg's simple hobby.

He has become the epitome of industrialised, marketplace man. Miranda is supposed to be very different: liberal in ethos, educated, intelligent, and bourgeois. As an artist, she should reject the mechanisation of the commercial society. She is also a stock character, however, as she is a potential member of Fowles' Aristos, the "few." As a member of the marketplace, however, she exhibits some of the same alienation as Clegg. She also conforms to his experience with the butterflies in several important ways.

Like them, Miranda has no real community: her parents are incompatible, and their money and her scholarship enable her to be independent. She remains uncommitted to anyone, though her imprisonment forces her to re-examine her limited friendship with an older artist, G.P. As a possessive individualist she bargains with her emotions: Knowing that he has had many love affairs, she uses the age difference between herself and G.P. to be flirtatious, and then to expose him to a frustrating sexual teasing. Under the pressure of

captivity, she begins to dream of him as a lover, and pretends to herself: "I mean I believe I could love him in the other way, his way, now."⁸ Through separation, loneliness and fear, she disassociates love from sex, and entertains the thought of random sex as a calculated exchange. In her alienation, she deludes herself about relationship.

Miranda's situation, of course, is alienating because it is totally separate from society, and her struggles to return to her own milieu further alienate her from the only society that remains. Her ~~desperation~~ leads her to panic; Clegg is pitiable and dreadful, and any association with him would be unthinkable. Though she makes the connection between herself and the butterfly, therefore, she is unable to obey her insight that resistance is futile; Clegg will only pin her down more firmly. Yet in a perverse way, she encourages him to dehumanise her and to treat her like a butterfly, even though they both know that all his insects die.⁹

Even so, Clegg desperately wants her as a live human being. It seems as though he wants to believe that she will metamorphose him from a chrysalis into a beautiful insect, or a frog into a prince. But because Miranda is lulled into an easy manipulation of him, she neither imagines his yearning, nor would she want to be involved in his reincarnation. Instead, she rejects his own simple explanation of his motives, and makes Clegg even more confused with her frantic efforts to escape.

This is clear in her final, fatal error, when she attempts to interest him in alienated sex. Her act releases Clegg's perversion,

for he can rationalise his pornographic photographs of her in terms of her immorality: "It was no good, she had killed all the romance, she had made herself like any other woman. I didn't respect her any more, there was nothing left to respect."¹⁰ This narrow view of romance clearly illustrates the suffocating nature of marketplace intimacy corrupted by possession. Clegg can deal only with a Miranda who is an object-for-sale, and willing to live through him.

It was always she loving me and my collection, drawing and colouring them; working together in a beautiful modern house in a big room with one of those huge glass windows; meetings there of the Bug Section, where instead of saying almost nothing in case I made mistakes, we were the popular host and hostess.¹¹

And in spite of the presence of children, it is a dream without sex: "Nothing nasty," he smirks.

Requiring nothing of her except her presence, he confuses pride of ownership with love, and when she resists that classification of her he often makes the plaintive cry, "If only she would love me." For in his world, love has come to mean that she will conform to his perfect marketplace. Miranda, even though she is a salesman, is not as alienated as Clegg, and she cannot believe in a love which is a cool, almost emotionless understanding of a fundamental human passion: "In my dreams it was always we looked into each other's eyes one day and then we kissed and nothing was said until after."¹² "After" what is not made clear. In his romanticised, commercial world, love does not enrich a relationship, but is used as a means of manipulating others. Thus he is upset when his natural emotions forge past his intentions to introduce his love at the proper moment, and he declares himself to her: "Suddenly I said, I love you.

It's driven me mad."¹³ This instinctive use of the word 'mad' rings true, though he loses the thread of its significance. The need to possess Miranda is greater than intimations of insanity, for he has spent all his emotional energy on getting her close to him.

His love is an inarticulate exchange of information, not a sharing of experience, of sex, of friendship, or of more than a chaste kiss. It is a strange, inhibited, repressed dream, a wish-fulfillment; the fantasy of a sleeping Princess waiting for the Prince to waken her with a kiss.

This image Miranda also conforms to in a limited way, for she seems to be sleeping emotionally and intellectually. As an artist, searching for new means of expression, her self-conscious writing merely gropes after effect, for she is elitist and cliché-ridden: she is asleep to the excitement of the language. She also classifies Ferdinand as a Caliban even though Clegg, unlike Caliban, is kind and does not rape her. Miranda's categorisation of Clegg-as-Caliban helps her to overcome her fear of him, but it also obscures his true self. Similarly Clegg distorts Miranda within the cliché of pure woman as wife and mother, and can then ignore her reality.

Her alienation, however, shows most clearly in her lack of sensitivity and perception. She cannot see beyond his unresponsiveness to her liberal and speculative thought to the possibility that he might be speaking the truth: "that with me it was having. Having her was enough. Nothing needed doing. I just wanted to have her, and safe at last."¹⁴ As an active person, the thought of being a passive piece of property is naturally abhorrent to her, even though

it is equivalent to her desire to love G.P. in his way.

In truth, Miranda's middle-class, petit-bourgeois life is as barren of close relationship as Clegg's childhood. Like him, she is also titillated by the possibilities of life, so that she projects G.P. as an abstraction rather than a living, emotional human being. She watches him, always backing away from primary involvement. She is entitled to consider Clegg to be "absolutely sexless,"¹⁵ yet her own sexual instincts fail her with both G.P. and Clegg.

Miranda is, however, established as a woman of potential: she is socialist, liberal and emancipated. She represents a less alienated future than that suggested by Clegg, so it seems that the burden of new kinds of relationship falls on liberalism. Several choices are open to her: first to redeem Clegg through a vision of sex which would necessarily include the insight that love and sex are inseparable. Second, she could use sex impersonally. Or she could accept Clegg's vision of romantic love, and try to humanise him from within that framework. All of these options fail her in this situation, however, either because of her alienation from understanding love as wholeness, or because of Clegg's marketplace impotence. Instead, she patronises him.

The terror of the situation is relieved occasionally by teasing; but almost every day ends in a kind of hysteria. The impotent ownership of one person by another has created a fear which inevitably distorts those human qualities essential for relationship, such as trust, faith, and love. Clegg's obsession for Miranda also distorts his dreams about her, and his madness increases as he comes to

realise that though he can possess her body, he can never possess her spirit.

But proximity does, after all, develop some kind of relationship:

It's weird. Uncanny. But there is a sort of relationship between us. I make fun of him, I attack him all the time, but he senses when I'm "soft." When he can dig back and not make me angry. So we slip into teasing states that are almost friendly. It's partly because I'm so lonely, it's partly deliberate..., so it's part weakness, and part cunning, and part charity. But there's a mysterious fourth part I can't define. It can't be friendship; I loathe him.¹⁶

In Fowles' philosophical world, each idea and emotion has its contrary pole producing a creative tension,¹⁷ so that Miranda's "fourth part" could be affection. But her imprisonment obscures that possibility. Once more, Clegg's possession of her dehumanises them both; they can only have a warder/prisoner relationship of suspicion and cunning. Thus both dream dreams, possessed by "shaping fantasies" which fatally alienate them from each other. And through Clegg's pernicious desire for possession, he loses his self-respect and allows Miranda to manipulate him in the futile hope that she can be bought. As it becomes increasingly clear that the marketplace relationship is not developing, therefore, he feels more thwarted and vengeful, ready to believe the worst of her.

Condemned to their own proud separateness and powerful feelings of uniqueness, they are fundamentally alienated from one another; nothing can be shared. No books read together; no music heard together; and no art understood. They are reduced to a solipsistic exchange of private impressions. Even the major myths and symbols

of religious experience, or of common humanity such as the sharing of food and hospitality, are lacking. Nothing can release them from the inexorable nature of the "joke mousetrap."* This major insight of Ferdinand's hides the final irony that he--not Miranda--is the mouse. When death releases Miranda from the trap, Clegg cannot turn back. He believes that his ideal marketplace has failed not because of its inner weaknesses but because she refused to cooperate. All his doubts are erased by his increasing isolation and his overpowering need to possess, and he enters the next trap. With a different kind of girl, he suggests, his dream will come true.

Even under the best of conditions an intimate relationship is difficult. Between two alienated, dehumanised people it is impossible. Within a possessive marketplace society, all relationships are cramped and distorted, for the physical jail is accompanied by one of the mind and spirit. Liberalism, when trapped within possessive individualism, cannot intuit the desperate dreams of the obsessed, de-classé worker. And the worker is similarly alienated from his community and thus his place in society, seduced through the illusion that money means possession and power.

Though the reader's natural sympathy lies with Miranda, she shares some of the responsibility for the terror. They are both deluded in their beliefs about relationships, for they begin with and theories about the nature of love or emotional involvement.

*Miranda's death, Clegg says, "was just like a joke mouse-trap I once saw, the mouse just went on and things moved, it couldn't ever turn back, but just on and on into cleverer and cleverer traps until the end."¹⁸

They are equally bankrupt of feeling because their possessive individualism creates a fundamental separation. Both Miranda and Ferdinand treat each other as a property, or as objects, and thus there can be no relationship. There is not even sex.

The alienation and marketplace values which provide the basis for Fowles' environmental determinism in The Collector came to maturity in the Victorian era. Fowles turned to that ethos in his third novel The French Lieutenant's Woman,¹⁹ which describes some of the parameters of science and of the marketplace which finally affected personal relations. The nineteenth century was a time of increasing freedom from traditional oppressions of the natural environment and social restrictions, and a parallel increase of exploitations by industrialism and commercialism. The novel's characters are thus affected less by the environment than by change, and therefore by time and history. Individuals affected by the new conditions moved into new relations with each other, and thus the novel is also a consideration of the change in intimacy.

The novel concerns people who have not yet been directly touched by industrialism, though its tentacles are close. Some of the characters are part of the old traditions of family and aristocracy; others are creating a new tradition. All, sooner or later, are touched or controlled by the economic truth of society as a commercial enterprise. In the mid-nineteenth century, society still contained many members who were not salesmen, but the novel details how they all eventually succumbed. Thus it is an introduction to a novel such as The Collector, in which commercial considerations are

primary within relationships.

The novel has a number of sub-themes of philosophical and cultural concern, and is consequently rather complex. In particular, there is a pervasive awareness of what J. Hillis Miller terms The Disappearance of God.²⁰ Abandoned by the unifying principle of God, Miller argues, Victorians experienced a fragmentation of the literary perception. Fowles presents that fragmentation by shattering the world of a secure scientific agnostic, as though it were a paleo-ontological specimen being crushed under the pressure of new earth movements.

The disappearance of God is dramatised through the drastic change that occurs in the consciousness of Time; from the fixed period of Biblical scholarship to that of evolutionary and geologically open-ended time. Charles Smithson realises that

h evolution was not vertical, ascending to a perfection, but horizontal. Time was the great fallacy; existence was without history, was always now, was always this being caught in the same fiendish machine. All those painted screens erected by man to shut out reality--history, religion, duty, social position, all were illusions, mere opium fantasies.²¹

The existential and Marxist implications of Smithson's thoughts are reinforced in the novel by the sense of an inexorable force for change which destroys those who refuse or cannot adapt to it.

The novel's plot and style bear a striking resemblance to George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss.²² Maggie Tulliver is the outsider who is attracted to and attracts her cousin's suitor, Stephen Guest. Three people interact in a similar way in The French Lieutenant's Woman, though Fowles updates his Maggie. He rewards her with a new unfettered life rather than shame and death, so that the

new Maggie, Sarah Woodruff, has a life consistent with her character. Eliot's novel is complete in itself, consistent with Victorian conventions; while Fowles' resolution is ambiguous and free.

As in The Mill on the Floss, the woman has the sympathetic role, though Fowles tells his story from the masculine point of view. In this way, the strong sense of mystery surrounding and within Sarah can be preserved, since the man consistently fails to comprehend her. The technique of limited viewpoint, however, is combined with the constant use of authorial intrusion (to ensure that the reader understands Victorian mores and principles). The combination of nineteenth century authorial omniscience and twentieth century uncertainty parallels the philosophical position of the gradual overthrow of Victorian conviction of right by an increasing self-consciousness and philosophical insecurity. Fowles illustrates these unsettling changes through the use of ambiguity, through refusing authorial omniscience, and through encouraging the reader to take part in resolving the novel. By this means, Fowles makes the reader conscious of the gains and losses of individual freedom from the bonds of traditional society.

The immediate milieu of the novel is England in 1867, the precise year in which Marx began Das Kapital, and women made their first claim for the vote. It was also the time when the broader meaning of Darwin's theory of the Survival of the Fittest became significant in the cultural sphere.* The early introduction of this

*where it helped to justify that distortion of the relationship between a man, his work, and his community, which is characteristically found in industrial capitalism.

theory in the novel foreshadows a human battle for survival:

Personal extinction Charles was aware of--no Victorian could not be. But general extinction was as absent a concept from his mind that day...even though...he soon held a very concrete example of it in his hand.²³

And it is here found interwoven with the battle of the sexes.

The theory foreshadows more, as evolutionary data indicate forces beyond man's control. "Survival" contains an implication of war to the death, in which all but the winner succumb. And "fittest" is a term which finds physical adaptability more important than spiritual or moral worth. In its Victorian setting, the survival of the fittest matched neatly with a society of intensive industrialisation and commercial enterprise.

All these themes are, however, subsidiary (though essential) to the announced subject of emancipation. The novel's Marxian epigraph has a driving moral force: "Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself."²⁴ The axiom is humanist in temper, and appears to be a denunciation of all that would deny man the essence of his humanness, such as class, economic and emotional exploitation, social injustice, and alienation. The irony of the novel, however, is that although emancipation brings a powerful and exciting dignity and integrity to Sarah, the human relationships thereby created are limited in significance and fulfillment. In view of the epigraph, the limitations may indicate that Sarah's emancipation is partial. For Marx was committed to wholeness and community, and Sarah breaks one man's community in order to find her own. Her emancipation is therefore not unfettered;

it is tied to an isolation associated with individual freedom.

In common with The Collector, relationships are also affected by possession and possessive individualism. There is the same madness of desire, and the same consideration of people as property, but possessive individualism is at first more subtle. Eventually, however, its influence is felt in a scene of alienated sex "without loving communion." (This is contrasted with a young lower class couple who accept sex as an intrinsic part of their loving intimacy.) When sex is used in order to gain emancipation, possessive individualism is explicit and triumphant. It prevents intimacy as surely as Clegg's impotent possession.

The novel begins with a vivid vignette of a traditional relationship in the presence of intimations of change: the engaged couple, Charles Smithson and Ernestina Freeman are first disquieted and then haunted by the presence and absolute silence of Sarah. As a minor aristocrat, Charles is self-possessed and stands foursquare at the centre of the old but comfortable world of reason and rational decision. His money comes from land, and he has minimal and abhorrent contact with the world of commerce and industry. He also still belongs to a social group which has not been alienated from power. Being a rational man, however, he is vulnerable to irrational forces.

Governess Sarah Woodruff, on the other hand, has "the instinctual profundity of insight,"²⁵ a quality which places her at the centre of the new world; a world of fresh, creative energies and unprecedented choices. She comes from a family of dispossessed yeomen and is now alone, without ties or responsibilities to others. And

Ernestina, daughter of a nouveau riche, social climbing tradesman, is supremely indifferent to both worlds because of the felt power of money. She is already aware that her wealth gives her power over people and things, and she is consequently careless to other people's feelings and needs.

Together the three form the hoary motif of the love triangle. Customarily its tensions are resolved by one woman pairing up with one man, but in this story, the man is finally discarded by both women. In a magazine article, Fowles declares:

My female characters tend to dominate the male. I see man as a kind of artifice and woman as a kind of reality. The one is cold idea, the other is warm fact. Daedalus faces Venus and Venus must win.²⁶

The phrase that "Venus must win" has an implication of battle/winner/loser which is deadly for relationship, particularly intimacy.* When informed by the Darwinian theory, the sentiment becomes an omen that the loser will ossify into a living fossil. There is thus no hope of redemption, or of a final peace of an Oedipus.**

Within relationship, a battle for survival encourages qualities of aggression and possessiveness, and emphasises conflict rather than co-operation. The reciprocal nature of relationship

b

*Marx held that "Man's need for a partner in the sexual relationship makes his own satisfaction dependent upon another person's satisfaction. By definition, sexual relations are reciprocal. If they are unilateral they cease to be a relationship, degrading the other person to the status of a mere object, rather than a co-equal subject."²⁷

**These comments were brought out in a conversation with Assoc. Prof. R. Frank, English Dept., Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon, U.S.A.

becomes impossible, for the loser has to surrender himself to the whim of the victor. Above all, the battle may be arbitrary in its selection of protagonists. Charles is intermittently reminded that paleontology is a record of dead species which succumbed through failure to adapt to or escape from changing conditions. Like George Bernard^o Shaw's life force, the evolutionary process is inevitable-- as is Sarah's rejection of Charles. His reaction to the developing evolutionary pattern is significant:

Some terrible perversion of human sexual destiny had begun; he was no more than a footsoldier, a pawn in a far vaster battle; and like all battles it was not about love, but about possession and territory.²⁸

The development of close relationship is subject to the same external pressures of evolutionary time* and the far-reaching implications of the Darwinian struggle. And specifically, it depends upon the character of the women; for they have not only the warmth of Venusian sexual reality, but also Daedalian contrivings and subtlety.

In the face of their power, Charles is an emotional innocent, for he considers himself to be a man of reason.** Informed by native wit, their intuitive strength makes him into a straw man, a stereotype of the landowning aristocrat clashing head-on with the New Woman. His ancestry and inclination make him inflexible against the onslaught of the future. But he is not blind to the changes

*Matthew Arnold, for example, felt "that the failure of love in these bad times without God is caused by the implacable flow of time. Time bears the lovers apart."²⁹

**It is curious that Fowles should stereotype men and women as "cold idea" and "warm fact." The close definition of personality by sex is surely a limiting principle, and Fowles expands upon it in The Aristos without lessening my unease.

occurring in the society, and has vague feelings of unease, "a general sentiment of dislocated purposes" and "of obscure defeat"³⁰ as though aware that his particular culture is doomed.

Although independently wealthy, Charles is not a possessive individualist. He is ~~"part of a larger"~~ "part of a larger social whole" and assumes his proper place between past and future, confident of his position in space and time. His failure to recognise and deal with the ambition of his valet Sam to be part of the new commercial world underlines his different kind of individualism. And although he sees his marriage to Ernestina as a form of exchange (his title for her money), this kind of bargaining was common for centuries within the aristocracy, and is not possessive.

In contrast to Charles, both women are strongly self-willed, and responsive to the impulse for change. Their ability to bend, to compromise, and to persuade others to their will both subtly and directly is marked. Sarah rides the forces of change, and uses Charles as the means to her end; and, ~~as~~ as part of the new commercialism, Ernestina needs a coronet to prove herself to be a legitimate successor to the aristocracy.

Though central to the story and to the two women, Charles is peripheral to their resolutions: he is discarded as an artifact of a defeated social force. Because his attachment to the old milieu of social relationships makes him refuse the dehumanising nature of the marketplace, he is open to exploitation and manipulation. The two women welcome the changing social forces, and their possessive individualism is made very clear both in their social ~~and~~ in their sexual relations with Charles. Thus he is taken very much by sur-

prise when Ernestina reacts so sharply to his confession of love for Sarah. She feels that she has been cheated of her bargain, for if Charles has possession of her body, he also owns her love. Thus her assumptions about intimacy are commercial and tinged with romanticism; but Charles' assumptions are no less suspect. Bound by traditional social conventions, his understanding of intimacy is very limited. Marriage in an arrangement of convenience glossed with declarations of love; and like most Victorians, he is uncomfortable with passion. Yet, because he is titillated by its possibilities, he becomes vulnerable to Sarah.

Sarah is a new phenomenon, for she is responsible only to and for herself rather than to society or to another person. She is presented as a woman of mystery, free of convention, family and friends, and her melancholy appeals to Charles' old-fashioned chivalry because it contains an implicit plea for help. As a woman of intellectual and emotional powers, she instinctively accords with Matthew Arnold's insight that "True piety is acting what one knows."³¹ Clearly, she is her own woman, and conforms to an early image of a possessive individualist. Forced into the marketplace on the death of her father, she has few skills that are wanted. In exchange for the job of governess, she loses her individual freedom, but seizes the first opportunity, provided by the French lieutenant, to regain it. That is, she instinctively struggles to return her labour to ~~to~~ herself, so that whether or not Varguennes becomes her lover is irrelevant. She soon recognises that he is not her means to freedom, and she returns to Lyme determined to use that experience to

try again.

Perhaps because reciprocal relations demands equality between the participants, Sarah refuses the Marxian imperative. She and Charles come together with "unilateral" needs, and intimacy fails to develop. For the same reason she also rejects all other relationships within the contemporary social fabric and marketplace--her first need is to be independent. Instinctively, for example, she converts intimacy into the language of commerce so that marriage becomes an exchange of property and thus a burden on her individual needs. But they do reach an understanding of equality, though it remains unspoken:

She smiled....It lay claim to a far profounder understanding, acknowledgement of that awkward equality melting into proximity than had been consciously admitted....Charles...was excited, in some way too obscure and general to be called sexual, to the roots of his being.³²

To Charles, Sarah promises a great deal through that smile, including a deep intimacy which holds the hint of reciprocal relations. It also gives the clue to Charles's obsession with her, for she liberates long-repressed forces in his soul. And it is the reader's first intimation of the powerful irrational forces by which Charles will be carried away, and through which Sarah will be emancipated.

Sarah is thus a dangerous woman in a tradition-bound, often hypocritical society. To Ernestina she represents the unknown and heterodox, and a freedom to be herself which is new and suspect; while to the naive Charles she is the challenge of the enigma, even of romance:

Sarah's was an unforgettable face, and a tragic face. Its

sorrow welled out of it as purely, naturally and unstoppably as water out of a woodland spring. There was no artifice there, no hypocrisy, no hysteria, no mask; and above all, no sign of madness.³³

The descriptive nouns are all revealing, for they typify the standard portrait of Victorian femininity, and make Sarah an original. Caught up with her mystery, Charles begins to drift away from reason, and to float on his emotions. His engagement to Ernestina then begins to pall.³⁴ Ernestina is too socially insecure to "act what she knows" until she is thwarted in her desires, and then she becomes a shrew.

Representative of the Victorian ethos, Ernestina Freeman is neither free nor earnest, for she is bound in filial duty to her protective father, who treats her as a precious commodity. She is a possession to be bought and sold in marriage, as though her father were an auctioneer. As an heiress of commerce, she understands that her possessions will enable her to own Charles. Like Sarah, therefore, Ernestina is a possessive individual³⁵, though in a different way: she owns herself only through her father. Money is her basis for power; its mere promise is sufficient to gain control over others. And being a commodity herself, she clearly understands the marketplace value of relationships, and every person around her becomes a commodity which can be bargained for.

To hide this commercial approach to marriage, however, Ernestina romanticises love and sex, although they too have an economic edge. Marriage is an enterprise to gain her own household and social position, while love is demoted to flirtation, and sex to a titilla-

tion of the senses. Relationships thus become connections between objects, and intimacy never becomes a bond between sexual equals.

She bides her time, playing the child to Charles' condescending older man: "Sweet child. You will always be that to me,"³⁵ he murmurs after a tiff. As a consequence, it embarrasses him to feel sexual stirrings while in her company.³⁶ The stereotype of engaged couples precludes any discussion about sex, so that Sarah's sensuality appears increasingly desirable to Charles. The engagement is conventional, including even the blushing maiden, so that Ernestina faints into Charles' arms at the merest hint of emotion. Such useful reflexes show that she is playing the proper role, for later scenes indicate that she stays conscious whatever the provocation when it is necessary. But they share little: she leaves him to his scientific hobby and he indulges her whims for domestic details without participating in the decisions. Ernestina would have sympathised with George Eliot's Mrs. Glegg about a woman's responsibilities:

The economising of a gardener's wages might perhaps have induced Mrs Glegg to wink at this folly of her husband's gardening if it were possible for a healthy female mind even to simulate respect for a husband's hobby.³⁷

Her relationship with Charles seems to hide more than it reveals, perhaps because the contractual nature of their engagement does not include the imperative of sharing their inmost thoughts and hopes. Thus it is a limited and limiting experience. In contrast, Sarah offers Charles a tantalising possibility of a greater honesty and openness, and even an enhanced feeling of vitality. Yet she is

also dangerously ambiguous: Her face "seemed both to envelop and reject him; as if he was a figure in a dream, both standing still and yet always receding."³⁸ Thus, in spite of the proprieties, Charles becomes increasingly less able to control his emotions. She evokes too many new impressions which he cannot understand:

what had on occasion struck him before as a presumption of intellectual equality (therefore a suspect resentment against man) was less an equality than a proximity..., an intimacy of thought and feeling hitherto unimaginable to him in the context of a relationship with a woman.³⁹

When added to thoughts of Madame Bovary, such intimacy launches Charles on a sea of new emotions. The growing friendship is not bound by social limits, or a contract between salesmen, but as an old-fashioned individualist he hopes that it will lead them into a new form of relationship.

But he underestimates her kind of power.

She made him aware of a deprivation. His future had always seemed to him of vast potential; and now suddenly it was a fixed voyage to a known place.⁴⁰

The words "fixed voyage to a known place" are a warning and a foreshadowing, for the Darwinian theory concerns adaptability. And as survival applies to a whole species, the hint of extinction necessarily extends to all amateur gentleman naturalists like Charles, whose capital is in land, their hereditary titles, and rational discourse.

Midway through the novel, therefore, Charles faces a choice: he can pursue the promise of emotional and sexual fulfillment or he can conclude a marketplace agreement, materially possessive and safe. He cannot explore a third alternative, the relationship between his

valet Sam and Mrs. Tranter's maid Mary. As lower class people whose lives have only been toughed externally by the commercial society, they have an intimacy which is open, honest and tender. Sex is accepted as part of the relationship because sexual desires have not yet been repressed in this class as they have in the bourgeoisie. Their liaison is thus fulfilling for them both. The new movement of capital is making its first inroads into Sam's character, however, for he looks out for his own advantage first, and will cheat on his employer if necessary.

Trapped within his rationalism, Charles becomes more obsessed with Sarah: "I feel like a man possessed against his will--against all that is better in his character."⁴¹ The rationality permits the obsession to subvert his will while the clandestine nature of the alliance, with its strong sexual undercurrent, helps to alienate his passion from the other elements of love. Sarah can manipulate this obsession, for Charles has no reference point or past experience that would enable him to control his increasing sexual desire and lust. In order to rationalise his emotions, and against his best judgement, he is driven to separate Sarah from acceptable society and to think of her as a "loose" woman. His later adventure with the prostitute, however, shows how false a position that is for him. His internal conflict is not resolved until after his lust has been satisfied, and he realises that love is a wholeness, but the rape violates his growing emotional bond with Sarah.

The consummation scene in Exeter is very powerful, but contains much ambiguity which can be resolved only through explanations

of irrational forces. Sarah's story about the French lieutenant and her seduction of Charles are both built upon lies which seem unnecessary, though they bring Charles to the heat of his passion. Perhaps, like the lodgepole pine seed, which is said to need the great heat of a forest fire to bring it to germination, Sarah needs the fire of passion to germinate her need for emancipation and independence. In a profound sense, she bargains her virginity for her freedom, for the rape provides the final link.

Sarah enters relationships, therefore, in order to exploit their potential to further her emancipation. Thus the mystery surrounding her 'affair' with Varguennes, followed by her deliberate choice of solitude whether on the Cob or the Undercliff, spins the first threads of the web which snares Charles. Change in her life thus becomes an opportunity to be seized and used, and even suffering is proudly accepted as part of her "fate," as though she knows that loss accompanies every gain. By "acting what one knows," Sarah does not violate her personhood when she uses events to become emancipated. Even love is used as a means to this end, for she intensifies her relationship with Charles, and then deliberately rejects marriage. She thereby regains the right to herself as her own property. Emancipation for Sarah therefore destroys a potential for intimate relationship.

It also means the definition of self as property: "freedom from dependence upon the wills of others." A love relationship would change her, she feels, and make her less than complete in herself.

I am not to be understood even by myself. And I can't tell you why, but I believe my happiness depends on my not understanding....But it is not you I fear. It is your love for me. I know only too well that nothing remains sacrosanct there.⁴²

She has found a new equilibrium, founded upon mystery and even ambiguity, which can only be enjoyed in solitude. Love disturbs the equation:

I do not want to share my life. I wish to be what I am, not what a husband, however, kind, however indulgent, must expect me to become in marriage.⁴³

This form of self-possession is more than an echo of C.B. MacPherson's possessive individualism, for Sarah explicitly rejects change which is suggested by others. Any loss of her personhood and central mystery are thus unacceptable.

Like his life, Charles' form of possession is traditional. He desires both to own Sarah, and to be owned, "to possess her, to melt into her, to burn, to burn to ashes on that body and in those eyes."⁴⁴ But a new Sarah is the phoenix that rises from his ashes (for he is an exemplar of the existentialist axiom "that the desire to hold and the desire to enjoy are mutually destructive."⁴⁵).

Unable to understand Sarah's new self-hood, and emotionally outraged that she prefers her "melancholy" to happiness with him, Charles interprets her self-sufficiency as a mirror image of his own possessiveness:

He sought her eyes for some evidence of her real intentions, and found only a spirit prepared to sacrifice everything but itself...in order to save its own integrity....And there he saw his own superiority to her...of an ability to give that was also an inability to compromise. She could give only to possess; and to possess him...to possess him was not enough.⁴⁶

This limited perception provides Charles with the germ of a new self-

respect. Based on the insight that this love is superior to her emancipation, he instinctively grasps a principle that sharing oneself with another is the supreme experience of life. Sarah's new individualism is self-oriented, property-conscious, and possessive, and changing values in the society make those qualities dominant. Thenceforward, all traditional customs become curiosities of antiquarian interest, for, like Charles, they have lost the battle for survival: he is the "ammonite stranded in a drought."

Through its sexual impact, its ambiguity and passion, Sarah and Charles' relationship has significantly changed their lives. But its conclusion poses two issues: first, that intimate relationship will permit no mystery, no solitude, no independence of soul, while the struggle to retain individuality, within the Darwinian model, is transmuted into one of possession, territory, and thus power. Second, that intimate relationships have no place in a world of industrial capitalism. Where relationship is seen as a "dependence upon the will of others," intimacy is impossible.

A marriage between the two worlds of eighteenth century rationalism and nineteenth century individualism, therefore, would have been foredoomed to a competitive struggle, with the triumph of new social patterns conforming with new concerns. Without love and relationship, however, Charles and Sarah remain celibate, and thus symbolically sterile, foregoing the joys and sorrows of profound emotional involvement with another person. In the world of this novel, therefore, relationships in the emerging society have been reduced to a Darwinian conflict, a battle for power and possession.

Emancipation has become possessive individualism. Yet there remains the memory of Sam and Mary whose personal relationship is not competitive: they struggle in the world of business, but they come close to achieving the unity described by de Chardin.*

Sarah's refusal to consider marriage is also consistent with Fowles' hypothesis of male and female principles. As Eve, she opposes the Adam of "selfish tyranny," of "hatred of change" and "stasis or conservatism," who can be changed only through conflict and battle. Women, as the agents of change, or "innovation and experiment, and fresh definitions, aims, modes of feeling" and "tolerance," must in fact overcome the male principle, and become emancipated from it.⁴⁷ Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest is thus a logical vehicle for Fowles' ideas. And a relationship of equals, one assumes, cannot occur until both men and women are Eves or Eve-men. Yet Charles is finally closer to Fowles' idea of a love relationship than Sarah.

She emancipates herself from the patriarchal, rigid Victorian society, but she does not represent a trend. For she associates herself with the Pre-Raphaelites who freed the emotions from Victorian repression, but whose dedication to craftsmanship and the machineless age was rejected. In their own way, the Pre-Raphaelites became "ammonites" also. Her association with the artists, however, indicates authorial approval of her liberation, for they were not

~~alienated~~

*Even here, however, there is a strong implication that commercialism is encroaching upon their intimacy; as a symbol of their love, Mary always wears the brooch with which Sam betrays Charles. Sam's business future is more important than Charles' happiness.

alienated from the past. Yet because they had no vision for the future, Sarah's emancipation is also incomplete. Though breaking her own and Charles' community, therefore, she is unable to "restore human relationship to man himself."

By returning to the Victorian era after writing The Collector, Fowles dramatises that a serious change in society has taken place. Emancipation has given Sarah a strong independence, self-confidence, and realised her potential, yet there is no love nor intellectual commitment in her portrait. And within a century, that liberation decayed to Miranda's flabbiness of thought and Clegg's envy and impotent possession. Sarah's independence of spirit was grounded in a strong, though intuitive, religious belief, and she has the potential to love. No such possibility exists in The Collector.

There has been a failure to love, the relinquishment of religious conviction, and a loss of intellectual rigour and of intuition. Above all, Sarah's need to be herself has degenerated into a conviction of uniqueness which precludes community and relationship. The Darwinian battle, seen as the struggle for survival inherent within industrial capitalism, has created a society in which competition has become the great leveller, smothering all creativity. The effort to survive has absorbed all available energy, and has generated a climate in which Fowles' "giving without return" is impractical, and tantamount to losing the game.

Thus it can be said that capitalism substituted possessive individualism for community; while sex begins as "intercourse without loving communion,..., becomes fornication as property, and ends with

possession as impotence."

"Fowles has explored that progression backwards: from impotent possession (The Collector) to individualism as sexual isolation (The French Lieutenant's Woman)." Doris Lessing begins by exploring alienation, which denies Marx's truth about sex, and her voyage brings her close to madness.⁴⁸

Doris Lessing

Doris Lessing's heroines are Sarah's spiritual descendants who live in a society which has become more strongly alienated and marketplace oriented. These women are strong, middle-class individualists who are conscious of the alienating and destructive qualities of modern capitalism, and are trying to find a way of staying sane and human. They are politically conscious, and determined to avoid holding a dehumanising job while fiercely defending their right to remain free of others--emotionally, intellectually, and physically.

As a committed socialist, Lessing saturates her writing with politics which gives it a powerful contemporaneity. Her women characters tend to be unconventional and creative, fighting for their emotional survival more energetically than the men, almost all of whom are emotionally debilitated by a dehumanising and emasculating economic system. (Fowles' Adam has ceased to exist.) They are often weak, less sensitive, more competitive and more dependent upon things for self-definition than the men. As Anna phrases it in The Golden Notebook,¹ "real men" who are self-possessed and emotionally whole are very scarce, and force women to fight to have their men return to strength and dominion. As D.H. Lawrence recognises, however, that struggle is futile,² and Anna comes to recognise the truth of his insight.

Reciprocal relationships are thus rare in the Lessing canon, as is love. For, as Milt says in The Golden Notebook: "Love is too difficult." In a society of commercial enterprise, the love of

"other-orientation" interferes with the logic of the marketplace. Thus Lessing's women isolate their intimate relationships as much as possible from the outside world, as though aware that any contact with the alienated society might crumble the intimacy. This seclusion of relationships from other people, however, is also distorting; as is the emphasis on the senses while neglecting the intellect. Indeed, for Anna Wulf, the desperate need to maintain the definition of herself as a woman deeply in love with a real man brings her to compromise part of her character.

Her Socialist ideology provides Lessing with a trenchant critical tool to assess contemporary western society. Through irony, she analyses the dehumanising qualities of the capitalist system and of the bureaucratisation of socialist aims. Both have similar effects on people, an issue which is developed in Lessing's play, Each his own Wilderness,⁵ which deals with the theme of personal alienation. For even within the family, the play asserts, individuals are unwilling to be beholden to others. Instead they are held within the armour of their own private desperation. Fulfillment is found either through frantic activities on behalf of other people, or through the transfer of commitment to things. Relationship no longer exists.

Such extreme alienation is muted in The Golden Notebook, though Anna Wulf, its narrator, asserts that the essence of her life is incommunicable; for experience changes subtly when it is converted into thoughts, words, and phrases. An event, she says, is changed by what ends it because it becomes objective and thence false. By

separating experience and reflection she rejects Wordsworthian romanticism and mirrors the deep philosophical split, the dissociation of sensibilities she feels. The resulting loss of wholeness prompts her to search for a relationship with a real man which will heal her soul. In the past, she has unsuccessfully tried to cure it through emigrating to Africa, or by committing herself to radical politics. Unity evades her in spite of her strong efforts, because the split affects the whole of society.

But Anna's desire for close relationship, "to love a man," eludes her. Contrary to her hope, her love is not enough to carry a relationship alone, nor can she exclude the alienating world and possess the relationship for herself. When she is in love and is loved, she feels she can be unified and complete, "manufacturing happiness like molasses" out of those moments. She strives to achieve de Chardin's insight: to possess herself when "lost in the other," yet she fails because her other-orientation is flawed. Her possessive individualism results in alienation just as it does in The French Lieutenant's Woman.

Ironically aware of her plight as a contemporary person, Anna calls herself a "free woman." Divorced and emancipated from traditional attitudes about woman's sexual role, she is also financially independent with the royalties from her novel. She is thus free from commercial pressures. Her freedom, however, is limited for her environmentally as a mother responsible for a child; and emotionally and intellectually by her relationships with other people. She also finds it difficult to escape from the commercial value imposed on

her liberty, and from the restrictions and expectations placed on women in a man's world. As a result, freedom often appears to be more illusory than real. This is also true within her relationships.

In one of her moments of frustrated insight, Anna sees that she can spend all afternoon sharing a "what's-wrong-with-men" bitching session with her friend and fellow free woman Molly, yet at its conclusion know that there would be

a sudden resentment, a rancour--because after all, our real loyalties are always to men, and not to women....She thought: I want to be done with it all, finished with the men vs women business, all the complaints and the reproaches and the betrayals.⁴

Once more, Anna is confused. Her loyalty to men would seem to compromise her freedom until it becomes clear that she needs a man--not for the relationship itself--but in whom to lose her alienated self and individuality. However, she is unable to lose herself "in the other," and so ironically, it is her individuality, not de Charadin's self-possession, which is greatest in the middle of an affair.

She is free in the commercial world, however, to refuse to participate in a dishonest marketplace morality in which the rights to her novel are bought, only to be altered beyond recognition. The refusal, however, becomes part of her "writer's block," so that for years she writes only for herself in her four, then five notebooks. Essentially, as Molly's son Tommy Portmain and then her friend Saul Green come to feel, this is a kind of arrogance, for she considers her fragmented life to be too personal and chaotic to be of vicarious help to others. The yearning to be whole leads to a longing for the past, a time when it seemed that some men lived by a whole,

organic philosophy, and could order their lives by it. Her theory of the modern novel reflects her pain:

The novel has become a function of the fragmented society, the fragmented consciousness. Human beings are so divided, are becoming more and more divided, and more subdivided in themselves, reflecting the world, that they reach out desperately, not knowing they do, for information about groups....It is a blind groping out for their own wholeness!...Yet I am incapable of writing the only kind of novel which interests me: a book powered with an intellectual or moral passion strong enough to create a new way of looking at life. It is because I am too diffused.⁵

Her theory however, ignores the possibility that people who are fragmented may be unable to pattern their lives after books which create order. It may be that the very diffuseness of the contemporary novel, and the searching out for information, will help people to understand once more that they are united by being human; just as Anna dreams of being an Algerian soldier, a Chinese peasant, and an evil old man.

Like Anna, this novel is "fragmented" and "diffused"; it incorporates large chunks of information, ideas, friendships, feelings, all contained in or rather scattered through four differently coloured notebooks which do indeed lead to a kind of unity and a new way of looking at life. The notebooks are Anna's personal prism through which she records her past. Between excerpts from the notebooks, however, are sections called "Free Women" which regularly force the reader away from the completed past into the unordered present. The structure presumes that the mind moves fluidly between aspects of time, and so it is the reader who must try and make a coherent whole, because the narrator cannot.

The resulting story is not always easy to follow, for the real,

or imagined, or illusory elements of Anna's life combine and separate as though obscured by mists on a seashore, driven by unseen and unfelt air currents. This technique has the effect of involving the reader very closely in order to interpret and make sense of the different versions of the same incident. Thus Anna confronts her readers with a very potent image of herself, real and imagined, concrete and abstract. And she does "create a new way of looking at life" which can be unifying, even though her search for unity creates ambiguities between "fact" and "fiction" which confuse the reader, and which inevitably affect the nature of her intimate relationships.

Given the marketplace society and its alienating effects, it should not be surprising that in spite of her self-irony, courage, intellect, and awareness of emotional need, Anna cannot find a man to share her vision of love. But she longs for it:

Anna was thinking: A woman without a man cannot meet a man, any man, of any age, without thinking, even if it's for a half-second, Perhaps this is the man.⁶

Anna's desire for unity takes precedence in any relationship, and this desire that someone else should complete her indicates early the possessive edge of Anna's desire for self-fulfillment. But because she is not an aggressive person, she is invariably chosen; she does not choose her men. And because they are not other-directed, the resulting relationships fail to give her unity for very long.

Her choice of men, however, is limited. Her circle of friends is small and isolated, while her experience of radical politics is in a state of emotional and intellectual stagnation. She finds that

many members of the ideological left are either fossilising, or more fragmented than she. As ex-Communist Milt remarks: "It's a crazy thing....Moving about the world...you open a door, and behind it you find someone in trouble. Every time you open a door, there's someone in pieces."⁷ In addition, as a divorcee and a free woman she is considered fair game for men looking for an easy lay. Within such limits, intimacy is difficult to find.

The three major relationships of the novel are those with Molly Jacobs; with Michael, a middle-European emigre from Communism; and with an American, Saul Green. Anna writes of them in significantly different ways. The first relationship exists in two time zones and through two personalities: the present, written as reality in reportage style, where Molly is herself; and the past seen as fiction* where Molly is herself and Julia. The second is half imaginary, half real, in which Anna and her friend Michael become Ella and Paul (and the names and characters become interchangeable); while the third is almost wholly a creation of Anna's imagination, though the outline for the relationship contains experiences with two Americans, Milt and Nelson, and Milt's story of one Harry Matthews.

Anna's durable and well-tempered friendship with Molly is based chiefly upon their common political interests, their common problem of bringing up a child without a man, and their experiences with men. At the outset, Anna is somewhat defensive and self-protective towards Molly, but as she becomes less consciously dependent upon the

*From Anna's observation that "literature is analysis after the event."⁸

friendship she develops self-confidence. She is able, for example, to deal with Tommy when his mother is distraught.

Within this friendship, however, there is a strong sense of possessiveness. Molly (Julia) is protectively jealous of Anna's financial freedom, as well as possessive towards her writing talent. Thus she castigates Anna for refusing to write because she wants to enjoy Anna's talent and envies Anna her freedom to live without having to sell her soul. Because of that freedom she seems to feel that Anna is more whole and can be more of a person, unaware that she is thereby conferring more worth and value on the fact of an independent income than on the regularly earned wage. There is an echo here of MacPherson's comment that for the philosopher John Locke, individuality "can only be fully realized in accumulating property, and therefore only realized by some, and only at the expense of the individuality of the others."⁹ Molly's possessiveness, thus emerges out of defensiveness as a product of marketplace inequality, so that Anna can seriously discuss neither her writer's block, for example, nor question the utility of exchanging betrayals by men friends. Molly's emotional and intellectual security seems to depend upon Anna's self-assurance and lack of self-doubt based upon an independence of the marketplace.

The friendship is shown to be relatively straightforward and simple by the dry, spare language used to describe it in both the Free Women sections and the notebooks. It is their 'magnetic north,' the point of sanity which they use to cope with the pressures of society. Once their common concerns and needs dwindle, however, a la-

tent competitiveness mainly about men becomes explicit and interferes with their friendship. When Molly gets married, and her son is settled, all that remain are warm memories, a limited emotional alliance, and a diminishing political interest to hold them together. For the friendship has not been defined by their need for each other, but as a consequence of their common problems; and this ultimately affects their ability to communicate. They are then left with an increasing sense of futility through their loss of closeness.

Molly's possessiveness, however, obliges Anna to keep her individuality intact. When she is with Molly, she has to phrase her ideas and experiences so that they are neither critical nor emotionally disturbing. The effort to do so makes her self-protective, so that when the time comes she cannot tell the truth about her writing to Molly's son. And the steady assumption between the two women that they prefer the company of men to women further interferes with their relationship. "Free women," said Anna wryly... 'they still define us in terms of relationships with men, even the best of them!'"¹⁰ In spite of the inference that she prefers not to be defined in such terms, however, Anna's lifestyle perpetuates the misunderstanding. Her impulse to be possessive of herself is obscured by her strong desire for intimacy.

Still informed with much self-irony, Anna's affairs with Michael and Saul appear more profound and intense because of their sexual elements. The theme of possessive individualism, however, persists. Anna's account of Molly is clear, gleaned through the ever-shifting diary entries. That of Anna's first affair with Michael is more ima-

ginatively presented and much more difficult to piece together, for it is interspersed with the parallel fictional story of Ella and Paul. Neither story is told as a whole unit; each is fragmented and interphased with other events of Anna's life, past and present. The technique reveals that the affair does not bring Anna the unity she yearns for.

Anna weaves the two stories together, juxtaposing them in such a way that it is often difficult, though perhaps unnecessary, to separate fiction and reality. Unnecessary because the two accounts reinforce each other: Anna's insights into Ella are also hers into herself. Combining fact and imagination, for example, brings Anna to a greater perception about the relations of herself and her physical body ("Our bodies understood each other," she writes of Ella and Paul¹¹). And later, as Anna, she writes intensively and intimately about herself--her activities, her thoughts, her physical troubles--for one complete day. As though preparing herself for the later, more profound knowledge concerning the nature of her mind, she seems compelled to understand her physical person before that of her psychic.

The psychic adventure comes with the relationship with Saul Green, and is presented entirely as one of the imagination; it occurs only in notebook form. Although these men are based on two Americans with whom she had short sexual encounters, they provoke none of the intensity, the sexual warmth and jealousy (and accompanying fear), or the involvement of Anna's intimacy with Saul. This brings her to the edge of madness, to a confrontation with her intelligence, her imagina-

tion, her very identity, and results in self-knowledge, an enlarged sense of identity, and an increased psychological awareness. It is both terrifying and marvellously rewarding, for Anna comes to know not only herself, but also through the empathy of love and passion, the nature of Saul. She also experiences the contraries of suffering and of sublime happiness. The experience confirms her insistence that she must be in love as a prelude to self-discovery.

So this relationship is quite different. It is written as a complete unit, without interruption; through understanding herself more clearly, this relationship has unified Anna. Depending upon the intensity of her love, therefore, she may engender either perceptive insight, or personal limitation. When she is in love with Michael/Paul, for example, Anna/Ella writes of welcoming the emotional satisfactions of suspending the drive of her intelligence. For her, the interplay of giving and taking in the love affair with Michael enhances her physical and emotional nature. But by not taking her creative intelligence seriously, Michael inhibits her deeper insights of both intellect and spirit. (And though Ella writes a novel during her affair with Paul, it is about suicide and death.)

On the other hand, when Saul respects Anna's experience and knowledge, Anna-in-love moves into a deeper awareness of herself (as in the qualities of touch), while her desires, motives, and imagination move into new spheres of empathy with other people and cultures. Her preference, however, is to be inhibited intellectually, as that increases her emotional and physical perceptions. These help to push back the borders of the resented alienating world. But Anna's

happiness is not shared; as Anna commits herself to the relationship, Michael's involvement becomes only marginally important.

Several points are clear about the affair with Michael/Paul: its striking privacy; Anna's utter commitment seen in counterpoint with Michael's qualified response; her emotional refusal to recognise the imminent end of the affair in spite of knowing the truth; and the strong possessive character of the relationship. Once Paul has trampled the barriers of Ella's social and sexual privacy, she falls deeply in love, and holds to a powerful image of both herself and the relationship (which lasts longer than her marriage). Her son Michael thinks of Paul as a father, and Ella fights to keep the image of him as her man. So she knowingly chooses to overlook his daily visits to his wife and children as irrelevant to their love, and tries to ignore his provocation about her willingness to make love on their first date.

Afterwards he would complain, half-bitter, half-humorous: 'You should have loved me at first sight...' Later still, he would develop the theme, consciously humorous now...: 'The face is the soul. How can a man trust a woman who falls in love with him only after they have made love? You did not love me at all.'¹²

Even though Paul is dishonestly rationalising his desire to leave Ella, his conclusion seems to have a grain of truth. His accusation makes her love seem false as it is the result of a bargain, but if she has not been in love with him for five years, then clearly, her desire for relationship brings her to fall in love with the wholeness she experiences within intimacy.

This would explain a great deal about Anna-Ella. Ready for a

commitment to a man, Ella is an easy victim to Paul's charm. Because of the alienating nature of society however, she attempts to keep this relationship out of the marketplace by keeping him largely to herself. Her flat becomes a refuge, a haven in which they eat together ritualistically night after night, after her son has gone to bed. (Similarly, Anna's daughter always eats her meals on a tray in her room when Michael is in the house.) The themes of isolation and privacy only accompany Anna's two intimate relationships. She seems to be insecure, fearful that they will be shattered if they are not protected by the cushion of secrecy from an alienated, fragmenting society.

At the same time, she becomes so "other-directed" that she seems to be only half a person when he is absent. Even after several years of separation, Ella is still dependent upon Paul:

When she was with Paul she felt no sex hungers that were not prompted by him; that if he was apart from her for a few days, she was dormant until he returned....That when she loved a man again, she would return to normal: a woman that is, whose sexuality is, so to speak, contained by a man, if he is a real man; she is, in a sense, put to sleep by him, she does not think about sex.¹³

The statement is strange, because it would appear that women who have desires are abnormal, and that she is dependent upon a real man who will release her desires and then fulfill them. But because she believes that love and sex must go together, her instinct that Paul does "contain" her sexuality brings Ella to the belief that he is an integrated man who will unify her. When he refuses her love therefore, she feels betrayed because he has denied her desire for unity, and thus undermined their sexual relationship as well as

her love.*

As a man who can "darken" her mind, Paul gives Ella a unity which is destroyed when he leaves her. Similarly, when Michael doubts the reality of their "great love affair," and accuses Anna of living in her own world of reality, she feels

a terrible dismay and coldness at his words, as if he were denying my existence....Afterwards I fought with a feeling that always takes hold of me after one of these exchanges: unreality, as if the substance of my self were thinning and dissolving.¹⁵

By identifying herself with Michael, Anna loses materiality and feels vulnerable and insecure without him, although Ella hopes that she will fall in love with another real man who will give her security.

Yet Anna's surrender to Michael is in conflict with her possessive individualism, and it stifles her creativity. She exchanges the alienating nature of contemporary relationships for the willing alienation of her own self; for by giving up her freedom to desire, she gains "integrity" which she defines as "orgasm." The irony is sharp. A free woman is thus one who does not experience "orgasm" because she is not made whole through sexual fulfillment within intimacy. That is, "free women" are not free; they are merely alienated. The logical thrust becomes one in which only through surrender of her consciousness can a woman be true to herself and find her real freedom.

D.H. Lawrence has the same message in his novels Women in Love

*Marx held that "sex as an end is non-human, so that the quality of sex determines how far man's natural behaviour has become human."¹⁴

and Aaron's Rod, and in some of his essays. The conception, however, denies that women have desires as women to be free and integrated, surrendering and consciously knowing. In addition, Anna illustrates that her surrender brings Michael to "own" her so that she defines her self in terms of his existence; and her surrender then creates a complementary possession.

Because of her deep need for the relationship, Anna denies Michael's reality as a man deeply scarred and alienated by political and personal experience. Creating an image of him as a real man, she possesses a relationship which integrates her; but by placing her desire for unity within something outside herself, the split remains in her soul. When Michael leaves her, she has to return to her previous self, with its intellectual capabilities and responsibilities, which she has surrendered to him. Ella calls her submission "naivety:" "What Ella lost during those five years was the power to create through naivety."¹⁶ (Italics in the text.) It fulfills her, she says, when Paul

destroyed in her the knowing, doubting, sophisticated Ella and again and again he put her intelligence to sleep...so that she floated darkly on her love for him, on her naivety, which is another word for a spontaneous creative faith. And when his own distrust of himself destroyed this woman-in-love, so that she began thinking, she would fight to return to naivety.¹⁷

The repetition of Ursula's experience in Woman in Love, and the echo of Lawrence's essay on women, "The Real Thing," is both striking and numbing as Anna/Ella is supposed to be a free woman. And the quotation would seem to support Lawrence's contention that women are emotionally and sexually dependent upon men, but that men are

similarly dependent. As a result, Anna is open to emotional and intellectual manipulation in her fight to return to naivety. And in a world in which men are more alienated than women, it would be impossible for the women to be creative in this way.

The phrase "she floated darkly on her love for him" also emphasises that the relationship appears to be incomplete. She is not "lost in the other," but lost in herself, which takes the ego self into the heart of her deepest intimacy. Thus the relationship fails ultimately because it is foreign to Anna's nature. She deludes herself if she feels that it is right for her intellect to be denied. The split she experiences runs through the whole culture, and it cannot be healed through an alienated, private affair, nor one which excludes the mind and over-emphasises feeling. Anna uses her relationships to buffer herself from reality, and it is most of all this protective shell which Anna misses when Michael leaves her. In spite of herself, then, Anna still belongs to herself; she has merely overlaid her individualism with the desire to be whole. In this way, she can avoid confronting herself.

Ironically, Anna undergoes psychotherapy (presumably an integrating experience) throughout her affair with Michael, in order to make her "feel." As an invasion of her psyche, the therapy parallels her emotional surrender in which Anna is (in the words of Hobbes) "invaded and dispossessed." Because of the voluntary nature of both acts, Anna does not feel devalued as a person, although Molly constantly questions the value of the relationship. Both the affair and the therapy conclude at the same time, which suggests that

the 'cure,' the ability to feel, has finally sensitised Anna to recognise Michael's waning interest and thus see her illusion for what it is. Also it suggests that Anna's most significant relationship is associated with loss of feeling, and with her writer's block.

Essentially, this intimacy is one of submission and power (like many commercial transactions), and Anna's preference for isolation becomes another kind of possessiveness because it spawns certain pressures. Michael takes advantage of her availability until the golden threads of domesticity and sexual passivity begin to chafe, and then he struggles to be free by beginning another affair.

Three years later, Anna experiences her second passionate relationship, and it is an illustration of one of Ella's story ideas:

I've got to accept the patterns of self-knowledge which mean unhappiness or at least a dryness. But I can twist it into victory. A man and a woman--yes. Both at the end of their tether. Both cracking up because of a deliberate attempt to transcend their own limits. And out of the chaos, a new kind of strength.¹⁸

Like Michael, and most of her casual brushes with sexual partners, Saul Green is a foreigner. But sex within this alliance is not always a surrender; it is a barometer of the quality of the relationship, and a physical earthy contact giving security and warmth from which to move into and return from psychic exploration. For Anna it becomes the means for surrender and knowledge through which she experiences a kind of terror, and for the first time a strong, pulsating sexual jealousy.

The sole account of this affair is in diary form, and though unified, is thus less than the truth. Powerful, and stunningly ambiguous, it is an interrupted unity written in two notebooks, first in the blue (used for personal reflection), and then in the gold (for unity). Significantly, however, the gold notebook is not mentioned in the free women section which succeeds it, so it is as yet an imaginative unity only. Once more, time is fluid and without a reference point, so that what seems to be weeks of an affair with Saul is only six days with Milt. The association, indeed, is passed over lightly with the comment from Molly, that "it" was "not the most sensible thing you ever did, I should have thought."¹⁹ But if the golden notebook is the symbol of Anna's unification (as is certainly implicit within the novel's structure), the creation of order out of her chaos and the accomodation of warring elements into one whole, then her remark is another indication of Molly's inability to grasp Anna's selfhood.

But it is this mostly imaginary relationship which brings Anna out of her private world back into the public view. She starts looking for a job, takes on volunteer work with juvenile delinquents, and joins the Labour Party. That is, the affair enables her to accept at least for the moment the split nature of herself and reality. It also brings her to a minimal accomodation with the world of commerce and business.

Once more, however, Anna creates love out of the relationship and her need for a man, through Saul's need for her to renew men's self-confidence at a time when they are emotionally, psychologically,

and thus sexually insecure. For the moment though, it is enough for her that she lies "in the arms of a man one loves."²⁰ From that security comes a sense of "oneness with everything." She takes on the mantle of being all women to Saul, but that stifles him and forces him out of the isolated "ship" of her flat into the outer world where other women are not so smothering. Saul thus responds to Anna's exclusiveness in the same way as Michael, even though the relationship is different. With the involvement of Anna's intelligence, the affair is emotionally unifying and very exhausting, for it leaps from love, to hate, to friendship, to egomania, to defensive neutrality. The ambiguity of the section is such, however, that all these shared characteristics may belong only to Anna, where they are fighting for order and priority.

Thus it is she, not the relationship, which expands and develops, though she can describe only the loss and deprivation of happiness, love and sublime joy she finds in intimacy. Similarly, she grasps Marx's tenet that "the basic unit of reality is a Relation,"²¹ for she finds herself as Anna, and as part of all suffering humanity fighting for its freedom from oppression.

Recognising this Relation, however, brings Anna to the edge of insanity. It is as though the struggle to combat the alienation of contemporary society with the emotional surrender to love and relationship creates a powerful psychological conflict. She is unable to carry the memory of her joy into her life. Instead she becomes frantic, jealous of Saul's absences, and this triggers terrifying dreams in which she almost loses her self. Her self-irony disappears,

and only her despised intellect rescues her. In an awareness of sanity felt through the shock of insanity, she comes to feel that

sanity depends on this: that it should be a delight to feel the roughness of a carpet under smooth soles; a delight to feel heat strike the skin, a delight to stand upright, knowing the bones are moving easily under flesh.²²

Once more, this affair is wholly protected from the public. Though they hold the seeds of many short stories and novellas, her visions and insights are shared only with her diary. It is as though Anna's very immersion of herself in another like Saul who is equally possessive of a dream, is extensively creative, but the creativity remains undeveloped and unshared. Instead, Anna's deepest instincts are committed to maintain the integrity of her whole person. This fundamental inability to share her self is a heavy burden on her men, and they ultimately refuse the enveloping responsibility of her possessiveness.

Nevertheless, Saul Green is a different kind of man from Michael, and it is significant that, as a mostly imagined person, he accepts more of Anna. First the relationship is not primarily defined as sexual, as it was with Paul/Michael. Anna can bring her mind into the friendship without it being decried or discounted; rather it is respected and responded to in a serious way.²³ Emotionally they are also compatible, as his neuroses produce equally strong neuroses in her.

For the first time, Anna's developing love carries the need to be the only woman in Saul's life so that he can respond to her in the image of a real man. Both those desires are possessive. When happy

with him, she sees the flat "like a ship floating on a dark sea, it seems to float, isolated from life, self-contained."²⁴ And the intimacy remains private because Anna feels that "there was nothing to say" about it. When the relationship is going well, it permits her to lose herself once more, without thought, awareness of time, or analysis of experience. This contrasts strongly with her outpourings on her suffering, her quotidian life, and her unhappiness when Saul breaks the spell she creates around them. Inevitably, when Saul leaves her, she feels "betrayed," because he was her source of happiness. It is the same denial of relationship that brings her to rationalise Michael away: "I had happiness with Michael, but it meant nothing to him, for if it did, he wouldn't have left me."²⁵

This is a curious remark, because it uses the singular 'I' and not 'we.' It implies that her happiness is paramount. Feeling betrayed when her lovers leave her also means that she does not carry the happiness with her in memory, which leads her to be increasingly possessive of the man who can evoke that happiness within her. It is the only time that she can ignore the external world, and thus her own possessive individualism.

Saul's instinctive refusal to co-operate highlights his impulse to self-preservation, as well as his awareness that Anna wants to possess him in order to heighten her individualism. This is further illustrated by an illuminating passage.

Then there was moment of knowledge. I understood I'd gone right inside his craziness: he was looking for this wise, kind, all-mother figure, who is also sexual playmate and si

sister; and because I have become part of him, this is what I was looking for too, both for myself, because I needed her, and because I wanted to become her. I understood I could no longer separate myself from Saul, and that frightened me more than I have been frightened.²⁶

Frightened first of all because she knows that he will leave her as soon as she makes too many strong emotional claims on him, and thus lose her new found unity. Yet that picture of a woman is similar to the mental portrait Ella imagines of Paul's wife, and it is one which is not crazy at all: the figures of mother, sister, lover and friend contain the four aspects of love. Anna herself has shown elements of all three figures with Saul, but it seems that the prospect of being whole as a woman and a human being fills her with panic. Her freedom as a possessive individualist would be compromised.

It is paradoxical, yet consistent with her individualism, that Anna is willing to surrender much of what she is as a person in order to become naive, yet is frightened of experiencing a genuine form of unity with another through love. The paradox can be explained because she can retain her individuality in the first, and may not in the second. A comparison of Anna's relationships reveals that the first two contain forms of submission which enable Anna to avoid an emotional commitment which will change her. And the third forces her to think critically about herself, an evaluation which sends her into jealousy and madness, but not wholeness, which will compromise her self.

One further result of her time with Saul is that she writes a great deal out of her terror of separation, of mental breakdown and

unhappiness. Out of the emotional conflict and friction is born both a creative urge, and a desire to create a new order. Thus Saul writes his successful short novel from Anna's suggested first liner; and Anna writes The Golden Notebook from his! Thus the section of the novel relating her affair with Saul Green is the most original and inventive because it recognises that an alienated society cannot be healed through submission. And also that for Anna the key to unity lies within her own mind.

Preferring to submit also makes her hide her vital talent which would force her to become a public figure. The novel begins: "The two women were alone in the London flat." They are Saul's words yet, ambiguously and paradoxically, he prefaces them with a short phrase: "There are the two women you are, Anna."²⁷ Molly, the Jewish extrovert, cheerfully independent, impressed with character and not money, a small-time actress and artistic dilettante; and Anna, the thoughtful, quiet, talented, "spiky" committed author: the public and private Anna. With the publication of the novel, they exchange roles, for Molly gets married, adjusting her old philosophy to something which may be close to the truth of both women: It was said of Molly that "Her source of self-respect was that she had not--as she put it--given up and crawled into safety somewhere. Into a safe marriage."²⁸

The 'Molly' part of Anna thus becomes private, and this releases her inner self, her individuality, to the outer world, so that she can get a job dealing with "other people's marriages." The mere factor of both women becoming "integrated with British life at its

roots"²⁹ forces the committed Anna back into the marketplace, where she has to bargain with her talents in order to earn a living. As a consequence, she will no longer be a "total proprietor of her own person," and she realises it with a new consciousness: that she will enter an affair knowing that it will be temporary, "barren" and "limited." For those are the results of feeling in a world in which love generally leads only to money and power.^{30*} That is, while there are no "real men," her denial of alienation continually increases her feeling of being split.

The idiom of possessive individualism creates many of Anna's problems with relationship which she wants to experience without compromising her freedom. Her assertion that loving a man is the only thing she has talent for³¹ helps to deny her alienation, but it also helps her to avoid confronting her fragmented life. And her individualism forces her to deny the Marxian insight that all things are related. Her only recourse is to explore her psychic unity, even though she knows that this will mean "buttoning-up" her emotions.

Because of Anna's inner and personal struggles, and the fascination of the struggle between individual freedom and commitment to another, she becomes superlatively real. She has an involvement with living which is consequential for the reader. Interestingly, Doris Lessing wrote that she interrupted her Bildungsroman on Martha Quest in order to write The Golden Notebook, as though she were conscious of a lack in the saga. For the series is generally unemotional, and

*As Adam Smith says: love often leads to ambition, but ambition seldom leads to love.

unintellectual, and contains little intimate relationship. Emotion and intimacy are not the primary concerns of Martha in the second Lessing novel under discussion, The Four-Gated City,³² and the novel is often impersonal as a result.

The book could be seen as a dramatisation of a perception of Anna's: she is speaking to her psychiatrist, insisting that there are new things in the world which can be recognised:

Yes, there's a hint of something--there's a crack in that man's personality like a gap in a dam, and through that gap the future might pour in a different shape--terrible perhaps, or marvellous, but something new---...sometimes I meet people, and it seems to me the fact they are cracked across, they're split, means they are keeping themselves open for something.³³

Martha Quest is one of those people.

In her essay for the book Declaration, Doris Lessing makes a strong plea for a commitment from the artist: to investigate and to probe the limits and responsibilities involved in the "conflict" which exists between the obligations of the individual to the society, and those to his own conscience and judgement.

The point of rest should be the writer's recognition of man, the responsible individual, voluntarily submitting his will to the collective but never finally; and insisting on making his own personal and private judgements before every act of submission.³⁴

This commitment is the stated central theme of the Martha Quest novels: "a study of the individual conscience in its relations with the collective."³⁵ Lessing goes on to declare that those who wish to create a new social order must have a vision, one which "must spring from the nature of the world we live in," and one which involves not merely a question of preventing an evil, but of streng-

thening a vision of a good which may defeat the evil."³⁶

With such a definite goal, it is curious that Lessing should create a heroine who makes few conscious moral decisions per se, of which the reader is directly informed. Instead, Martha seems to drift in and out of situations which on reflection appear to have been morally decided. In the novel, the existing society has no vision, and is destroyed by an accidental nuclear explosion, thus enabling a new, moral social order to come into being. In the absence of national and international conscience, it is Martha's task to provide the essential moral perspective as she works through her relations with the collective. The novel, therefore, is profoundly religious.

The millennial resolution to the novel focusses its religious nature, and infers that a new vision of community is not possible through the renewal of close relationships within the present society because it has lost its faith. Thus relationships are not important to Martha. Salvation can only come, Lessing suggests, through a purging which will cleanse Britain and thence the world of its miseries, inequities, and injustice.

Thus this novel, like The Golden Notebook and The Collector, confronts the reader with the assumption that primary relationships are impracticable in a social system which is eroding the human spirit of its freedom and judgement, and reducing human relations to the medium of the marketplace. The metaphor of the city gates also warns of the penalties of extremism; and recommends a balance which will release the potential of living a moral, creative life

as a whole person. Only those, however, who have kept their freedom of soul and integrity of mind are free to enter new worlds of perception and action.

The Four-Gated City therefore contributes strongly to the argument of possessive individualism; although it contains no intimate relationships it clarifies some of the consequences of such individualism, while its symbols give a sense of organised relationships which provide a foil to the personal. Both symbolically and literally, it vividly illustrates the consequences of extremist activity, and shows the effects on a novel of such a strong authorial commitment.

This commitment is important, for it indicates Lessing's approach to the "responsible individual" in society. First, the individual and the collective are always in potential conflict and tension with each other. Second, the individual is paramount in society as the source of values, indicating that she/he should validate all decisions. Finally, she/he is free from pressures which will prevent them from making "personal and private judgements" free of bias. Martha Quest is such an individual and, like Anna, she is a possessive individualist.

All Martha's jobs, for example, are limited in their demands on her time and energy; she has minimal "dependence on the wills of others." Committing herself to no-one, she has few close relationships, and only her mother is demanding of her time and emotional support. (These demands drain Martha of physical and emotional strength, as she resents the intrusion of another person on her self.

This situation brings Martha to the verge of a mental breakdown.) Her freedom as an individual remains essentially uncompromised, and is an illustration of MacPherson's assertion that "society becomes a lot of free equal individuals related to each other as proprietors of their own capacities and of what they have acquired by their exercise. Society consists of relations of exchange between proprietors."³⁷

Martha flirts with the idea of living with the London working class, for example, through short visits with two families. But, emotionally stifled by the close family relationships, Martha soon rejects this way of community. Her companions are not "free" in the individual sense. Instead they belong to their own collective, subject to rules which are largely unquestioned and accepted, and thus do not assert the proprietorship of their own persons. And when she is interviewed for her job with the Coldridge family, the same emphasis is there: Martha wants no claims to be laid on her; the hope in a child's eyes that she will stay with them gives her the jitters. Only when independent does she feel able to fulfill herself.

In view of this bias, her natural niche is in an upper middle class family of independent wealth where nothing is emotionally required of her. The family is a group of free-wheeling individualists, owing little to anyone save through a limited sense of kinship and unspoken affection. MacPherson's phrase "relations of exchange between proprietors" to describe the Coldridges may be rather stringent, but bartering occurs on the emotional plane in the family. It is explicit, for example, in Mark Coldridge's re-

relationships with his mentally ill wife Lynda and implicit with his son Francis, while his nephew Paul feels obliged to use it in his contacts with the family after being abandoned by both his parents.

Lessing's commitment as an artist can be traced through the five books of the Quest series, concluding in The Four-Gated City. The earlier novels take place in the British colony of Zambesia, where Martha grows up in rebellion against family and convention during the inter-war years. It is an early indication of her declaration of independence from social ties. Adulthood brings two marriages and subsequent divorces, motherhood, and membership in the Communist Party (her background is surprisingly similar to Anna Wulf's), and then emigration to England in 1946.

Strictly speaking, all Martha's experiences have ended in failure, but when judged in the light of Lessing's commitment, she is seen to be testing herself against the conventional relationships of the collective: the family, marriage, motherhood and the political community. Martha refuses to submit to any of them, as none of them are consistent with the vision of a new society she saw as a child, and which still beckons to her.

After each experience, Martha struggles to regain her independence. (Lessing's word "conscience" seems inappropriate here in that there is no explicit moral decision.) She recognises that she is very different from the simple black women "who might be women in peace, according to their instincts,"³⁸ but she searches for an equivalent wholeness first through social contacts, and then through her self.

This assertion of individualism is gradual but distinct. At the time of Martha's arrival in London (the beginning of The Four-Gated City), she has deliberately abandoned her roots. First with her daughter Caroline, whom she leaves ostensibly for the child's sake, when she separates from her first husband. Then with her mother, a familial relationship which has never been satisfactory, for neither woman could sympathise with the other's frustrations and rebellion against Zambesia and its counterfeit white colonial society. And finally by leaving Zambesia where she was born.

Limited as they are, all the relationships are conventional, almost stereotyped. Martha seems to be responding to generalisations about family and marriage, and that may be one of the reasons that if Martha cannot get excited about them, neither can the reader. The individualism is developing in reaction to a smothering, spiritually exhausted collective, composed largely of unthinking, self-oriented, futile people who permit Martha almost no alternatives. Such a 'straw' society has few redeeming features, and is not difficult to ridicule. The English society is not very different, and Martha avoids that as much as possible, for she understands that "the new, an opening up, has to be through a region of chaos, of conflict. There was no other way of doing it."³⁹ And the English community is ordered and confining, not chaotic and open.

Personal attachments thus come to be recognised as emotional traps which will destroy the objectivity, the distancing she needs to find her place vis-a-vis the community at large. This with-

drawal from personal needs leaves her curiously flat as a character. Many of her motives remain hidden or undiscovered; because she has few confessional relationships, the reader's acquaintance with her is largely limited to her social activities and minimal narrator comment. The loss of depth is crucial, for it eventually creates a lack of credibility in Martha as a person, and thus questions the validity of Lessing's thesis.

In addition, she cuts herself off from the past because her memories are painful, and she lives for her vision and the future. Yet she can only keep schizophrenia at bay when she recreates her childhood step by difficult step. Her problem lies in her agonising associations with her mother's insensitivity and pathetic snobbery; but it is the house, not the relationship, which Martha recaptures to cure herself during her breakdown. The transference of person to place is symptomatic, and it once more results in a loss of depth. Paradoxically, however, the madness which results from her denial of community and intimacy is the means to her salvation and her new community.

Martha's isolation and alienation can be seen as one of Lessing's responses to the increasing political and bureaucratic interference in, and violence done to, the individual life. These invasions of privacy became increasingly evident in the inter-war years. Significantly, the title of the Quest series is Children of Violence, and Martha sees herself as a child of her time.

Every fibre of Martha's body, everything she thought, every movement she made, everything she was, was because she had been born at the end of one world war, and had spent all her

adolescence in the atmosphere of preparations for another which had lasted five years and had inflicted such wounds on the human race that no one had any idea of what the results would be.

Martha did not believe in violence.

Martha was the essence of violence, she had been conceived, bred, fed and reared on violence.⁴⁰

And both violence and possessive individualism attack the existing social order, so Martha continues to reject society's traditional attachments as mother for child, child for parent, man for woman, woman for man. Lessing's society, like that of Hobbes, is a power struggle in which there are no disinterested relationships. By inference, possessing only oneself becomes a moral position, though it denies society which consists of a web of relationships.

Thus the phrase "individual conscience" develops for Martha into a strong form of possessive individualism; She recognises no direct duty or obligation toward the collective; she owes nothing to the past or to the present; while many of her relationships are discharged within an alienated context. She becomes an observer of society, commenting on it by her rejection of its tenets. As a Marxist, she refuses to be trapped within the stereotype of the New Socialist man, and insists on retaining her right to individual thought. But she has yet to find her Forward. This imposes on her a sense of drifting so that the next stage to an emancipation like Sarah Woodruff's is much less decisive. But, as there was with Sarah, there is the impression of a directional, external force guiding Martha through her testing of the collective.

During this expectant waiting, Martha meets Thomas Stern: a Jewish refugee from Poland, a gardener, and a man of gentleness and

passion.* Until now, Martha has failed to become deeply involved with anyone or any institution, so her first reaction to Thomas is a typical one of non-involvement, preferring, as she says, to "live deprived, to be resigned, to be self-contained. No, she did not want to be dissolved."⁴¹ (Martha realises very well that her refusal of relationship impoverishes her life.) From such suspicious caution develops a friendship which becomes a deep and strong relationship difficult to describe. It was, she says

as natural as breathing. And even the long process of breaking-down--as they both learned to put it--for the other, or learning to expose oneself, was something they did together, acknowledging they had to do it.^{42**}

The vocabulary is enlightening, for it makes Martha's fear specific that an affair would "dissolve" her as a person, and thus be an invasion of her individuality. Yet the reader never knows whether or not she dissolves, because the affair takes place in private, alienated from family, friends, and the collective. She and Thomas meet every day in a gardener's hut, symbolically among growing things but otherwise apart from everything Martha has ever known.

The relationship is like an exotic flower, and mistrusted by a society of "salesmen" because their love is freely given and taken. But their separation from other people is again striking, while it

*It is curious that, like herself, many of Lessing's characters are foreigners to the country in which they live, and are often refugees from oppression of one kind or another. They have few roots in their country of adoption, and minimal security, save that which they can find within themselves and their political philosophies.

**As in The Golden Notebook, the Lawrentian overtones are strong. The phrase about breathing can be found almost verbatim in Lawrence's essay, "The Real Thing."⁴³

almost guarantees a temporary relationship because Martha's commitment forces her to be in, though not of, society. Commitment destroys the objectivity she cannot achieve through irony; like Anna.

Because of the affair's symbols of growth, however, the final irony of her dissolution is that Martha comes 'out of solution' as it were, unchanged. She has merely experienced another part of the collective. Nor have the exposure and the breaking-down given the reader any further insights into Martha; there is only the conviction that she must go to England. That is to say, her individuality remains intact. Something as instinctive and essential as breathing might have been expected to have had more significance in her life. But she is once more constant to her commitment to the individual conscience, and though Thomas is always remembered as a symbol of life, Martha never seeks for nor hungers after another relationship. It may be that she understands that the commercial nature of the western world will always destroy her close relationships, so that she prefers not to get involved again.

She never forgets him, although the quality of the memory changes: "A person who has gone away is still here as long as one can hear what he says";⁴⁴ ten years later he becomes "the strong smell of fresh wet greenery, of growth, a sound of strong rain hitting dust, the sun on a drenched tree."⁴⁵ The images are of life, powerful examples of natural, immortal things, organic, and redolent of life, warmth and wetness--and very sensual. And perhaps the memories keep her from feeling "deprived," although it is difficult to understand what she means by that.

This difficulty is compounded because, unlike Anna, Martha separates the elements of her life; except with Thomas, sex is experienced outside intimacy; after abandoning her own child, she mothers and befriends other people's children; her communism is practised in a non-revolutionary situation at a non-revolutionary time; and in specific social protests, such as the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, her interest is peripheral, though constant. It is as though she realises that when her individuality is attacked from one direction at a time, it can be defended successfully. Her love affair, which combined relationship, love and sex, was broken up by external forces, and she never had another.

As a result, Martha's relationships are casual, affectionate, and limited. When she wants sexual attention, she goes to see Jack, a young man she meets in London; when she wants good talk she seeks out Mark Coldridge; when she wants family closeness, she surrounds herself with the Coldridge clan and its minimal intimacy. Her preference for solitude makes her a strong self-contained individualist, and gives her a freedom from other people and institutions which she uses to induce a state of abstraction, of psychological fantasy, in order to transcend the conscious limits of her mind. In this way, she 'tunes-in' to an extra-sensory perception of great pain and great beauty, which makes her one with the unity of mankind in its sufferings and joys. It is an impersonal oneness however, for she does not accept, in spite of her Marxist-Communist background, Marx's premise that the fundamental need of human beings is "companionship." Thus her experience of joy and suffering seems abstract and unfelt;

she needs no community, just as sex for her becomes a means of mere pleasure or of assuaging another's needs.

Through Martha's discovery, Lessing's study of the individual conscience is resolved. The holocaust destroys possessive individualism and industrial capitalism and permits the emergence of a new community which is inherently moral--and a personal voice is no longer necessary. The resolution is highlighted against the two major symbols of the novel: the city and the garden. The first is created through Martha's imaginative vision; the second emerges through the patterns in the novel.

Both city and garden are primary human endeavours to tame the wilderness (human and natural). They impose organised, highly hierarchic relationships on each individual unit, yet are also highly individualised, for without order and individual expression they quickly return to their natural state. Predating the age of possessive individualism, they have become traditional symbols of man's relationship to nature and his eternal struggle to create order out of chaos. Thus they represent social organisms against which individuals must continually assert themselves. For, as described in the novel, the systems are paternalistic and benevolent, and thus seductive against change and growth.⁴⁶

Because of its sensuality, aesthetic beauty, and eternal recurrence, the garden is a place in which life is sated by the senses. The city, on the other hand, is an intellectual and rational exercise. In the visions of Martha and Mark Coldridge, it is circular, and appears to be organic, created ex nihilo and without a history. Under

a hierarchy of gardeners, the design is orderly and harmonic while relationships form a moral whole; for it is a place in which plants are grown "exactly" in relations to buildings and to each other, and where men live in harmony with each other.

The roads which lead to the centre of the city enter through four gates, which are in exact relation with each other, symbolising the balanced, civilised world. Each gate comes to symbolise a facet of civilisation; but when one gate is explored in isolation from the others, it becomes a means to single-minded power whose virtues are bartered in the marketplace.

The gates are those of sex, liberal politics, art, and science and technology. Without moral limits, sex becomes a system of sophisticated pimping and prostitution, and its rituals depersonalise and dehumanise its devotees. It is a travesty of intimate relationships. In liberal politics, well-intentioned Socialism becomes just another repressive regime when disorder increases. Again, no artist in the novel has any real talent or even self-discipline, so that art degenerates rapidly into a documentary journalism or a popularity contest. It fails to explore anything of moral, political, or sexual significance, or to give any moral guidance. And the fourth gate, science and technology, is found to be neither morally neutral nor pure, but sold to the highest bidder. Science without morality, and without art, love, and politics, is deadly enough to produce the holocaust. To continue the metaphor of the vision, the city falls to barbarians, and the memory of its wholeness is warped by the conquerors into a spirit of conquest and empire.

The gates therefore symbolise the loss of individual integrity through the grim pursuit of power without morality. The analogy to the four elements of love is instructive, for morality is founded only when the four gates are in balance with each other. The metaphor and destruction of the city therefore provides a potent image of the failure of contemporary human institutions to create a moral world. So by withdrawing herself, Martha avoids the commitment and eventual monomania that result from a one-tracked drive to power.

She is not, however, totally immune, for her self-possession enables her to transcend traditional means to power only to find another. It also exacts a toll. The fifth "gate" uses Martha's intense individualism in the urgently felt need to explore her mind, and thence the mind of the collective and even the future. By definition, only Martha can discover her own psyche, which can be done only in an intensely solitary operation, in which other people are a distraction. Thus her commitment to psychological knowledge removes her from relationship in almost all senses. Casual contacts are at first possible, but even these die away for they bring tensions and conflicts of another world and make demands on her emotional life. With the total demands of the spiritual life, the tuggings of intimate relationships are a luxury which she can ill-afford.

And this is the end of Martha's quest; one which has all the connotations and significance of a religious journey, with its imperative toward the ancient needs for salvation and revelation and such desires as "release from the burdens of the flesh." The religious nature of her quest becomes clearer through reading, for ex-

ample, about the quest for the Holy Grail by the Knights of the Round Table, for there are interesting parallels. In Keith Baines' rendition of Sir Thomas Malory's translation of Le Morte D'Arthur, for example, there is the following declaration as the knights begin their long search:

For the nature of this quest is the challenge of evil which each knight must transcend in order to participate in the holy mysteries which God shall vouchsafe to the righteous.^{47*}

Each knight, however, is commanded to travel alone, and so the fellowship and community of the Round Table is broken.

Similarly, Martha moves alone into the world, and successfully challenges the evils of power and false commitment; and she is upheld in her quest, like Sir Galahad, by seeing a mystical vision at its conclusion. Unlike him, she performs no purifications or miracles because she is not sinless. The two quests are, however, very similar. The nature of the Grail provides the most important difference, and symbolises the loss of spiritual unity between God and man in Martha's world. Sir Galahad seeks for unity with God through the mystical body of Christ trans-substantiated in the vision of the Grail; and its appearance symbolises his earthly death and the union of his soul with God. It is thus a highly personal experience. Martha's Grail, however, is impersonal, for she seeks a union with the whole of mankind through a mystical kinship of minds and spirits. And, illustrative perhaps of her age, Martha's quest is without the joy and spiritual conviction of the central mystery of tradi-

*There are echoes here of Lessing's desire to defeat evil; see above pp. 63-64.

tional religious aspiration.

The lack seems appropriate, however, for a society of individuals which no longer celebrates its common humanity. Defining worth in terms of property and wealth, industrial capitalism has destroyed a common social purpose. The resulting alienation between those who own property, and are therefore free, and those who do not, must be transcended and revolutionised in order to regain a spiritual community. But Martha feels that man cannot do this by himself. Her prophetic, even mystic vision brings the hope of a spiritual revolution which creates new and hopefully more human relationship between men and women. This is surely a religious quest.

The religious theme is woven throughout the novel in several ways: first the surname Quest, and then through the given names of the most important characters: Thomas, Martha, Mark, Francis, Paul, Joseph. All of these people are named for Christians who had enormous influence on the religious life of their Christian tradition. The thread is strengthened during Martha's self-imposed isolation to "explore her own being," for she is conducted through the Stations of the Cross by the Devil, in the Hell of her own mind. Then she is bound to the Cross for the expiation of her sins, or "crimes." In the light of the Grail story, and in Martha's rejection of the temptations of temporal power, this rite of purification is surely experienced to enable her to finish her quest.

An interesting footnote is that Rome refused to recognise the legend or reality of the Holy Grail, for fear that it might encourage and foster

any separatist tendencies that might exist in Britain, for the legend claimed for the Church in Britain an origin well-nigh as illustrious as that of the Church of Rome, and independent of Rome.⁴⁸

In the same way, the British Establishment first refuses to accept, and then harasses and persecutes those who, like Martha, continue to pursue their investigations of their psychical powers and the universal mind.

Her vision is religious in nature. But the nature of Martha's quest for self-understanding and possession, and thence unity with mankind, is surely one result of a view of man as a competitive, self-interested individual. The resulting loss of community, and its earthy warmth of disinterested human touch and recognition, leaves only extra-sensory perception as a means of contact. This impersonality can be seen in Martha after she receives her revelation. Like Sir Galahad, who dies into the Body of Christ, she seems to lose substance. Descriptions of her life after she has loosed most of her attachments to other people make her seem enervated, solitary and grey, even though Martha feels psychologically that this is her greatest time. As a physical being, she hardly seems to exist; rather she appears to be a wandering, almost disembodied spirit. Her "conscience" has guided her away from the organised collective altogether, and although she is engaging in highly suspect investigations, the society leaves her alone--as though she moves around unseen. The disembodiment would seem to suggest that it is relationships, whether close or distant, which give a person her corporeality and concreteness. As Martha finds all her needs fulfilled by her own psyche she has little need of others.

After the holocaust, Martha finds a different kind of relationship which vindicates her quest and the religious essence of her vision. Once the fear of radiation death has passed on the island off Scotland where she now lives, life seems subdued, 'pastel-coloured,' and without conflict or human drama, but it is highly mystical:

Sometimes it seems that inside ordinary light shimmers another kind of brilliance, but very subtle and delicate. And the texture of our lives, eating, sleeping, being together, has a note in it that can't be quite caught....There is a transparency, a crystalline gleam.⁴⁹

Not only are the new-born children recipients of benign mutation, but there is a special enchantment within the community. In awe Martha writes: "It was as if the veil between this world and another had worn so thin that earth people and people from the sun could walk together and be companions."⁵⁰ Even more importantly, the island receives a visit from strangers who are different from "any people we had known--though some of us had dreamed of them.... It was from that time, because of what we were told, that we took heart and held on to our belief in a future for our race."⁵¹ The tone of writing is that of that of Christ's nativity with its religious blessing and promise; the people have received a revelation and a conviction of salvation.

Relationships thus become mystical rather than human, so that the need for "individual conscience" is superseded. The natural leaders are moral beings who would seem to have effortlessly prevailed over the possessive nature of man and the marketplace, and to have obviated the need for sceptical judgement. Or perhaps, as

in the ambiguity of a dream, Martha is killed in the holocaust, so that the final journey is part of the vision, for the ransom of seeing the Holy Grail is death and the transmutation of the body.

It remains true, however, that Martha is one of those people with a "crack," and is waiting for something. She is "a typed of person, not yet admitted to the general literate consciousness."⁵² Nevertheless, the novel illustrates the loss of emotional and spiritual commitment in "relationships of exchange between proprietors in the marketplace." Martha thus epitomises another of Anna's observations, though in a different context: "That's what's wrong with us all. All our strongest emotions are buttoned up, one after another. For some reason, they're irrelevant to the time we live in."⁵³ Anna cares deeply about that; to the contrary, Martha is indifferent.

Thus Lessing's two women, Anna and Martha, who surely represent two sides of the same coin. Middle class, possessive individualists, the women are involved in their society, and act as sceptical foils for the follies of the political and aesthetic scene. But their responses towards that world are very different: one public, one private. Again, each is resolute in maintaining her individuality intact, either through an illusion about the nature of her commitment, or through withdrawing from intimacy altogether. For they learn that the necessary loss of individualism within such relationships destroys their autonomy. In the context of MacPherson, they feel that any alienation of themselves diminishes their worth and value. But despite their Communist idealism, they are caught within the marketplace definition of society as fragmented, alienated sales-

women. Within this context, even intimate relationships distort the individual's need for unity, and compromise his or her freedom.

Thus Anna's longing for naivety is a nostalgic relinquishment of her responsibility toward her self, and it explains her yearning when talking to Saul: "What's my strongest need--being with one man, love, ~~all~~ that. I've a real talent for it."⁵⁴ Later Milt reasonably comments: "Love is too difficult." Anna: "And sex too cold."⁵⁵ Alienated sex, that is, and Anna knows it through long experience. Martha prefers to experience sex outside relationship, until the pleasure fails, and then neglects it entirely. She recognises the alienation, and separates her emotional and intellectual lives, and becomes less 'human' as a result. Yet that enables her to move onto another level of being.

On the other hand, because she is involved, Anna's failure to move into unity and beyond the nature of her society and her possessive individualism is consequential. It makes her a much more human character than Martha, whose "small personal voice" is finally so important to the collective. Anna wants to re-form society and its web of relationships while Martha wants to transcend it, so that only Anna tries to illustrate John Dewey's assumption on individuality: "Assured and integrated individuality is the product of definite social relationships and publicly acknowledged functions."⁵⁶ Teilhard de Chardin's self-possession is possible within such individuality. Martha's individualism is closer to that found by Koenrad S. Swart:

Young Hegelians...preached a complete emancipation of the indi-

vidual amounting to a form of anarchism and nihilism....Their excessive individualism...left its impact on the Marxian utopia promising the free development of each as the condition of the free development of all.⁵⁷

In providing such a free development for others, Martha becomes alienated, and Lessing's commitment as an artist is seen to have created characters who become spokesmen, not individuals.

Though both Anna and Martha were born into the bourgeoisie, they are each searching for ways to escape from marketplace morality, with its emphasis on "Freedom as a function of possession." But they cannot avoid possessive individualism because that is their cultural and intellectual heritage, and their escape route therefore turns them increasingly inward to their own subconscious, and away from the community.*

*In a review written on Lessing's The Summer before the Dark, Ellen Cronan Rose makes this observation: Lessing's "insistence on the importance of the individual makes her a humanist, but it is a neo-humanism, a vision of disparate individuals in a disintegrating web of meaningful social relationships. Just as George Eliot was unable to imagine a society unregulated by hierarchical patterns of marriage and social responsibility, so is Lessing incapable of seeing beyond individual redemption."⁵⁸

David Storey

The loss of community and of intimacy, and the prevalence of alienated sex are issues which are also explored by David Storey; first in This Sporting Life¹ in which they are associated with the weakening of working class values; then in Radcliffe,² in which Storey returns to the roots of Protestantism.

Because these two novels use the milieu of the working class or the spiritual descendents of the first Protestant gentry, possessive individualism is not strong. Storey's characters are largely victims of industrial capitalism and its associated alienation. This is true even of the Radcliffe family; for the commercial society has seriously distorted the religious roots of early Protestantism. Both novels are concerned with the weakened traditions of community which were at one time capable of nurturing a good relationship. In This Sporting Life, the community values are further impaired when marketplace success is uncontrolled by a moral sense. Their decline is also emphasised when it appears only as a weak conscience, and by the fear of commitment to deep relationship. During the first years of industrialisation, however, working class community and its conservative solidarity provided an essential bulwark against total alienation, until the marketplace pressures began to enter individual relationships.

Both novels are very class-conscious, and in Radcliffe in particular, there is a relentless though blind class conflict of proletariat against bourgeoisie. Storey even conforms to the class assump-

tion that workers are people of muscle power, while the gentry are cerebral. The intensity of the conflict, however, in which vast human and physical energies seem to be engaged in a dialectic struggle, is only an illusion. For in neither novel does either class seem viable, principled, or the bearer of much moral energy. Much of the activity is wasted, spent either through a struggle for power within the group, or exploited on behalf of others' wealth and power.

As a consequence, the visions of both groups have become increasingly ingrown, narrow and impotent, while their members are correspondingly thwarted in their individual lives and within their intimate relationships. The introduction of universal education has signally failed to give either class a broader outlook, or a moral vision of life and society. In a word, people have been alienated from their roots. Relationships in these novels reflect this state, and also the loss of compassion and understanding in a society dominated by money and the desire for power. The lack of vision and imagination is crucial in This Sporting Life, because though its protagonist, Arthur Machin, is trying to become independent of the class structure, he is unable to stand free of the inherent moral or economic principles and mores. The tension of this struggle makes his relationships more self-conscious, and they ultimately fail.

Like Fowles and Lessing, therefore, Storey focusses on a marketplace society in which everyone is a "salesman." Sexually, people behave without feeling or consideration for others, and are trapped within the commercial relationship. Sex thus becomes another alienating force, perhaps the most important in the novel, and

cannot be fulfilling or unifying. Machin and Mrs. Hammond illustrate clearly Marx's insight that alienated sex "is not the satisfaction of a need, but only a means for satisfying other needs."³

Like many contemporary novels, This Sporting Life is written in the first person, a subjective and necessarily limited point of view. The technique serves to illustrate the storyteller's limited understanding of himself as well as of others, thus undercutting his story with irony and ambiguity. The first person strategy becomes awkward only when the vocabulary and articulation have to carry more complex ideas than are to be expected of a man who left school at fourteen, and who limits his reading to American pulp novels. Yet, although the descriptive passages are not strong, the visual quality of the novel is powerful; the dialogue carries the major responsibility for this in its spare but evocative language.

A rough-playing rugby professional and lathe operator, Arthur Machin is a young man of great physical strength and cunning, but inexperienced in love and in close relationships. He is not promiscuous; and remains faithful to one woman. He also avoids his mother's propensity to feel shame and scorn for those members of her own class who do not conform to her sense of propriety (taken from the Protestant ethic: "She thought everybody was in most ways responsible for how they were."⁴). Machin is more tolerant of difference because he has loosened his working class ties a little, but he falls into the emotional trap of pity for which he demands the payment of gratitude. Pity makes him possessive.

It also makes him arrogant. once he begins to earn extra money

through playing professional rugby. But he is mentally unprepared for and emotionally ill-equipped to manage the sudden acquisition of money; though he does cope adequately with the milieu of middle-class mores and game-playing into which he is swept. He keeps his feet at the rugby club because he feels compelled to maintain his identity as a working man by retaining his job at the lather. He also keeps his digs with Mrs. Hammond in a poor part of town near the factory. She is a pathetic, young, and proud widow with two children, very little money, and a pair of boots in memory of her late husband placed for reassurance in front of the hearth. By attempting to live in two social worlds, however, Arthur faces the disturbing insecurity of belonging to neither, and is without the inner capacity to create his own.*

The relationship which slowly evolves between Mrs. Hammond and Machin is based first on mutual need; he needs a room and board, she needs the money. Exploitative on neither side it is cautiously friendly, for their needs make them equals and they accept each other as they are. The balance begins to shift with Machin's new status as a rugby player and cultural hero. A new world opens for him; for the first time in his life, for example, he can be financially generous; but this he discovers creates its own tensions.

Feeling sorry for Mrs. Hammond, he begins to put pressure on

*The social insecurity is common to many post-war working class fictional heroes who have found that the British class system is not an open institution. This novel is more unusual than most because Machin does not want to move into the middle class. Instead, he tries to create a new pattern of behaviour within the working class so that he can remain in his familiar social milieu.)

the landlord-tenant relationship. When she refuses to take his new status seriously, he stops seeing her as a shy, quiet, hurt woman, and arrogantly interprets her non-interest in him as apathy which can be changed. He desperately needs to be praised in his new role and confirmed in his new identity, and the pressure for recognition is first applied through the medium of hard cash. He buys a big car, a television set, and other expensive presents, but instead of gratitude, they ultimately arouse in Mrs. Hammond a narrow but deep personal strength, and a pride in her class.

Because his increased financial assistance is given in presents instead of higher rent, she feels threatened; she suspects Arthur's gifts to be a trap, a form of charity which she scorns, or one demanding favours. Thus she is not really surprised when Machin puts further pressure on her to have sexual intercourse, the ultimate recognition as a person. Unable to accept his gifts as a mark of esteem, Mrs. Hammond is burdened by an obligation she cannot repay, and so she accepts that second definition of women Machin angrily recognises: motherhood and prostitution. The relationship thereupon becomes a commercial transaction.

Mrs. Hammond's resulting sense of liability begins to destroy any feeling she might have had for Machin. A victim of possessive individualism, she is a proprietor of nothing of marketplace value save her own body. Its alienation, however, runs counter to her life and self-respect, and the resultant moral struggle colours their lovemaking, which becomes mechanical and unfeeling. Rather than being spontaneous or lovingly anticipated and prepared for, it be-

comes a "routine," a commercial activity.

The thread of alienated sex is clear, as Machin uses it as a way to force her to acknowledge his existence. Mrs. Hammond instinctively understands his emotional blackmail, but she refuses to compromise her feeling for intimacy. By introducing the marketplace into their relationship, Machin destroys their companionship, and they fight and become resentful towards each other.

In order to avoid the moral collapse of her life, Mrs. Hammond imposes certain "rules" and adopts a matter-of-fact style of intercourse. Machin is sensitive enough to see that she suffers it: "She thought, I imagine, there was no alternative. She didn't care. It normally happened once a fortnight."⁵ Seemingly, Machin does not care much either; it is as though the effort to get her regularly into bed is enough. The relationship has thus changed from one of respect to that of marketplace exchange, and Machin is emotionally unable to alter that sense of bargaining. And even though Mr. Hammond's boots disappear from the hearth (surely a symbol of her wish for love and friendship, as well as her moral conflict), Machin is too impressed with his success on the rugby field to understand its significance, and thus why she remains so unhappy.

On the other hand, he does know that he is behaving badly; that he is like "a big ape given something precious to hold, but only squashing it in my big, clumsy, useless hands. I couldn't even apologise."⁶ But he turns the perception on its head by blaming her for his social insecurity because she will not give him emotional roots. Her hoped-for response will, he thinks, confirm his new identity by making him

feel loved; and because he knows her integrity, insists that he is not 'buying' her love.⁷ Using sex as a means to an end, he desperately hopes that Mrs. Hammond will give him the emotional reassurance that he is "human" because loved for himself. When she asserts her own needs, therefore, he turns brutal and stiflingly possessive.⁸

Machin's blindness about the deteriorating relationship is handled well through the first person viewpoint; despite his failure to grasp Mrs. Hammond's needs, he reports faithfully everything she says and does, thinking that it justifies his attitude, even as it highlights his own callousness and cruelty. By ignoring common gossip, he exposes Mrs. Hammond to the neighbourhood in her most vulnerable area of self-respect which is the basis of her pride. It is here that she shows her greatest strength, using community ties as a protection against emotional exploitation by Machin. Her shreds of self-respect, working within the pressures of her working-class environment, eventually confront her with a choice: either she keeps Machin, accepts the community's moral condemnation and its social ostracism, or he must leave. In a scene actively shared by her neighbours, Mrs. Hammond chooses the second alternative: community, not alienated relationship.

Machin's orientation towards the totem of money is also influenced by the conduct of Rugby Club members and their hangers-on. The clubhouse is a place where money and influence talk, and relationships are a means to manipulate others. The permissive behaviour and easy sex also provide a life pattern which is quite different from that known by workers. Arthur reverses the two life styles: within

his own class, he acts on the basis of sexual permissiveness; within the middle class, he honors a more stringent standard of sexual morality. Out of his element in that class, for example, he is very embarrassed when the wife of the Club's managing director casually suggests that they have sexual relations one afternoon. Cursing himself for his propriety, he cannot bring himself to accept her offer. Somehow the thought of Mrs. Hammond intrudes to prevent his betrayal of their relationship, for he is not promiscuous by nature.

This loyalty to his landlady is seen and derided by outsiders, but she does not and will not believe it. Their general inability to exchange feelings and fears contributes to her desperation, so that his continuing failure to recognise her misery becomes crucial to her decision to terminate their relationship. She becomes his lodestone, and though Machin loves her in his own way, he fails to declare it. And he never perceives her morality. Through his acts of generosity and through his remaining with her, he expects her to assume how he feels, and to accept him in good faith.

He also imposes an alien morality on her, for he insists that his wealth safely enables him to ignore traditional mores, and he offers Mrs. Hammond no other alternative. Her neighbours, he suggests, are merely jealous and small-minded. The option of marriage is curiously never mentioned, possibly because she fears a state which carries a strong commitment but which has brought her nothing but cares and worries. And Machin has established a sexual pattern with her which is sufficient for his emotional needs.

Marriage to Mrs. Hammond would also have made his mother unhappy.

She instinctively knows that Mrs. Hammond is a different kind of woman: "That's what I mean when I say Mrs. Hammond's no good...no good for you. She's like something that's left over. You could never be happy."⁹ Without ambition and refusing Machin's alienating life style, Mrs. Hammond threatens the world of market relations: she prefers the world of community of the past. Mrs. Machin fears her, and portrays her as an "evil" influence because she thinks that love is a finite measurable quantity. In her reasoning, the more Machin loves Mrs. Hammond, the less he loves his mother. And she blames Mrs. Hammond for that transfer of affection, thus failing to understand the landlady's sense of true relationship and morality.

As he is a loner with "No feelings. It's always helped to have no feelings,"¹⁰ other people do not influence Machin very much. Thus he continues to take Mrs. Hammond for granted, steering an erratic course between the black and white morality and general concern of his parents, and the alienated sex of the clubhouse.

Several aspects of Machin's handling of relationship are now clear. On the rugby field, he is dependable and loyal to the team; and with the club owners, he is business-like. Those without money, however, he tries to dominate. Old Man Johnson, for example, is poor but gave Arthur his entry to professional rugby. Once no longer useful, he is easily discarded. Again it is her poverty which makes Mrs. Hammond vulnerable and her feisty refusal to be dominated galls him.

Money gives him a sense of power and of being in control which she never acknowledges. Because she remains faithful to a tradition of life which is neither alienated nor uncommitted Machin gives her

his working class respect even when his success alienates her. Thus the conflict between his marketplace success and the remnants of his working class traditions parallels his inner strife; and this interferes with his capacity to understand Mrs. Hammond's commitment to companionship and a love relationship. Thus her insight into his motives and his insensitivity has little impact on him:

"You're not fair to me, Arthur. You just say whatever comes into your head--to make me feel I should be grateful....You use me. You don't treat me like...I should be."¹¹

And again:

"You treat me as if I didn't exist. I'm just nothing, to you....Anything I do you knock down. You won't let me live. You make me think I don't exist."¹²

Emotionally she puzzles him, for she keeps her distance from him in spite of all his gifts and demands:

I'd never seen her much as a person. She didn't want to be seen. Her life, while I'd known her, had been taken up with making herself as small, as negligible as possible. So small that she didn't exist. That was her aim....It was mainly this I resented. I wanted the real Mrs. Hammond to come popping out....She was withdrawing and lying down. I hated her for it... Nothing counted any more. Not even me.¹³

The resentment and hatred are important clues to his possessive treatment of her, for Machin assumes that her experience of him is the same as his of her.

Yet he senses differently. When his mother speaks against Mrs. Hammond, Machin spits out desperately:

"Mothers, mothers. Always mothers. Women are never anything but mothers. There's never a wife been born yet! I hate all these bloody mothers and their stinking brats. Can't women be anything without kids, kids, all the time? You're not just animals. Mrs. Hammond--she's a woman. Somewhere she's a woman."¹⁴

As she is never treated as a woman but only as an object, Machin can

hardly expect her to act like one. Blind to the morality of his situation and ignorant of intimacy, he uses the ethic of business and the marketplace in which the fulcrum of relationship is money and power. His working class roots have been weakened, and he tries to manipulate and exploit her, just as the small-town industrialists and businessmen of the district manipulate their workers and their peers; and just as Machin is exploited on the rugby field to be, not a man, but a winning machine. Mrs. Hammond realises the implications of a relationship between unequals, but the struggle to rebalance the liaison in order to keep faith with herself tips her apart.

After her death, his loneliness brings some insights into their relationship. He feels a compassion for her which is untinged with self-pity or sexual need. However limited, their brief friendship has enabled him to grow; to acknowledge his need for fame, and to recognise the estrangement it brings; to learn that caring for someone includes small domestic tasks, or acting as a father to two fatherless children. He also realises that he has grown dependent upon the relationship to give him integrity, to "make him feel whole and wanted."¹⁵ And so he remains faithful to Mrs. Hammond. His loyalty prevents him from abandoning his class, or of finding casual sexual satisfaction with other women.

In the Marxist sense, she teaches him that sex without loving communion is destructive of community and relationship. So he philosophises after her death:

Living was a formality to be got through without looking too closely....I was on the move all the time, until I felt I'd driven all feeling out of my body, and it just acted like it'd

been trained....It was wrong to be alone, and I reckoned I didn't notice. I told myself I'd been right all along; I had no feelings; It was no good acting any longer as if I had.¹⁶

There is an echo here of Anna Wulf: "All our strongest emotions are buttoned up, one after another. For some reason, they're irrelevant to the times we live in."¹⁷ And again, the words are an echo of an earlier insight of Machin's that he is "paid not to have feelings"¹⁸ on the rugby field, or in the factory. One is faced with the truth that a society which pays a man not to have feelings at work cannot expect him to be different at home. Close relationships between a man and a woman cannot be expected to endure under such pressures.

The friendship between Arthur and Mrs. Hammond thus flowers tentatively, only to be frost-bitten by his alienation, impatience, insensitivity, and emotional ignorance, as well as by her fears of commitment to another man. It is largely his failure, however, so that her death comes to appear as his responsibility. For her decision to disassociate herself from Machin exacts a toll of her spirit, and makes her want to be even more "negligible" than before. Gradually she loses her will to live as, forced to confront the issue that the relationship will increase her alienation from both Machin and her class, she becomes a living wraith. Machin's companionship and emotional support was valuable, but the price tag of his excessive demands on her frail trust taxed all her remaining will.

In truth perhaps, the relationship is doomed almost before it begins; initially because of Mrs. Hammond's mistrust of men, and then of her emotional exhaustion and fear. "I can't let my feelings go.

Not again. Not to have them cut off like Eric...and everything gone, in one person, and dead. I want to be sure."¹⁹ Any threat to her frail damaged psyche could be mortal because it pierces her attempt to be self-protective. Even the merest hint that Eric committed suicide is threatening, as it brings back the guilty fear that she never made him "belong," as though his death was her fault. Like Anna Wulf, Mrs. Hammond finds that Shécis vulnerable--no longer intact, as Rollo May phrases it,--without her man. Her vulnerability differs from Anna's however, for it is not only the security of being loved which has gone, but her ability ever to trust and love again. Her very capacity to enjoy life is first eclipsed by Eric's life, and then his death. She becomes doubly vulnerable to alienation.

Machin actively hinders her wary acceptance of him both in his overbearing approach and in his way of life. His ideas about women, for example, are immature and stereotyped, largely gained from pulp novels with lascivious titles; their heroes are boxers or bull-fighters with 'machismo' who inevitably and effortlessly have voluptuous "samples" to "comfort" them after their exertions in the ring. There seems to be no sex in these novels. His reading leaves him unprepared for the sight of Mrs. Hammond's shabby underwear, and his reaction is one of nausea. A further contrast is provided by her reaction to his lovemaking: "Her body began to mount in a slow fit--of rage and bewilderment. Surprise. 'You're a man!' she screamed. 'You're a bleeding man!'"²⁰

"Samples" are not supposed to have feelings, let alone be repulsed by their man, but Mrs. Hammond knows that once more her inte-

grity has been violated. All her life, she has struggled to be what other people needed her to be: a daughter to look after her father; a wife to Eric when he offered her a release from home; a mother to two children; then to "suffer" Machin. Ironically, though not surprisingly, she feels that her happiest days were spent making bombs during the war. So Machin's alienating behaviour is the last straw, and it assists gossip in making her his "slut." Having a dishonest way of life imposed upon her leaves her with no recourse but to retaliate by accusing him also of sleeping around. Indeed, he never lets her be herself.

Mrs. Hammond is thus not a possessive individualist. Nor is she alienated from her working class traditions. For her, freedom is not a "function of possession"; it is instead a freedom to be herself, however dowdy that might be, and the integrity to refuse to be exploited by alienated sex. She is thus an anachronism in the marketplace; for she views possession of her body as a function of morality, of self-respect, rather than something to be exchanged. Her drift into a form of prostitution therefore initiates a mortal conflict within her soul. She is battered, but neither bitter nor beaten. She can even tease Machin gently about his need for admiration for she is other-oriented. Machin only comes to that kind of self-awareness while looking after her in the hospital:

I felt elated--an elation compressed by some bitterness and self-reproach, as if, at last, really at last, I'd got hold of something which before had always slipped my grasp, and which I wasn't too clumsy to hold. Now it was real, and held me. I was no longer alone.²¹

And it seems that the memory of other-orientation lies behind his re

refusal to engage in further alienated sex.

Modern relationships are tricky things. Through possessiveness and alienation, Machin brings tragedy to his closest friend, and isolation and friendlessness to himself, so that the tone at the end of the novel is one of his being "finished," too old and "left over," as though he were repeating Mrs. Hammond's life. For like her, his will to live and love has been damaged, and with it his preference for a fair game. And without the humanising effect of a relationship, Machin becomes more of a machine, ready to do the bidding of the rugby game but without emotional commitment or enthusiasm.

The kind of possessive demands Machin makes on his association with Mrs. Hammond are repeated more extremely in Storey's second novel, Radcliffe. Love is sought and experienced not as a foundation for a relationship, but as the means to a transcendent religious triumph; a means to overcome the physical limitations of the body in order to end the Cartesian split and unite body and soul. It is a more extreme resolution of the split that Anna Wulf tries to heal. And unlike The Four-Gated City, it is not a religious novel of reconciliation between man and God through love, for grace and absolution are gained only through murder and madness. The main theme is thus much more ambitious than that in This Sporting Life, and it explores the distortions which occur when an intense conviction of absolute faith is imposed on a relationship.

Possessive individualism of modern capitalism plays little or no part in this novel. The morality of Radcliffe is founded upon the religious fanaticism of the seventeenth century, when the indi-

vidual was part of and responsible to God and God's community. Nonetheless, even a cursory acquaintance with the relationships in the novel makes it clear that they are extremely possessive. The novel demonstrates that with the "disappearance" of God, a man's fundamental need for spirituality or divinity must be rooted elsewhere; here it is found in, or extracted from, other human beings. Oneness, the unity of spirit with flesh, is also found through other people. The potential for possessiveness is thus high and very destructive, for the demands made on others to give up their substance are absolute. And significantly, sex becomes a "means for satisfying other needs."

Told in the form of a realistic novel, Radcliffe has touches of the surreal, of the the Kafkaesque, and of heavy symbolism. A black dog, for example, appears each time the relationship between the two protagonists moves to a more spiritualised level, and becomes increasingly menacing. There are also strong overtones of D. H. Lawrence, particularly in Leonard Radcliffe's assertion that homosexual love is finally more important than heterosexual love. And the several wrestling bouts which occur between Leonard and Tolson prior to intercourse are much akin to those between Gerald and Birkin in Women in Love.

Radcliffe is an historical novel, engaged in the broad sweep of social and religious change of three hundred years. The contemporary protagonist, Leonard Radcliffe, embodies that change. His complex character mirrors the far-reaching effects of capitalist industrialism on Protestantism, a distortion which also explains the

confusion in his portrayal, in spite of the many allusions comparing him with Oliver Cromwell. For, unlike the Lord Protector, Leonard is a man without a conscience, and he has a streak of bestiality which can only be accounted for through the impact of industrialism.

Often grotesque and macabre, the story concerns the Radcliffe family in the twentieth century--the decaying, degenerating remnant of successful seventeenth century forebears. The novel traces its dissolution, which is both endemic within the family and imposed upon it through a confrontation with the raw but oddly unvital encroachment of the working class. The sketch of an alienated society is vivid here. Cut off and alienated from the roots of its past, the proletariat has become a dead weight, and must find a spurious history in order to function. Thus the warmth, humanity and pity of Storey's first novel are almost completely absent; they are replaced by isolation, a curious kind of living through others, and the pitiless thrust of absolutism. It is also more abstract, as it attempts to carry the energies and religious faith of Cromwellian Puritanism into the secular, spiritually arid twentieth century largely through the life and experience of Leonard Radcliffe.

The epigraph of the novel, Yeats' poem "Vacillation", Part VII, brings the two eras into dramatic tension. The Christian imperative, Yeats believes, is to exalt the spirit over the body in order to find salvation and immortality. In contrast, western man's pagan heritage glorifies the immortality gained through man's physical strength in war. Thus, Yeats contends, pagan man enjoyed life, while

the Christian loathes his mortality, finding his flesh a barrier between himself and God. Storey attempts to combine these two heroic strands of western experience (pagan and Christian) through Oliver Cromwell, a man who was both Christian and warrior and who felt that he had gained revelation and unity with God. Thus, before moving into the discussion on relationships in Radcliffe, it would be useful to deal with the persistent references to Cromwell in the lives of Leonard and his father, John Radcliffe.

Cromwell is described by John's brother Austen as a man who could act. He was the complete puritan. The one whose guilt matched his ambitions."²² He himself puts this another way: "That a man never mounts higher than when he knows not whither he is going."²³ More significantly, John describes Cromwell as being capable of acting "politically and religiously in the same event."²⁴ Above all, Cromwell's puritanism ensured that his religion was one of this world, enacted in cooperation with God, rather than waiting for intervention by a deus ex machina.

Like all Puritans, he claimed a special, personal relationship with God. At first, his political and personal success was assumed to confirm such a relationship, but it was rapidly corrupted by his victories: "His doctrine of providences slipped over easily into a theory of justification by success,"²⁵ comments biographer Christopher Hill. And as a member of the gentry who first championed the cause of the common people against agricultural enclosure, he rapidly changed his views when those same commoners began to interfere with his notion of property. Thus he was both a master of ideological

compromise between conservative and radical elements, and a ruthless enemy of democratic tendencies in his New Model Army. Convinced of his election to Heaven, and that his acts were God's will, he could act "politically and religiously in the same event." So he killed Irish Catholic "infidels" in the name of Christ using the religious issue as an excuse to conquer Ireland for tactical reasons of England's security.

Such a conviction seems absurd in the twentieth century, and Austen recognises this when he tells John that such militancy is not to be expected in the present century: "But there have been evangelists before, despairing of their vision. Singers without a song,"²⁶ he continues. Together, however, John and Leonard come close to Cromwell's vision. Both men are absolutists, despairing of mankind's abuse of its own society, but finding "hope" or "reassurance" in that despair. Both also live as by instinct, and with a conviction of predestination. These two Puritan qualities encourage a capacity in them both to wait, like Cromwell, "on events,--or on the Lord."²⁷

The decisive difference between John and Leonard, however, is that John "waits "on the Lord" while Leonard waits "on events." As a man of the gentry, John continues to care for property and the family, for the family church and house (the Place), and he follows Cromwell's instinct towards tolerance. Leonard, on the other hand, exploits his tolerance in order to fulfill his need for the absolute. Like Cromwell, his idea of liberty is strained. Hill writes that Cromwell insisted that the rights and liberties of Englishmen came before those of other nations. Thus he justifies his invasion

and brutal treatment of the Irish as necessary to

maintain the lustre and glory of English liberty in a nation where we have an undoubted right to do it, wherein the people of Ireland...may equally participate in all benefits, to use liberty and fortune equally with Englishmen, if they keep out of arms.²⁸

And similarly with the Scots. Here is the theory underlying Leonard's later treatment of Victor Tolson, and the political base of his bestiality.

In the same way, Leonard feels that he has a direct relationship with a power which enables him to move outside conventional authority: thus "the success of a virtuous human being is at once his victory and the victory of divine grace working in him."²⁹ Further, Leonard illustrates seventeenth century puritanism in its felt necessity to fulfill the divine law, striving after

an elusive perfection, which from time to time suffuses one's whole being with a happiness and confidence more than human; and makes mere legal righteousness seem petty and irrelevant. Hence the tense effort, the self-confident elation when things were going well, the desperate feelings of guilt in defeat.³⁰

~~This last~~ This last quotation clearly illuminates Leonard's visions at the close of the novel.

This digression has been long but necessary in order to clarify certain character traits in Leonard, and also to throw light upon Leonard's relationships with his family and with his friend Tolson. As a transposed Puritan, he knows that mere human life must be subordinated to the revelation of a relationship with a higher power. But contemporary Puritanism is more closely identified with a work ethic than a powerful religious force. And in a world of relative morality, in which God is closer to being a superstition than an

object of awe, Leonard's search for an absolute is clearly disruptive. Just as Cromwell failed to deal with radicalism and the resurgence of monarchism without imposing tyranny, so is Leonard forced to impose his vision of the truth when others fail to acquiesce in it. The consequences for relationship are considerable.

Throughout the novel, Storey carefully demonstrates some of the changes that have occurred in English society since the interregnum: organised religion is a ritualised empty church, filled with relics and dedicated to an absent God; the once governing aristocracy is symbolised by the ancestral Radcliffe home, where the estate has been built up with workers' houses, and the house itself is undermined by the tunnels of industry; and the nobility and gentry have lost their status, and have married into the lower classes (like John), or symbolise barrenness and even aridity through the practice of celibacy or homosexuality (like his brothers).

In addition, Puritanism has lost the conventional regulators of conscience, such as guilt and the social obligations of feudalism, but has retained the anxiety and insecurity contained in the Cartesian split between body and soul. Like Anna Wulf, Leonard fears the disunity, but he is the one foredoomed to redeem it by resolving the paradox of being separate yet united within himself through the medium of a relationship.

The traditional relationships of the novel are not strong. There is a sense of debility and weakness, as though the Radcliffe family knows itself to be doomed to physical extinction in the male line. Leonard, John's only son, is a curious child: all the omens

of his first year generate conversations which predestine him for an unusual fate, chosen to dramatise the struggle between body and soul. He even has a 'baptism' when the 'devil' of fleshly needs relinquishes his hold.

For a year his life was in doubt. It was like someone resenting an intrusion: there seemed to be a resistance to life in that slight, straggly and perpetually flushed body, a tenacity almost greater than the will to breathe. For days he would vomit his food, crying whenever he was touched, as though refusing to accept any sustenance of reassurance.³¹

At the end of his first year, he begins to gain strength; "It was as if he had accepted the intrusion of life and given it reluctant accomodation."³²

From birth as a result, Leonard* is presumed to be a predominantly spiritual man, and his physical health continues to be weak and vulnerable. This changes only when he meets a worker's son named Victor Tolson. Here is the central, intimate relationship of the novel: Leonard as boy and man of tightly controlled intellectual and spiritual power, though physically weak and undisciplined; and Victor, a person of great physical powers which are controlled by an instinctive compassion, and a gentleness which make him sensitive to his capacity to hurt others. Their individual traits form a balance and a whole. This theme of complementarity is repeated several times in the novel, paralleling the Cartesian-Puritan split, and extending it through individuals to the society. Thus John does not carry through as an heir of Cromwell. He only acts religiously at the conception of Leonard, who is said to represent John's "confession" of the sins of the flesh. Leonard carries out the accompanying political act.

The class system manifests the same split: John turns to the lower class for companionship, as does Leonard; while Tolson reverses the position by exerting his influence over people of a higher social status (even Blakely has pretensions to an aristocratic past). At the same time, the customary division of society into two sexes is often denied through homosexuality, as though the author wishes to exclude resolving the body-soul split through conventional relationships which tend to celebrate the heart, not the soul. In combination, all these divisions, intellectual, emotional, social, re-emphasise Yeats' thesis, and underline the desire for unity.

Given such a complex base, it follows that all the relationships in the novel are singular, that between Tolson and Leonard more so than the others. Being between two men, their mutual love is consummated through homosexual relations which Leonard sees as a creative act:

"You've got to accept that there is a love that exists between men which is neither obscene nor degrading, but is as powerful and as profound, and as fruitful, as that love which bears children...it has a subtlety and a flexibility, a power which creates order...law, art, politics, religion: these are the creation of men as men." ³³

But the creativity of this relationship is distorted by Leonard's Puritanism and his own nature. He creates only through violence, and his art, law, and religion are violent distortions of the Christian philosophy of love.

As the only son of the only gentry family in the neighbourhood, Leonard becomes increasingly isolated and secluded, and comes to feel that for him, normal relationships are denied. There is some-

thing unnamed, "threatening," and alienating within himself:

"I think there's an element in us which refutes and condemns our understanding of ourselves, as if perversely we're determined to be damned. I think that's the key to everything."³⁴

This is an alienation of the intellect and soul, not of an economic system; it was first forced upon him by other boys' envy and suspicion of his intellectual superiority, and their scorn of his physical weakness. Their aggressiveness against him forces him to turn inward, and he finds in his soul the Puritan penchant to "an inscrutable sense of guilt." The guilt, however, is not personal but on behalf of humanity, and therefore abstract.

Thus Leonard uses his individualism not to celebrate but to transcend his separateness in order to find salvation. The early Protestant belief in a higher morality, however, is no longer rooted in the faith in a transcendent God, so that his resulting spiritual possessiveness becomes secular, self-oriented, and destructive. His family relationships are also affected, for his need for salvation separates him from them: his parents' strange awe of him leads him to withdraw into an instinctive reserve and emotional coolness, which creates a further barrier to normal family affection.

Leonard's solitariness makes him insensitive to others. His mother sorrowfully notes that "Leonard, it seemed, had not penetrated her feelings at all, but simply her method of feeling. It was alarming. As if he, at the centre, felt nothing."³⁵ It is as though the more Leonard withdraws from customary relationships, the more other people become abstractions. Almost everyone becomes subsumed in his passion, so that when John accuses his wife Stella of

placing a barrier between herself and her son, she can only respond with a heartrending honesty:

"How can I cut myself off?...How can I? He's the only person I've ever known who has gone through the whole of life without forming one single relationship. You can't cut yourself off from that. How can you separate yourself from something that doesn't exist?"³⁶

Though not quite accurate, for the relationship with Tolson is passionate and strong even when it is finally perverted, she is also essentially correct, for the competitiveness of the alliance destroys its life-enhancing potential. Neither man is other-oriented; they both use sex as a means of subduing the other, and see each other chiefly as the embodiment of a principle.

A victim of the Puritan imperative for perfection, Leonard thrusts his relationships out of the realm of personal fulfillment into the transcendent. Because he is an artist, his vision is narrow. He has an obsession with smallness, with minute drawings and abstract, geometric figures. Distancing himself from both family and society, he demonstrates as far as he can the Christian disgust of the flesh, and the parallel conviction of the superiority of the soul.

The burden of the twentieth century Puritanism is that original sin remains without the possibility of forgiveness. This loss leads Leonard's "spirit" to search for unity with another man's "body" in order to create a new vision of man. Such an abstraction of a principle, however, is possessive; and it binds the ensuing relationship to the stake of doctrine. It also dehumanises the individual person by denying qualities such as compassion, joy, and even fear. Further,

Tolson's refusal to conform and submit to Leonard's vision of love forces Leonard to take possession of Tolson in order to create unity.*

Tolson's refusal is a result of his equally uncompromising search for the absolute. Representing Yeats' pagan man whose passionate desire to live for glory has been deformed by the aridity of the twentieth century, he has a history of strange, and parasitic yet symbiotic relationships. He is flesh alone, finding his unity through living on the spirituality of others which is usually absorbed through sexual intercourse. The perverse relationship which is established, however, is one which his victims covet, as though it reassures them of their capacity for spirituality.

Blakely, a previous victim, is a caricature of a man: emotionally grotesque and hollow, he has committed incest with his daughter (also a prey of Tolson), and has been convicted of sodomy with Austen. He says about Tolson:

"Vic sees everything in terms of victories, of his assimilation of other people....his only real pleasure comes from overpowering people, swamping them, and after that he can just patronise them...!Why, us talking here...is all the result of a deliberate plan of Tolson's...Not deliberate...No, it's all intuition....That's the really monstrous, the really destructive part of it! Intuition!"³⁷

He goes on:

"Do you realize, for example, that it's spiritual things Tolson seeks to possess most of all. Things he can't acquire through his own temperament. He's bound to attack, to consume people

*This dehumanisation which results from the application of a theoretical principle without regard for the human beings involved is like justice without mercy. By extension, it sets the pattern for the alienation of an industrial society.

in whom he recognizes some sort of spiritual quality. And naturally, they're the ones who are most vulnerable to his physical sort of energy."³⁸

Allowing for Blakely's pride in having had a spiritual quality to be consumed, the absolute nature of Tolson's needs are clear. His possessiveness is equal though opposite to Leonard's, and once he has consumed his victims, Tolson manipulates them in a kind of sado-masochistic connivance, to gain power over his next victim.

Symbolised by the somewhat trite image of the powerful motorcycle, Tolson, like Leonard, does not recognise established morality. He follows another ethic: "He has this passion to do things absolutely....a man who destroys things out of his affection for them."³⁹ Curiously, though Tolson's possessiveness is different in kind from that of Clegg or Machin, it shares with theirs the need to feed on others' emotional and spiritual resources.

Tolson's recognition of spirituality, however, is debased. He consumes the aristocratic pretensions of men like Blakely, who are compelled to find evidence of a long-lost heritage of position and status to give themselves roots and a viable identity. They bare the bankruptcy of the proletariat, whose roots have been alienated by the industrial system. At the same time, this spurious spiritual energy seems to be the only remaining source of cultural vitality, so that Tolson seems to be a purifier even as he comes to represent the breakdown of the century-old proletarian solidarity. For he symbolises the failure of the working-class community to withstand the despiritualisation of industrial capitalism. His pagan vitality has degenerated to dominating other people, and it is symbolic that

he is swept up by a spiritual force much stronger than his physical frame can withstand. Even in a secular century, the Puritan strength of purpose still has the magnetic power that cannot be resisted by the despiritualised man.

Thus the quest for relationship between Tolson and Leonard becomes a struggle for supremacy between two absolutes that are remnants of philosophies long bankrupt, but which still retain an important hold on society. One is physical, with its pagan dependence on force; the other spiritual, with its transcending love. Their mutual love is complicated and finally controlled by the intentions of each man to dominate the other; and they cannot understand one another. For Tolson wants to find glory and passion through carnal love, while Leonard wants to unite body and soul through transcendent love.

The relationship is complementary in one other way: Tolson inhibits Leonard's propensity to commit uncontrolled violence. When his friend is absent, Leonard can kick a man into bloody insensibility, and have no compassion about causing mental injury. Neither does he feel guilt. There is an eerie amorality about him, as though being predestined releases him from responsibility for his actions. Or perhaps his birth has expunged both his father's guilt and his own, because his own inner moral authority does not admit sin. As his mother recognises, this facility makes him a dangerous man, for he cannot care for other people and is insensitive to their needs. His behaviour is also inconsistent, as he recognises: he is "sometimes scarcely controllable," and sometimes very "inert."

Both traits are incompatible with close relationship, and Leonard's demand for power makes any intimacy fraught with tension and conflict. The Puritan penchant for absolutes, and the need for a relationship with a transcendent God drive him into alliances which become power plays, a kind of bartering of commodities: Tolson's body for Leonard's spiritual victory. His emphasis on the abstract also prevents the development of a deeper relationship. Even sexuality is translated into a higher good: Leonard's passionate need to love Tolson "as a man, as a human being," is made on behalf of all mankind, thus converting an intensely personal emotion into an abstract desire. This interferes with a relationship just as much as Tolson's inability to love Leonard as a man leads him only to the sexual experience. Without the religious emphasis, therefore, Leonard and Tolson would practice alienated sex.

Even though Tolson's compassion complements Leonard's callousness, and Leonard possesses their common spirit, this mutual dependence does not increase the depth of their relationship. They do not learn from each other, or care about each other as equals; they function only as competitors. The result is a soul/flesh impasse, which Leonard comes to feel must be broken by the assertion of his superior spiritual power. So he is forced to consider and then to execute the murder of Tolson, an act which he can do because he has no compassion and no conscience.

The clash of absolutes makes compromise impossible, and thus the friendship is a power struggle, possessiveness in the most extreme sense. This is exemplified by Blakely, who is a soulless

cipher once he has been possessed by Tolson. He is a creature of his audience and dependent upon it for his roles and personality. He is a man who needs Tolson and his working class peers to give him life, if only as a grotesque, tragi-comic clown. And it is no coincidence that he always wears a mask when 'acting' nor that he commits suicide in the manner of the grinning mask after Tolson's death. Without Tolson, he is death-in-life.

This ruthless possessiveness creates a selfishness of dependency, and is one which dehumanises both men. Thus Tolson's relationships are usually destructive, for they result in the despoliation of others, and only a temporary satisfaction of his hunger. Leonard is equally possessive; Tolson must be ready to relinquish his need in order to fulfill Leonard's. Each man, Leonard is saying, must be ready to sublimate his humanity to a higher need, but this becomes a struggle for power when there is no longer a God to receive it. The delusion of transcendence leads to an overturning of both secular and conventional religious morality in order to create a new God. Thus Leonard feels elation, not guilt, for murdering Tolson who is merely a symbol of the flesh to be overcome. He then masochistically imposes upon himself his impressions of the sufferings of Christ on the Cross in order to gain Resurrection.

Leonard's morality and absolute conviction of right justify him in murder, and he feels that his decision is confirmed in a religious vision:

It seemed, to Leonard, afterwards, that the trial had only been incidental. The hugeness by which he was now surrounded enveloped everything that had preceded it, so that even Tolson's

death was only a detail of the vast structure by which he was enclosed. It had a completeness, a wholeness, that dazed him, making him so exultant he could scarcely breathe. It contained everyone and everything. It was complete.⁴⁰

The pitilessness of the absolute, the unawareness that human relationship can be something other than personal "completeness," is contained in six words: "Tolson's death was only a detail." But it also brings Blakely's death and then Leonard's dissolution, for he dies soon afterwards, unrecognisable and unregretted, emaciated, consumed by his passionate will. The possessiveness is dazzling. His flesh has died with Tolson.

The thought of Yeats' epigraph returns once more, for although the Christian faith seems to be supreme with the vision of unity, Leonard's celebration of the spirit has led to murder and the further dehumanisation of at least two men. Thus neither the pagan nor the Christian vision is enough for the twentieth century. But Leonard feels justified: having acted religiously and politically in the same event, he is now free to love; to be "reconciled," and to preach "the brotherhood of man." Convinced of his sanity within an insane world, he is certain that he alone is moral and able to create order. He takes on the role of a Christ-figure, violent and gentle, perhaps feeling himself to be a new medium to bring reconciliation between spirit and flesh: "He touched them, smiling at them reconcilingly. He could touch everything."⁴¹

Like Cromwell, Leonard reconciles the spirit and flesh in a unity, although he celebrates the flesh only through its death. Yet the absence of God is crucial; brought to the judgement of men, not God, Leonard finds a kind of peace, but also becomes increasingly

violent. Without his relationship with Tolson as a stabilising influence, Leonard cannot function. The split in Puritan thinking, therefore, remains, and it "maketh men mad." Christopher Hill is correct: "An approach to the world which in our period [seventeenth century] produced a Luther, a Descartes, a Milton, a Bunyan, today produces psychiatric cases."⁴² For Puritan man knew and depended upon his relationship to God, and therefore knew that the struggle to find His purposes would fulfill man; but the twentieth century has no God: "we have squeezed him right out of the universe."⁴³

Radcliffe thus illustrates the logical end to an absolutist, predestining faith without the restraining hand of a God of love. A love which accepts men for what they are is the missing quality of this novel. Relationships are therefore impossible. There is great passion and intensity, an urgency interpreted as love, but they are all possessive, serving only to dehumanise the relationship between the two men, and those between them and others. By abstracting love, Leonard feels that his love for Tolson enables him to love all humanity. It is a Christ-like wish, except that Christ never loved any one person in order to love them all: he loved God first. The strong and powerful relationship between the two men thus serves only to warp their humanity,

The relationships in both these Storey novels project an emotional wasteland, a distortion of human feelings either through the medium of money and industrial capitalism, or the desolate remnants of a Puritan morality. A relationship of other-relatedness is debased into non-human sexual fornication; one in which fulfillment

for one person results in the dissolution of the other. And though the lust and emotional impermeability of Eliot's wasteland have mellowed, the protagonists are left more vulnerable to one another. The dominant-subordinate idiom of these two relationships creates an aura of suffocating possessiveness in which intimacy germinates and then withers. Machin smothers Mrs. Hammond with his desperate needs, while Tolson is murdered for another's transcendence.

And each shattered relationship also breaks up the small community of which each is a part: Mrs. Hammond and her children; Machin and Mrs. Hammond; Tolson and his family; and victims; Leonard and the Radcliffe family; and through them their social environment. The ripples of these dislocations are a further element of the failure of relationship in these contemporary novels. That is, Storey places his characters within a social community realising that because no relationship occurs in a vacuum, they have consequences beyond the individuals who are immediately involved. Unlike Lessing, Storey asserts that relationships bear the yokes of heritage and environment, and that one cannot be "free"; that humans exist within a community. A community also carries the crucial burdens of life and death, and thus is part of the mystery of man's existence. This assertion is not evident in the middle class milieu of Lessing or Fowles, for their community has disintegrated, and the religious, moral questions of life and death have been shifted from the centre of life.

Conclusion

Since Marx wrote the words that introduce The French Lieutenant's Woman, "Every emancipation is a restoration of the human world and of human relationships to man himself," the expectation has become increasingly idealistic. As these six novels show, emancipation has become a rare event, and human relationships have fallen victim to alienation and possessive individualism. Only Mrs. Hammond fights free of alienated sex, and the struggle kills her. Western society has continued to be the commercial enterprise that Marx perceived to be typical of Adam Smith economics, and inevitably that iron has entered the soul of human relationships. Even Charles Smithson commits an act of alienated sex after he is dispossessed and then alienated from his ancestral roots and the aristocratic community.

The political economy of industrial capitalism affects every person and every relationship, either through the replacement of community by possessive individualism, or through the elevation of money over morality and religious aspiration. Thus every potential relationship in these novels turns sour. They support Marx's contention that alienated sex is animal and non-human, and occurs in the medium of the marketplace. And though Anna Wulf tries desperately to be other-oriented, to have reciprocal sexual relations, either her possessive individualism perverts the orientation to herself from the other, or her partner behaves in the classic marketplace pattern, and the relationship then becomes unilateral.

In addition, alienated sex may end in spiritual or physical death for one of the partners. All of the novels are class-oriented, and one of the striking though surely unintentional similarities between the working class stories is that Miranda, Mrs. Hammond, and Victor Tolson are all victims of alienation, and all die. Moreover, the victims of the middle-class novels, Charles Smithson, Anna Wulf, and even Martha Quest, deal with alienation through a narrowing of their emotional lives, and a loss of emotional depth and joy. The two women gain further human insight only at the edge of madness, while Charles becomes emotionally impotent, and a willing celibate.

The working class, it seems, still retains an experience of community, in spite of the capitalist milieu. These novels appear to say that when this is violated, through alienation, a violent death results. On the other hand, the middle class lost its community with the rise of the bourgeoisie and possessive individualism, so that alienation results in a loss of human substance and will. This is also true of the aristocratic Charles once he is dispossessed.

One further common feature of these novels becomes clear when they are divided into classes: there are definite patterns of expectation for relationship. The middle class characters, like Anna and Martha, and ultimately Sarah Woodruff, are possessive individualists and prefer to develop alone. Thus relationships are expected to aid in personal growth, and enhance individuality. Working class relationships, however, are more earthy, brutal, yet more sympathetic, and are felt to occur within a community. Ghostly though the community may be, its relationships are expected to give confi-

dence and emotional security first rather than the growth of the individual. Clegg, Machin, and Tolson are all searching for assurance and enhancement of their communal position, and only function well within a community. Both patterns, however, are destroyed by alienation; possessive individualists from a felt inner loss, working class people from an extreme possessiveness.

Exploring the working class idiom a little further, it would seem that the central concerns of human life and death still occur within the context of the community. Alienation from the class brings death. Social intercourse, therefore, is still a human activity rather than a business venture. The bourgeoisie no longer have a community within which to experience the central mysteries of human existence and are thereby forced to explore their own existence and to bear the burdens of life and death alone. And their denial of community brings them to experience insanity.

The working class community, however, shows the strain of the commercial environment, and this becomes visible through the overpowering respect for money. Aping the middle class, Clegg and Machin have had their sense of values warped by getting money without ethical strings. Wealth is their entry, they think, into an independent existence, and they begin to evade the responsibilities of the community at large. Riches make them possessive, and thus they do violence to those whom they love and are without the emotional strength to combat their possessiveness. This is true also of Tolson, although his driving force is the desire for spirituality. This form of possessiveness in its turn accelerates the breakdown of the

community into individuals with all their best emotions "buttoned up."

In the society of these novels, therefore, intimate relationship is a victim of the marketplace. Possessive individualism, the impotent possessiveness of wealth, and alienated sex are all consequences of industrial capitalism and some aspects of Puritanism. None of them permit reciprocal sexual relations or other-orientation because they demand the satisfaction of one person, not of "co-equal subjects." Personal morality has been converted into marketplace sex.

One fictional exception to this marketplace milieu is Margaret Drabble's This Garriick Year.¹ The novel concerns a middle class marriage in which alienated sex is tried as an extra-marital experiment and found wanting. Yet though the experience matures both David and Emma Evans, Emma now feels what she ought to feel for David.¹ That is, her spontaneity has been spoiled. The brush with the marketplace has marred the quality of their relationship and their community.

On the record of these novels, intimate relationship is thus a rare phenomenon. It has been one of the chief victims of the destruction of community and the rise of the possessive marketplace culture. And lost with intimacy is the knowledge given by Teilhard de Chardin, that the greatest possession of the self occurs when lost in another.

Footnotes

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Chapter I: John Fowles

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2. William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream, in The Complete Works, ed. Hardin Craig (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman & Co., 1961, Act V, sc. 2, ll. 4-17.
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